

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ian's Friends Foundation, Trailblazing Organization Funding Pediatric Brain Cancer Research, Announces 4th Annual WhatIFF Symposium

Shark-Tank Style Event Features 50+ Leading Doctors, Researchers, and CNN's Rene Marsh as Keynote

(Atlanta) - Ian's Friends Foundation (IFF), a non-profit organization dedicated to funding novel pediatric brain tumor research and supporting affected families, announces the 4th Annual WhatIFF Symposium in the search to find a cure for the leading cause of death in children under 20.

WhatIFF is a collaborative brain trust featuring more than 50 leading doctors, clinicians, and researchers from leading institutions around the globe, including Johns Hopkins, Duke, and Emory University. These medical pioneers pitch their most innovative ideas for advancing pediatric brain cancer treatment and fellow attendees vote on the most innovative treatment modalities. The top three projects receive a grant of up to \$100,000 each from IFF to accelerate the research.

"Our goal is to cure pediatric brain cancer NOW," says Cheryl Yagoda who founded IFF with her husband Phil. "Current funding mechanisms are too slow to get us to that goal in real-time. With WhatIFF, we're breaking down barriers and supporting ideas and collaborations that can expedite our objective of finding new treatments and cures for pediatric brain tumors."

René Marsh, CNN correspondent and fervent advocate for pediatric brain cancer awareness, will be this year's keynote speaker. Her children's book, *The Miracle Workers: Boy vs. Beast* is an inspirational tale about the power of hope. Rene has donated all proceeds from the sale of her book to pediatric brain cancer following the loss of her son, Blake. René's candidness about her journey following the loss of her son from pineoblastoma, a rare pediatric brain cancer, has brought crucial attention and has touched the hearts of many. Marsh is dedicated to bridging the funding gap when it comes to pediatric cancers, as only 4% of U.S. government spending on cancer research goes to pediatric cancers with less than 1% dedicated to pediatric brain cancer*.

"Blake was treated with chemotherapy drugs that were designed for adults four decades ago, then given another drug that was designed seven decades ago," says Marsh. "Is this how we're trying to solve or cure this disease when we know the biology of a child's cancer is very different than that of an adult? I'm thrilled to be a part of the WhatIFF Symposium in the hopes of truly finding innovating cures for the future."

Founded in 2006 by Phil and Cheryl Yagoda after their son Ian was diagnosed at the age of two with an inoperable brain tumor, IFF has been steadfast in accelerating research to discover new treatments and methodologies and ultimately find a cure for pediatric brain tumors. Since its inception, IFF has raised over \$40 million, funding 50 groundbreaking research projects at 26 world-renowned U.S. institutions. For more

information about Ian's Friends Foundation and the WhatIFF Symposium, please visit www.iansfriendsfoundation.com.

Event details:

InterContinental Buckhead

September 20 and 21, 2024

About Ian's Friends Foundation:

Ian's Friends Foundation (IFF) is a 501©3 non-profit organization dedicated to funding pediatric brain tumor research and supporting families affected by this disease. Founded in 2006 by Phil and Cheryl Yagoda, IFF funds innovative research focused on the immediate need to develop groundbreaking therapeutic methodologies to treat and cure pediatric brain tumors.

About René Marsh:

René Marsh is an award-winning journalist, author, and advocate for pediatric brain cancer awareness. Her book, "Miracle Workers," chronicles her journey following the loss of her son, Blake, to pediatric brain cancer. René's courageous advocacy has brought crucial attention to this devastating disease and inspired countless families worldwide.

IFF NIH Recognition Projects:

- IFF-funded Tumor Monorail Device has secured "Breakthrough Status" from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), fast-tracking the development of this potentially life-saving treatment for aggressive brain tumors.
- Initial research funded by IFF resulted in a National Institute of Health UO1 grant for "Project Brainslice," a multi-institutional effort to identify therapeutic neurological agents using the organotypic brain slice culture platform.
- A project seed funded by IFF at Johns Hopkins All Children's Foundation received a prestigious R01 NIH grant for pediatric cancer research.
- Emory University provost Ravi Bellamkonda received the NIH Director's Transformative Research Award for using electrical fields to treat aggressive pediatric cancer, a project fully supported by IFF.

*According to the National Pediatric Cancer Foundation.