



When the Poseys visited a young cancer patient, Buster—in goofy dad mode—had the little guy in stitches.



The scene at the Buster and Kristen Posey Fund's 2016 gala that raised half a million to provide grants to research hospitals and organizations that support kids diagnosed with pediatric cancer. Guests dined at tables overflowing with loads of goodies autographed by Buster, and snagged selfies with the popular catcher as well. "It's obviously very humbling that we can play a role like that," he says of the couple's charitable impact.

PHILANTHROPY

THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT MY JOB

Buster and Kristen Posey team up to fight pediatric cancer, and shine a much-needed spotlight on a disease that's "so easy to ignore," says Kristen.

BY MICHELLE KONSTANTINOVSKY

Kristen Posey can't remember exactly how **Cannon Wiggins** came across her radar, but the little boy's story left a lasting impression. "He was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma," she says of the now 5-year-old, who has been living with the form of nervous system cancer for most of his life. "He's just a couple of days older than our twins, so it really broke my heart."

Moved by Cannon's story, Kristen connected with his mother, **Melissa**, and forged a cross-country friendship with the Florida family. After learning more about their journey, she devised a game plan with her husband, famed San Francisco Giants catcher **Buster Posey**. "Having this platform, we've always wanted to give back to something we felt very passionate about," Buster says. "Cannon is so close to our kids in age and it was palpable for Kristen; she could put herself in Melissa's shoes."

In early spring 2016, The Buster and Kristen Posey Fund was born.

With support from the Giants, the couple partnered with organizations like UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital and the V Foundation to raise funds for pediatric cancer research and treatment and help families like the Wiggins. As parents, Kristen and Buster felt compelled to not only support the fundraising cause, but to spread awareness and education about the often-overlooked and underfunded illness: While more than 15,000

adolescents are diagnosed each year, just 4 percent of cancer funds raised in the United States go toward pediatric research.

"It's one of those things that, unless it directly affects you or a friend or family member, it's so easy to ignore," Kristen says. "Buster and I are just two people with healthy kids—we don't take that for granted, and we're trying to get as much money raised so we can fund trials to get better treatments for kids."

To date, the Poseys have generated more than \$788,000 for the cause through direct donations and partnerships with brands like New Era Caps, Toyota and Under Armour. The first-edition New Era's Buster Posey Pediatric Cancer Awareness 9FORTY cap raised over \$50,000 last year, and a second edition is on its way. Toyota, via Charity Buzz, raised another \$50,000 by auctioning off the player's used Tundra. "It's blown my mind how generous Buster's partners have been," Kristen says. "And the Giants have been amazing—we couldn't ask for a better organization. They've been right by our side."

The team's home turf of AT&T Park will serve as the site for a Pediatric Cancer Day on September 2, as well as The Posey Fund's second annual fundraising event on September 14. Last year's inaugural benefit featured guest ap-

pearances by **Dick Vitale** and **Phillip Phillips** and took in upward of \$550,000 for the fund's efforts. As details for this year's fundraiser come together, the direct impact of last year's efforts is clear: The Poseys are currently funding a three-year grant of \$200,000 per year to support neuroblastoma research at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, as well as a grant for the Children's Fund at Benioff Children's

Hospital to support the work of **Dr. Mignon Loh** and her colleagues.

While raising money is at the core of the Poseys' mission, it doesn't represent the entirety of their good works, which also include quality time with affected families. "We go to different hospitals around the Bay Area once a month and we also have different groups out to the field if

they're well enough to come," Kristen says. The prospect of spending time with their sports idol can have powerful effects on the kids; Kristen recalls one 4-year-old girl in particular who left her hospital bed for the first time in days to don a dress and greet the player.

"It's one of the great things about my job," Buster says. "It's obviously very humbling that we can play a role like that. I want my kids once they're older and understand life a little more to appreciate that as well." **NHG**

"IT'S ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT MY JOB"

—Buster on giving back