

Sib Buzz

Volume 1, Issue 1



SuperSibs!

January 2004

Did you know...

- 18,000 new siblings are affected by their brother or sisters' cancer diagnosis every year.
- **SuperSibs!** served over 480 sibs in IL, WI and IN in our first year alone!
- In 2003, **SuperSibs!** participated in 25 sibling parties, picnics, conferences and events, reaching out to siblings, parents and medical professionals.
- **SuperSibs!** now serves "cancer siblings" ages 4 through 18 **across the United States!**



SuperSib Bailey is delighted with her personal courage trophy

From Vision to Reality — SuperSibs! Delivers

To all of YOU — our friends, supporters, referrers, volunteers and **SuperSibs!** families, **thank you** for supporting our wonderful first year of service to super siblings of children with cancer. We hope that with this newsletter, you will feel the difference YOU have made in helping us bring delight and support to hundreds of children in need of our services.

We have had a tremendous impact — helping these kids "emotionally heal" from their sibling's diagnosis with cancer. One of these poignant "impact reminders" came in an envelope from one of our **SuperSibs!** families. There was no parent note — just a hand drawn picture by 6-year old SuperSib, Chase. It's so beautiful, I had to attach it here.

And have we made a difference? To Chase, we clearly have...



What a reminder that these "invisible children" play an important role in their sibling's healing and hope, while they experience the emotional turmoil of their brother or sister's cancer.

Tears came to my eyes recently, as I read the responses from our first annual Sibling/Parent Surveys. One phrase stopped me cold. A 10-year old boy wrote, "**SuperSibs! is nice to sad and scared kids.**"

This child sweetly and simply validated our work. And there's so much more. One parent told me, "I don't want my son to be jealous of cancer." He went on to encourage us to continue our important work.

The kids' faces at our booths at hospital picnics, parties and sibling days said it all. The kids would point, grin and say "**THIS is where I go!**". They helped us make colorful "**I'm Thumbody, I'm a SuperSib!**" thumbprint

posters, which now adorn hospital hallways while reminding passers-by that siblings need validation and healing, too.

At one event, a surly looking 16-year old sibling pulled out his **SuperSibs!** VIP card and told me he carries it in his wallet every day. This, too, was invaluable feedback. Clearly, the card with his name on it and the message "**Always remember how special YOU are!**" means something special to him. Each day brings new tears — of pride and gratitude. Also of sorrow... as we think of these children and their families fighting cancer every day.

One little boy wrote to us... "SuperSibs! is nice to sad and scared kids."

And the future?

Our vision to support these forgotten children has quickly become reality — nationwide. With our 2004 expansion serving families across the United States, we will continue making a positive difference in the lives of these "shadow children". Thank YOU for helping us do so!

Melanie Goldish

Executive Director — **SuperSibs!**

P.S. Remember to pass the word about our College Scholarship program for High School Senior siblings!

Spring Fling in NYC!

Help us spread the word about our
New York City Spring Fling Fundraising Event

Hors d'Oeuvres, Wine, Photo Exhibit, Silent Auction,
Music and Fun!

Location: **A Ramona Studio**
65 W. 37th Street, 4th Floor Gallery
Midtown Manhattan

Date/Time: **March 4, 2004 6:30-9:00 pm.**

Check <http://www.geocities.com/supersibsnyc/index.html> to register. See www.supersibs.org for more event information or call Coordinator, Tracey Lazos at 212-581-3582.

A Unique Volunteer Viewpoint

I first heard about *SuperSibs!* in March 2003, and I remember it like it was yesterday. I knew *immediately* that I wanted to be a part of this wonderful organization. I am a SuperSib myself, so I know from my own experience, how important it is to support the brothers and sisters of children with cancer. I also know that in the past, there were no programs geared specifically towards siblings. Families and patients were supported, but as a group, siblings like me were, more often than not, left to deal with this incredibly difficult situation on our own.

That's no longer the case, thanks to *SuperSibs!*

I had no idea how rewarding the experience would be, and I certainly didn't realize the impact it would have on me and my life.

As a *SuperSibs!* volunteer, I've had the opportunity to be involved in many ways... from office administration to the scholarship committee, to sending Smile-cards and Welcome Packets, fundraising, talking with families about the program, helping edit the teen journal and

more — it's been an amazing experience.

I feel so lucky to be a part of *SuperSibs!* The rewards of volunteering for *SuperSibs!* are constant, but the biggest reward is hearing from a parent or a SuperSib. I've been told "Thank you for making my child feel so special" and "My daughter carries her trophy everywhere and even took it to school." Just recently a mom said

"My son is *so* proud to be a SuperSib." I hear this and think, "That's what this is all about!"

