

ANNUAL REPORT  
**2024**  
ISSUE NO. 14

# MAYA'S HOPE

*Every Child Has Value*



## Looking Back, *Moving Forward*



Platinum  
Transparency  
2024  
**Candid.**



# MAYA'S HOPE

## 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!



### Emergency Aid

Life-Saving Surgery  
Evacuation Assistance  
Emergency Preparedness Supplies



### Nutrition

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



### Medical Needs

Multidisciplinary Therapy  
Dental & Medical Checkups  
Medical Tests • Medicine



### Education

School Fees • School Supplies  
Educational Materials



### Loving Care

Caregivers  
Special Care Packages

- 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.

## Where We Bring the Hope



Headquartered in New York City, our global team of staff and volunteers work hand in hand across continents to bring hope to children in Ukraine and the Philippines.





## 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 that plays 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.



Maya's Hope Board of Directors (from left to right): David Cohen, Maya Crauderueff, Semanti Datta Kulkarni, Michael Meltzer, Julia Maksimova, and Simon Brandon (Ava Mehta not pictured).

### Maya's Hope Team

Maya Crauderueff, *Founder and President*

Ollie Zhorniak, *Program Manager*

Caron Katz, *Bookkeeping Services*

Krisztina Sepelja, *Assistant*

Natalia Nanaienko, *Program Coordinator*

Jennifer Fenimore, *Graphic Designer*

*And many incredible volunteers who make our work possible!*

### Board of Directors

Michael Meltzer, *Chairman*

Maya Crauderueff, *President*

Julia Maksimova, *Vice President*

David Cohen, *Treasurer*

Semanti Datta Kulkarni, *Secretary*

Simon Brandon, *Director*

Ava Mehta, *Director*

## Message from Maya

### Dear Friends and Supporters of Maya's Hope:

This past year has been one of reflection—looking back at where we began, and moving forward with renewed purpose.

In February, our Program Manager, Ollie, and I traveled to the Philippines. It had been five years since my last visit, and was Ollie's very first time. I'll admit, I was nervous. I remembered the sights, the sounds, and even the challenges of walking through the slums. But what greeted us was joy: warm smiles, laughter, and the kindness of people who welcomed us like family. When I saw a sign that read "Welcome Home," I knew exactly what the Philippines has always been for me.

It was in the Philippines, back in 2008, that Maya's Hope was born. Just one year earlier, I had suddenly lost my mom. The grief was overwhelming—a wound that wouldn't heal. In my search for meaning, I visited her homeland. I didn't know it then, but that trip would change my life. Meeting children who longed for love, watching them grow year after year—it was their resilience that gave me purpose. From grief, a mission of hope blossomed.

Over time, that mission stretched beyond the Philippines. My dad's Ukrainian roots led me to visit orphanages in Ukraine, where I felt the same calling. In 2011, I met Vanya at the Kalinovka orphanage. Labeled a hopeless



Andrea, Maya and Dima

case, he was full of joy despite his circumstances. This year, our team spoke with his adoptive family, and we saw firsthand what love and care can do for a child once written off by the world.

We also celebrated another extraordinary story at Maya's Hope Lotus Ball 2024, where we welcomed Andrea Wallace and her son, Dima. Andrea's journey began in 2016 with a single Facebook video of Dima—then a boy in an orphanage, yearning for a family. That moment sparked his adoption, as well as the adoption of his brother, Volodya. Today, both boys are thriving.

Looking back reminds me how Maya's Hope began with a single loss, a single hug, a single child. Moving forward, I see how each story continues to ripple outward, shaping a future where no child is beyond hope.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are turning grief into love, and love into hope.

Hugs,

Maya Rowencak Crauderueff,  
President and Founder



Maya with Sponsored Children in Bulacan, Philippines



# Why Help Children in the Philippines?

When you walk through the narrow alleys of Manila's slum communities, you see children everywhere—laughing, playing, chasing each other barefoot through crowded streets. Their joy is contagious, but behind the smiles lie challenges no child should face.

Families in these neighborhoods often survive on just a few dollars a day. Many live in makeshift homes without clean water or proper sanitation. For parents, every day is a struggle to answer impossible questions: Do I buy food, or pay for medicine? Do I keep my child in school, or send them to work so we can survive?

This reality means that millions of children in the Philippines go without basic care. Preventable illnesses turn deadly. Education slips out of reach. Poverty steals away childhood.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

Since 2010, Maya's Hope has walked alongside these families. We've seen what happens when children are given the tools to thrive:

- A child diagnosed with hydrocephalus, myelomeningocele, and encephalocele, like Aeris Yuki, receives life-saving surgery—and continues to grow and thrive like any other kid.
- A teenager like Lander, once afraid he would never be able to receive an education, walks across the stage with a diploma in hand

- Families who once struggled to keep their children fed and clothed are able to stay together, no longer forced to consider giving up their children out of desperation.

