



# Grin Kids

# Media Kit

21 Years of Magic

# About

## Ace & TJ's Grin Kids

When Ace & TJ began their morning radio show in Charlotte, N.C., they were besieged by requests from numerous nonprofits. They began donating time and money to a number of different charities but eventually felt called to develop their own charity dedicated to bringing joy into the lives of terminally ill and chronically disabled children.

In January 2000, Ace & TJ's Grin Kids was born as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charity. The organization got its name from their morning show motto "You Grin, You're In!" Each year, the nonprofit aims to provide a new group of terminally ill and chronically disabled children, and their families with a magical and memorable five-day, all-expense-paid vacation to Walt Disney World.





The annual Disney Trip is an all-expense-paid vacation including air travel, ground transportation, Disney Park Hopper passes, meals, hotel rooms at a Disney Resort, Meet & Greet with some of the famous Disney Characters and Disney Dollars for souvenirs. Each day is meticulously planned to ensure that the trip is filled with joy and memories – not only for the child who is terminally ill and chronically disabled, but also for the deserving families who are in need of a true vacation and dedicated time as a family. The Walt Disney World trip is funded exclusively by listener donations, fundraising events and corporate donations. Ace, TJ and the Grin Kids team all join the children and their families for a magical trip of a lifetime.

Over 580 children and their families have been able to attend since Grin Kids' inception. The 2020 trip included 20 Grin Kids and 125 adults and siblings. Though the organization continues to bring smiles to new faces and families each year, once you're a grin kid, you're always a grin kid!

# Leadership Team

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## Ace



Enamored with radio since high school, Ace is one of the few people you'll meet who is doing what he has always wanted to do. Ace worked all airshifts, was a Program Director, Assistant Program Director and Promotions Director before settling into his now 27-year partnership with TJ. Ace is married to his wife Amanda and the father of two, daughter Payton (deceased) and son Cade, and loves all of them almost as much as he loves Louisiana State University and all LSU sports teams. A 1991 graduate of LSU with a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism, Ace still dreams of using his four years of eligibility on any LSU

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## TJ



TJ is co-founder of Grin Kids and is the wittiest member of the radio show. He co-hosts the show with Ace and constantly uses sarcasm to take his humor to the next level. TJ and his wife Jodi have two children, Lanie and Aiden, who take care of their golden-doodle, Dutch. Before getting into radio, TJ was a Purchasing Agent for a lumber company and says he'd probably be a teacher and coach if it weren't for the show! One more thing you need to know: "I know everything there is to know about women!"

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## Liana



Serving as the executive director of Ace & TJ's Grin Kids, Liana works with Ace & TJ to ensure their long-term vision is being fulfilled while handling all the details. Liana not only oversees the logistics for the big Disney trip itself, she also manages the day to day operations including finances, development, and public relations all while managing multiple fundraising events throughout the year. When she's not out changing the lives of children who are terminally ill and chronically disabled, she's at home spending time with her husband Jason and their five children, or catching a nearby yoga class.

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## Lizz



Lizz Updegraff serves as director of philanthropic giving for Ace & TJ's Grin Kids. She is responsible for researching and securing donors and sponsors to help raise funds for Grin Kids' annual trip. As a seasoned professional in the worlds of communications and non-profit management, she was given an opportunity to join Ace & TJ's Grin Kids' Board of Directors. However, after serving for six months, she accepted a permanent position on the Grin Kids team. Lizz received her undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and her graduate certificate through Strayer University. On her days off, you will find her spending time with her friends and family or training for her next half-marathon.

2020

Ace & TJ's

# Grin Kids



## Meet Willy

Willy Murdock is a spunky 5-year-old from Statesville, North Carolina. He loves superheroes, wrestling and playing with his little brother Malachi. He was diagnosed with Biliary atresia, a rare disease of the liver and bile ducts that occurs in infants. As a result, he received a liver transplant. He also has Perthes Disease and Chronic Immunosuppression.

Though he struggles with his health, Willy doesn't let his diagnoses slow him down! He has dreams of being a policeman when he grows up to fight crime and keep the community safe. He can't wait for Disney and is most excited to meet Donald Duck and Aladdin.

2020

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# Grin Kids



## Meet Emily

Emily is an energetic, fun-loving 5-year-old from Charlotte, North Carolina. She loves spending time with her family and her favorite hobby is playing with baby dolls. Emily suffered third-degree burns over 58% of her body. She has also had a trach placement and suffers from balance issues.

Emily is most excited to ask Aladdin and Jasmine to teach her how to twirl like they do. She wants to have fun with her family and see lots of cool stuff at Disney.

