

DECEMBER 2020 | Vol 1, No 3

# THE Adventurist

A Kid Again's very own magazine about Adventures!

## SMILE... Like A Kid Again

Celebrating the End of 2020 p. 4

Cedar Point Adventure! p. 7

Kings Island Adventure! p. 8



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**A Kid Again.**  
Giving illness a time out

Dear friends,

Welcome to the third edition of The Adventurist Newsletter!

It likely goes without saying, but 2020 has been a challenging year. Our families have been at particularly high risk during the COVID-19 pandemic and for many, traditional Adventures were out of the question. It's been a year of pivoting – pivoting to continue delivering joy through the power of Adventures to our kids and families when they need it most.

In 2020, we delivered all kinds of new and creative experiences! Our families took part in Virtual Adventures with cooking features and magicians. Adventures in a Box, Streaming for Adventures with Butler University, and in-person Adventures at Jurassic Quest, Columbus Zoo, Kings Island, and Cedar Point all created memories and smiles.

This year, we also expanded our reach and opened the doors to our Greater Philadelphia Chapter, and we're looking to open the Charlotte, North Carolina Chapter in early 2021. These new chapters are the next steps in a long-term plan to provide every child and family dealing with a life-threatening condition the hope and support that Adventures offer.

In this issue of The Adventurist, you'll find stories of inspiration, hope, and healing that tell the tale of A Kid Again kids, families, donors and volunteers.

Enjoy!

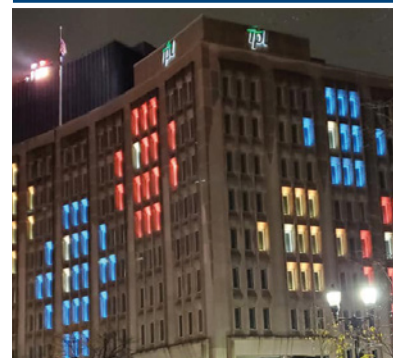
Oyauma Garrison,  
President and CEO

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## Our Logo in Lights



In October, IPL hosted a socially distant trick or treat event for kids and families in our Indiana Chapter. Nearly 100 attendees came downtown dressed in their best costumes to enjoy a Trick or Treat Adventure. Thanks to our friends at IPL for the Adventure and an awesome display of lights to spread awareness for A Kid Again!



## We are thrilled to have Kenny Moore II on board!

Our Indiana Chapter is excited to announce that star cornerback for the Indianapolis Colts, Kenny Moore, has been named as an honorary member of their board of directors! Pictured here auctioning off his game day jersey to raise money for A Kid Again in memory of his beloved friend #MightyMason.

## RICART GIVING TUESDAY TELETHON FUELS ADVENTURES



All you need to do is mention A Kid Again to Rick Ricart, and you'll quickly realize his passion for this organization. In early December Ricart/Ricart Automotive partnered with NBC4 to deliver a telethon to raise funds to fuel more Adventures in 2021. 'On-air' sponsors included

Central Ohio Contractors, CGI and Greif, Inc., and the event featured stories of inspiration from local A Kid Again kids and families.

**Thanks to volunteers, sponsors, and call-in donors,  
the event raised over \$35,000. ♥**



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## Get Social...From a Distance

Follow our social channels for feel-good moments and the latest Adventures with our families. You'll also stay connected with event announcements and opportunities to get involved! Thank you for helping us with shares and likes! Check us out on Facebook – Twitter – Instagram – LinkedIn.



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**LI:** a-kid-again



**IG:** a\_kid\_again



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DANCE,  
LAUGH,  
RACE,   
SMILE,  
PLAY,  
LIKE A KID AGAIN!

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It's easy to feel isolated when you're caring for a child with a complex medical diagnosis and Adventures give our family two incredibly important gifts: the gift of community and the gift of memories.

