

Since 1995, A Kid Again has worked to foster hope, happiness & healing for families raising children with life-threatening conditions by helping them gain back moments of positive, family-shared experiences. Designed around the entire family, A Kid Again provides ongoing, year-round events full of joy, fun, and smiles that allow parents, siblings, and the sick child to take a time out from their illness to make memories together and just be *A Kid Again*.

For an enrolled family, there is never a cost to participate in any of our events, which we call Adventures. There is seldom room in a family's budget for fun activities when they average between \$400,000 and \$600,000 in yearly medical bills and approximately 30% of our families live below the poverty line. This is where A Kid Again steps in to provide our families with a cost-free, care-free Adventure. When an enrolled family attends an Adventure, they are provided free admission for each family member, a memento for every child, and many times a family meal.

What makes A Kid Again unique?

- We focus on serving the entire immediate family, not just the sick child. We know that the difficult medical journey is one the whole family is living through and needs supported.
- The support our programming provides is multi-faceted. One-time experiences are great - but research has found that a family needs consistent, on-going support as they navigate difficult times. A Kid Again delivers an experience or Adventure at least once a month so there is always something to look forward to.
- The community A Kid Again provides is important as families need to know they are not going through their medical journey alone. They have other A Kid Again families to turn to for support through their regular interactions at Adventures.
- We are condition agnostic. We serve kids with illnesses like cancer and cystic fibrosis as well as rare genetic disorders. For many families, their child's condition is so unique that there is not another organization out there providing them support.

A Kid Again prides itself on being an inclusive organization by not only including the entire family in our program but including all life-threatening conditions. Over the last 27 years, we've learned that our program makes a deep and meaningful impact on these families by providing an inclusive environment. We continually focus on what needs our families require to ensure that they are not having any hardships during one of our Adventures. Additionally, we meet with our families to find ways to ensure we speak, interact, and understand the condition their child may have. An example is understanding the grave risks of having two children with cystic fibrosis near one another. This scenario can become deadly for these children, so we provide a signifying button so families with cystic fibrosis know what other families have this condition.

When it comes to speaking with our families, we know that our words have power, and they mean something. Also, we know that our children are listening to us. Using inclusive language is vital to providing the welcoming atmosphere we seek at A Kid Again. We all know what it is like to feel like an outsider or that you don't belong, and our families feel that frequently enough. The constant stares as they change the diaper of a 16 year old or someone looking with concern at your child because they have a mutation or impairment, these moments are usually met with that same person pointing and

saying something that can be hurtful to these children, the siblings of the child who is sick, and their parents.

At A Kid Again, we ensure that those moments do not exist as all our families have some sort of life-threatening condition. The beauty of our program is that there is no pointing, no inappropriate words, or feelings of angst. Our inclusive atmosphere ensures that these families can forget about their illness, and just feel like *A Kid Again*.

We at A Kid Again strongly support HB281 and encourage the adoption of this inclusive language to ensure that our most vulnerable children do not have to worry about the different names they may be called, but they can focus on living their life as a child should with happiness and kindness to all. This inclusive language is the first step in ensuring that our children are treated with the dignity they deserve by demonstrating that the State of Ohio wants to make sure that we do not use offensive language.