These are not isolated stories—they are part of a larger transformation. With your support, we've helped children in the Philippines access medical care, stay in school, and grow up with dignity and hope.

Every child deserves a chance to dream. Every child deserves to feel safe, cared for, and loved. By helping children in the Philippines, you are not only changing one life—you are shaping a brighter future for entire families and communities.



Daniel with his monthly essential supplies provided by Maya's Hope

Together, we are proving that no child is beyond hope.

## Maya's Hope Successes in the Philippines in 2024:

- **1,808** children in the Philippines received essential supplies, such as nutrition, hygiene items, medication, etc.
- **17** children in the Philippines with various birth defects, such as hydrocephalus, spina bifida, and Hirschsprung disease, received life-changing surgeries.
- **4** sponsored students graduated from college in the Philippines, successfully completing their educational journey.



Ceejay with myelocystocele before surgery

# Through the Lens of Hope:

## Ollie's First Journey to the Philippines

We began 2024 by looking back at how Maya's Hope started. I first joined as a volunteer in 2015, when Maya's Hope had already been saving children's lives for several years. I knew pieces of the story, but I always longed to understand more—about Maya's personal journey, and about the children who are now thriving: graduating from schools and colleges, and growing up in loving adoptive families.

So when Maya asked if I would accompany her on a trip to the Philippines—her first in five years—I didn't hesitate. This was where it all began, and I wanted to see it with my own eyes.

It was also my first time in the Philippines, and in Asia altogether. Up until then, everything I knew about the country came from online research and conversations with the families we support. But nothing could have

prepared me for what I experienced there.

I didn't see crystal-clear waters or golden beaches. I walked through slums, visited hospitals, and went to the poorest areas in some provinces. The things I saw were breathtaking—but for reasons that could never be captured on a postcard.

Our first visits were to hospitals. I met children waiting for life-saving surgeries, and others who had just undergone one. Photos and videos could never have conveyed the reality: how incredibly small these children are in person, how heavy the head of a child with hydrocephalus can be, how fragile the body of a baby born with spina bifida feels, how shaken and exhausted a mother is as she prays for her child's survival.



Ollie and Miracle with her mom at the hospital

It was there that I saw the most beautiful things in life. I saw hope.

A mother patiently holding her son in a hospital waiting room. His head, swollen with fluid, is almost as large as his tiny body. If the doctor clears him for surgery today, he'll receive







Ollie and Ron



Ollie and Princess during her therapy session



Ollie and Crystal before her therapy session

a VP shunt to drain the fluid from his brain—and finally have a chance to live, to smile, to walk, to dream.

That is hope.

An exhausted mother walking her child to school in the slums. Their neighborhood has no clean water or proper sanitation, yet the little girl's white shirt is spotless, her shoes are polished, her hair braided with such care it glistens in the sunlight. She walks to school as if it's her sanctuary—and it is. Her family labors every day so she might one day break free from the chains of poverty that bound generations before her.

That is hope.

A bright high school student who dreams of becoming a biomedical engineer but may have to leave school to help his family survive. He doesn't know it yet, but I will meet him later that day—and decide to help him.

That is hope.

Seeing these realities firsthand deepened my understanding of why Maya's Hope exists—and why our work matters so profoundly.

— Ollie, Program Manager



Ollie and Aaron at the hospital





# A Second Chance at Life: Aeris Yuki's Story

Aeris Yuki was born in the Philippines in September 2023. From the very beginning, her journey was filled with challenges. At just four months old, Aeris was diagnosed with hydrocephalus, myelomeningocele, and encephalocele—conditions that caused her head to grow dangerously large, reaching 66 cm (26 inches) when the average for her age was only 40–41 cm (16 inches). Without urgent surgery, her life was at risk.

Aeris' parents love her deeply, but her father's modest income of just \$285 a month could not cover the cost of the surgery that would save her life. In their desperation, they turned to Maya's Hope as their last hope. And their wish was granted.

Thanks to our generous donors, Aeris underwent life-saving surgery in February 2024. A shunt was placed to relieve the pressure on her brain, and almost immediately, her head size began to shrink. The surgery was a success!

Today, Aeris is thriving. This year, she celebrated her first birthday surrounded by love and laughter. Her family even held their very first photoshoot together—a milestone they once feared they might never reach.

Her parents shared their gratitude with us in a heartfelt message:

"Aeris is turning 1 year old this month—thank you for saving our little Aeris' life, thank you for giving her a second chance to live. She is now very healthy and very happy. Because of you, she was able to celebrate her birthday with joy."

