



**Riley
Children's
Foundation**

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Walther Cancer Foundation makes \$10M challenge gift to fuel discoveries in children's cancer research, inspire others to give

INDIANAPOLIS – [Riley Children's Foundation](#) today announced a \$10 million commitment from [Walther Cancer Foundation](#) to power the discovery of new treatments for children's cancers. In keeping with Walther's goal to inspire others to invest in cancer research, the gift will create a special matching program that doubles the impact of select donations.

Cancer is the leading disease-related cause of death among both children and adolescents, with more than 15,000 kids and teens diagnosed annually throughout the United States. This includes about 315 Hoosier children each year, approximately 80% of whom are cared for by [Riley Children's Health](#).

"While we have made important improvements in the care of children with cancer, some types of childhood cancers remain largely incurable. Even when cancer can be cured, the therapies are brutal and leave children with lifelong chronic health conditions," said D. Wade Clapp, MD, chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Indiana University School of Medicine and physician-in-chief at Riley Children's Health. "This extraordinary commitment from Walther, along with the other donations it will spur, will help our researchers develop more effective and less toxic treatments."

Walther's \$10 million commitment will provide a 1:1 match for donors who establish endowed children's cancer research funds at Riley Children's Foundation – ultimately resulting in at least \$20 million to fuel discoveries.

The funds will be deployed to support children's cancer research at [Indiana University School of Medicine](#), which is the research partner to Riley Children's and Indiana University Health. Research will also be closely coordinated with the [Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center](#).

"It's especially important that we focus on new and better treatments for children's cancer, because we have the opportunity to give children decades more life and to improve the quality of those years," said Thomas W. Grein, president and chief executive officer for Walther Cancer Foundation. "We're excited about this commitment because it will ensure innovative and promising children's research continues to take place here in Indiana, and it will encourage others to invest in this urgent work."

The Riley-affiliated IU research team conducts the full spectrum of children's cancer research, from laboratory investigations to clinical research studies that test promising new therapies to ways to prevent lifelong consequences of cancer treatments. Among other breakthroughs, these researchers



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have contributed to the approval of the first ever drugs to treat Neurofibromatosis type 1, the most common genetic disorder that causes debilitating tumors along nerves. Through Riley, the team is also part of CureWorks, an elite group of children's hospitals pushing the frontiers of immunotherapy to treat cancer.

Dr. Clapp emphasized that a leading-edge research program translates to improved care for patients at Riley. Riley is Indiana's only nationally ranked children's health system and is home to the only nationally ranked pediatric cancer program in the state. It is the only place where children can receive the most advanced cancer therapies, including stem cell transplants, highly promising immunotherapies, and genome-guided therapies that are personalized based on a child's cancer.

"Research is key to ending suffering from cancer, but research can be extraordinary expensive, and too many brilliant ideas never get off the ground because there isn't enough funding. Philanthropy is vital to fill that gap," said Elizabeth A. Elkas, Riley Children's Foundation President and CEO. "We hope others who care about children's cancer will take advantage of this special matching opportunity to double the impact of their gift – and double the impact of the research being conducted. Thanks to Walther and others who step forward, the physicians and scientists at IU and Riley will have the resources and tools they need to help more children survive cancer and lead long, full lives. That's a huge reason to celebrate."

"At the cancer center, we believe research cures cancer, and philanthropy fuels research. I'm grateful to the Walther Cancer Foundation for creating this extraordinary matching opportunity to help IU researchers continue to make advances focused on children, adolescents, and young adults," Kelvin Lee, MD, director of the IU Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center, said.

About Walther Cancer Foundation

The Walther Cancer Foundation supports and promotes cancer research both bench and clinical, including behavioral studies. Our goal is to help build cancer programs that provide tangible benefits by expanding the world's scientific knowledge, by saving lives and by offering hope to patients and their families.

About Riley Children's Foundation

Riley Children's Foundation is Indiana's preeminent nonprofit dedicated to funding children's healthcare. Our vision is to ensure all children have equitable access to exceptional healthcare so they may reach their optimal health and quality of life.