



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



childrensheartfoundation.org

Letter from the Board:

2025: A Year That Moved the Needle

2025 powerfully reflected how far The Children's Heart Foundation has come and what becomes possible when a dedicated community unites around a shared mission. Unforgettable Galas, inspiring Congenital Heart Walks, and nationwide awareness efforts fueled a year defined by momentum, connection, and meaningful progress.

Most notably, we made our largest single-year investment in research. Together, we funded more than \$1.9 million of congenital heart defect research and scientific collaborations, raising our total research funding to nearly \$21 million since our founding. Each dollar we invest represents hope—advancing earlier diagnoses, better treatments, and longer, healthier lives for Heart Warriors everywhere.

As we reflect on this remarkable year, we do so with deep gratitude. To every donor, volunteer, family, partner, and advocate who stood with us in 2025: thank you. Your commitment is the driving force behind every breakthrough and every life changed.

As we enter 2026, we proudly celebrate a milestone year—The Children's Heart Foundation's 30th anniversary. For three decades, we have championed bold ideas, funded promising research, and challenged the status quo for children and adults living with CHDs. While we celebrate this legacy, we also look ahead with renewed urgency and optimism toward the next era of discovery and impact.

Together, we will continue building a future where every individual affected by congenital heart defects has the opportunity to thrive. Here's to 30 years of progress and to the breakthroughs still to come, made possible by you.

With a grateful heart,



Terry Morrow
President & CEO



Kathryn Osteen
Chairwoman of the Board of Directors

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2025 Research Funding

A Year of Record-Breaking Investment

The Children's Heart Foundation shattered records by investing \$1.9 million into congenital heart defect research and scientific collaborations in 2025, making it our largest single-year research investment to date. This milestone marks a significant leap forward in our mission to save lives and improve outcomes for Heart Warriors everywhere.

Our funding supported five transformative initiatives that are driving innovation and collaboration in CHD research:

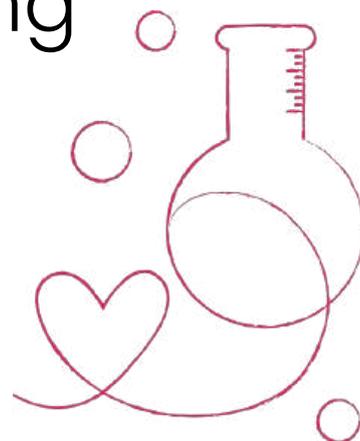
- **Independent Research Awards funded by the Foundation**, including the Izak Szymczak Research Fund Award and The Cortney Gives BAK Foundation Award
- Collaborative research with the **American Heart Association through the AHA/CHF CHD Research Awards**
- Funding the American Academy of Pediatrics' Pediatric Cardiology Research Fellowship Award
- **Support of Cardiac Networks United (CNU)**, a pediatric congenital cardiovascular research network.
- **Scholarship for Researchers** Committed to Advancing CHD Research in Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities



This record-breaking year underscores the power of community and collaboration. Each dollar raised by our supporters fuels groundbreaking discoveries, paving the way for better treatments, enhanced care, and brighter futures for those living with CHDs. Together, we are making monumental strides toward a world where CHDs are no longer life-limiting.

Independent Research Awards: Funding the Most Promising CHD Research

The Children’s Heart Foundation’s Independent Grant Awards are intended to fund research that directly impacts patients living with congenital heart disease over the course of their lifetime. We seek to support investigations in clinical cardiology, including surgical and interventional techniques, as well as translational research and population science.

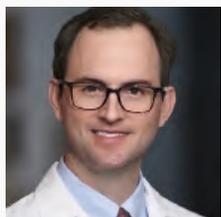


The researchers who received Independent Research Awards are:



Izak Szymczak Research Fund Award – **Mark Rodefeld, MD** (Indiana University):
“**Fontan Pump: Wireless Charge and Control System Development**”

Dr. Rodefeld’s work aims to move the Fontan pump closer to full implantability by developing a wireless charging, control, and monitoring system—eliminating external hardware and helping improve quality of life for patients while easing the daily burden on families and caregivers.