Aeris' story reminds us why Maya's Hope exists. Behind every number and statistic is a child's life waiting to be changed. Aeris' future is brighter

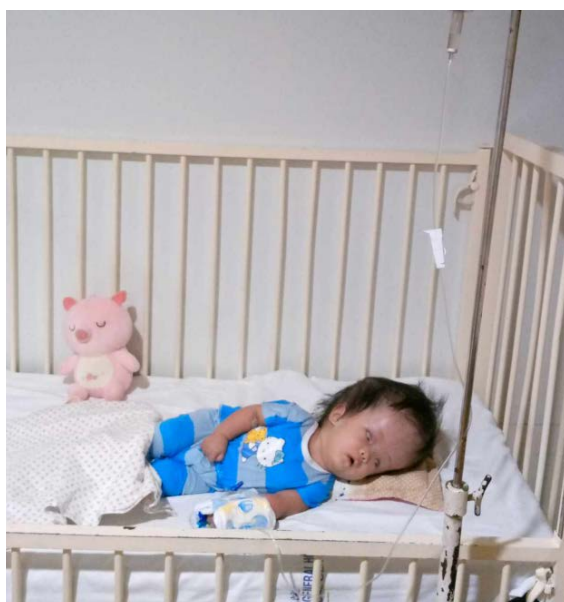


Aeris after surgery

today because someone chose to say "yes" to helping her.

To every donor who makes moments like this possible: you are the hero in Aeris' story.

Looking back, we see how your generosity saved Aeris' life. Moving forward, we know that together, we can bring that same hope to countless more children. ■



Aeris before surgery



Aeris and her mom 3 months after surgery



# Breaking the Cycle of Poverty:

## Celebrating Lander's Success

In the Philippines, 1 in 4 children and youths between the ages of 5 and 24 are not in school (2020 Census of Population and Housing). This is not because of a lack of schools or teachers—it is because of poverty.

For many families, survival comes first. As soon as children learn to read and count and are old enough to work, they often set aside their dreams and take on jobs to help support their families. Hard labor replaces homework. Income replaces education. Without completing high school—let alone college—better-paying jobs remain out of reach, and the cycle of poverty continues.

At Maya's Hope, we believe education is key to breaking this cycle. That's why every high school or college graduation of a child in our Sponsor a Child program is more than a personal milestone—it's a collective achievement of the child, their sponsor(s), and our team.

In summer 2024, we celebrated the graduation of Lander, a young man from Bulacan who earned his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Bulacan State University.

Lander's journey has been anything but easy. He lost his father when he was nine years old,

and his mother worked tirelessly, earning only \$51 a month to keep their family afloat. Higher education was far beyond their reach. Without Maya's Hope and the dedication of his sponsors, Lander likely would have followed the same path as countless other children—leaving school early to earn money for his family.

But Lander had someone who believed in him.

Accepted into the Maya's Hope Sponsor a Child program at age 15, Lander quickly stood out for his talents and determination. An extraordinary student, he consistently ranked at the top of his class, became Salutatorian, and earned awards in both art and science competitions. With the steady support of his sponsors, Prin and Rhonda, he was able to pursue his education all the way through college.

Today, Lander is not only a graduate but a role model for what is possible when a child is given the chance to succeed. His story reminds us that investing in education is investing in hope.

We see the obstacles Lander overcame and we celebrate the limitless potential of every child who dreams of a brighter future. ■



Caption



Caption



Caption

# Why help children in Ukraine?

In Ukraine, families raising children with disabilities often face heart-breaking choices. Many are told that their child will “never have a future” and are urged to surrender them to state-run institutions. Those who resist this pressure frequently find themselves with little to no government support—forced to navigate overwhelming financial, medical, and emotional burdens on their own. Meanwhile, children who are placed in institutions face bleak conditions, including neglect and a lack of individualized care, leaving many without the opportunities they deserve.

For more than a decade, Maya’s Hope has stood beside these children. Long before the war began, Maya’s Hope’s commitment to children in Ukraine has remained unwavering. What began as direct aid to orphanages has grown into a broader, more impactful mission: supporting both institutionalized children and families working to keep their children at home.

Through Maya’s Hope advocacy efforts prior to the war, many institutionalized children in Ukraine were able to find permanent homes and new opportunities in the United States. By helping raise awareness, Maya’s Hope played a meaningful role in opening doors to brighter futures for countless children who otherwise would have remained unseen.

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, international adoption has paused indefinitely. Many institutionalized children were never

true orphans; those with parents or legal guardians were sent home at the start of the war. Children without family were relocated inside Ukraine or evacuated abroad, often to neighboring countries.