– Ryan's Mother, Megan



# SMILE... LIKE A KID AGAIN

This holiday season, A Kid Again supporters met Ryan and his family during the last push of the year to fuel more Adventures. John and Megan Strok are the parents of three young children: Lily, Jack and Ryan. Their youngest child, Ryan, was diagnosed with a rare seizure disorder called CDKL5 Deficiency Disorder when he was 8 months old. Affecting about 1,400 children across the world and only around 40 boys, CDKL5 manifests in seizures, creating speech issues, vision impairment and development delays.

As part of the End of Year Campaign, Ryan's mother, Megan, shared powerful words in response to the most common donor question, "does my donation really matter?"

#### Her answer:

"If you've ever wondered whether your support of A Kid Again makes a difference, I'm here to tell you it does. It's easy to feel isolated when you're caring for a child with a complex medical diagnosis, but Adventures give our family two incredibly important gifts: the gift of community and the gift of memories."

A Kid Again families need Adventure (even if it's virtual!) more than ever before. That's why it was important to the Strok family to share their message.

"For all of our kids, the Adventures are so amazing because it means a day of pure, uninterrupted family time where we don't have to worry about our to-

do list or medical appointments or anything other than having fun," Megan shared. "The Adventures are some of our happiest family memories,



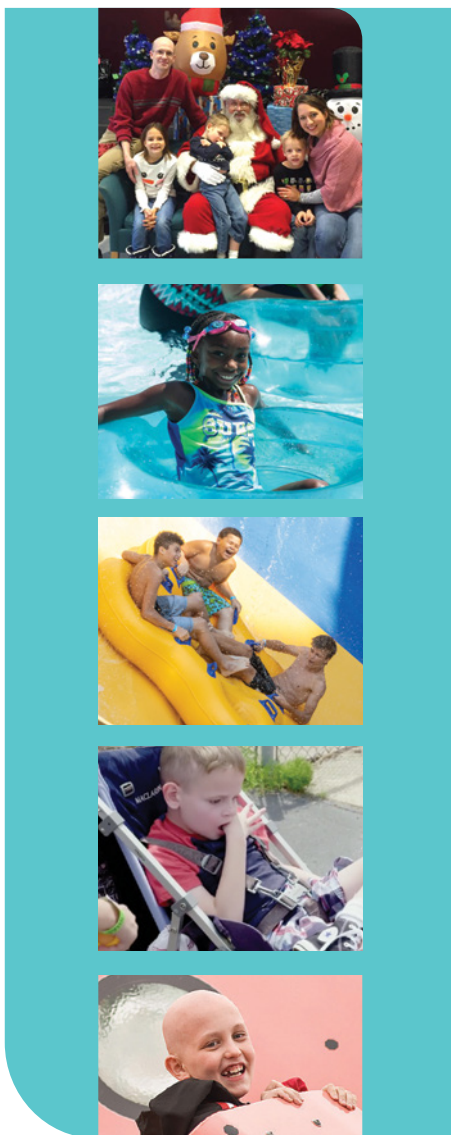
and for a family who is constantly worried about a child whose life expectancy is shorter than most, memories are even more precious."

Technology gives A Kid Again the ability to continue bringing the power of Adventure to kids and families in creative ways, but donor support is needed to keep it going.

And donor support this year is more important than ever because COVID-19 presents higher risk for a family with a medically compromised family member. They need Adventure to bring them the joy of community, even if it's virtual.

There's still time to donate! As 2020 comes to a close, A Kid Again is nearing its **goal of \$50,000** before the new year to fuel the Adventure and bring joy to more families.

Whether you can give \$5 or \$500 – as Megan Strok told us, your donation makes a difference for families! **To donate, visit [akidagain.org/donate](https://akidagain.org/donate)**, and select the LOCAL Chapter. ♥



Where Illness Stops  
and Adventure Begins



# NBA All-Star Host Committee Cuts Ribbon for All Play



In November, the Indianapolis NBA All-Star Host Committee and A Kid Again teamed up to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil the new addition of accessible playground equipment at Independence Park, a local park in Greenwood, Indiana.

The new equipment, called the Yalp Sona Arch, is an interactive dance and play arch where audio-guided games are played in motion. This new addition to the park is a piece of playground equipment accessible to all, transcending age, physical and emotional barriers.



"The play equipment being donated will be so fun for our family because it's hard to find things that we can all do together," said Jess Moering, 4 year old Willow's mother. "A lot of the time, Willow is watching but not able to engage much, but she loves music and moving around so we know she will enjoy playing as a family with the arch."

The installation was funded through a grant A Kid Again received from the Indianapolis NBA All-Star Host Committee and its Legacy project.

Thank you to the Indianapolis NBA All-Star Host Committee for your commitment to play for all! ♥



## Northern Ohio "Rock n' Roll" Virtual Gala



Not even a pandemic can hold back the power of rock and roll! The Northern Ohio Chapter virtual "Rock n' Roll" Gala was hosted on-site at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum in Cleveland, Ohio.

The event was held virtually and featured inspiring stories from local families. "Attendees" were invited to host small, in-home gatherings and received a guitar shaped charcuterie board, desserts, and a bottle of Tito's vodka, the official vodka of the Rock n' Roll Adventure.

For the 5th year in a row, Cedar Point stepped in as the event's Presenting Sponsor. Thank you to our other sponsors including GPD Group, Riley Contracting, Interim HealthCare, Miele Family Foundation, and OMNOVA Solutions. More than \$190,000 was raised to support local Adventures. ♥



### TRICK OR TREAT DRIVE THRU FEATURES SPOOKY SURPRISES

In October, the Central Ohio Chapter came up with a fun way to bring the best parts of Halloween to a local Adventure. Families enjoyed a safe trick or treat where they were invited to drive through for their treats.

At the end of the drive thru, families were surprised with a drive-in Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles concert.

"We absolutely LOVED the trick or treat drive through. I literally had tears in my eyes the whole time because of how wonderful it was for the boys. And seeing all the volunteers just touched our hearts. Even my husband had tears in his eyes. It was amazing." -A Kid Again Mom of PJ & Remmy (Kimberly Grandinette) ♥







# CEDAR POINT DELIVERS ADVENTURE



Even in a year with so many challenges, our partner Cedar Point was able to help us deliver a safe, amazingly fun Fall Adventure and bring everlasting smiles to so many of our children and families. Challenges aside, Cedar Point and A Kid Again worked together to ensure these families dealing with effects of life-threatening conditions were able to make memories together albeit in a slightly different way. We adhered to all safety precautions at the park. These safety measures included limited capacity, mandatory temperature checks, health screening questions, face coverings for guests and associates, social distancing - all to ensure a safe environment for all attendees and especially our children and families.

On Sunday, Oct 18th, over 500 of our guests arrived for a fun-filled Adventure with over 30 volunteers joining in the day. Families were greeted with Halloween goodie bags full of glow sticks, toys, hand sanitizer and more, thanks to our friends at COVIA Corp. Laughter and joy could be heard throughout as families enjoyed the day with amazing

rides, food and fun that a world-class Amusement Park can offer.

Cedar Point has been a partner for more than 12 years and they were hosting us as part of their Tricks & Treats Fall Fest. They went out of their way to make this an incredible day for all of our families. Kids and families attended the event in their best costumes and experienced an exciting day out at the park where they could, even if just for a few hours, experience the fun and exciting moments of life with their friends and just be...a kid again. Thank You to Cedar Point for continuing to help us deliver powerful Adventures in 2021 for our kids and families. ❤️



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# KINGS ISLAND

## Keeps **ADVENTURE** Going

Long-standing partner to A Kid Again, Kings Island, remained a good friend to the organization in 2020 despite the challenge of COVID-19.

They worked to ensure A Kid Again families could make memories together, providing safer alternatives.

For many families with immunocompromised children, a traditional Halloween Trick or Treat was out of the question this year due to COVID-19. Knowing this, Kings Island worked to provide a COVID-friendly Tricks and Treats Fall Fest Adventure to more than 600 A Kid Again families. Safety precautions at the park included limited capacity, mandatory temperature checks, health

screening questions, required face coverings for all guests and associates, social distancing, extra sanitization and more.

