

# Taking Community Service National: Paul Ayoub '70 and Lizzie Ayoub '09



**T**his July, Paul Ayoub '70 was elected as Chair of the National Board of Directors of ALSAC (American Lebanese Syrian Associates Charities), the fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. St. Jude is among the largest non-profits in the nation and is recognized as one of the world's premier centers for the study and treatment of cancer and other life-threatening diseases in children.

The ALSAC/ St. Jude mission has long been an Ayoub family affair, with three generations contributing and leading the effort: Paul's father, Joseph, Paul, and now his daughter Lizzie '09, who is a senior at Vanderbilt University.

## How has The Park School shaped both your and Lizzie's commitment to community service?

**Paul:** The importance of giving back and serving others are core values woven into the fabric of the School. This was increasingly evident when I was a parent. What impressed me the most, though, was seeing and hearing firsthand those values so deeply embraced and prioritized by the Board of Trustees during the time I served as Secretary. I was pleased that Lizzie could be part of a vibrant school community that modeled those values in so many ways.

**Lizzie:** The Park School taught me the importance of community service. As a student, I remember chopping vegetables with

my mom for the Chop-A-Thon in second grade and getting involved in several community service projects through Helping Hand [now called Service Council] in later years. I agree that community service is a core principle. Park helped shape my belief that service should be a part of everyone's life—no matter what form it takes.

## Please share how important the ALSAC/ St. Jude mission is to you.

**Paul:** I grew up with ALSAC and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital; when I was seven I went door-to-door collecting change from neighbors for what was then the "Teenage March for St. Jude." Prior to becoming Board Chair, I was Vice-Chair and have served on both the ALSAC and St. Jude Board since 1992. During that time, I have chaired the Audit, Finance, Legal and Governance Committees of both Boards. For our family, this is much more than a good cause; it is our life's mission.

My parents Joseph and Ellie Ayoub helped Danny Thomas, the late entertainer, start ALSAC in 1957, and open the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in 1962. My father served on the Board since its inception and with Danny Thomas, wrote the original ALSAC bylaws. My wife, Jane, and I are proud to pass on to Lizzie the tradition of giving to others, as our parents passed onto us.

**Lizzie:** My earliest memory is hearing my dad talk about St. Jude and ALSAC during family dinners. Even though it is a hospital for some of the sickest children in the world, St.

Jude manages to exude a feeling of hope and happiness. I walk through the halls of the hospital and know that my grandfather, "Big Joe," played a huge role in making St. Jude a reality.

## How has your family's involvement shaped your career and studies?

**Lizzie:** As I enter my senior year at Vanderbilt, I'm not sure where my human and organizational development major may lead, but I know I will always be passionately involved with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

I developed my own connection to St. Jude when I visited the hospital for the first time and met a patient named Suzanne at an ice cream party for patient families. She was only a few years older than me and had been diagnosed with neuroblastoma. I remember her scooping ice cream with her dad, with a huge smile across her face. I couldn't help but wonder how she could be so happy, knowing that she was fighting to stay alive every day. Unfortunately, Suzanne lost her battle with cancer and passed away when she was eleven. As music has always been a passion and an outlet for me, I wrote and recorded a song dedicated to Suzanne called "Ice Cream with Suzanne," as a way to tell her story. I spent several years singing this song at St. Jude events across the country. [Ed. Note: You can listen to the song at [www.lizzieayoub.com](http://www.lizzieayoub.com).]

In 2016, my dad and I will publish a book called, *Inspire Me! A Father-Daughter Book of Quotations that Motivate, Teach and Inspire*. We intend to donate all profits to St. Jude.

**Paul:** My work with ALSAC/St. Jude certainly translates to the work I do as a partner at Nutter, McClennen & Fish and the firm's belief in the importance of making a difference. As a member of the firm's Executive Committee, I am particularly proud of Nutter's culture of encouraging lawyers to serve as leaders in the larger community. Deb Manus, our managing partner, often says: "Law is a profession and those privileged to practice it have a duty to give back." It is in that spirit that I served on Park's Board and Alumni Committee and now am involved with the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Board, the Board of the Real Estate Finance Association, the Boston Local Development Corporation and am serving as the Chair of the Building Committee for the Board of Trustees at Nobles.