Despite these challenges, Maya’s Hope continues to support institutions in western Ukraine through trusted local partners. This model is simple and transparent: purchase supplies in-country to avoid shipping costs and delays, gather multiple quotes to ensure transparency, and deliver essential, audited aid. These deliveries include non-perishable food, warm clothing and blankets, school supplies, and—critically—generators as the country faces ongoing energy outages and harsh winters. Budgets of these institutions that were never sufficient before are now stretched to the breaking point. A sack of potatoes or a single tube of toothpaste can bring a child immense joy—a reminder of both the magnitude of need and the impact of even the most basic support.

Maya’s Hope provides critical assistance that helps families and children meet daily needs, access education, and build safe,

stable environments. In a time of war and uncertainty, this support matters more than ever. By standing with vulnerable children in Ukraine, we’re not only helping them survive—we’re giving them a chance to thrive, to grow, and to be seen for their abilities, not their limitations. ■



Maya’s Hope continues to provide essential supplies to children in need in Ukraine



Oleksii, who has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, received a portable power station to ensure his access to supplemental oxygen remains uninterrupted.

## Maya’s Hope Successes in Ukraine in 2024:

- **3,715** children received basic necessities, such as nutrition, hygiene items, vitamins, nutritional supplements, clothing, bedding, etc.
- **108** children with special needs received multidisciplinary pediatric therapy services.



# *Keeping Hope in Motion:*

## *The Power of Therapy for Children in Ukraine*

War disrupts lives in countless ways—but for children with disabilities in Ukraine, its impact goes even deeper. As families face blackouts, air raid sirens, displacement, and the daily uncertainty of conflict, children with special needs risk losing the skills and progress they've worked so hard to achieve. At Maya's Hope, we refuse to let that happen.

Therapy is about more than exercises or medical routines. It's about giving children a sense of normalcy in a world turned upside down. It's about mobility, self-sufficiency, and hope. It's about something to look forward to.

Children with special needs cannot simply wait for the war to end. Every day without therapy is a day of lost opportunity for growth and development. Access to multidisciplinary services—physical, occu-

pational, behavioral, and speech therapy—helps children move more freely, sleep better, gain independence, and in many cases, ease pain caused by spasticity.

Even before the war, therapy resources were limited and centralized in major cities, often requiring families to travel long distances for short, intensive courses. Now, the situation is even more dire. Many centers have shut down due to blackouts and the loss of specialists. Those that remain face long wait lists, increased costs, and mounting pressure to meet the needs of hundreds of children.

For children living through war, therapy isn't optional—it's essential. The sounds of drones, air raid sirens, and nearby bombings can trigger fear, regressions, and physical

setbacks. Many children stop sleeping well, lose previously gained language or motor skills, or become more physically limited by stress-induced tension.

Therapy provides a vital anchor in this instability—a safe, trusted space where children can regain skills, strengthen their bodies, and calm their minds. It offers not just care, but comfort, consistency, and dignity.

One day, the war will end. But a child's development can't wait for peace. Our mission is to make sure that children in Ukraine do not lose precious time in their journey toward mobility, independence, and fuller lives. By continuing to fund therapy programs, we're not just helping children survive the present—we're building a foundation for their future.

This year, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, 108 children in Ukraine received essential therapy services. Many more are still waiting for their chance. With continued support, Maya's Hope will ensure these children keep moving forward—literally and figuratively—toward a brighter tomorrow. ■



Ivanna working on developing fine motor skills



Mykhailo learning to walk on his own

# From Orphanage to Family:

## Vanya's Journey Home

Maya first met Vanya in 2011 at the Kalinovka orphanage in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine. The bleak surroundings of the institution made the children's spirits stand out—and Vanya's radiance, in particular, was unforgettable.

"He was the sweetest, just a ray of sunshine in a place that was so bleak. He was just so happy, and I can't find the word exactly—but the word 'tender' comes to mind. This tenderness is what I remembered when I came back to New York City. Vanya was my daily inspiration for helping him and his friends get caregivers and more support. Ultimately, my goal was that he would be adopted."

Maya didn't know anything about international adoption when she first stepped into Kalinovka. But when she discovered that children like Vanya could be adopted, she realized that advocacy could give him—and others—a way out of institutional life. Through years of persistent support and outreach, that hope became reality.



Vanya

"Over the years, with our work and my advocacy for Vanya, he did get adopted. It was not just a miracle for Vanya, but it was my own personal miracle. Today he's thriving—a loving son, a loving brother, and so much more. Vanya, the firecracker at Kalinovka, not only touched my heart, but changed the world for the better."



