

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Because of you, Taryn is still competing for gold

But she nearly lost her lifelong dream

“My dad got me my first skates when I was two,” says Taryn Brandt. “I entered my first competition at age six. Even as a young kid, I wanted to go to the Olympics.”

TARYN'S LIFE REVOLVED AROUND SKATING, from elementary school on. There were lessons and training sessions before and after school, independent academic classes to free up even more practice time, hours and hours of competitive dance to help with the performance aspects of skating, and competition after competition. It was her passion—and it was all-consuming.

But skating is hard on the body—and injuries can change your life plans. In college, Taryn suffered an ankle injury and was off the ice for a year recovering from surgery.

Fortunately, Taryn is tough. She came back from her injury to have some of her most successful years of competition, medaling at the New England Regional Championships. She might not make it to the Olympics, she realized, but she could still compete—and win—at the highest levels of elite figure skating.

Then, a few years later, she began having pain in her right knee—the leg she uses to land her jumps.

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“Cheesy as it sounds, Dr. Sutton is my savior.”

After knee surgery with a local orthopedist, and a long recovery period, Taryn was still in severe pain. She turned to YNHH for a second opinion. That’s where she found Karen Sutton, MD, orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine.

“I was so distraught—I was afraid I’d be in pain forever.”

Taryn was afraid she might never be able to compete again. “But Dr. Sutton got it. She was confident she could help me get back to where I wanted to be—which was skating. She was so patient and compassionate. It made a huge difference, because I felt that she cared.”

Over the next three years, Dr. Sutton performed a series of surgeries to repair the complex damage to Taryn’s meniscus. It took many months of recovery and painful physical therapy, but thanks to her determination—and **your generous support of YNHH** and physicians like Dr. Sutton—Taryn is competing again. And her knee feels great.

Paying it forward to future athletes Taryn’s life plan will probably always revolve around skating. But her career plan is to help other athletes get through the challenges of competition and injuries that are part of life for elite athletes.

She’s nearly completed her Doctor of Psychology degree in Athletic Counseling, and she’ll begin working with student

athletes at Lehigh University in August. “Going through these experiences myself inspired me to help athletes with injuries and transitions in their careers,” she says.

What a great example of how the benefits of your generous donations to YNHH ripple out to have an impact on so many. **Thank you, donors!** ♥



Watch a video about Taryn’s recovery story—and see her on the ice at www.givetoynhh.org/brandt



Why do you give to Yale New Haven Hospital?

Every donor has a reason. Here’s Liz’s.

WHEN LIZ DELUCA’S HUSBAND FRED (founder of Subway® restaurants) suddenly became ill during a business trip to Canada in 2013, they received a devastating diagnosis. Fred had leukemia. His survival depended on getting immediate treatment.

Suddenly, they had to make a very important decision—where should Fred go for treatment?

“I had an affinity for YNHH,” says Liz. “When I was studying for my nursing degree as a young woman, I chose to do my clinical practice there. My son was born there 44 years ago. It has a world-class reputation and a state-of-the-art cancer hospital. I knew it was the right place.”

Fred spent the better part of the next two and a half years in the care of the physicians, nurses, and staff at Smilow Cancer Hospital. Both Liz and Fred came to rely on their expertise, compassion, and professionalism.

“The physicians were amazing—their willingness to be available all the time, their attentiveness...they always gave us reassurance, no matter what we were facing,” says Liz.

Fred’s treatment at Smilow gave him extra time with a good quality of life. He could still work—which he loved—and he was able to do some limited travel. “**He was so grateful for that extra time,**” says Liz.

Tragically, Fred lost his battle against leukemia in 2015.

“The team at Smilow helped Fred get through the most difficult time in his life,” Liz says. He felt deeply grateful and wanted to show his gratitude, but Liz wasn’t sure exactly how to go about it.

“I went back to the doctors who cared for Fred

and said, ‘How can I help you?’” she says. They told her they needed funding to support their research into new ways to help cancer patients.

“Then I asked the nurses, ‘What can we do for you? A new lounge? Televisions?’” They said they needed funding for continuing education, so they could learn to give even better care.

“What these professionals do is already so noble, but to hear that what they wanted most was help to do their jobs even better—I thought that was beautiful!”

Liz made a generous donation to Smilow through the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation to support cancer research, professional development, and a new patient and family education initiative.

Liz recently visited the unit where her husband was treated. “To see the enthusiasm of the physicians and nurses for the help we’re giving them was thrilling,” she says. “Everything they do is a step toward prolonging the lives of people with cancer. We have to keep trying to make those steps happen.” ♥

