



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

## Senator Phillips Secures \$1 Million For Northwell Health's Cohen Children's Medical Center

ELAINE PHILLIPS October 26, 2018



### *Funding To Support Pediatric Cancer Research & Create "Aiden's Starfish Lounge" In Honor Floral Park Boy*

Senator Elaine Phillips announced today she has secured a \$1 Million Health Care Transformation Capital Grant for the Northwell Health Cohen Children's Medical Center. The funding will be used to support the renovation of the Cohen Children's family resource room/lobby in memory of Aiden Binkley of Floral Park who passed away from cancer.

“It was a privilege to deliver this funding to Northwell in honor of Aiden Binkley, a special young man who, when faced with a life-threatening disease, still lit up a room and put a smile on anyone’s face. Sadly, Aiden passed away on December 30, 2010 at the age of 11 after losing his courageous battle against cancer,” Senator Phillips said. “Believing he got cancer so he could help to find a cure, Aiden’s illness was no barrier to his will to help others and search for an end to childhood cancer. It is truly fitting to have this special location named after Aiden, as his spirit continues and will help inspire children diagnosed with similar illnesses to keep fighting.”

The Cohen Children’s Medical Center will create “Aiden’s Starfish Lounge” with the funding, an undersea themed space to help provide families facing pediatric cancer with an important respite area from treatment and establishing a space that promotes dignity and healing for all involved.

“We are so grateful to the Binkley family and Senator Phillips for this important funding, which will have a tremendous impact on patients and their families at Cohen Children’s Medical Center. We appreciate the great hope you give our patients through future research you make possible and the comfort you will provide families through the creation of Aiden’s Starfish Lounge,” said Dr. Charles Schleien, Executive Director, Cohen Children’s Medical Center, Senior Vice President, Pediatric Service Line; Northwell Health.

“The Binkley family is so grateful to Cohen Children’s Medical Center and Senator Elaine Phillips for this incredible honor and opportunity to continue Aiden’s legacy of helping others and searching for cures,” said Lisa Binkley, Aiden’s mother.

The space will be staffed by concierge services and will provide families and patients with privacy and support while at the center. Additionally, “Aiden’s Starfish Lounge” will allow sick children a special space to observe and participate in special activities safe from the

general population at the children's hospital.

The funding will also be allocated to support pediatric cancer research at Cohen Children's Medical Center with genomics and clinical trials. Physicians and scientists will now have further resources to help unlock answers about why disease occurs in clusters in families and how new drugs can be used safely to treat diseases more effectively in patients.

In July 2008, Aiden was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called Rhabdomyosarcoma. During his illness, the Binkley family learned of the St. Baldrick's Foundation, the largest private funder of childhood cancer research grants. St. Baldrick's is known for their signature head-shaving events where individuals shave their heads and raise money for lifesaving childhood cancer research. In 2009, Aiden participated in his first St. Baldrick's "Shave Off" event in Floral Park and since that event, the local events have raised over \$2 million, making Floral Park the sixth top fundraiser in the world for the St. Baldrick's Foundation.

"In the memory of Aiden Binkley, the St. Baldrick's Foundation and community members have worked selflessly to continue searching for a cure for childhood cancer. This funding will contribute to those efforts and honor Aiden," Senator Phillips said. "With more children losing their life from cancer yearly than any other disease, we must continue to provide and raise funds for lifesaving research."

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