Vanya in 2011

Thanks to the advocacy of Maya's Hope, Vanya was adopted by a loving family and given the chance to grow, heal, and thrive.

When Rebekah and her husband brought Vanya home from Ukraine in February 2019—just two weeks shy of his 18th birthday—they knew their lives were about to change. What they didn't know was how profoundly the journey would reshape their family, their routines, and their understanding of resilience.

Vanya, a young man with Down



Vanya, Maya and Vladik in 2011 at Kalinovka

syndrome, was born in Sevastopol, Crimea, and spent nearly his entire life in state institutions. His adoption was not simple. His early records were lost or trapped in occupied territory, forcing the family to endure multiple trips and navigate long delays. But when Rebekah finally met him in Zaporizhzhia, she knew they were meant to bring him home.

### A Shock Upon Arrival

Vanya's first weeks in the United States were marked by medical crises and withdrawal from sedatives used in the orphanage. He was anxious, hyperactive, and a flight risk. He hoarded food, drank water compulsively, and ate with startling speed—a legacy of years in an environment where food was scarce and competition was fierce.

"He never seemed full," Rebekah remembers. "It was like his body didn't trust there would be more."

Medical exams revealed a long list of untreated conditions: extreme dental decay with black, crumbling teeth; chronic diarrhea caused by parasites and *H. pylori*; a heart murmur; thalassemia beta minor; and severe ENT





complications. Doctors discovered years of impacted earwax, chronic infections, and holes in his mastoid bones—damage from untreated ear disease. When they finally cleared the blockages and fitted him with hearing aids, his world opened in new ways.

Physical scars told a parallel story of neglect and abuse. Vanya had cigarette burns on his scalp and body, a deep shoulder wound that had never been stitched, ligature marks on his arm, and facial scars. “We’ll never know the full story,” Rebekah says quietly. “But his body remembers.”

### *Relearning Safety*

Because of institutional trauma, Vanya could not recognize danger. In those first months, he repeatedly escaped the house, tampered with appliances, and wandered toward busy roads. Privacy laws prevented the family from installing cameras or alarms, so they improvised—hanging measuring cups on the door so they’d clang if he tried to slip out at night.

“We were living on high alert,” Rebekah says. “Everything in the house had to be locked or modified.”

### *Building Communication*

Vanya is nonverbal but understands Ukrainian and Russian. To build trust,

the family kept familiar language in the home—cartoons in his native language on repeat—and slowly introduced casual ASL (American Sign Language). Today, he uses roughly 200 signs, a few approximated English words, and a picture exchange system. His first sign, within hours of leaving the orphanage, was “shoes.”

“It was the first time he got to choose something of his own,” Rebekah says. “That little backpack with shoes and snacks—it was his. That mattered.”



### *Healing Through Care*

Over the years, the family worked through medical treatments and therapies: speech, occupational, physical, and behavioral support to address boundaries and sensory regulation. A trampoline became a beloved outlet for his restless energy, and a custom-made three-wheel coaster-brake bike gave him safe freedom of movement. Magnesium and natural remedies help manage sleep and anxiety.

Some challenges remain. Vanya has lasting sensory processing issues, emotional miscuing (like laughing when hurt), chewing difficulties, and needs assistance with daily living

tasks. But compared to the frightened teen they met in 2018, he is now healthier, more stable, and deeply connected to his family.

### *Honoring His Roots*

Rebekah’s family has intentionally preserved Vanya’s Ukrainian identity. They cook Ukrainian dishes, keep a Ukrainian flag in the house, and celebrate the language and culture of his birth country. “We can’t change where he came from,” Rebekah says. “And we wouldn’t want to. It’s part of who he is.”

Vanya’s early years in institutional care left deep marks, but they also revealed his extraordinary capacity for adaptation. Despite everything, he laughs often, signs what he wants, rides his bike proudly, and asks for cheeseburgers and fries—his favorite.

### *A New Chapter*

Today, Vanya lives as a U.S. citizen with access to healthcare and therapies. He may never live fully independently, but he has something far more powerful: a family that sees him, protects him, and loves him.

“If we had the space and the money,” Rebekah says, “we’d go back and bring home every one of those boys. We can’t change the past—but we can give him a future.” ■



# Lotus Ball

13th Anniversary Gala  
Edison Ballroom | New York City | November 20, 2024

The Maya's Hope Lotus Ball was held at the beautiful Edison Ballroom, where we were honored to welcome our special guests—the Wallace family. The Wallaces adopted Dima from Ukraine in 2018 and returned in 2021 to bring home his adoptive brother, Volodya. Before joining their family, both boys lived in an orphanage where caregivers were funded by Maya's Hope.

**Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors and sponsors, this year's Gala raised more than \$225,000 to support children in need.**



Gala Chairs Simon Brandon and Semanti Datta Kulkarni

## 2024 Gala Sponsors

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**Philippe & Stephanie Dauman**

**Liz & Greg Myers**

**Fairy Pardiwalla**

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Heather & Jim Perlmutter

Joseph Piropato & Paul Michaud

Maxim Serezhin

Chris Young





Kate and Michael McLaughlin

### Gala Chairs

Simon Brandon  
Semanti Datta Kulkarni

### Host Committee

Christopher Anderson  
Nyree Bass  
Collin Beardslee  
Hana Boruchov  
David Cohen  
Maya Crauderueff  
Semanti Datta Kulkarni  
Lorena Davison  
Gabriela Dijkhoffz  
Katrina Edge  
Elle Erickson  
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Maya Morozov  
Yuliya Novak  
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Adam Reback  
Jarvis Reeves  
Nathaniel Richards  
Oxana Shetsko  
Moriah Shires  
Tory Trippe  
Aditya Udas  
Ollie Zhorniak

## The Michael T. Meltzer Humanitarian Award Honorees 2024

We were proud to honor Philippe and Stephanie Dauman at this year's Maya's Hope Lotus Ball.

For more than a decade, Philippe and Stephanie have been steadfast supporters of Maya's Hope's mission to uplift vulnerable children and families. Their generosity, leadership, and commitment to creating meaningful change have made a lasting impact on our work and the lives of those we serve.

Philippe Dauman, Jr. is the President and COO of PPD Investments, LLC, and Executive Vice President of The Philippe and Deborah Dauman Foundation, which supports educational and health initiatives. With a distinguished career in technology and investment, Philippe has spent the past 20 years building and scaling innovative businesses. His leadership roles at Tray, Twitter, and Google helped shape the future of commerce and payment technology, including launching the first tap-to-pay product in the United States.

Stephanie Dauman is a New York-based actress whose work spans independent film, television, and theater. A passionate advocate for community engagement, she serves on the Board of Directors of the Inheritance Theater Project, using the power of storytelling to bridge divides and bring people together. She is also actively involved in nonprofit initiatives, including Hope for New York's Community Grants Circle.

Together, Philippe and Stephanie have exemplified what it means to lead with both vision and compassion. Their long-standing dedication to Maya's Hope reflects their shared belief in building a brighter future for children around the world.

We were deeply honored to celebrate their extraordinary commitment and contributions as our 2024 Maya's Hope Lotus Ball honorees.



Philippe and Stephanie Dauman



Jeff Escobar and Elle Erickson



Ukrainian Fashion Designer Andre Tan and Maya Crauderueff





Alex Leykind, David Sirchenko, Michael Fey, Erica Finkelshteyn, Aleksandr Finkelshteyn, Ilona Finkelshteyn, and Irina Golub



Andy Peeke and Dr. Tabasum Mir



Sandeep Kulkarni, Semanti Datta Kulkarni, Karen Aguirre and Rodrigo Hernandez



Jessyka and Jason Birchard of Veselka



Janet Hammond, Nathan Richards and Julia Maksimova



Maya Crauderueff, Lorena and Chris Davison with family





Hayden Cassone, Riley Gallagher, Caroline Ramirez, Henry Berck, Sabrina Clark, Seth Moroch, Araya Hebert, Collin Beardslee



Hana Boruchov and Alexander Zakharin



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# *Dima and his mom Andrea,* *Maya's Hope Lotus Ball Special Guest*

"Assume That I Can": Andrea's Family,  
Two Ukrainian Sons, and the Quiet Power  
of High Expectations

When Andrea first saw Dima, it was in a short Facebook video posted by Maya's Hope: a teenage boy in an orphanage in western Ukraine, taking careful steps and dabbing paint onto paper. She didn't know why the clip affected her, only that she kept replaying it, crying harder each time. Within days she had reached out to Maya's Hope—and the long, unsure road toward adoption began.

That road would eventually carry Andrea and her husband to a village called Zaluchchia, where children with disabilities lived far from public view; to Kyiv, where a glitch in a medical exam stranded father and son for two months; and back again in 2021, racing a birthday deadline to bring home a second

boy, Volodya. It would also widen Andrea's family to 10 children, reveal her husband's own Ukrainian roots, and change the way she thought about ability, education, and what we owe one another.

This is their story.

## **The first child ever adopted from Zaluchchia**

Andrea and her husband Matt started Dima's paperwork around 2016–2017. They met the boy in June 2018 and returned for court that July. When Matt went back to pick him up that autumn, everything seemed routine—until Dima failed the required chest X-ray in Kyiv. He

didn't have tuberculosis. But older pneumonia scarring made the film look suspicious.

