

*"because kids can't  
fight cancer alone"*



Candlelighters

# Candlelighters

a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization of West Texas & Southern New Mexico

April 2018



*Blanca Perez*

# Blanca Perez

My name is Blanca Marilyn Perez, I am currently 16 years old. When I was 14 years old I was diagnosed with HLH, this is a disease of the cells that slowly damages all the organs of the body. This disease is very difficult to diagnose because at the beginning they told me it was just a cold. At first I was hospitalized in Cd Juárez without any improvement, every day I got worse and worse. After a week of headaches, temperature, and vomiting, I was admitted to Childrens Hospital. I was admitted to intensive care as they realized that my lungs were starting to get damaged. They put me on oxygen and several antibiotics but still the temperature would not drop. For this reason I slept in a bed that looked like it was made of ice. It was a type of mattress that was connected to a machine that helped lower temperatures as high as mine. It was definitely a very unpleasant experience. I could not drink water because my lungs began to fill with water and with the help of some hoses they managed to drain the water. Nor could I eat because the pancreas, spleen and liver were already inflamed.

As a result of all these complications I had to be intubated. From that moment until two weeks later I did not know about myself anymore. My mother tells me that Dr. Saenz decided to make one last attempt, asking for me to have a biopsy of bone marrow and kidneys. The results came out negative for cancer. Thanks to these studies, Dr. Bista was able to see what I had that night and my parents were informed of the diagnosis of my HLH disease.

Although the doctors still did not know if the miracle of life would be achieved, at least there was a small hope. The next day they applied the first round of chemotherapy through the vein and into the medulla. That day they also completely removed all tubes and hoses from me. That's how I slowly got better every day thanks to the care of the doctors, the nurses, and the hospital staff. Of course the love and all the support of my family and some friends also helped me to recover. I have to thank God first because he has given me another chance to live. To Dr. Saenz who never gave up and without exhausting all the possibilities. Also to Dr. Bista, who arrived just in time with the diagnosis and got the right treatment. To my family my parents, brothers, and uncles and cousins who studied with me and supported me to get ahead. To my friends who visited me in the hospital or were aware of my health taught me that true friendship is in the good and bad times of life. Everyone on the hospital staff for their care, but above all to ANA that always encouraged me to move forward. I also have to thank my psychologist Rosa Luna, who although she is no longer with us, always encouraged me not to give up. Another fight that I am facing while bedridden, is that my right foot has lost all sensitivity and movement. Although a neurologist, Dr. Fierro, told me that I was never going to be able to move it anymore, God had other plans for me. Thanks to my therapy and my daily efforts nowadays I already have movement in my foot and I know that soon I will also recover my sensibility.

I have no more to say about my story, I just want to take this opportunity to thank Hilda Menefee for encouraging my mother to attend Candlelighters meetings and activities. They have supported us in all aspects. To Mrs. Mary Vasquez, Marcos Arrieta and all those who collaborated in this organization, for continuing to give a light of hope to all patients who enter this project. Today I know that you can move forward! A thousand thanks and as they said to my mother in the hospital, "Miracles happen every day" and I am one of those miracles.





*Easter Party*



## EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS IN APRIL

We are still requesting our families to please come in and update registration forms stop by the Candlelighters office and pick up your packet today!

April 3, 2018	Family Meeting- Food Vouchers
April 5, 2018	P. S. I Love Your Workshop – Savers' Voucher
April 12, 2018	Arts & Crafts Workshop – Gas Card
April 17, 2108	Caregiver's Workshop – Food Voucher
April 21, 2018	Teen Support Group
April 25, 2018	Parent Support Group- Saver's Voucher
April 26, 2018	Dia de los Niños @ Gumballs

Horse Therapy has begun please sign up your children. For more information please call Mary at (915) 544-2222.

