ANNUAL REPORT 2023 ISSUE NO. 13

MAYA'S HOPE





Therapy for Children with Special Needs Page 8



Life-saving surgeries Page 11





Our Mission

Maya's Hope works to improve the quality of life of orphaned, impoverished, and special-needs children on a global scale. Whether providing funding for loving caregivers, vitamin-rich formula, or access to quality medical care, Maya's Hope improves lives, one child at a time!

What We Do



Emergency Aid

Life-Saving Surgery
Evacuation Assistance
Emergency Preparedness Supplies



Nutrition

Infant Formula • Toddler Formula Specialized Formula • Baby Food NGT Feeding Supplies

- We provide urgent medical assistance, including surgeries, for children with life-threatening congenital malformations such as spina bifida, hydrocephalus, congenital heart defects, Hirschsprung's disease, etc who come from disadvantaged backgrounds where access to medical care is limited and families often struggle to afford essential healthcare services.
- We supply vital necessities such as nutrition, medication, and hygiene items to children in orphanages, hospitals, impoverished families, and families displaced by war, aiming to sustain their well-being and enhance their quality of life.
- We fund multidisciplinary pediatric therapy services (physical, occupational, speech-language, behavior, and other therapy programs) for children with various conditions to help them reach their developmental milestones and full potential.



Medical Needs

Multidisciplinary Therapy
Dental & Medical Checkups
Medical Tests • Medicine



Education

School Fees • School Supplies Educational Materials



Loving Care

Caregivers
Special Care Packages

Where We Bring Hope



Ukraine and The Philippines.
All centered in New York City
with volunteers and
donors around the world!



Platinum Transparency **2024**

Candid.



Program Overview

Maya's Hope operates several key programs aimed at addressing the diverse needs of disadvantaged children:

- Sponsor a Child (Philippines provides scholarships to children from low-income families pursuing education; offers nutrition, hygiene supplies, medication, and access to medical care for children with disabilities living in impoverished conditions.
- Sponsor a Child (Ukraine) offers nutrition, hygiene supplies, medication, and access to medical care for children with disabilities living in impoverished conditions.
- Ukraine Fund distributes nutrition, hygiene items, vitamins, nutritional supplements, clothing, bedding, and other basic necessities, as well as offering access to multidisciplinary pediatric therapy services to children with special needs, children residing in orphanages, institutions, and foster care, and children living in impoverished families displaced by war.
- Emergency Medical Fund provides funding for surgical interventions and medical needs of children from underserved communities who have congenital malformations.

Our Objectives

- To facilitate life-saving surgeries for children facing lengthy waiting lists, when the child's condition may deteriorate or threaten their survival if left unaddressed
- To enhance the living conditions of orphans and children with disabilities residing in orphanages and foster homes
- To offer direct support to families
 with children who have disabilities,
 ensuring access to necessary medical care and proper nutrition, and
 supporting families to enable these
 children to thrive despite poverty

Board of Directors

Maya's Hope is guided by a dedicated and passionate Board of Directors who play a pivotal role in steering our organization toward success. Our board members bring diverse backgrounds, expertise, and a shared commitment to our mission, ensuring that we remain focused on the welfare of the children we serve. Our Board of Directors play a critical role in guiding Maya's Hope through the complexities of an ever-changing landscape.



Maya's Hope Board of Directors (from left to right): David Cohen, Ava Mehta, Semanti Datta Kulkarni, Julia Maksimova, Maya Crauderueff, Jacky Flood Soeda, Michael Meltzer

Maya's Hope Team

Maya Crauderueff, Founder and President
Ollie Zhorniak, Program Manager
Caron Katz, Bookkeeping Services
Krisztina Sepelja, Assistant
Yulia Brusko, Program Coordinator
Natalia Nanaienko, Program Coordinator

Board of Directors

Michael Meltzer, Chairman Maya Crauderueff, President Julia Maksimova, Vice President David Cohen, Treasurer Semanti Datta Kulkarni, Secretary Jacky Flood Soeda, Director Ava Mehta, Director

Message from Maya

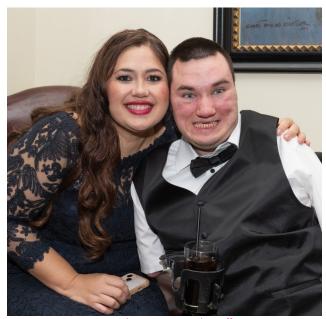
Dear Friends and Supporters of Maya's Hope:

2023 has been a year of reflection on the incredible journey of Maya's Hope, which began over 15 years ago with a visit to the Philippines. In 2007, I suddenly lost my mother, a loss that left a deep wound. Struggling to fill the void, I decided to visit an orphanage. A family friend Fr. Vic invited me to visit an orphanage in Bulacan in 2008 and that's how it all began.

