



## **Agency Overview**

Though modern medical advances have increased the success of (surgically performed) organ transplant procedures to rescue and extend the lives of chronically-ill children facing certain death, this lifesaving (medical) procedure is only the beginning in a new set of lifelong health and economic challenges these survivors and their families must navigate.

Transplants for Children (TFC) exists to empower more than 350 children and their families to master the new and overwhelming challenges of pediatric transplantation with education, counseling, support services and emergency assistance. TFC provides services to the pediatric transplant survivors that seek to improve their quality of life and help them remain medically compliant – no other organization in San Antonio serves this specific need all the while continually bringing organ donor awareness to the community. Because TFC addresses this unique need and occupies a unique niche in the social sector marketplace, advancing forward programmatically to better address our family's emergency needs is critical.

Transplants for Children (TFC) was founded in 1986 by Sharon and Eric Sutton in response to their own personal experience in securing a lifesaving liver transplant for their baby son, Richard, during the time organ transplantation was still in its infancy. In spite of this arduous transplant process and having subsequently endured the tragic loss of their son, the Suttons were inspired to honor his memory by forming an organization dedicated to assisting other families who experience similar difficulties associated with the pediatric transplantation. Today, TFC consistently serves more than 1,500 children, parents and siblings annually through our programs and direct client services and has supported more than 4,500 children and their families since its inception.

TFC envisions a community where every family with a chronically-ill child requiring and receiving an organ or bone marrow transplant receives the essential immediate support, empowerment tools for long-term successful organ retention (survival), medical care self-sufficiency, and counseling support services that promote healing.

Organ transplantation is overwhelming in countless ways. From the drug-induced suppression of the body's immune response to help the survival of an organ after the transplant to sudden financial hardship due to the costs of meeting critical and necessary medical expense obligations. Even for families who've never faced financial challenges, they now face them dramatically during the chronic illness (survival) transplantation process. Two-income households are often reduced to one when a parent becomes the full-time caregiver. Families must temporarily move from their homes to live in hotels close to the transplant center. Lifelong medical bills and required anti-rejection medications often leave these families struggling to pay the necessary basic household bills, provide food for their families and meet these new and expensive medical obligations.

In years past, families who came to TFC for emergency food assistance were often directed to the local community pantries, however, it became clear that these families with immune-suppressed children having interacted with other food assistance clients with minimal or no access to primary healthcare become exposed to now life threatening illnesses and infections. This program seeks to address those challenges.