Established in 1993, the Mission of Nevada Childhood Cancer Foundation (NVCCF) is to provide social, emotional, financial, education, and psychological support services and programs to families of ALL children diagnosed with life threatening or critical illnesses such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, sickle cell, renal disorders, blood and immunological diseases and provide healing arts and wellness programs to adults, their children, and their caregivers touched by cancer.

Project A.R.K. consists of licensed professionals who provide services to families of all children, infancy through 23 years of age, diagnosed with life threatening and chronic illness that live or receive treatment in Southern Nevada. This division of NVCCF houses the financial, educational, and emotional support services for critically ill children and their families. A.R.K. also represents the Foundation’s logo, the ARK OF HOPE.

Referrals for services originate from local and out of state hospital personnel, out-patient medical clinics, social workers, and child-life specialists along with family and friends of a diagnosed child. Within 48 hours of receiving a referral, NVCCF service professionals work in tandem to provide resources for the needs of each family.

NVCCF improves the quality of life for children who fight a daily battle against disease.

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

**Licensed Social Workers**
- Meet with families to complete psychosocial assessment determining patient/family needs, individual coping styles, and available support systems through a devastating disease
- Advocate for non-medical issues related to childhood cancer
- Skilled at crisis intervention, helping patients/families adapt to a medical diagnosis and assist with providing and identifying resources to meet basic needs
- Help families navigate the health care system and apply for Social Security Disability Insurance and Medicaid
- Have legal and ethical responsibility to advocate for the appropriate care of children
- Collaborate with community and national organizations to obtain resources for patients/families

**Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW)**
- Perform all duties listed under Licensed Social Workers
- Skilled in cultural values, theories of child development, various mental health theories (systems theory, cognitive behavioral theory, etc.), medical ethics, codes of conduct, child protection, and legal responsibilities
- Provide counseling and offer coping skills to children and their families during treatment
- Assist patients and families with emotional issues regarding re-entry to school and ongoing counseling that helps to navigate the complex issues of survivorship and late effects

**Educational Service Providers**
- Provide specialized tutoring services to ill child, their siblings, and children whose parents are diagnosed with cancer
- Provide direct instruction, by a licensed teacher, in an inpatient and fully functional hospital classroom as part of a daily treatment for inpatient students
- Implement strategies and activities to support and maximize each student's ability to learn
- Facilitate school meetings (504, IEP, and private conferences) to educate staff on child's medical, social, and emotional needs to ensure a successful path for education in school
- Ensure appropriate accommodations to curriculum for equal access to education for children with medical and behavioral health needs
- Facilitate in-home and inpatient education services if a child is unable to return to school
- Facilitate education and school re-entry programs with parents, teachers, and other students to ensure an understanding of special issues upon returning to the classroom after illness

**Project A.R.K. (Aids & Resources for Kids)** – Staff members of the interdisciplinary care team are responsible for integrating the emotional, social, financial, and educational needs of patients and their families with medical and nursing interventions. The care team continually provides support to families through the progression of illness or the loss of a loved one.
Camp Cartwheel – This overnight and medically supervised summer camp is one of the largest camps in the western United States and offers four days of outdoor activities at no cost to over 200 critically ill children and their siblings ages 5 to 17.

SEEK Teen Retreat – The teen retreat, led by an LCSW, is a therapeutic, invite only annual event which creates an environment for self-reflection, personal growth, team building, and enhances self-esteem for teen patients and their siblings.

Danny Gans Memorial Champions Run for Life – This annual event gives the community, friends and family the opportunity to individually honor and recognize courageous children who fight illnesses daily and those who have won their battle against disease.

Bravery Beads – The program provides specially designed beads, representing a variety of procedures, to document a child’s journey as they fight a daily battle against disease. What quickly becomes a heavily beaded necklace is worn as a “badge of courage.”