The warmth and resilience of the children there touched my heart and sparked the creation of Maya's Hope. What started with one orphanage in the Philippines soon expanded to others, and eventually, our mission grew to include families across different regions in the Philippines and Ukraine.

People often ask, "Why Ukraine?" The simple answer is that my dad's roots are there. My paternal grandparents were from Ukraine, but my dad was born in a work camp in Germany at the end of World War II. He came to America as a young boy with his Ukrainian-speaking parents, ready to start a new life.

In 2011, I visited the Kalinovka orphanage in Ukraine, where I felt a calling similar to what I had experienced in the Philippines. It was there that I met Vanya, a child whose joy and resilience embody the spirit of hope that drives our work. His journey, from a bright light at the dreary orphanage to finding a loving home through



Logan with Maya Crauderueff



Maya and Vanya at the orphanage in Zaporizhzhia region, 2012.

adoption in 2019, symbolizes the profound impact we can make together.

At the Maya's Hope Lotus Ball 2023, we were honored to welcome Logan, Vanya's friend from Kalinovka who was later adopted by the Vilardo family. His presence was a powerful reminder of how far we've come and the countless lives transformed along the way.

I'm reminded of how, from that first step in the Philippines to our expansion into Ukraine, our work has touched thousands of lives.

Thank you for being a vital part of this journey.

Together, we can continue to bring hope and change to more children around the world.

Hugs,

Maya Rowencak Crauderueff, President and Founder

Why Help Children in Ukraine?

In Ukraine, parents of children with special needs are often told their children will be a burden on society and pressured to place their children in state care institutions. As a result, many children are sent to orphanages and institutions where they frequently endure abuse and neglect. The limited support available to parents who choose to care for their children at home places them in incredibly challenging situations. Maya's Hope is dedicated to alleviating some of this burden on these parents.

For over a decade, Maya's Hope has been deeply committed to supporting children in Ukraine. Before the war in eastern Ukraine began in 2014, and well before its escalation in 2022, Maya's Hope was steadfast in providing essential assistance to orphaned, impoverished, and special needs children. Our approach has evolved from exclusively supporting orphanages to em-

bracing a more holistic strategy that extends aid to families caring for children with disabilities. Our initiatives in Ukraine encompass a wide range of help, including financial assistance, basic needs, and educational support for orphaned children and those with special needs.



Melanic

Maya's Hope <u>Successes</u> in Ukraine in 2023:

- **2,633** children in Ukraine received basic necessities such as nutrition, hygiene items, vitamins, nutritional supplements, clothing, bedding, etc.
- 137 children with special needs in Ukraine received multidisciplinary pediatric therapy services.

Maya's Hope started helping children in Ukraine in 2010. As the war in Ukraine intensified, our commitment to the region only grew stronger. Maya's Hope continues to ensure that orphanages and families with special needs children have access to critical medicines, life-saving resources, and basic essentials. Our assistance has spanned all key program areas – from water and food supplies to evacuation funds and multi-disciplinary therapies.



Nikita



Children at the orphanage in Western Ukraine

Rescuing Vitaliy

A Journey of Hope Amidst the Kherson Flood

In June 2023, the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine was destroyed, causing a catastrophic flood in the Kherson region. Countless families were left grappling with loss and despair, facing an uncertain future.

Thanks to the swift compassion of our donors, Maya's Hope was able to respond immediately. Our charity partners braved a difficult journey to the affected area, ensuring that critical assistance reached those most in need. Together, we provided families with store vouchers for essential items such as food, hygiene products, and cleaning supplies.

Among the many stories of resilience, one family's journey stood out. Liudmila, Andriy, their 16-year-old son Vitaliy, and his 6-year-old sister Veronika were forced to embark on a perilous journey across multiple countries to reach safety. Vitaliy suffers from several severe health conditions, including a congenital malformation of the central nervous system, epilepsy, severe developmental delay, myopathy, hydronephrosis of the kidney, and chronic inflammation of the bladder. While evacuation is a daunting task for any adult, it was a life-threatening ordeal for Vitaliy. Without the necessary medical attention, his life was in grave danger.

The flood left them with no choice but to leave their home and face a treacherous journey. Maya's Hope was able to step in, providing the necessary funds to ensure the family's safe evacuation abroad in pursuit of medical care. Their path was fraught with challenges, from interrogations at Russian and Belarusian borders to the looming threat of Andriy's conscription by hostile troops. Yet, their determination never wavered, and they ultimately found refuge in Germany after a stop in Poland.

Together with our dedicated donors, we saved Vitaliy's life. The unbreakable resilience of this family deeply touched our team's hearts, and Maya's Hope takes immense pride in having been part of this life-changing journey.