# In Their Own Words

Grin Kids families reflect on their trip of a lifetime

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“Our favorite thing was getting to see and meet all the amazing people who made this trip possible. We will be grateful to Ace & TJ’s Grin Kinds for the rest of our lives. ”

-**The Stroupe family**

“For us, it was a good time to have a family vacation. We spend so much time in and out of hospitals and doctor’s offices, so it was really good to just have fun, show the kids a great time and make memories. ”

- **The Perez family**

“A big highlight for us was meeting all the other families. Everyone understands each other and what we all go through on a daily basis, so connecting with them has been amazing. ”

- **The Cashion family**

“We appreciate Ace & TJ’s Grin Kids tremendously. The trip meant the world to our family and we are forever grateful. ”

- **The Hall family**

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# The Facts

- Over 580 children and their families have gone on Ace & TJ's Grin Kids Disney trips
  - 27 fundraising events occurred leading up to the 2020 Grin Kids Disney trip
  - 200 volunteers donated more than 1,200 hours of their time
  - 450 slices of pizza were devoured on the 2020 trip
  - 20 Grin Kids were accompanied by 125 siblings in 2020
  - 125 Mickey ears were worn throughout the five-day 2020 trip
  - 625 Grin Kids colored tees zoomed around Disney rides
  - 990 Mickey Mouse waffles were consumed for breakfast on the 2020 trip
  - One gazillion laughs are shared throughout each trip
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# How To Get Involved

There are many ways to get involved with and help support Ace & TJ's Grin Kids.

- **Volunteer**
    - Ace & TJ's Grin Kids uses volunteers for numerous events throughout the year.
  - **Donations**
    - Ace & TJ's Grin Kids solely relies on the kindness and charitable donations from our partners and supporters to assist in its mission to provide ill and disabled children a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Disney World.
  - **Wish List**
    - Ace & TJ's Grin Kids offers two ways to donate to the Grin Kids Wish list for items to be used or given out during the trip itself:
      - *Option 1* is to make a monetary donation to cover the cost of specific custom items.
      - *Option 2* allows supporters to purchase or collect on their own or with friends.
  - **Host an Event**
  - **Shop for a Cause**
    - Shopping on Amazon through a special link allows individuals to give back just by shopping. Just sign up at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Ace & TJ's Grin Kids as your charity of choice.
  - **Sponsorship Opportunities**
    - Sponsors are a part of the charity all year round including various fundraisers such as the Mardi Gras and the annual Ace & TJ's Grin Kids Golf tournament, and the annual trip to Disney.
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# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Are donations to Grin Kids tax deductible?**

Ace & TJ's Grin Kids is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization so unless otherwise noted, your donations are tax deductible.

## **Does Ace & TJ's Grin Kids do anything besides the Disney trip for the kids?**

No. We do fundraising throughout the year in order to take the yearly trip. Our main goal is to take as many families as financially possible on all-expense-paid trip to Disney.

## **How do the children qualify?**

Children must be between the ages of 5 – 12 and nominated by someone familiar with the child's condition. This must also be the child's first trip to Walt Disney World.

## **How are the children selected?**

Final recommendations are a result of the collaboration of pediatric doctors and nurses and their medical teams.

## **Can I volunteer?**

Yes, there are several opportunities throughout the year that we need qualified staff and volunteers for Grin Kids fundraising events. We receive many requests for volunteers who would like to assist during the Disney World trip, however at this time the trip is staffed by the Grin Kids board team, Ace & TJ Show members and the medical advisors to Grin Kids.

## **When is the Grin Kids trip?**

Our next trip to Disney World is planned for January 2022. Applications will open for this trip are open now and the deadline for applications will be June 30, 2021.

## **How do I apply for Ace & TJ's Grin Kids?**

To apply, an application must be submitted through [grinkids.org](http://grinkids.org). While the application can be filled out by a family member or a friend, please note that it must be completely filled out and may sometimes require information from the child's physician.

## **Where did you come up with the idea for Grin Kids?**

In the first few years of the Ace & TJ Show, the radio personalities were very involved in many charitable causes, being pulled in different directions, and were not able to accommodate as many requests as they wanted to for charity events. All of the priority events centered around helping children and in 1999, they decided to create Grin Kids...to focus the fundraising efforts, to be able to create a memorable experience for truly unique and special children, to give happiness to families who may have never experienced a "family vacation" before and to give back to the community that supports our show.

## **Where can I learn more?**

Visit our website at [grinkids.org](http://grinkids.org) or our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/GrinKids](https://www.facebook.com/GrinKids).

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# Sponsors

A few of the sponsors who helped make the 2020 Grin Kids dream into a reality include:

