Nemours

Hematology/Oncology Unit at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children Dedicated to Leukemia Research Foundation of Delaware

Local charity honored for $2 million gift with naming of hematology/oncology unit

Wilmington, DE -- The story began in 1998 when 3-year-old Natalia Ferrara of Middletown, DE, was diagnosed with leukemia and treated successfully at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children. Natalia's mother, Denni Ferrara, established the Leukemia Research Foundation of Delaware (LRFDE) to raise funds and awareness for pediatric blood cancer research. This week, the 3East hematology/oncology patient care unit at the hospital was dedicated and named for Ferrara's foundation and volunteers, the first organization to receive such an honor.

> *"Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for the work of LRFDE in speeding pediatric cancer research and inspiring dedication to this vital cause. - E. Anders Kolb, MD, Director, Nemours Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders"*

LRFDE holds signature fundraising events throughout the year, including their popular black tie gala in February, Mud Runs in June and the famous Frightland attraction during the Halloween season. Over the years, LRFDE has donated a total of $1.25 M to cancer research at Nemours and has pledged another $750 K.

Retired hematologist/oncologist Rita Meek, MD, who treated Natalia, said that while many families whose children recover from cancer choose to close that chapter and move on, "the Ferraras decided to use their energy, style and spirit to make the world a better place for children with cancer."

E. Anders Kolb, MD, Director of Nemours Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders (NCCBD), described the LRFDE's gift as transformative. "It has been a catalyst for our center's deliberate focus on research, spurring Nemours collaboration with other cancer centers and securing additional faculty and funding." He noted that five years ago, Nemours' cancer program was not ranked [by *US News and World Report*]. "This year, we are ranked 16th in the nation for pediatric cancer," he said. Dr. Kolb added that two new immunotherapies developed by Nemours and collaborators with funding from LRFDE are being adopted globally as treatment protocols and that Nemours (all sites) is among the top three children's health systems for enrollment in pediatric clinical trials nationally. "Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for the work of LRFDE in speeding pediatric cancer research and inspiring dedication to this vital cause," Dr. Kolb said.

The 3 East plaque reads: *The Leukemia Research Foundation of Delaware dedicates the 3 East Patient Unit to its young patients with love as boundless as their courage and with enduring gratitude to those who care for them.*

LRFDE Founder and President Denni Ferrara said: "We are devoted to finding cures for childhood cancer. On behalf of the small mom and pop foundation that we are, and the amazing volunteers who work beside me, I am honored and excited about this moment and for the future discoveries to be made as the LRFDE, Dr. Kolb, his staff and team of researchers continue to work towards a cancer-free tomorrow."

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