Vitaliy and his family on the train



Vitaliy with his dad and his sister on a bus



Vitaliy arrived safely to Western Europe

Restoring Warmth

How Maya's Hope Brought Comfort to Ukraine's Orphaned Children

The war in Ukraine triggered the mass evacuation of many children from residential institutions. Often mislabeled as "orphanages," these institutions housed many children who, in reality, had at least one living parent or guardian. In response to escalating danger, Ukrainian authorities mandated the return of children to their families or guardians to minimize the risk of mass child casualties.* However, approximately 3,400 children, orphaned or deprived of parental care, remained in these institutions, without a home to return to.**

Since the beginning of the war in February 2022, Maya's Hope has faced the tough challenge of supporting the children left behind in orphanages. The most critical need arises in winter when children have to shelter in cold, damp basements during long air raid sirens without access to warm clothing, bedding, and sufficient food supplies.

In November 2023, Maya's Hope received distressing images from a partner charity in western Ukraine. The harsh truth of the children's living conditions was exposed against the backdrop of shabby basement walls.

Wrapped in multiple layers of winter clothing, they spent their days and nights sitting on beds covered with thin, worn blankets and filthy pillows seeking refuge from the constant attacks. With power plants destroyed and resources growing scarce, the need for warm bedding became urgent for the 353 children still living in the three orphanages we support. Nights turned bitterly cold, and children were exposed and vulnerable without these essential items.

Maya's Hope united with its generous donors to provide these children with warm bedding, new pillows, and cozy sweatsuits. Our goal was simple yet profound: to restore the warmth and comfort they had long been missing. And the photos we received from our charity partners showed us the happy smiles of the children who now felt warm and safe thanks to your support.





Message from the charity partners in Western Ukraine

In 2023, with the help of Maya's Hope, 353 orphans received the help they needed and were sincerely happy and childlike to receive every gift they received. After all, those things that are a normal part of life for many people are considered a real luxury for them. These children have already overcome many challenges in their lives, as they grew up in dysfunctional families, were abandoned by their parents, and have various diseases and developmental disorders. And only with the help of people who care about children's fate, they have the opportunity to feel the warmth and care they need so much.

This year, these children have received such important and necessary support:

- 103 children received new clothes and shoes, food, hygiene products, vitamins to support children's immunity, and stationery.
- **353** children received new stationery sets for the beginning of the school year.
- **353** orphans received winter care help, which included warm clothes (warm tracksuit and warm slippers), food and hygiene products for each child, a new set of blankets and pillows, and heaters for a comfortable stay in rooms and classrooms.

Fr. Pavlo, Executive Director Anastasia, Program Manager

^{*}Esveld, B. V. (2023, April 11). "We must provide a family, not rebuild orphanages." Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/03/13/we-must-provide-family-not-rebuild-orphanages/consequences-russias-invasion

^{**}Weber, M. (2022, September 12). Emptying Ukraine's orphanages. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/graphics/UKRAINE-CRISIS/ORPHANS/dwpkrxzwwwm/

Why Therapy for Children Matters Now More Than Ever

Recently, our team had a profound conversation with one of our major donors about the situation in war-torn Ukraine. The donor posed an unexpected yet critical question: "What would happen if the children in Ukraine did not receive therapy services?" This question resonated deeply with us, as it likely does with many of our supporters. Why should we continue funding something that may not seem urgent amidst the chaos of war?

This reflection led us to outline the crucial reasons why multidisciplinary pediatric services are essential for children with special needs in Ukraine.

Children with special needs cannot afford to wait for the war to end. They need extensive therapy now to improve mobility, enhance sleep, and gain essential skills. In certain cases, therapy helps ease pain caused by spasticity. However, in Ukraine, therapy services are not available in every hospital. Specialized centers providing physical, behavioral, occupational, speech, and other therapies are primarily located in major cities, making them inaccessible to children in remote rural areas.

To receive therapy, children must travel to these centers a few times a year, where they undergo intensive courses and receive recommendations for the next 3-6 months. With the war, many centers have had to close due to power outages and the departure of specialists. Now, children face lengthy journeys, long waitlists, and increased costs as centers struggle with inflation, a shortage of specialists, and additional expenses such as generator services.

The sounds of air raid sirens, shelling and bombing, and constant tension due to all that is going on severely affect children with special needs. They may stop sleeping and speaking, or lose previously gained skills due to the stress of air raid sirens, power outages, planes flying overhead, and nearby bombings. For these children, therapy provides a vital lifeline—a safe, comforting, and familiar place to alleviate stress and restore their functioning.

We are committed to making a difference in the lives of these children in any given circumstance. In 2023, thanks to our donors, we have helped 137 children with special needs in Ukraine undergo crucial therapy.

One day, the war will end. Our mission is to ensure that these children do not lose precious time in their journey to become well-developed and self-sufficient individuals.



