

Jennie Moreland: A Superhero for Children with Special Needs

In 2008, Jennie Moreland gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Ainsley. Shortly thereafter, her daughter was diagnosed with Williams Syndrome. Williams Syndrome is a genetic disorder resulting in various learning disabilities, as well as some heart defects. In learning about Williams Syndrome, Jennie and her husband, Steve, discovered Ainsley would require occupational, physical, and speech therapies. This revelation led to a lengthy and involved search for programs she felt could provide everything for Ainsley. The result was Signal Centers. For Jennie, Signal Centers became a one-stop shop for everything Ainsley would need for her transition from infant to toddler to school-aged child.

While at Signal Centers, Jennie recognized a potential lack of local and statewide funding. After speaking with staff, she promptly dedicated herself to the roles of fundraiser and event organizer. “I knew I had creative ideas and community connections,” said Moreland. “I wanted to bring resources to children I think are often forgotten and an after-thought in our community.” And that is just what she did. Jennie passionately filled a funding gap with fundraisers that would last for years. From a highly successful golf tournament, Swing for Signal Centers, to a wine tasting event, Grapes on the Green, Jennie brought drive, determination, and dynamic energy year after year. While she often seems to be a one-person show, Jennie humbly shares the credit. “I couldn’t do what I do without my incredible family, friends, and all those who give from their hearts.”

Currently, Ainsley attends Wallace A. Smith School in Ooltewah. Even though her daughter is no longer with Signal Centers, the legacy Jennie and her family created through fundraising lives on. Never one to rest, she continues her dedication to children with special

needs through her church and volunteering with both the Community Kitchen and Wallace A. Smith School. She is also a strong supporter of non-profit agencies through the United Way and through her employer, Unum. Jennie was recently chosen as a committee member to help bring about education equality in Hamilton County. The goal of everything she does is to give every child equal opportunities, inclusion, and genuine exposure to the same curriculum as other students. “If you don’t give every child the same opportunity, how will you ever really know what he or she can or can’t do?” She believes by doing so, we can find out just a child is truly capable of achieving.

In her free time, which is sparse, as you can imagine, Jennie loves spending time with her family through sports, Tennessee football, tubing, and water skiing.