2020 was also the year for the Kings Island Orion First Rider Auction! Naturally, it was a different experience this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, but Kings Island still found a way to make kids and families feel special as they took on only the seventh giga coaster in the world! The first drop on Orion took riders down the length of a football field (300 feet!). Thanks to the Orion First Rider Auction Presenting Sponsor, Interim HealthCare, and the countless donors who put their bids in to ride, this event raised over \$160,000 – breaking previous Kings Island First



Rider Auction records – despite the year's challenges!



A Kid Again is grateful to have dedicated partners like Kings Island who continue to work together to find new and creative ways to help A Kid Again families experience the power of Adventure. ❤️



## Holiday Parties Share the

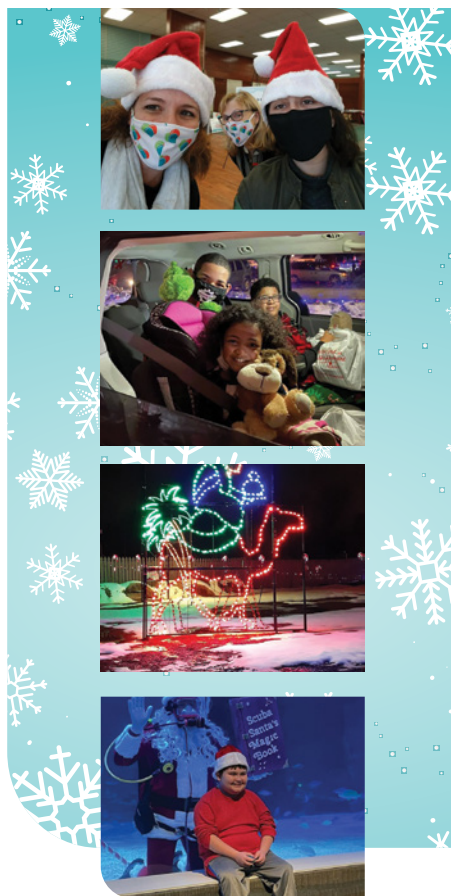
# Magic of the Season

"The fact that A Kid Again found a way to safely spread the joy of Christmas to the families they serve in the middle of a pandemic was amazing! I am so thankful we have something to look forward to again this year! We have learned through our journey that having moments of joy to look forward to helps us keep the hope alive we need to continue on." – Erin Moss, Ivy's Mother

In a year full of challenging times, a sense of community has never been more important for families dealing with life-threatening conditions. That's why local chapters made it a priority to continue the tradition of bringing joy and cheer through annual holiday parties.

With the help of donors, sponsors and volunteers, Holiday Parties happened across every region – central Ohio, northern Ohio, southwest Ohio, Indianapolis, and greater Philadelphia!

Central Ohio celebrated the holidays with a Wildlights outing at the Columbus Zoo! Volunteers came together to collect wish lists and play Santa as they distributed 1,300 gifts to central Ohio kids during their Holiday Party! In COVID-friendly fashion, families greeted Santa from a distance.



In northern Ohio, the local chapter teamed up with Magic of Lights. Prior to driving through to enjoy the light show, families drove through a special A Kid Again area to pick up a number of goodies! Thanks to Debbie Caudill and Kurtz Bros., there was a gift for every child, including cookie and hot chocolate kits from Applebees! This

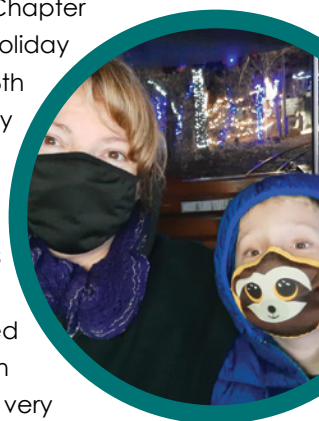
was a record year and nearly 800 people participated in the holiday party.

Southwest Ohio celebrated the holiday season with A Kid Again families at the Newport Aquarium and The Christmas Ranch! First-time donor Sogeti, USA and new southwest Ohio Board Member Becki Jean purchased 300 gifts from the chapter Amazon Wish List.

The Indiana Chapter hosted a fun-filled evening with our Indiana families at Conner Prairie. Kids and families enjoyed the atmosphere walking through the lights, and The Indiana Pacers and Jakks Pacific provided toys so each child could take a special gift home.

Greater Philadelphia Chapter hosted their very first Holiday Party on December 13th at Diggerland's Holiday Drive-Thru Light Show!

Holiday Parties are bringing joy and smiles to local kids and families thanks to dedicated supporters. A Kid Again would like to extend a very big thank you to our partners for making holiday parties happen this year for local families. ❤️



## THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Holiday Parties have brought joy and smiles to local kids and families thanks to dedicated supporters. A Kid Again would like to extend a very big thank you to our partners for making sure each child received a gift at our holiday parties!

**CENTRAL OHIO** Brenda & Ken Kirk • CGI • Ricart Automotive & Firefighters for Kids • WSA • Superior Beverage • AEP-Ohio • Bonner Family Huntington Bank • Navigator Management • City Campus Church • OSU MC • Towne Properties • Lindsey Spina Bifida • Prema Shankar Coke • Mike Streng and Pattie Reis • Steve Stadler **PHILLY** The Absalom Jones Foundation • Independence Blue Cross • Alcom Pay Day Payroll • Interim Health **INDY** Pacers **NORTHERN OHIO** Kurtz Brothers • Superior Beverage • Parker • Hannigan • Safelite **SOUTHWEST OHIO** Paycor • Sogeti, USA

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## A Kid Again Knows Santa!



For the Central Ohio Chapter, the man in the big red suit is no man at all – it's Program Director Kathy Derr!

Kathy is one of the original A Kid Again Founders who helped

establish the organization more than 25 years ago. This past year we had over 2,000 families participate in the holiday party. Behind the scenes Kathy and her team of elves start planning in October, reviewing every single wish list from our families, which are triple checked and individually wrapped.

As one of her long-time volunteers said "Kathy is like Mrs. Claus. She works tirelessly to make a special Christmas for the kids and their families. A few years ago, when we lost our venue at the last minute, she scrambled to find a new place at the zoo. She was able to save Christmas. During the pandemic she came through again with gifts for everyone"

Thank you Kathy Santa! As we close on the year, and start the new one, Kathy will be joining the National Team and bringing her Adventure planning talents to new chapters and families! ♥



## BEN'S BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISER

Ben Soller was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor in July, 1990; just one month before his 8th birthday. Despite experiencing a stroke and the massive doses of chemotherapy and radiation to his head and spine, Ben fought to survive.



This year, Ben celebrated his 38th birthday and 30 years since his brain cancer diagnosis. He shared that A Kid Again helped him cope with the struggles and pain he experienced during some of the scariest years of his life.

Ben and his family created the Soller Memorial Golf Outing 30 years ago. But due to the pandemic, the golf outing couldn't be held as usual. Instead, his family emailed friends and family asking for donations in celebration of Ben's 38th birthday. The fundraiser for A Kid Again raised more than \$8,000! Thank you Ben!

A birthday fundraiser is a great way to support A Kid Again kids! Learn how at [akidagain.org/fundraise](https://akidagain.org/fundraise). ♥

## Indiana Chapter holds first Esports Adventure!



2020's theme of "going virtual" facilitated new and creative fundraising ideas, which was the inspiration for "Streaming for Adventures." In November, the Indiana Chapter held the first Esports Adventure with Butler University's Esports Club. It was exciting as players navigated their

way through the world of Minecraft...Survivor-Style! In the end, FancyTaco won the battle! In southwest Ohio, University of

Cincinnati Games hosted their own event with a Minesgiving Fundraiser.