Glib



Edith



Maxym

Message from the charity partners in Kyiv

Thanks to the generous support of Maya's Hope, multidisciplinary therapy has been funded for over 100 children with cerebral palsy, autism, and neurological disorders, playing a crucial role in improving their quality of life. These therapy procedures are vital as the children require them three times a year. Each therapy session opened up new opportunities, helping children develop, gain confidence, acquire new skills, and build a foundation for future success.

Parents of the children who underwent therapy courses shared impressive results that changed their children's lives. Many parents noted that after therapy, their children became more active, had more energy, and gained self-confidence. Some children were able to sit up or stand up on their own for the first time or even take their first steps. These outcomes not only provided the children with more opportunities for physical activity but also significantly boosted their self-esteem and belief in their abilities.

Some parents observed that their children became more independent and active, capable of participating in various activities and interacting with the world around them. Additionally, parents emphasized the positive impact of therapy on their children's emotional well-being. They noticed a reduction in stress levels, improved moods, and an increase in joyful moments in their children's daily lives.

Overall, the therapy results shared by the parents indicated great success and the importance of this process for the health and well-being of their children. Thanks to the support of Maya's Hope, these children not only receive the necessary therapeutic procedures but also have a chance for a better future where they can realize their potential and live happy and fulfilling lives.

Viktoriia C., Executive Director

*Translated from Russian



Ivan



Sofia



Yeva



Oleksandr

Meet Karolina

Karolina is nine years old and has cerebral palsy and epilepsy. Due to her condition, she doesn't participate in play or attend school. She can't sit, walk, or stand without support. Her knees don't bend properly causing her additional struggles with basic tasks. Despite this, Karolina is a fighter. Neither she nor her parents give up, and with constant therapy, she's making great progress.

Our donors have played a vital role in Karolina's story. During physical therapy sessions, Karolina becomes calmer, starts to comment on the process (with sounds and smiles), and tries to complete tasks. She also



has successes with the speech therapist—she started singing along with songs that develop speech and continues to learn numbers and letters. She keeps working on fine motor skills, and there is positive progress in this area as well. The annual therapy course funded by Maya's Hope has brought Karolina one step closer to realizing her dreams.

Meet Maxim

Maxim, a charming 18-month-old boy, faces the challenges of cerebral palsy. His condition, stemming from internal hypoxia and complicated childbirth, impedes his ability to sit, crawl, and hold his head up independently.

Fortunately, Maxim's therapeutic journey commenced early, providing him with the necessary tools and resources to acquire these essential skills. He now confidently holds his head up, sits and stands with adult assistance, takes his first steps, has begun pronouncing new sounds and syllables, chews food, and independently holds a spoon.



Meet Yevheniia

From the moment of her birth, Yevheniia has confronted the challenges posed by a congenital malformation of the nervous system and brain, specifically schizencephaly and polymicrogyria. Additionally, she copes with epilepsy, enduring frequent seizures as part of her daily life.

Yevheniia relies on assistance for mobility and standing, and her journey to learn and socialize is facilitated through regular therapy sessions. Thanks to the compassionate support of our donors, we've been able to extend a helping hand to Yevheniia on her path to independence.

The doctors overseeing Yevheniia's care see immense potential in her; they believe she can stand and even walk independently one day.



Why Help Children in the Philippines?



John

Growing up in poverty is a circumstance beyond any child's control. A core part of our mission is to extend our support to children in the Philippines living in conditions of extreme impoverishment, ensuring that they gain access to healthcare, quality education, and life-transforming opportunities.

Among these children, those with special needs are often the most marginalized. Their unique needs can be financially demanding, and available resources are insufficient. For these children, waiting for up to five years for essential surgery can be a life-threatening ordeal. That's where Maya's Hope steps in.

We are dedicated to providing unwavering support for children with disabilities, addressing their basic needs, such as diapers, wipes, medication, and hygiene supplies. Additionally, we work to secure access to critical medical resources, such as life-saving surgeries and essential physical therapy. We also play a pivotal role in broadening their educational horizons, offering children the opportunities they need to create a brighter future for themselves.

Maya's Hope Successes in the Philippines in 2023:

- 561 children in the Philippines received essential supplies, such as nutrition, hygiene items, medication, etc.
- 11 children in the Philippines with various birth defects, such as hydrocephalus, spina bifida, and Hirschsprung's Disease received life-changing surgeries.
- 5 students sponsored by Maya's Hope graduated from college in the Philippines, successfully completing their educational journey.









