

Christine DiBona Lobley '09

Executive Director
Fred's Footsteps



"My career journey has been anything but typical," says Christine DiBona Lobley '09 (far right). "After an incredible four years at Notre Dame, I went to Lehigh University to study Industrial Engineering. I graduated from Lehigh and took a job at SEI Investments. Life seemed to be going exactly as I planned. Then, after an 18-month battle with kidney cancer, my dad, Fred DiBona, passed away at the age of 53. I was just 23 years old, and my world was shattered. A close family friend discussed the idea of starting a non-profit organization in my father's memory. The most important thing we remembered about him was the thing we knew we could keep alive — his passion for helping those in need at a critical point in their life. I decided to take a leap of faith and leave my position at SEI to become the Executive Director of Fred's Footsteps. I did not have any experience with non-profit work, but I had a passion for the mission and a hunger to learn as much as I could through our network of supporters. There was a lot of failure in the beginning, but I always kept my eyes towards the future with the goal of realizing the impact that was possible through the collective efforts of the community.



At Fred's Footsteps, we believe that a child's health should be a parents' only worry. Fred's Footsteps provides financial relief to hard-working families in the Philadelphia region who find themselves in a crisis due to the costs associated

with caring for a seriously ill, injured, or disabled child. We help working families stay on their feet through a child's illness or injury. We provide direct financial assistance for non-medical expenses, such as household bills, to make up for gaps in income as well as one-time extraordinary expenses, like medical equipment or home modifications. Fred's Footsteps is the only program in the region that provides this type of bridge—not just momentary help—to families during their time of need.

In honor of our tenth anniversary in 2015, we launched a fellowship program which welcomes some of the region's most exemplary young leaders for a year-and-a-half program focusing on servant leadership.

Notre Dame had an incredible impact on how I view myself as a part of a greater community. As a student at Notre Dame,



we learned that committing ourselves in service to others should be ingrained in each and every aspect of our lives. Everyone I interacted with at school taught me that I should approach each aspect of my career and personal life with one question in mind: How can I help? They showed this to me not just through their words, but through their actions. I feel so blessed to be one of the lucky ones who was taught by Sister Nancy. She taught me that life isn't always fair, but it can always be beautiful - if we look for the beauty around us.

I love what I do and feel it is a privilege to do this type of work. We are seeing people at some of the most difficult and vulnerable times of their lives. I often think of the Maya Angelou quote "People won't remember what you said or what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel". The interaction we have with the people we work with can have a profound impact in their lives. The financial support we give them is crucial; but the empathy and compassion can help show them that there are good people in the world who care about what they are going through."

To learn more about Fred's Footsteps, visit fredsfootsteps.org.



I feel the most fulfilled when a family tells us that we helped them realize that no matter how difficult things get, they are not alone.