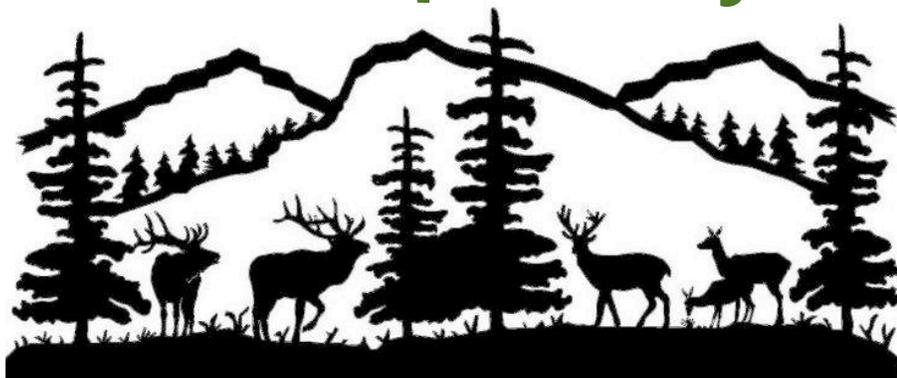
Speaker for Teen Meeting: Center Against Violence  
11:00 am - 1:00 pm at Candlelighters Office

### Dia del los Ninos Celebration

Gumballs Party Room • April 26 • 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
11540 Pellicano • Please pick up tickets at the office.



## Summer Camps Coming Soon



**Camp Bravo** • for siblings with a brother or sister who has cancer.

**June 26, 2018 - July 2, 2018**

**Camp Courageous** • for cancer patients.

**July 7, 2018 - July 13, 2018**

1<sup>ST</sup> PRIORITY GOES TO CHILDREN ON TREATMENT AND  
THOSE THAT HAVE NEVER ATTENDED.  
OTHERS WILL BE PUT ON A WAITING LIST.

### VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING CAMP!

If your child is planning to attend camp this year just a reminder to make sure your registration forms for 2018 are updated NOW, not on the day they leave to camp.

So PLEASE stop by the office and pick up your forms today.

We need to have more participation in our workshops and events this is a requirement for camp so please make an effort to attend.

## Volunteer Appreciation Week

April 15 - 21

WE LOVE  
OUR VOLUNTEERS

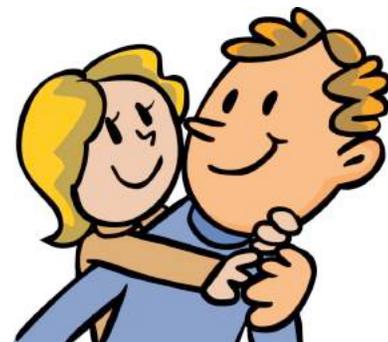
## Everyday Heroes

Here's to the everyday heroes,  
The volunteers who do what they can,  
To ease the suffering of others,  
And be of service to their fellow man.

May they know the true satisfaction  
That comes from helping others  
Less fortunate than themselves,  
But no less their sisters and brothers.

May they feel the gratitude in our hearts  
For all of the good that they've done.  
The appreciation that we all feel for them  
Is truly second to none.

## A big Thank You to all our Volunteers

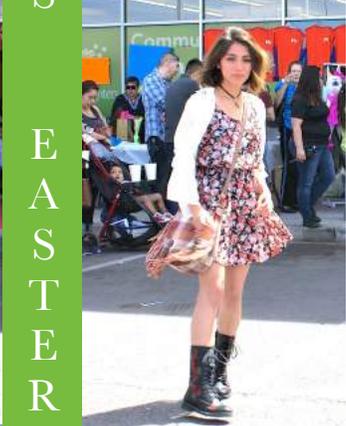


**We couldn't do it  
without you!**

## We need Volunteer Drivers



Drivers are needed to take patients to medical appointments, meal delivery, donation pick ups, and so much more. Please call the office at 544-2222 to learn more.



SAVERS  
EASTER  
FASHION  
SHOW