Zhanarah Crystal Ann

Emergency Medical Fund



Lymphangioma removal



Surgical insertion of a shunt to treat hydrocephalus



Surgical insertion of a shunt to treat hydrocephalus

One of Maya's Hope's most critical initiatives – the Emergency Medical Fund – provides urgent medical assistance to children in the Philippines facing life-threatening conditions. Children in the Philippines often lack access to medical care, leaving them on waitlists in the charity wards of public hospitals. These waits can extend for years, posing a grave risk to children in urgent need of surgery, potentially leading to fatal outcomes.

Maya's Hope became the only lifeline for many children facing the grim possibility of death, providing them with access to life-saving surgeries. This program primarily targets children with special needs in the Philippines who have various congenital disorders and require life-saving medical interventions. This includes children from low-income families who lack the financial resources to cover medical expenses. The program benefits children with congenital disorders such as hydrocephalus, spina bifida, Hirschsprung's disease, Arnold-Chiari malformation, congenital heart defects (CHD), etc.

Originally accepting only a few cases per year, this initiative has expanded into a separate medical assistance program, dedicated to transforming lives, instilling hope, and rescuing vulnerable children in critical situations. In 2023, Maya's Hope Emergency Medical Fund provided funding for 17 medical procedures for children in the Philippines, including 11 life-changing surgeries.



Jianna's Life-Saving Surgery

In November 2022, Jianna came into the world with a lump at the back of her head-parietal encephalocele, a rare birth defect.* In the United States, where medical infrastructure is well-developed, babies born with encephalocele typically have about a 55% survival rate and may face lifelong complications.** Jianna, however, was born in the Philippines, where the healthcare system is not equipped with the resources to provide early surgical intervention for patients with such conditions. Thus her situation was particularly dire.

Most healthcare resources within the Philippines are allocated to Manila, the capital, which is known for being one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Even here, the physician/patient ratio is significantly imbalanced, and the number of qualified neurosurgeons is limited.*** Patients from impoverished and rural communities cannot afford surgery in private hospitals, leaving them waiting in line for years, if not decades, for a spot in a public one. Many of them do not live long enough to reach their turn for treatment.

The lump on Jianna's head kept getting larger, but a call from the public hospital didn't come. Jianna's mother, Ronalyn, was determined to secure a future for her daughter and started saving money for surgery at a private hospital. But Jianna's father, the only breadwinner for the family of four, earns about \$150 a month. Despite Ronalyn's efforts to save every penny, she only managed to gather \$173 for Jianna's surgery over five months. It would take 15.5 years to accumulate enough funds at this rate, given the average surgery cost of \$6,500. The likelihood of Jianna surviving until then was slim.

Yet, hope emerged when Ronalyn discovered Maya's Hope. Jianna was five months old. After learning Jianna's story, Maya's Hope's team sprang into action. A generous donor provided the necessary funds through their family foundation to cover Jianna's procedure and associated medical expenses.

No longer confined to lying on her side, Jianna can now do tummy time and hold her head up. Her parents can finally embrace their daughter without fear of causing harm or worsening her condition. Ronalyn can now take her daughter out and

The surgery was a resounding success!

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Facts about encephalocele. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/encephalocele.html

about, exploring the world together.

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Real stories: Living with encephalocele. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/stories/encephalocele.html
- ***Amanda-Lynn Marshall, Pradeep Setty, Mark Hnatiuk, Daniel R. Pieper. Repair of Frontoethmoidal Encephalocele in the Philippines: An Account of 30 Cases Between 2008–2013, World Neurosurgery, Volume 103, 2017, Pages 19-27, ISSN 1878-8750, https://doi.org/10.1016/j. wneu.2017.03.063







Princess Raine's Story of Hope

At the beginning of 2023, Arneths, Princess Raine's mother, turned to Maya's Hope in desperate need of help. Princess Raine was suspected of having Hirschsprung's disease, a condition that could only be confirmed through a biopsy. However, a fecaloma—a hardened mass of stool—was obstructing the procedure, making it impossible for doctors to obtain the necessary tissue samples. Both the fecaloma removal and the biopsy were far beyond the family's financial reach, but a correct diagnosis was crucial to determine the proper course of action.

Thanks to the unwavering support of Maya's Hope and its dedicated donors, the necessary procedures were funded, and the biopsy was completed. The results confirmed that Princess Raine was indeed battling Hirschsprung's Disease.

In the Philippines, Hirschsprung's disease ranks 9th in the top 10 causes of morbidity in Filipino children; the mortality rate can reach up to 50%.* Arneths sought help from public hospitals, and surgery was promised within six months. However, as time passed, the medical staff offered only vague reassurances, with no available surgery slots in sight. For most mothers, the crying, straining, and irritability of a constipated baby are familiar

struggles—followed by an immense sense of relief when their baby finally goes. But for Arneths, that relief was something she had never known. Her three-year-old daughter had never passed stool on her own, and as the days turned into months, Princess Raine's condition worsened.