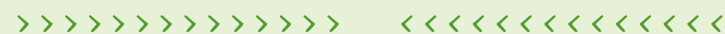
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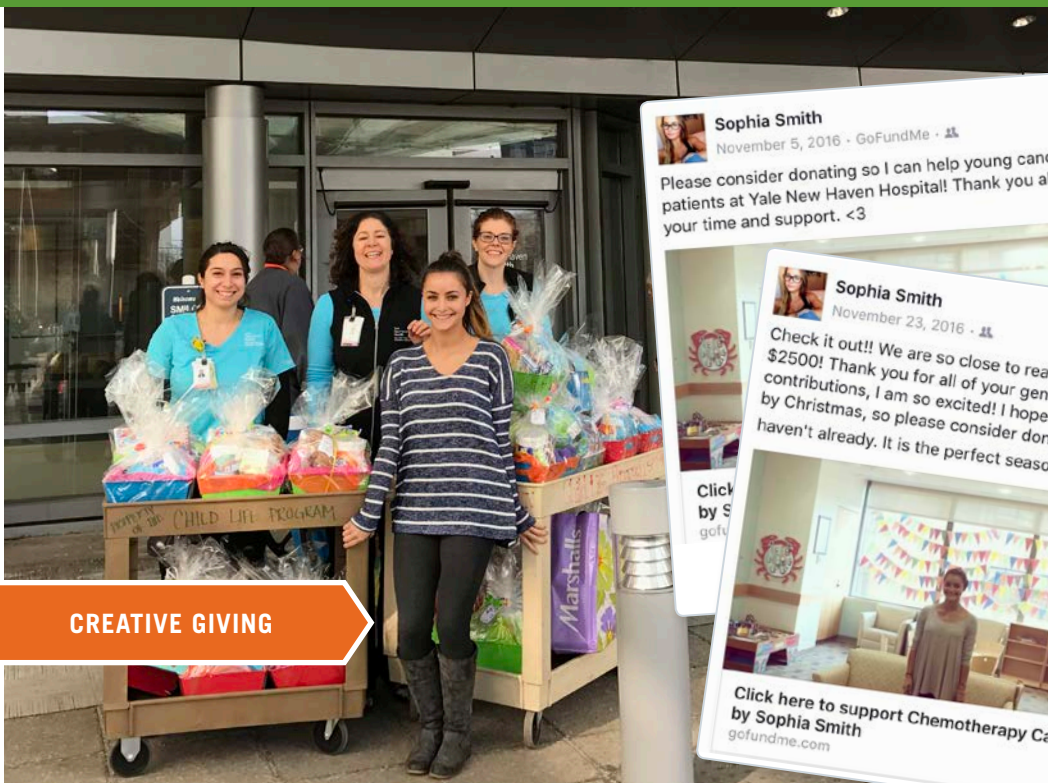
FREE classes, lectures, and support-group meetings at YNHH

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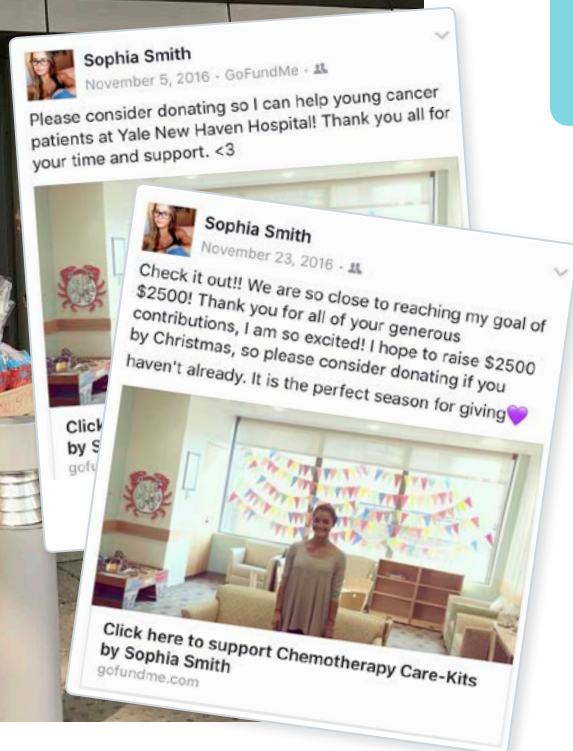
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Warmhearted high school senior gets all the credit

Special delivery for kids with cancer

Sophia Smith, 18, has always been passionate about community service, so when the time came for her to plan her required senior project at Branford High School, she knew it would involve helping people in need.

REMEMBERING HOW SHE FELT when she was hospitalized at age 17, Sophia wanted to do something to make the experience less frightening for kids. She knew that pediatric cancer patients spend lots of time in the hospital—receiving infusions and other challenging treatments—so she chose to focus her efforts on kids with cancer.

Sophia planned her project for success, down to the last detail. First, she met with hospital staff and patients to learn about the emotional and physical needs of pediatric cancer patients. Based on these conversations, she decided to create gift baskets of items carefully chosen to provide comfort and relieve some of the side effects associated with treatment.

Sophia raised a stunning \$2,500 through an online crowdfunding campaign. “A big

online circle of people saw my story and wanted to help,” she says. “It was so humbling—so many wanted to help and were willing to give.”

Then, she used the money to purchase a range of items to fill over 30 gift baskets—including “Queasy Pops” (special lollipops to relieve nausea), hats to help with hair loss from chemotherapy, DVDs, and gift cards for parents to get a decent cup of coffee.

“There is so much learning that comes with helping other people,” says Sophia, “including empathy and being exposed to things you might not otherwise see. It’s important to get involved—anything you can do, big or little, is worthwhile.”