The Cortney Gives BAK Foundation Award – **Christopher Broda, MD** (Baylor College of Medicine): “**Cellular Senescence in Blood as a Biomarker of Failure in Adults with Fontan Circulation**”

This research aims to develop a simple blood test that could help identify Fontan patients at higher risk for serious complications—before they become critically ill. By studying blood samples, researchers are looking for early warning signs of heart and organ stress to help doctors monitor patients more closely, intervene earlier, and potentially reduce the need for heart or organ transplantation.



William Goodyer, MD, PhD (Stanford University School of Medicine): “**Precision Treatment of Ventricular Arrhythmias in Congenital Heart Disease**”

Abnormal heart rhythms known as “ventricular arrhythmias” (VAs) are one of the leading causes of death in children born with congenital heart disease. This new CHF-funded research aims to change that by delivering medication directly to the heart, where it’s needed most. Using an innovative “smart” drug-delivery approach, researchers hope to control life-threatening arrhythmias more effectively while reducing harmful side effects to the rest of the body.



David Frank, MD, PhD (The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia): **“Mechanisms Driving Neointima Formation in PVS”**

The aim of this project is to uncover why PVS develops and identify new, effective treatments. By using advanced gene analysis, cell models, and large-animal studies, researchers hope to better understand the disease and test therapies that could improve survival beyond today’s limited options.



Joel Schilling, MD, PhD (Washington University in St. Louis): **“Unraveling the Mechanisms of Fontan Associated Liver Disease”**

The Fontan procedure is life-saving for children with single ventricle heart disease, but many develop liver complications later in life. This new research seeks to understand whether bile acids may be driving this damage and whether they could be used to better monitor liver health or even prevent complications as patients grow into adulthood. Overall, successful completion of this project will reveal whether measuring or lowering bile acids will help children with Fontan circulation live longer, healthier lives.



Scholarship for Researchers Committed to Advancing CHD Research in Underrepresented Communities

The Children’s Heart Foundation proudly awarded its inaugural Scholarship for Researchers Committed to Advancing CHD Research in Underrepresented Communities to **Samuel Regalado**, M.D./Ph.D. candidate at the University of Washington.

A first-generation college graduate and member of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians, Regalado is dedicated to addressing health inequities in CHD research and care. His commitment is both professional and personal. His great aunt, a Chumash elder, lived with a structural heart defect, and his young daughter was recently diagnosed with a bicuspid aortic valve. These experiences fuel his determination to improve outcomes for families facing CHDs.

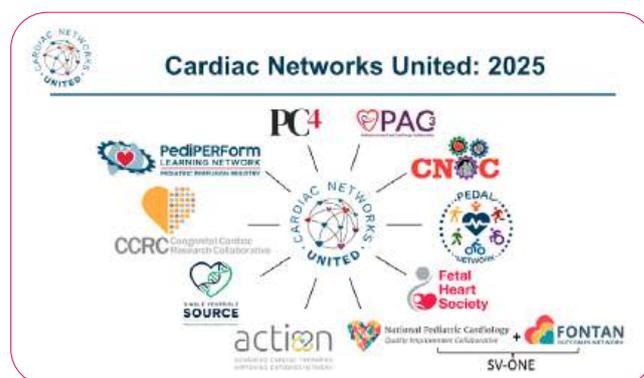


Regalado’s doctoral research uses stem cell models and genome engineering to better understand how congenital anomalies develop, laying the foundation for improved diagnosis and treatment. He plans to pursue internal medicine and a cardiology fellowship focused on adult congenital heart disease.

Cardiac Networks United: Powering Collaboration. Accelerating Discovery. Transforming Care.

Since 2019, The Children’s Heart Foundation has proudly supported **Cardiac Networks United (CNU)**—a first-of-its-kind collaborative bringing together eleven leading pediatric and congenital cardiovascular networks across the country.

Why does this matter? Because no single institution, registry, or research team can answer the biggest questions in CHD alone.



CNU was created to break down traditional silos in pediatric cardiology by harmonizing data, aligning methodologies, and accelerating collaboration across networks. Through our continued investment in CNU, The Children’s Heart Foundation is helping build a national engine for collaboration designed to accelerate innovation and improve outcomes for individuals living with CHDs.

This is collaboration in action. And this is how we move the entire CHD field forward, together.

American Heart Association & The Children's Heart Foundation: Working Together to Fight CHDs



American
Heart
Association.



The Children's Heart Foundation is proud to partner with the American Heart Association to collaboratively fund research through the AHA/CHF Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards. To date, the American Heart Association and The Children's Heart Foundation have pledged more than \$10 million across 10 years of the CHD research funding collaboration.