So they waited.

With Ukraine's (near) zero accessibility, "getting around" meant strangers carrying Dima up flights of stairs and long searches for apartments they could navigate. They lived several weeks in Zhyto-



*Dima Adopted!*

myr, then in Ivano-Frankivsk, passing time with small sightseeing trips and the daily logistics of life in a country unequipped for wheelchairs. Eight weeks later, the lab confirmed what they knew: no TB. Father and son finally flew home in mid-December 2018. Dima is believed to be the first child ever adopted out of Zaluchchia.

## **Racing the clock for Volodya**

Zaluchchia would come back into their lives in late 2020. Volodya, who had overlapped with Dima at the institution, was nearing his 16th birthday—the last moment, under Ukrainian law, that he could be adopted internationally. The family's dossier was postmarked just days before his birthday.

COVID brought constant changes and delays to the process. On one trip, Andrea and her husband ar-



*Dima in Zaluchchia Orphanage*





Dima and Volodya in Zaluchia

rived at the airport only to be denied boarding due to a newly changed testing rule; court had to be rescheduled on the fly. They began visits in late January 2021 and, after finally crossing the legal finish line, Andrea returned to bring Volodya home on Mother's Day 2021.

On that trip, something else stood out. In a Kyiv arboretum, the family discovered a brand-new inclusive

playground with wheel-chair-accessible swings—one of the country's first. It was a small but unmistakable signal of progress. Before the full-scale invasion, Ukraine had begun taking baby steps toward inclusion.

### Two boys, two histories

Both Dima and Volodya have cerebral palsy and intellectual impairment, and both arrived without speaking any English. The similarities end there.

Dima, a true orphan with no known family, has more mobility. He can stand with support and scoot independently; his upper body is strong. Volodya is impacted in all four limbs and requires full physical assistance for transfers, bathing, and daily tasks.

Volodya's past carries a quiet weight. At 13, his mother left for Italy. Neighbors eventually heard him calling for help—a desperate act for



First meeting Volodya in Zaluchia

a boy who rarely raises his voice—and alerted officials. He spent three months in the hospital while social workers rebuilt lost documents, then was moved to Zaluchchia. The courts later terminated his mother's rights; still, he stays in touch with her and with siblings scattered between Ukraine and Italy.

### Language, school, and the lie of low expectations

"Assume that I can." Andrea loves that phrase, and her sons prove why. Both entered U.S. public high schools with no English and, buoyed by ESL classes and immersion, were conversational within a few months and strongly proficient thereafter. They learned money skills, social skills, and the rhythms of community life that had been out of reach in Ukraine.

Were there hurdles? Absolutely. Even in well-meaning U.S. classrooms, disability can trigger quiet gatekeeping: Let's not challenge him; this might be too hard. Andrea pushed back. "Include them," she'd insist. "There's no reason they



Dima, Volodya with their family

## *Dima and his mom Andrea, Maya's Hope Lotus Ball Special Guest*

can't do this." The boys' progress made its own argument. Labels had defined their ceilings for years. At home and at school, higher expectations raised them.

### **Today: transition, work, and tigers**

Dima completed his district's 18–21 transition program in 2023 and now works with his state's Developmental Disabilities Administration on job readiness—resumes, interviews, placement. He's happiest at the zoo and lights up for big cats, especially tigers. If he could work with animals someday, Andrea says, he'd be over the moon.

Volodya is currently enrolled in that same 18–21 program—conveniently, in a building right next door to the family's home. He's learning cooking, community navigation, and job skills, and getting the social

practice every young adult needs.

### **A family of ten—and newly found roots**

Dima and Volodya are the only adoptees among the Wallaces' 10 children and sit right in the middle of the birth order, with three older siblings and five younger. "It's busy. It's loud," Andrea laughs. The chaos can overwhelm the boys at times, but the warmth is undeniable: a household stitched together by routines, teasing, and the kind of everyday care that builds trust.

During Dima's adoption, Andrea's husband took an Ancestry DNA test and uncovered something

he'd never known: his maternal grandfather was Ukrainian, with great-grandparents from Kyiv. The Ukrainian family name connected him with living relatives in the United States, a discovery that felt less like a coincidence than a circle closing. Two Ukrainian sons had brought Ukraine home to them—and, quietly, revealed Ukraine already lived there.

**The power of belief**  
Andrea talks often



*Andrea and Dima at the Lotus Ball*

about advocacy and.... belief. For children who were always told you can't, someone else's conviction becomes a bridge. "We work hard to help them believe it about themselves, too," she says. "You are capable. Don't be afraid. We're here to help."