Brett Torino Foundation Education Services - Named after its donor, this program gives children the opportunity to continue their education while in treatment, recovery, and post treatment. Services include inpatient and bedside instruction, an inpatient classroom with a full-time teacher along with outpatient services including school re-entry, transitional services, educational assessment to identify areas of need, and advocacy to provide support and facilitate school meetings:

• Lean on Me: Kidz Supporting Kidz – Shane and Valerie, NVCCF’s puppets mastered by volunteers, visit area schools educating classmates and teachers regarding the challenges of a life threatening or chronic illness that their ill classmate faces each day.

• Back to School In Style – School supplies, a new school outfit, and a special lunch highlight the first day back in the classroom after missing 30 days or more of school due to illness.

• Tutoring – Private and group tutoring, at sites throughout the Las Vegas Valley, is provided for all ill children, their siblings, and children of parents diagnosed with cancer who need extra help with school work due to diagnosis and its ramifications.

• Brett Torino Foundation Classroom – NVCCF created the first inpatient classroom in the state of Nevada in 2008. Facilitated and operated by NVCCF, the inpatient classroom is located at Sunrise Children’s Hospital and provides children, grades kindergarten through 12th, with direct instruction from an NVCCF teacher in a classroom setting along with education services provided at other area hospitals.

• C.A.P.S. Ceremony – The Annual C.A.P.S. Ceremony celebrates students who have shown Courage, Achievement, Perseverance, and Success in education. This memorable event includes a presentation of honors and awards highlighting special achievements as well as a celebration with students, families, teachers, tutors and participants. The ceremony represents a foundation for personal and social growth as students progress through education.

Jim Bell Transportation Program – Patient transportation to and from doctor appointments, treatments, and hospital visits are available and based on financial need.

Counseling – Counseling services are provided by licensed therapists to all children, siblings and family members. These services include individual, family and group interventions.

Engelstad Family Foundation Gifting Program – Based upon review, emergency funding is provided to families, in financial crisis due to diagnosis, needing support for housing, utility payments, transportation, food, and basic living essentials.

SEEK Teen Group – Led by an LCSW, this group meeting facilitates social support, communication and other social skills and aims to reduce isolation for teens that have been diagnosed with a critical illness and their siblings ages 13 to 18.

Sickle Cell Empowerment Team – Meets monthly to improve the quality of life for children and their families affected by sickle cell to enhance the sickle cell community’s knowledge, awareness and understanding, all while empowering sickle cell youth to self-advocate.

Kool Kidz Workshops – These workshops welcome diagnosed children, their siblings, and children with diagnosed parents who are all impacted by disease. Therefore, these workshops are held every 2nd and 4th Saturday and are overseen by a licensed professional and consist of healing arts, discussions and activities to provide emotional support and teach expression in a positive manner.

Family Food Pantry – The shelves of this room are stocked with donated non-perishable groceries and day to day basic living needs, cleaning supplies, and toiletries for families in active treatment and in financial crisis who need immediate support. Access to food pantry is by appointment only. Food donations are accepted year-round.

Giving Space – With each visit by a patient to NVCCF, comes a visit to The Giving Space filled with school supplies, new toys, hats, blankets, books, arts & craft items, nail polish and make up for teens and more.

Holiday Adopt-A-Family – Each year, NVCCF identifies families in need during the holiday season. NVCCF provides a structured way for individuals, companies, and businesses to purchase and donate gifts to a family with an ill child. Donors may stay anonymous or be active in delivering gifts to families.

The Caring Place – NVCCF’s adult services program offers healing arts and wellness services to adults with cancer, their children, and their caregivers as well as to NVCCF patients and their parents. Services include massage, reflexology, meditation, yoga, support groups and more.

Mom’s Day Out and Dad’s Day Off – Parents who need a little extra tender loving care are invited for an exclusive day out which includes pampering, meals, and plenty of surprises along the way including limousine transportation and gift bags for those who participate.

Sperm Banking – Licensed Social Workers assess families and help facilitate sperm banking prior to starting treatment. NVCCF facilitates the banking and storage free of charge to the families for the initial 2 years.