In 2025 The Children's Heart Foundation contributed \$300,000 to the AHA/CHF Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards. Through this, AHA and CHF were able to fund more than \$640,000 of new CHD research to five investigators.

- **Jennifer Schumacher, Ph.D.** at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio for **Mechanisms of retinoic acid signaling in aorta development**
- **Naoki Konno, Ph.D.** at Stanford University for **Deciphering congenital heart defects through single-cell evolution and in silico perturbation**
- **Hao Wang, Ph.D.** at the University of South Florida in Tampa for the **Role of CDK13 in Cardiac Remodeling**
- **Rachel Szymanski** at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for **Function of CRL4 in cardiac development**
- **Lucas Voce** at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities for **Design and Development of a Growing Transcatheter Pulmonary Stent Valve for Pediatrics**

"We're proud to continue funding innovative CHD research alongside the American Heart Association," said Terry Morrow, President and CEO of The Children's Heart Foundation. "By combining our expertise and shared commitment, we're accelerating discoveries that improve care, save lives, and bring hope to families affected by CHDs."

Pediatric Cardiology Fellowship Award: Powering the Next Generation of Physician-Scientists

The American Academy of Pediatrics and The Children's Heart Foundation selected two recipients for the **2025 Pediatric Cardiology Research Fellowship Award**: **Dr. Tracey Crooks**, pediatric cardiology fellow at University of Colorado Denver-Anschutz Medical Campus, and **Dr. Michael Jiang**, pediatric cardiology fellow at the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital.

These awards, made possible by educational grants from The Children's Heart Foundation, provide research support for individuals who have demonstrated aptitude for basic science or clinical science research during their pediatric cardiology fellowships.

Crooks' project is titled "**Observational Study of the Impact of Sodium-Glucose Cotransporter-2 Inhibitors on Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Function and Proteomic Analysis at 6 months in Exercise Limited Patients with Fontan Physiology.**" Her research will explore whether Sodium-Glucose Cotransporter 2 inhibitors (SGLT2i)—a cornerstone of adult heart failure treatment—can improve skeletal muscle mitochondrial function and exercise capacity in patients with single ventricle heart disease.

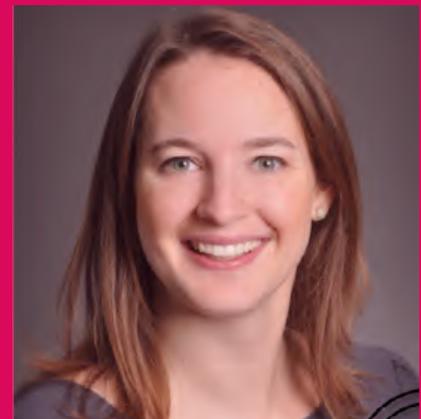
Jiang's project is entitled "**Anomalous Coronary Compression and Influence of Aortic Wall Stiffness on Ischemia**" and seeks to improve how physicians evaluate and treat patients born with anomalous aortic origin of a coronary artery—a congenital heart defect among the top two leading causes of sudden cardiac death in children and young adults during exercise.

The Children's Heart Foundation and the American Academy of Pediatrics have partnered through this award to promote understanding of cardiovascular disease in children and to support the next generation of physician-scientists advancing CHD research.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Dr. Tracey Crooks



Dr. Michael Jiang



Congenital Heart Walks: Hope for Every Heartbeat

The Congenital Heart Walk series raised record-breaking funds for CHD research in 2025! With 33 walk events across the country, we united thousands of participants, teams, volunteers, donors, and sponsors to make a lasting impact. Together, we raised an incredible \$2.2 million to support our mission – the largest amount ever raised by the walk series!

Every step taken and every dollar raised honors the strength of Heart Warriors and the cherished memory of all Heart Angels. Your generosity and passion fuel our mission, driving progress and hope across the CHD community.

We can't wait to see you again in 2026 as we walk together to celebrate 30 years of hope and progress at The Children's Heart Foundation.