It shows—in Dima's pride when he masters a new task, in Volodya's gentle humor, in the way English words that once felt out of reach now come easily. It shows in the family's ordinary days: school pickups, job coaching appointments, a Saturday at the zoo.

Years ago, a short Facebook video shattered the distance between a boy in Zaluchchia and a mother scrolling her feed. Today, in a loud, loving house half a world away, two young men are writing new chapters for themselves—proving, quietly and steadily, what happens when we assume that they can. ■



*Dima and Volodya*



## 2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets

(As of December 31, 2024)

#### Assets:

Cash & Equivalents	182,014
Investments	622,986
Pledge Receivables	18,684

**Total Assets 823,684**

#### Liabilities:

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	31,105
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**Total Liabilities 31,105**

#### Net Assets:

Unrestricted	777,850
Restricted	14,729

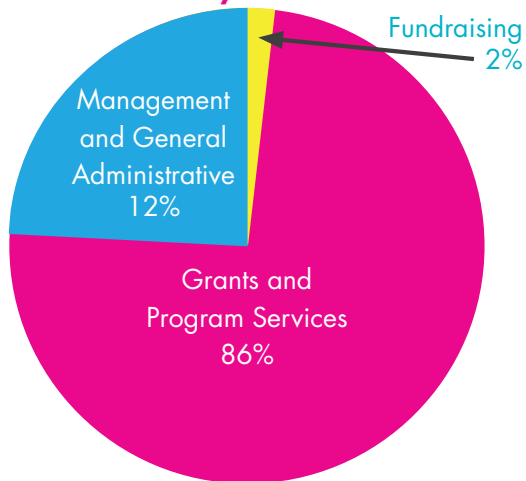
**Total Net Assets: 792,579**

**Total Liabilities & Net Assets 823,684**

### Revenue and Expense Summary

	2024	2023	2022
<b>Public Support &amp; Revenues</b>			
Contributions	542,269	861,703	1,231,940
Special Events (net of expenses)	159,973	157,283	144,006
Donated Goods & Services	468	—	—
Change in Investment	31,036	23,241	-357
Other Income	11,610	—	—
<b>Total Public Support &amp; Revenues</b>	<b>745,356</b>	<b>1,042,227</b>	<b>1,375,589</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program Services	662,519	742,878	900,994
Management & General	95,427	129,875	97,745
Fundraising	17,049	18,703	17,639
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>774,995</b>	<b>891,456</b>	<b>1,016,378</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>(29,639)</b>	<b>150,771</b>	<b>359,211</b>
<b>Net Assets - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>822,218*</b>	<b>646,747</b>	<b>287,536</b>
<b>Net Assets - End of Year</b>	<b>792,579</b>	<b>797,518</b>	<b>646,747</b>

### Annual Operating Expenses by Function



Data are excerpted from the 2024 annual financial statements audited by Zelin & Associates CPA LLC, and the 2023 and 2022 annual financial statements audited by Wegner CPAs.

This summary does not include all disclosures required by GAAP. Full audited financial statements are available upon request.

\*For the 2024 calendar year, the beginning net assets were restated.

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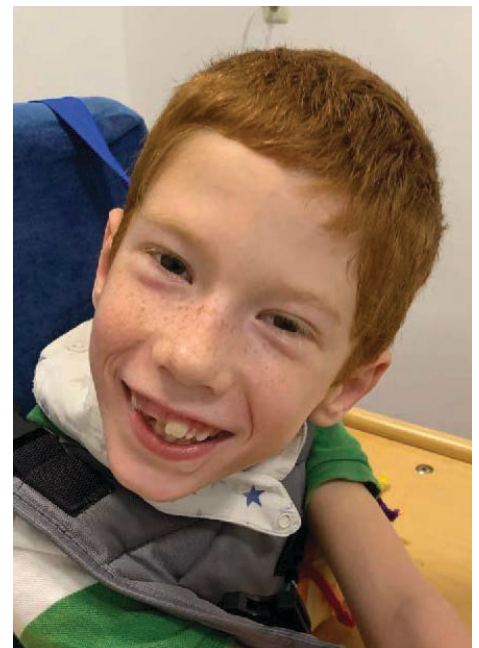


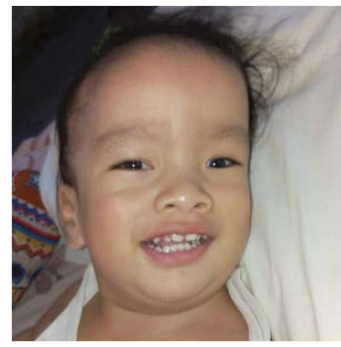
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MAYA'S HOPE 

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Maya's Hope is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to helping cutie pies around the world.



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