When I first started volunteering for *SuperSibs!*, I had no idea how rewarding the experience would be, and I certainly didn't realize the impact it would have on me and my life. I've learned what a great feeling it is to know I'm helping to make a difference in the lives of so many children and families.

**By Stacy Dempsey
2003 Volunteer of
the Year**



Stacy Dempsey, center, at our "Happy ThankSibling" recognition event in November with her husband, C.J. and Executive Director, Melanie Goldish

Miss Teen Texas Candidate Chooses *SuperSibs!*



Lindsey Rueter is a 17 year-old junior attending Garland High School in Garland, Texas. She currently holds the title of Miss Teen Duncanville 2004 and has chosen *SuperSibs!* as her platform for the Miss Teen Texas competition. After losing a dear childhood friend to cancer and seeing the devastating effect on that friend's younger sister, *SuperSibs!* has become an important mission for Lindsey.

Lindsey plans to spread the *SuperSibs!* message throughout the state of Texas by

speaking to school age children, teens and adults. She will be visiting schools and hospitals throughout Texas to bring this message to all who can benefit from *SuperSibs!*

Lindsey will compete for the Miss Teen Texas title on July 5-6 in Ft. Worth during the Miss Texas Pageant. Her goal is to win the Teen Texas Community Service Award for the second time and to also be crowned Miss Teen Texas. We wish Lindsey best of luck!

Check out www.lindsey4supersibs.org for more information or to have Lindsey speak to your group about this important platform.

SuperSibs! Announces New Board Chair

SuperSibs! is delighted to announce our new Board Chairman, Thomas Thurman. Tom has served as a Director of our Board since the inception of our organization last year. Professionally, Tom serves as Senior Vice President of Human Resources Global Supply Chain for Kraft Foods. His leadership, enthusiasm and



commitment for delivering services that will continue to meet our mission is a high personal priority.

SuperSibs! will indeed continue to deliver well under Tom's Board leadership. We welcome and thank Tom Thurman for accepting this important governance role!



Sibling creating an "I'm Thumbbody" Poster at our *SuperSibs!* booth at "Light The Night" to help fight Leukemia and Lymphoma.

And The Survey Says...

We asked:

Why is SuperSibs! important to you?

SuperSibs! kids responded:

- Because it helps people recognize that the child and parents aren't the only ones going through this. There are other family members, too.
- You guys make me feel happy on bad days.
- Because I get mail and I can help my brother.
- 'Cause I'm special, too.
- Makes me feel like the sibs aren't alone in this madness, 'cause we have feelings too.
- It helps us feel better about ourselves.
- It is the only presents and mail I get.
- It lets me know that I am still appreciated and respected.
- It helps me to get through what my brother is going through.
- It's an amazing program giving children who aren't normally heard a voice and a place.

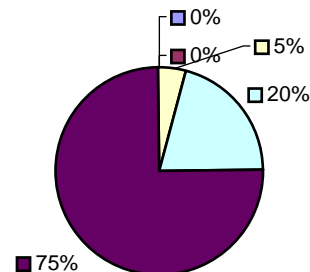
We asked:

How would you describe SuperSibs! to someone?

SuperSibs! kids responded:

- People taking care of people.
- It's something special for the brothers and sisters of a cancer kid because we get left out.
- A company that sends me awards for going through cancer with my sister.
- **SuperSibs!** is a really cool program!
- It makes you feel special, not ignored.

We asked *SuperSibs!* kids: What do you think of *SuperSibs!*?



75% of respondents said "Fantastic"
20% of respondents said "Great"
5% of respondents said "Good"

We asked parents for their comments...

- She is proud of herself every time she's reminded that she is a SuperSib! She loves to do things for her sister and is happiest when her sister gets blood transfusions and she feels good enough to play!!!
- What a great idea, the trophy. This represents and reminds my SuperSib every day how important he is to his brother during his cancer battle.
- Older siblings sometimes act as if they don't appreciate "special individual attention" such as SuperSibs!, but they really do!
- Thank you for being such a great help to our children.
- Thank you for recognizing her importance in our whole family's healing process .
- You recognized our children for their part in helping their brother (and our family) get through his treatment period.

Piper Rudnick — Award Winning Service!

