

Our Founder

Jan Wheeler, Ed. D., is the Founder and Executive Director of Project Joy and Hope for Texas, a nonprofit organization she established in 2000 to provide vital support to children facing life-limiting medical conditions and their families. With a background in education and a passion for compassionate care, Jan recognized the need for comprehensive resources that go beyond medical treatment, offering emotional, financial, and practical assistance to families enduring the most challenging circumstances.

Under Jan's visionary leadership, Project Joy and Hope has grown into a pillar of support for families across Texas and beyond. The organization provides safe housing near medical facilities, educational opportunities for children and siblings, bereavement care, and community programs that nurture resilience and hope. One of the organization's hallmark initiatives is **The Tulip Project**, a residential facility that offers housing and supportive care services to families with critically ill children, alleviating the burden of travel and allowing families to remain together during treatment.

Jan's compassionate approach extends beyond the immediate needs of families. She is committed to addressing the emotional well-being of caregivers, providing grief support for families who have lost children, and fostering a community of care. Her work with Project Joy and Hope also emphasizes the importance of education and advocacy, ensuring that families are equipped with the tools and knowledge to navigate complex medical systems and make informed decisions.

With decades of service, Jan has built a lasting legacy, transforming Project Joy and Hope into a widely respected organization that has touched the lives of thousands. Her dedication to uplifting families in crisis, combined with her strategic leadership, has earned her recognition within the medical and nonprofit communities, making her an inspirational figure in the realm of pediatric palliative care and family support.

The Valerie Grace Wheeler Campus for Pediatric Palliative Care

Valerie Grace Wheeler learned that she had cancer when she was barely a teenager, having celebrated her 13th birthday a few short months before receiving the harsh news of her diagnosis of metastatic Ewing's sarcoma.

Words seem inadequate to describe this exceptional young woman. Friends and family called her Val, while many called her "Amazing Grace." Astounding everyone with her determination, courage, positive attitude, and spiritual strength, Valerie touched hundreds of people throughout her experience with cancer. She died June 25, 1999, at age 15, before she could begin her sophomore year of high school.

Valerie was an honors student at Sam Rayburn High School, a talented artist, an outstanding athlete, and most of all, a person who had true compassion for others. Because of her faith in God, she believed in the hope that each new day could bring.