The surgery Princess Raine needed was critical—it was the only remedy for Hirschsprung's disease. Left untreated, the condition can be fatal. With no options left, an expensive surgical intervention at a private clinic became her only hope.

The urgency of the situation can't be overstated. But once again, Maya's Hope donors came together to give Princess Raine the chance she deserved. The surgery was promptly funded and scheduled. After a successful procedure, Princess Raine is now free from the obstacles that once threatened her growth and development.

*Salvador, M. Y. (2018, June 1). IDDF2018-ABS-0062 Functional Outcome of Hirchsprung's Disease, Postsurgical Transanal Enodorectal Pullthrough at National Children's Hospital. Gut https://gut. bmj.com/content/67/Suppl_2/A43.1







Meet Veronica!



What initially drew you to volunteer with Maya's Hope, and how has your involvement evolved over time?

I have a son with special needs. He had a speech delay,

a feeding disorder, fluid in his kidney, and vascular malformation in his hard palate. I know how hard it is to take care of a child with special needs. The children we serve are in much more challenging situations than my son's. Also, I am a Christian. My faith calls me to volunteer with Maya's Hope to help these little ones. Every child deserves to live each day as a child.

Can you share a particularly memorable experience or interaction you've had while volunteering with Maya's Hope?

There are too many moments! If I had to mention one memorable experience, I would say it was the case of a 10-year-old girl. Her mom suffered from breast cancer, which eventually led to major organ failure. One week before she died, she still videotaped herself requesting basic needs for her daughter. When reviewing these videos, I couldn't help but have tears in my eyes. She was truly a great mom.



Catherine and her mom Marilyn who passed away

What specific roles or responsibilities do you undertake as a volunteer, and how do they contribute to Maya's Hope's mission?

I am a project manager. In the beginning, I oversaw the process from application check to interview, voting, and final approval. Now, I mostly focus on application checks.

How do you balance your volunteer work with other commitments in your life, and what motivates you to stay committed to Maya's Hope?

I dedicate every night from 11 PM to 12 AM to my work with Maya's Hope. It's a good time for me after I put the kids to bed, finish my household chores, and occasionally do some overtime work. What motivates me to stay committed? I think it's my love for children and my faith.

What advice would you give to someone interested in volunteering with Maya's Hope or a similar organization? Don't take on this volunteer role just for fun and then leave suddenly. Really commit to helping these kids.

Looking ahead, what are your hopes and aspirations for the future of your involvement with Maya's Hope, and how do you envision continuing to make a difference? That's a great question. Honestly, I haven't thought about it much. I hope I will stick with it and continue doing my best to serve the Maya's Hope community in the Philippines. I also hope Maya's Hope could expand to China.



Many Faces of Maya's Hope







Chrissy Bencivenga



Maria Cassidy



Taylor Donnell



Jennifer Fenimore



Michael Fleischmann



Melody Gonzales



Myra Gonzales



Moira Lewerk



Olivia Lord



Vian Pasia



Olena Rivera



Grace Scott



Lori Seward



Veronica Wang

Low Sall

12th Anniversary Gala

The Players | New York City | November 15, 2023



Cristina Cote, Stephanie Dauman and Julia Maksimova



Matthew and Courtney Barry



Maya Crauderueff with Gala Chairs Michael Meltzer and Semanti Datta Kulkarni

The Maya's Hope Lotus Ball was held at The Players in Gramercy Park. We were delighted to welcome our special guests, the Vilardo family, who adopted Logan from Ukraine in 2012. Before then, Logan was in the orphanage that had caregivers funded by Maya's Hope.

Thanks to our donors and sponsors, our Gala raised over \$180,000.00!

2023 Gala Sponsors

Hope Sponsors

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Michael Meltzer and Monte Albers de Leon

Gala Chairs

Semanti Datta Kulkarni Michael Meltzer

Host Committee Nick Acocella Nyree Bass Steven Bollon Natalya Bowen Simon Brandon Kerry Bretz Dana Castro David Cohen Ashley Conner Maya Crauderueff Stephanie Dauman Lorena Davison Katrina Edge Jacky Flood Soeda Sandra Gail Frayna Kristine Laurel **Amy Laurent** Julia Maksimova Kate McLaughlin Ava Mehta Sara Morano Maria-Joelle Morris Yuliya Novak Fairy Pardiwalla Karla Sanluis Lee Stein

Werling Subervi Alexander Teleshko Ollie Zhorniak

The Michael T. Meltzer Humanitarian Award Honoree Jason Birchard

We were thrilled to honor Jason Birchard, owner of the beloved Veselka Restaurant in New York City, at this year's Maya's Hope Lotus Ball.

Jason Birchard has not only delighted us with the authentic flavors of Ukraine but also demonstrated an unwavering commitment to giving back to the homeland of his ancestors. His efforts have had a profound impact on the Ukrainian community, both locally and abroad.

