

# Peds Pals Program Guide

## Cause for Action:

- Children currently or previously treated for cancer or blood disorder have delayed cognitive and/or social skills from illness, treatment, or missed school time

## Where is the program?

The program is based at the [Upstate Cancer Center](#), 750 E. Adams St. Syracuse, NY 13210, but many activities take place at community locations.

## Who does the Peds Pals program serve?

The program serves pediatric patients of the Waters Center for Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders at the Upstate Cancer Center, including those receiving inpatient and outpatient care

## How does the program serve this population?

This program is primarily funded and supported by Paige's Butterfly in an effort to fight pediatric cancers. Families with children receiving care at the Upstate Cancer Center may elect to have their children (Little Pals) matched with Upstate Medical University students (Big Pals) for educational, social, and emotional support. Most activities are for Big and Little Pals, but there are activities throughout the year for members of the Little Pals' families. Activities include homework help, reading, visits to the zoo, dining out, Lights on the Lake, holiday parties, playing card/board games, etc.

## What would I do as a student?

As a Big Pal, you would provide tutoring and companionship. While social and emotional development is important, a major component of the program is to help Little Pals keep up with their school work, therefore, while many activities are intended to be fun, there must also be time for academic achievement and enrichment activities.

## How often would I serve?

Students are not required to serve for a specific number of hours, however, a **two year commitment** is required to participate in this program. Pairs of students which consist of a first year and a second year match with a patient to ensure consistency from one year to the next.

## What are the community impacts?

Upstate Medical University students help pediatric patients through the challenges associated with frequent or extended school absences during treatment, changes in physical appearance, medication management and pain. The program provides families respite from caregiving and gives them opportunities to participate in the same types of activities as families that don't have a sick child. If only for a few brief moments, kids and families get to feel "normal". The program also provides an opportunity to identify other supports and/or services the patient or family may need.