While *SuperSibs!* receives generous pro-bono support every day from professional individuals and corporations, we have been blessed from "day minus 30" with legal guidance and leadership from Piper Rudnick, LLC and their incredible team. There was no question that our inaugural **Partner of the Year** award should be bestowed upon **Piper Rudnick**. Spearheaded by the ongoing stewardship of Attorney, John Siemsen, with endorsement and guidance from Senior Partner, Allen Ginsburg, and team support from Myla Barefield, Esq. and others, Piper Rudnick virtually held our hands through many hurdles —



From left: Myla Barefield with Pamela and John Siemsen, on award night.

gaining our nonprofit status, ensuring trademark protection and responding to IRS guidelines among other action steps. To the team at Piper Rudnick, we thank you so much! Congratulations on this **2003 Partner of the Year** award!

Thank you!



Reaching Out — Meet Sandi Ring

Through luck, fate and relationships, *SuperSibs!* has been tremendously fortunate to have Sandra Kleinstub Ring on staff from the very beginning of our organization. When Sandi first heard about our determination to fill this gap to serve sibs of children with cancer and our vision for the future to serve these forgotten children nationwide, Sandi said "I HAVE to be a part of this!"

Sandi serves as the Director of National Outreach for *SuperSibs!* and brings professional experience from her eight years leading outreach efforts for Make-A-Wish of Northern Illinois and their national office. Sandi has her Masters Degree in Early Childhood Development and is a certified Child Life

Specialist. Her background and experience made it a natural fit to help co-create our services and reach out to families and referral sources appropriately. *SuperSibs!* Executive Director Melanie Goldish often says, "Having Sandi on our team saved us about three years of work in gaining credibility, building appropriate action plans and getting the word out about *SuperSibs!* right away. I couldn't have asked for a better leadership partner!"

Sandi is the proud mother of Sydney, who will become a big sister sometime in February. Sandi and her husband Joshua live in Buffalo Grove, IL.

We're so lucky to have Sandi on board and excitedly await the newest addition to our team, Baby Ring!




Sandi Ring is *SuperSibs!* National Director of Outreach

Refer a child to *SuperSibs!* at www.supersibs.org

7 Things YOU Can Do To Help A Sibling

When a child is diagnosed with cancer, here are a few simple things that friends and family can do to also support the SIBLINGS:

- Introduce them by their OWN name (Not "Jimmy's brother or sister").
- Ask the siblings how THEY'RE doing – and then REALLY listen. (Don't always ask them for the medical report on their brother or sister. These kids want a life outside of cancer, too!).
- Offer to free up the parents so they can spend special time with the sibs alone.
- Invite the siblings to be a part of fun activities that will make THEM feel special and wanted.
- Send fun mail addressed to the sibs.
- Tell a high school senior "cancer sibling" about our Scholarship Program.
- Refer them to *SuperSibs!* 

Lovin'
the Logo



SuperSibs!

Kids of all ages shared their opinions on six custom-designed logo choices, created by Jackie Pinsler of Instinct Incorporated. Our final choice had almost unanimous votes! The kids loved the "you are the star" message, the subtle "s", and the outer "arms" hugging the whole design. We do, too!

Thank you, Jackie!

A Year of Impact — 2003



Teen sibs get creative with our *SuperSibs!* temporary tattoos at a cancer survivor conference in Madison, WI.

- 480 kids of all ethnicities served on an ongoing basis by *SuperSibs!* throughout 2003
- Siblings referred from 175 cities
- 8 mailed ongoing services to kids in program
- 3 international conference presentations, reaching families and cancer professionals with the message — "sibs need healing, too"
- 4 *SuperSibs! Day* Mayoral Proclamations received
- Referral sources included Pediatric Oncology Social Workers, Child Life Specialists, Nurses, Doctors, Parents and Friends of the Families
- The need for "sibling healing" and *SuperSibs!* was highlighted in 8 newspaper articles
- We made a difference in the lives of children and their families at a terribly difficult time in their lives. **THAT'S IMPACT!**



Giving to Make an Impact

SuperSibs! wishes to thank our generous donors, in-kind partners and volunteers! You DO help us make a difference.

2003 Donations Received

SuperSibs! STAR Level Giving and Club 84

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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
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Thank you for helping us make a difference in the lives of thousands of children in need!

SuperSibs!
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Hoffman Estates, IL 60195

Toll Free: 866-444-SIBS (7427)
Fax: 847-766-7084



SuperSibs!

To honor, support and recognize brothers
and sisters of children with cancer.



www.supersibs.org

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To YOU!

SuperSibs! Thanks Our Super Supporters

In-Kind Donations Received as of 11/1/03

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
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It is our intent to thank and recognize all of our wonderful contributors. We deeply apologize if we have omitted anyone!

SuperSibs! also thanks the **over 100 volunteers** who have given so lovingly of their time, energy and skills to help us make a difference. You are all cherished as members of our **SuperSibs!** family.