TOP FUNDRAISING WALK OF 2025

Cleveland Congenital Heart Walk

Presented by Cleveland Clinic Children's

- \$268,800 raised
- 964 Participants
- 1,142 Donors
- 130 Teams
- Top Fundraising Team:
Team #SavannahStrong



Looking Ahead:

Our 2026–2029 Growth Plan

During the past 30 years, The Children’s Heart Foundation has grown into a trusted national organization that advances the most promising research to improve and extend the lives of children born with congenital heart defects. This progress reflects the dedication of our volunteers, researchers, staff, and generous donors who have helped build not only a mission, but a movement.

As we look to the future, we have developed a Growth Plan for 2026 to 2029 that represents our next step forward.

By 2029, we aim to double our annual revenue so we can accelerate our research investment and expand our national reach. An important part of this strategy includes strengthening and balancing our fundraising portfolio to ensure long-term stability and greater investment in life-changing science.

Four Strategic Pillars Guiding Our Growth

Our plan is built around four interconnected pillars designed to deepen our impact, visibility, and sustainability:

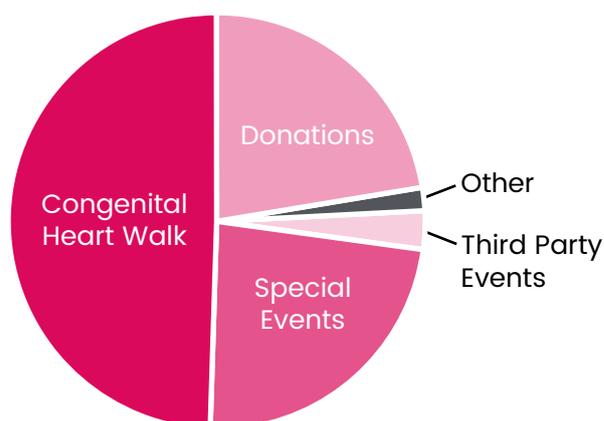
-  **1 Expand and Diversify Philanthropy**
Broadening our community of supporters and building strong major, corporate, foundation, and recurring giving programs.
-  **2 Strengthen National Visibility and Research Storytelling**
Bringing the science we fund—and the researchers behind it—closer to the families and donors who make it possible.
-  **3 Empower Volunteers and Ambassadors**
Equipping passionate advocates across the country to champion our mission and expand our reach.
-  **4 Build Operational Excellence and a Culture of Collaboration**
Investing in the people, systems, and partnerships that allow CHF to grow with intention and accountability.

This plan will guide how we grow to meet the evolving needs of children and adults living with congenital heart defects — today and for generations to come. Together, we are shaping the next chapter in CHF’s history: one defined by purposeful growth, bold innovation, and strengthened national leadership in CHD research.

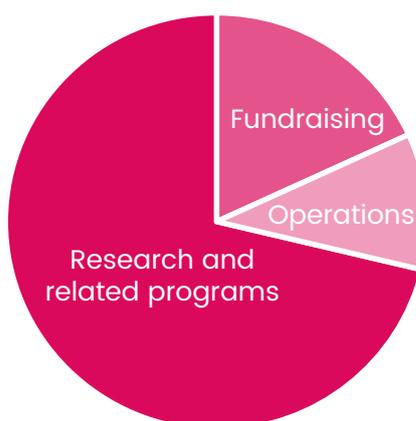
Financials

2024 Audited Financial Statements

REVENUE	
Donations	\$1,027,960
Congenital Heart Walk	\$2,269,409
Special Events	\$1,069,904
Third Party Events	\$136,896
Other	\$82,266
Total Revenue	\$4,586,435



EXPENSES	
Research and related programs	\$3,420,256
Operations	\$506,747
Fundraising	\$870,370
Total Expenses	\$4,797,373



NET ASSETS AT DECEMBER 31, 2024	
Unrestricted	\$1,748,580
Restricted to Research	\$551,825
	\$2,300,405





For 30 years, The Children's Heart Foundation has proven that investing in research saves lives. That legacy gives us a responsibility to accelerate progress as children with CHDs live longer lives.

Our next chapter is about turning momentum into lasting impact for every Heart Warrior, at every stage of life.

Visit our website and social media channels throughout 2026 to learn more about how The Children's Heart Foundation is celebrating 30 years of progress, and to read stories about the researchers, doctors, children, and families who continue to inspire our work.

A Legacy of Research A Future Full of *hope*

To learn more about getting involved, volunteer opportunities, or to make a donation, please visit childrensheartfoundation.org

Thank you for joining us in **Placing Children at the Heart of Research.**

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