Lightbridge Foundation Awards $68,000 in 20th Anniversary Year

Lightbridge Academy’s philanthropic arm was seeking to award $20,000 to grant 20 wishes to celebrate its anniversary. To say the team exceeded its goal is an understatement.

ISELIN, NJ (PRWEB) February 01, 2019 -- The best part of achieving your goals is the ability to set another, higher goal. Early education and child care franchise Lightbridge Academy can attest to this on multiple fronts thanks to a wildly successful year celebrating two decades in business. Giving back has been a part of the brand’s DNA from the beginning; founder and CEO Guy Falzarano created the Lightbridge Foundation as an extension of the brand’s Circle of Care philosophy in 2001, just three years after its first center opened.

To date, the Lightbridge Foundation has given away nearly $450,000 to those in need -- including a whopping $68,000 awarded in grants and support this year.

Dina Duffy, the foundation’s executive director, explained her team’s original goal was to grant 20 wishes with $20,000 in celebration of Lightbridge Academy’s 20th anniversary. The Lightbridge Foundation raised funds through a variety of activities and events, including its inaugural Field Day, an event full of fun games and friendly competition challenges--including a baby race-- that Duffy said had “phenomenal” participation from kids, their families and Lightbridge staff across all of its locations.

Field Day and several other events helped the foundation raise nearly $40,000 over the year, which when coupled with funds reserved from prior years, allowed for a record $68,000 in donations being awarded by the Lightbridge Foundation. For Duffy, being able to support the greater community in such a substantial way holds great personal meaning.

“I lost my son two years ago, and if it wasn’t for my Lightbridge family, I don’t know what I would have done,” Duffy said. “When you go through something like that, you want to reach out to others to help them with what they’re going through.”

The Lightbridge Foundation prides itself on supporting anyone who falls within the company's Circle of Care philosophy: children, families, staff, franchisees and the greater community regardless of their affiliation with Lightbridge. Duffy detailed the variety of community members the foundation granted wishes to over the course of the year, from a staff member who needed medical equipment in order to come home from the hospital, to children diagnosed with cancer in need of expensive support, to a community member with nine children who lost everything in a fire.

“We work very hard to find some way to help,” Duffy said. “Whether it is through active participation in community events, volunteering or providing financial support, there’s heart involved. For us, it’s all about demonstrating that we care deeply for those families in need and are here to support them through their journey.”

One beneficiary of the Lightbridge Foundation was Lisa Hayward, a longtime Lightbridge Academy staff member who began her career while still in college as a teacher’s assistant located in Rutherford, New Jersey. Hayward eventually received a full-time teaching position at another Lightbridge center in nearby Clifton where she has worked ever since. When Hayward’s triplet daughters were born prematurely, the foundation...
stepped in to help.

“When my daughters were born at 29 weeks, we didn’t know what to expect,” Hayward said. “Lola and Delilah spent 66 days in the NICU, while Stella spent 113 days there. I was on a lengthy maternity leave, some of which was unpaid. The Lightbridge Foundation’s grant helped us pay for expenses for travel to NYC to see our girls daily, as well as help us make ends meet before I could go back to work.”

For Hayward, Lightbridge’s impact on her family goes far beyond the tangible support they received during an extremely difficult time.

“The family at Lightbridge has been part of our lives for a long time,” she said. “Not having to stress about financial issues, being able to focus on our girls getting stronger and enjoying our time together. I was completely taken aback and didn’t expect such generosity.

Now happy and healthy, Hayward’s daughters are enrolled in Lightbridge Academy. “The staff is extremely supportive of us as parents and our girls, and we know that their time there will be well spent,” she said.

After an incredible year of giving, Duffy is already motivated and ready to kick into high gear for next year’s efforts to support deserving individuals within the Circle of Care like Hayward and her family.

“There is never a lack of families needing support,” Duffy said. “It’s my job as executive director to raise the funds and resources to help the foundation meet that demand. We are reaching out to larger companies and conducting bigger fundraising events than just inside our centers. I know the difference we make and am passionate about continuing to building the Lightbridge Foundation in order to supporting the families in the communities we serve.”

About Lightbridge Academy: Established in 1997, Lightbridge Academy provides early education and child care to children ages six weeks through kindergarten, as well as special programming for children up to 10 years old during school holidays, breaks and summer camp. The company franchised in 2011 in an effort to expand their distinctive concept throughout the Northeast; it currently has over 100 child care centers either open, under construction or in development throughout Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Guy and Julia Falzarano founded the company based on core values and a Circle of Care philosophy that places equal importance on the needs of children, their families, teachers, center owners, and the community. Lightbridge Academy was ranked on the Entrepreneur Magazine Franchise 500 in 2019 and on the Franchise Times Top 200+ in 2018. To learn more about Lightbridge Academy, prospective families and franchisees are encouraged to visit www.LightbridgeAcademy.com or call (732) 980-1900 x 199.
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