We were honored to recognize

Jason Birchard's exceptional dedication and celebrate his contributions at the Maya's Hope Lotus Ball 2023.





Top Host Lorena Davison with family and friends



Ashley Connor, Renee Koeppel, Victoria Tyson, and Mia Scott



Beth Iacoviello, Maya Crauderueff and David Bennett



Bryan Hanley and Melanie Mac



Michael and Kate McLaughlin



Dana and Sergio Castro



David Cohen, Semanti Datta Kulkarni and Sandeep Kulkarni



Marianna and Peter Zinkovetsky



Alexander Teleshko and Leonid Velikovich

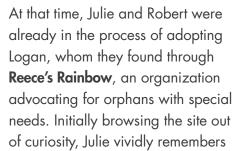


Alva Fuller and Ching Tao

Logan Vilardo, Maya's Hope Lotus Ball Special Guest

In 2012, Julie and Robert Vilardo's family was forever transformed when they opened their hearts and home to Logan. Logan was born in Ukraine with a rare condition called phocomelia, which left him with underdeveloped limbs. Though the Vilardos already had four children—three biological and one adopted from Kazakhstan—they felt drawn to a new kind of journey: adopting Logan, who needed not just a home but a family who would love him and believe in him.

Logan's story with Maya's Hope began long before he made it to the United States. In the spring of 2012, Maya's Hope initiated its "Guardian Angel" program to provide caregivers for orphans at Kalinovka, an institution in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region. Julie Vilardo discovered this program and expressed her family's desire to help. "We are interested in helping the kids at Kalinovka. If all goes well, we hope to bring a child home from there. While we wait, how can we help?" she wrote to Maya's Hope. She soon became a sponsor, covering the salary of an additional caregiver for the orphans.



the moment she saw
Logan's photo—listed
under the name Alex. It
was as if fate stepped
in. "This is your child,"
Julie recalled feeling.
Even though his condition was more severe
than they had anticipated, they couldn't shake
the belief that Logan
was meant to be theirs.
Their adoption journey

was far from easy. At home, the Vilardos were facing their own



Logan with his mom Julie Vilardo

trials—Julie's eldest son suffered a broken neck, requiring surgery just as they were preparing for Logan's adoption. At that time, they received a phone call that forever changed their lives: "Be in Ukraine in two weeks." The moment was surreal. While most international adoptions take years, Logan's case moved swiftly. So Julie and Robert made their way to Ukraine, where they signed the paperwork and took the first steps to officially becoming Logan's parents.

What followed was one of the most challenging but rewarding experiences of Julie's life. Logan's orphanage was located in a remote area, and Julie had to stay there for five weeks, living like the caregivers and children. With no running water, she learned to draw water from a well, boil it in a teapot, and



Logan in the Happy Home



Logan, age 8, in the bedridden ward in Kalinovka

make do without modern comforts. "I had to live like all of them," Julie recalls. Despite the isolation and hardships, Julie was unwavering in her commitment to Logan. It was a time of bonding, even if their communication was limited to gestures and smiles.

Bringing Logan home to Ohio marked the beginning of a new chapter—one filled with both joy and challenges. Logan spoke in a



Logan with his dad Robert Vilardo in 2012

unique blend of Russian,
Ukrainian, and what Julie
called "orphanage language," making communication difficult at first. Yet,
within just six weeks, Logan
began to pick up English,
although his speech took
longer to develop. Julie
remembers how hard he
worked. Over time, Logan
blossomed, proving that
love, patience, and support
can overcome any obstacle.

Physically, Logan's journey

was just as remarkable.
Upon his arrival in the U.S., he began using prosthetic legs and made significant progress in learning to walk. However, due to the toll that years in an orphanage bed had taken on his body, the Vilardos eventually made the difficult decision to forgo certain surgeries required for using prosthetic legs in order to preserve Logan's independence. Julie's focus was always on giving Logan as much freedom as possible. "We didn't want him to lose his ability to

desk together or helping out," she explains.

do the things he loves, like putting a

Today, Logan thrives in ways that continue to inspire everyone around him. He works at Julie's dental office, shredding papers and keeping an eye on security cameras—where he's even caught people trying to break into cars. Recently, he was sworn in as a police deputy in two counties, a role he takes great pride in. Logan's spirit, resilience, and infectious



Logan being sworn in as a police deputy

joy have won the hearts of his community and transformed the way people see him.

For Julie, the most incredible part of Logan's journey is the love he brings into their home. "Of my five kids, he's the absolute easiest," she says with a smile. "He's super loving and always happy." She admits that before they adopted Logan, some people questioned their decision, suggesting that adopting a child with disabilities would be too difficult. But for Julie and her family, Logan has been nothing short of a blessing. "Disability doesn't define a child," Julie emphasizes. "People see the challenges, but they don't always understand the love and joy these children bring."

