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NEWS RELEASE

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Generous Donations to Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program And Top Honors for Pediatric Oncologist

(Madera, CA) – Valley Children’s Healthcare has received two generous donations in support of its Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program - a \$100,000 grant from the Isnardi Foundation and a \$40,000 award from the St. Baldrick’s Foundation.

The same treatments that cure cancer patients may put children at risk for long-term health problems. About two-thirds of survivors will experience at least one late effect, including physical, emotional and social issues that may require ongoing medical support. One out of four suffer a more serious or life-threatening late effect, such as heart problems or a second cancer diagnosis.

Established in 2009, Valley Children’s Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program aims to promote healthy lifestyles in former cancer patients as they enter adulthood. It also advances research efforts to discover the most effective cancer treatments with the least amount of late effects on survivors.

“The Isnardi Foundation’s commitment to investing in the long-term sustainability of the Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program through an endowed gift will help us provide for the needs of childhood cancer survivors for generations to come,” said Rob Saroyan, Vice President of Philanthropy and Chief Development Officer at Valley Children’s. “We are blessed to be the recipients of the continued legacy of Mr. Vincent Isnardi, who dedicated his life to providing programs and services for the children of our community.”

Established in 2006 in Fresno, California, the Isnardi Foundation has generously supported local non-profit organizations that improve the quality of life and wellbeing for those in the community. Children’s healthcare is one of the foundation’s key focuses.

“We are honored to continue our philanthropic support of Valley Children’s,” said Peter Tocchini, a member of the Isnardi Foundation’s Board of Directors. “We believe that improving the lives of future generations is vital to the health of our community. Valley Children’s Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program will continue to play a major role in preventing the lifelong damage faced by childhood cancer survivors.”

The Isnardi Foundation gifted \$100,000 to the Childhood Cancer Survivorship Endowment in 2015, bringing its total contribution to the program to \$200,000.

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The St. Baldrick’s Foundation recently awarded an infrastructure grant of \$40,000 to Valley Children’s Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program.

“This grant will allow us to continue to increase access to our program to high-risk, underserved populations and identify better ways to serve our patients and improve outcomes,” said Dr. John Gates, pediatric hematologist/oncologist and director of the Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program. “We are truly grateful for St. Baldrick’s continued support of our program.”

Valley Children’s diagnoses nearly 150 new cases of pediatric cancer a year. The Hospital has one of the leading childhood cancer treatment centers on the West Coast and is the only provider of pediatric oncology services in the Central Valley. Since its creation in 2010, the Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program has served nearly 500 childhood cancer survivors.

The St. Baldrick’s Foundation is the largest private funder of childhood cancer research grants. St. Baldrick’s has donated almost \$360,000 to Valley Children’s since 2009.

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The Mendiburu Magic Foundation in Bakersfield, California, recently presented Valley Children’s Pediatric Hematologist/Oncologist Dr. Vinod Balasa with award for “Outstanding Advances in Cancer Research.” Dr. Balasa is medical director of the Cancer and Blood Diseases Center at Valley Children’s.

Valley Children’s pediatric research program comprises more than 160 national clinical trials and research studies. More than 90 active studies are related to pediatric cancer. The Cancer and Blood Diseases Center at Valley Children’s sees more than 120 new children diagnosed with cancer each year and is the only provider of in-depth, inpatient and outpatient pediatric cancer and blood diseases services in Central California.

“I am so honored to accept this award, which is a testament to the dedication not only of our pediatric oncology team, but also of the researchers we work with each day,” said Dr. Balasa. “Because of advancements in treatments, we are able to cure so many more children with cancer than we could just a few decade ago. That is what gives us

the strength and motivation to keep doing what we do. And to have the support of the Mendiburu family and their amazing Foundation is truly humbling. I thank them for this recognition.”

Since 2005, the Mendiburu Magic Foundation has invested more than \$44,000 toward the support of Kern County families with children at Valley Children’s Hospital. The Foundation is dedicated to responding to the unmet needs of Kern County families and their children facing cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

“Our Foundation has supported Valley Children’s Hospital for many years, and our long-standing friendship and partnership is something that means more than anything,” said Mendiburu Magic Foundation Co-Founder and President Brian J. Mendiburu. “My mom, Nancy, was from Madera and we are honored to work with Valley Children’s on behalf of Kern County children and families.”

In 2015, Valley Children’s Pediatric Oncologist/Hematologist Dr. John Gates accepted the Nancy Ann Mendiburu Compassion Award for Innovative Cancer Research. Dr. Gates is also the director of Valley Children’s Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program.

Valley Children’s Hospital ranks in the top 4% of the country for enrolling pediatric cancer patients into therapeutic programs through the Children’s Oncology Group. COG is the world’s largest organization devoted exclusively to childhood and adolescent cancer research. This high enrollment makes Valley Children’s a valuable contributor to ensure advanced treatment protocols for children throughout the country. The ranking comes from COG’s most recent “report card,” which reviews the more than 200 institutions in its membership.

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