February 13-15th, A Kid Again will team up with Esports and over 11 colleges and universities across Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and New York to host a 72-hour live streamed charity event called "Spread The Love." If your company is interested in supporting this event, call **Katie Pappas at 317-295-3178** or e-mail [kpappas@akidagain.org](mailto:kpappas@akidagain.org). ♥



## Greater Philadelphia Fall Adventure in a Box!

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter hosted Adventures in a Box, Fall Fun edition! A Kid Again families enjoyed a box full of Halloween crafts and candy, delicious fall recipes, and Thanksgiving family crafts. ♥

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While in-person formal galas weren't a possibility in 2020 due to COVID-19, that didn't stop local chapters from finding ways to bring the experience to the living rooms of A Kid Again supporters.

In lieu of a traditional in-person event in the Fall, our Southwest Ohio Chapter pivoted to Holiday Hope-La, an online fundraising event where 'attendees' could support A Kid Again from the comfort of their homes while providing hope to families this holiday season.

Holiday Hope-La featured stories from the Underwood and Mockbee families, who shared what A Kid Again Adventures mean to them. The event accepted donations and raised funds through an online silent auction with nearly 80 items, as well as a Blanton's Bourbon Whiskey raffle.

Together with the support of donors and sponsors like Ohio National Financial Services, Interim Health, Huntington Bank and Messer Construction, Holiday Hope-La raised nearly \$50,000 to provide hope to families during the holiday season and all year long! ♥



## Southwest Ohio New Adventures Coming!

The world is changing, and community is more important than ever! In 2021, A Kid Again will continue to bring local kids and families hope and joy through the power of Adventure. We'll host the virtual events you've come to know and we'll look to bring you new opportunities. We'll also do our best to offer smaller in-person events as the state deems it safe.



The Southwest Ohio Chapter is excited to share they'll be hosting new Adventures like a B&B Riverboat experience, Boonshoft Museum, and a Florence Ya'lls Baseball game. They're also excited to welcome new partner **Sogeti**, thanks to new Board Member Becki Jean who secured a donation of 300 gifts from the Amazon Wishlist for the Holiday Party!

**Here's to Adventure in 2021!** ♥

## Central Ohio Chapter Welcomes Travis!

We are thrilled to welcome Travis Gulling as our new Central Ohio Executive Director. Travis comes to us with a wealth of experience in fundraising, volunteer management and program implementation. He is eager to meet all our families, volunteers and donors! Welcome to A Kid Again Travis! ♥



## Jurassic Adventure!

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter was established in 2019 and hit the ground running for new Adventures in 2020.

For the first time ever, our Greater Philadelphia Chapter teamed up with Jurassic Quest®, North America's largest and most realistic Dinosaur Adventure. Guests get to see the Cretaceous, Jurassic and Triassic Periods and experience for themselves what it was like to be among dinosaurs of all kinds. Families received free tickets to the drive-thru dinosaur event and saw more than 70 life-like dinosaurs roaring and moving around in realistic scenes!

This Adventure provided A Kid Again kids and families with a memorable Adventure during COVID-19 that was safe for children who are immunocompromised. Thanks to Jurassic Quest's donated tickets, 15 families were in attendance to experience a drive with the dinosaurs! ♥







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## LOOK INSIDE!

We've enjoyed spending time  
with our kids at all of  
our chapter Adventures!



## SHOW US YOUR #BARBASOLBEARD!

**Create your own Barbasol beard for a good cause.** We're teaming up with our National Partner, Barbasol, to bring you a silly way to fuel more Adventures!

**Show us your best Barbasol beard!**

**Step 1:** Purchase a can of Barabsol with the A Kid Again logo at Giant Eagle stores.

**Step 2:** Get silly and design your own Barbasol beard!

**Step 3:** Take a selfie with your beard and post it to social media using the hashtag **#BarbasolBeard**

**Step 4:** Challenge friends and family to post their funniest Barbasol beard too!

Look for specially marked Barbasol cans in Giant Eagle stores through December! **Don't forget to use the hashtags**

**#BarbasolBeard #AKidAgain...**challenge your friends...and get silly with it! 💙