Logan still reflects on his time at the orphanage, sometimes expressing fears of going back. "No dom, no dom," he'll say, referring to the Ukrainian word for orphanage. But Julie reassures him that he will always stay with her, in the forever home surrounded by people who love him.

2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

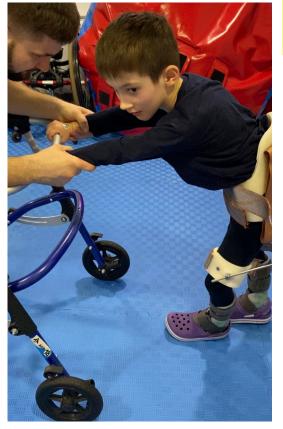
Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets (As of December 31, 2023) Assets: Cash & Equivalents 200,909 625,449 Investments Pledge Receivables Security Deposit Fixed Assets 63 **Total Assets** 826,421 **Liabilities:** Accounts Payable & 28,903 Accrued Expenses **Total Liabilities** 28,903 **Net Assets:** Unrestricted 737,267 Restricted 60,251 Total Net Assets: 797,518

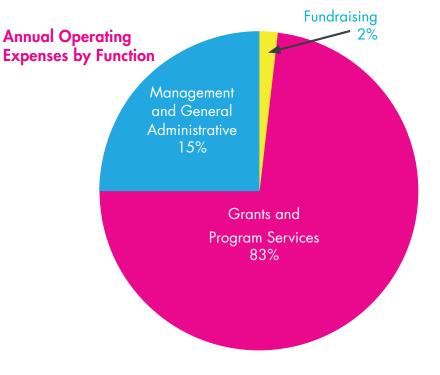
Total Liabilities & Net Assets

826,421

Statement of Activities			
	2023	2022	2021
Public Support & Revenues			
Contributions	861,703	1,231,940	513,708
Special Events (net of expenses)	157,283	144,006	180,952
Donated Goods & Services	_	_	_
Change in Investment	23,241	-357	430
Net Assets Released from Restriction	_	_	_
Total Public Support & Revenues	1,042,227	1,375,589	695,090
Expenses	7.40.070	000 004	517.047
Program Services	742,878	900,994	517,347
Management & General	129,875	97,745	81,070
Fundraising	18,703	17,639	11,050
Total Expenses	891,456	1,016,378	609,467
Change in Net Assets	150,771	359,211	85,623
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	646,747	287,536	201,913
Net Assets - End of Year	797,518	646,747	287,536

Excerpted from the 2023, 2022 & 2021 annual financial statements audited by Wegner CPAs.





Mike Block



"One of the most memorable experiences I had was several years ago amidst the landscape of the pandemic. I was in a Facebook group for

parents of children diagnosed with an encephalocele. A new mom joined in a bit of a panic and began talking about her son who had been born with a pretty severe encephalocele and was around one year old. The admins of the group were familiar with my connection to Maya's Hope so I passed along the case to Maya. It turned out this mother was around an hour's commute from the hospital where Maya's team was standing by ready to help but she was understandably hesitant that all this help was available to her less than just a few days after first posting in the group. Maya as well as myself and an admin from the Facebook group all started messaging with the mother urging her to get to the hospital immediately as her son was approaching critical condition after having been left untreated for a year since birth. Eventually, we convinced her to go and Maya's Hope was able to quite literally save this young boy's life. I still keep in contact with that mother once or twice a year and she recently sent me a video of her son absolutely thriving."

Jessica Slominski

"Seeing the photos of the precious children that Maya's Hope advocates for touched my heart. So many children need nutrition and urgent medical care that we take for granted here in the U.S. Knowing that I could use the gifts I've been given to make a real impact on a child's life inspired me to start supporting Maya's Hope. As an international adoptive mama, I've felt the same desperate helplessness as these families have, as I held onto hope advocating for a lifesaving surgery for my daughter in her birth country. I know the gut-wrenching feeling when every door you take in the hopes of finding help, closes in front of you



with no help in sight. That is why I fully support Maya's Hope and their life-saving mission to change the future of these precious little ones. About a year ago, a photo of little Zeila appeared on my Facebook feed. Maya's Hope was raising funds to cover her surgery. She was suffering from hydrocephalus and needed the same surgery that my daughter had needed. I knew I had to help. I had lived through this exact same experience watching my child suffer from hydrocephalus. I could feel her pain through the photo and knew how desperate her family must have felt. I followed little Zeila's story through the fundraising process, watched as she went into surgery, and received the ultimate reward after her surgery was a success. She is now thriving, and I am so blessed to have been able to play a small part in making that possible."

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