Stephanie and her husband's little boy, Lucas, (pictured below), started complaining of headaches. "Then Lucas started vomiting," with both parents living and working in Florida, their lives turned upside down. Lucas was 3 1/2 years old when he was diagnosed with brain cancer and needed to be treated out of state.

In this Reflective, Gratitude and Giving Time of the Year, What is Your Message, Your Example and Your Imprint on the World?

The below comments were made by a very successful and fulfilled individual when he was asked: "What would your advice be for.... ?"

His answer was a matter of fact and simply put: "You've got to have tough skin. People aren’t always going to see it how you see it — especially in the beginning. When you haven’t yet accomplished anything, the whole world’s going to doubt you. You have to believe more than anyone else. You have to know that you’re going to hear way more no’s than yes's, but you've got to fight. You've got to have tunnel vision. People are going to be hurtful. They will turn you down, they won't answer your phone calls, and they’re going to make you feel insecure. It takes a different type of drive to get through all of that."

In my professional tennis career and children's cancer foundation work, those words are very familiar. Even in present times, that message is relatable in challenging to accomplish daily efforts, research based success and award winning efforts being made by Little Star Foundation on an annual basis.

This is the reflective, gratitude and giving time of year. What is your advice and your example? What is your imprint on the world?

Lucas, Cora and others share theirs in this issue. No better time than the present to know your message, example and your imprint on the world.

Little Star Foundation provides important financial assistance & other care support for families that hospitals, like Lucas' St Jude Hospital, insurance & stay facilities like Ronald McDonald Houses are unable to provide for families. To help newly diagnosed children with cancer & their families & others struggling day to day Luke & Cora share their story. What is Luke's favorite saying? "Never give up!" Cora, from Calif., also going through a tough cancer battle, shares her smile, ups & downs & her love of rainbows & unicorns.

Pictures: Lucas in the hospital. Cora before & after cancer diagnoses.

Donate Today!

Your donation matters! Donate today to improve the lives of children.

Donate to Little Star at www.littlestar.org
“Crying is all right in its way while it lasts. But you have to stop sooner or later, and then you still have to decide what to do.” ~ C.S. Lewis
It is common knowledge that young amateur and professional athletes sacrifice a great deal. They miss normal rites of passage their childhood and teenage counterparts enjoy freely while they train, train and train.

Like Little Star Foundation's Founder, Andrea Jaeger, I too was one of those kids spending my youth in both amateur and professional sports. We were able to take many negative experiences and use our adolescent learned drive, dedication, focus and commitment to bring benefits and success to our adult projects and careers.

Science, medicine, media, sports and global industries are beginning to understand the harsh costs on youth in sport and life. Thankfully, new studies, safer environments and better practices are being developed in youth sports to have better support systems. Decisions made to help the mind, body and spirit of children and people of all ages are important.

This brings up what the mere mention of the word "Sacrifice" means. Society has idolized the word. It shouldn't. As a child, choices and voices of decisions can be hard to come by. Once adult age, adults have the legal right to make the best decisions to follow their highest self and best values. With a child in a life threatening disease situation, parents make huge decisions. Parents, in general, have to navigate their roles daily with constant critical care decisions too.

Pursuing athletics, education, careers, relationships and especially in parenting, "sacrifice" isn't a newfound concept. According to several research studies, "sacrifice" is an old way of thinking that could be better utilized by announcing to self, "This is my decision, based on the best research, professional expertise, experiences, problem solving, goals, etc. and I accept the outcome and I am accountable for my decisions. If the outcome is not what I hoped for or worked towards I understand life has those experiences too."

I watch parents, families, medical teams, Little Star Foundation's Founder and myself make decisions daily that may look like incredible sacrifices, but in reality, they are well thought out, researched, put to the test decisions that speak to the individual and collective values, callings, higher self, heart, mind, soul and spirit. I wish you each day lived fully, with an "Above All" approach, decisions and an imprint on the world you are excited about and connect to present and future.

Follow Andrea Jaeger and Little Star Foundation on Facebook and @littlestarfoundation on Instagram.

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Posts include news inspirational devotions, special tributes & pictures.
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Your donation will help bring important Long-Term Care, Better Quality of Life Programs & Emergency Care support to children with cancer. Donate today. Thank You!

Adriana who is part of Little Star's Team graduated with BA in Business Management & Masters in Physical Therapy, was a college & professional tennis player & helps Lucas, Cora and other children w/cancer in Little Star Foundation's year round programs in 38 states & worldwide.
Lucas's Mom was confronted with all the emotions a parent goes through when hearing the words, "Your child has brain cancer." The devastated Mom said to Little Star Foundation's Founder, Andrea Jaeger, "I was also told, 'You have to be willing to give up one year of your life to save your son's.' Then our family’s decision of moving from Florida to another state for treatment, having to leave work, struggling with bills, suffering in unimaginable ways, chemo going on for even longer than one year and much more never seemed like a sacrifice because they were decisions willing to be made to help save our child's life."

Cora's Mom, Aubrey, also received devastating news on her child. When the doctor said, “Your daughter has cancer,” she said, “It rocked our entire family. My 9 year old son is old enough to understand and feel what is happening to his younger sister. He is amazing but he struggles too. Cora's cancer treatment continues until February 2023.”

Cora’s Mom, and her Dad employed by the Dept of Navy, like many children with cancer families, had to uproot their family to another state to live near their treatment hospital. Out of pocket expenses soared, both parents couldn't work, the septic shock nearly killed Cora's frail body during treatment during the first 8 months of chemo and lumbar punctures with chemo were their new normal. The majority of families Little Star Foundation helps across the country on average endure 5 years of hospital visits, chemo, surgeries and other treatment modalities. Some families have suffered through as many as 8 relapses and 10 years of cancer treatments.

Left: Cora & her brothers & sister enjoy life before her cancer diagnosis & Cora above begins her cancer chemo treatment.
One of Cora’s doctors is Dr. Bhojwani, pictured right. For over 20 years I have had the honor of working side by side with, being friends and helping Dr. Bhojwani’s pediatric oncology patients from several states and worldwide. A special Leadership Profile:

Dr. Deepa Bhojwani is the Director of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Program within the Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases CHLA; Attending Physician of Hematology, Oncology and Blood and Marrow Transplantation; and Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Studying Medical Journals are the norm for Little Star Foundation. One article: Antibody–Drug Conjugates for the Treatment of Acute Pediatric Leukemia by Dr. Jamie L. Stokke and Dr. Deepa Bhojani

“The outcome of pediatric patients with leukemia has improved dramatically in recent decades with overall survival exceeding 90% in B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (BALL). Modest improvements have been noted in acute myeloid leukemia (AML) with overall survival of greater than 60%. However, survival for patients with high-risk and relapsed leukemia is much lower, and despite highly toxic, intensified therapies, durable remission is difficult to achieve. In addition, patients suffer significant toxicities related to intensive chemotherapy regimens. Published: 13 August 2021 See full article in Journal of Clinical Medicine.

Right: Andrea participating in a fundraising event for Little Star & far right: Andrea getting ready for Holiday Programs.