

# 5p MINUS

## February Newsletter

Volume 42, Issue 1 2026



Adulting is hard—especially when your child is stepping into adulthood, too. In Episode 4 of the BREATHE Podcast, Cathy Vaden shares her family's journey supporting their daughter, Abigail, through a challenging transition and the difficult—but ultimately life-changing—decision to place her in assisted living.

Pour your favorite beverage and listen in. Stay tuned through the end for an inspiring discussion of *The Yes Brain* by Daniel Siegel, with a handy fridge-ready reference to help motivate doing hard things.

Find 5p-Society: BREATHE on your favorite podcast platform. Subscribe, follow us at [www.fivepminus.org](http://www.fivepminus.org), and share with someone who may benefit.

Interested in being a guest or suggesting a future topic? We'd love to hear from you. Take a slow inhale... and an even slower exhale.

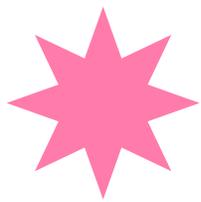


## SURVEY!

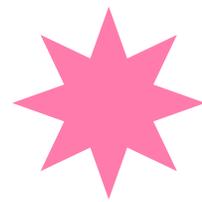
*The 5p- Board of Directors want your opinion regarding the annual conference. Please fill it out. It's just a few questions but your answers are super important to us. Survey will be open until 2/8.*

<https://fivepminus.org/>





# ATTENTION!



As we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the 5P-Society, lets do all we can to get Proclamations from at least 40 states declaring May 2026 as, 5p- Syndrome Awareness Month and May 5 as 5P- Syndrome Awareness Day.

Here is how to request a proclamation from your Governor requesting that they declare May 5 as 5P-Syndrome Awareness Day.

- First, just because a Governor declared May 5 as 5p- Syndrome Awareness Day in 2025 or any previous year – you still will have to ask in 2026 and all future years!
- Start Early – like Billy Masson did for Colorado – the best thing to do is make your request before March 1 as most states say it takes up to six weeks to determine whether or not the request will be granted and to issue the Proclamation.
- Do a google search “Governor OF STATE?” (for your state) This will take you to the Governor’s website.
- On the Governor’s website, on the home page search for “Request a Proclamation” – usually there will be an online form to request the proclamation.
- You are the “requestor” – the requesting organization is “The 5p-Society.”
- -PM ME WITH YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS AND I WILL SEND YOU SAMPLE LANGUAGE TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR REQUESTS.
- Some states do not have online forms – so when you search for “Request a Proclamation” you will be directed to an office – call there and ask how to send an email request for a proclamation.
- Keep a copy of the request and write down the date you submitted it. This will be helpful when you call or email to follow up the request. I suggest that you do this about 2 weeks after you submit the request. Be prepared to call back several times!
- You may have to call a general phone number from the web page and ask to speak with the person who handles requests for proclamations.
- And remember, Governors get hundreds of requests every month for them to declare given days so if the request is turned down, do not take it personally!

If you run into issues, feel free to email me at [Jaggerwatt@hotmail.com](mailto:Jaggerwatt@hotmail.com)

ALSO, WHEN YOU REQUEST A PROCLAMATION, PLEASE EMAIL ME AND LET ME KNOW AS I TRACK THE REQUESTS!

Message from Julie Watt Faqir on Cri Du Chat/5P- Society Facebook Page



# POEM

5p- Syndrome may be rare,  
But love and strength are everywhere.  
Each child unique, each path their own,  
With talents and hearts brightly shown.  
Across our country, every year,  
New families begin a journey here.  
A lifetime of support, care, and grace,  
Helping each child find their place.  
Our Society stands side by side,  
Spreading awareness far and wide.  
With education, guidance, and support,  
For families, teachers, and doctors who support.  
Together we work, together we grow, So every life can shine and glow.  
Because with understanding, care, and heart,  
A better quality of life can truly start.

-Anonymous

# Fundraiser Alert

## Got Coffee & Hot Coca?

We invite you to join us for a Bitty & Beau's Coffee fundraiser. Fundraiser starts February 27, 2026 and ends on March 13, 2026



Perfect Mother's Day Gift!!

*but first, coffee*



### Why Bitty & Beau's Coffee?

Bitty & Beau's Coffee is more than a coffee brand; it's a movement for inclusion and opportunity. By supporting this fundraiser, each purchase not only helps our organization but also contributes to a mission that promotes acceptance and opportunities for people with disabilities.

The 5p- Society will receive 40% profit from each sale. Proceeds will assist the 5p- Society with Outreach, Events and Overhead. For more information contact Laura at [director@fivepminus.org](mailto:director@fivepminus.org).



Order here: <https://fundraisewithcoffee.com/?ref=1173>

5P- SOCIETY IS  
TURNING

40!



**Stay tuned for our April newsletter for a message from our 5P- Society President, Nick Wallace.**

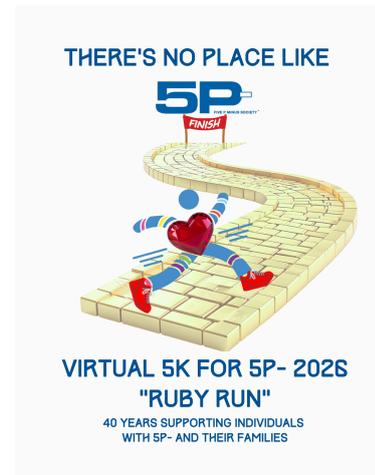
# 5p- Society: 40 years of supporting individuals with 5p- and their families

## May 2026 5p- Syndrome Awareness Month Events

The month of May is just around the corner and we will be in full swing with Awareness Month Activities. The [5p- Society Awareness Month](#) webpage will be packed full of information, flyers, graphics and events. Visit it often as items will be added continuously.

2026 also marks the 5p- Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing support to individuals with 5p- syndrome (also known as Cri du Chat Syndrome) and their families. Join us as we celebrate this remarkable "Ruby" anniversary. Here are few events and information:

"Ruby Run" Virtual 5k for 5p-: Join the hundreds of other 5p- members, families and friends by creating your own team and set up a walk around a park, neighborhood, or track. Several of our families from around the globe participate in and host these events. [Visit our dedicated Facebook page](#) for event information. Click here to sign up for the ["Ruby Run" Virtual 5k for 5p- event](#).



Proclamations: Reach out to your Governor's office and ask for a Proclamation to have May 5, 2026, 5p- Syndrome day (or Cri du Chat Syndrome Day). See page 2 for more information. You can also reach out to Julie Watt Faqir who can guide you or let you know if a Proclamation has already been applied for by another member.

Faces of 5p- profiles: Each day of Awareness Month (and beyond) we will be showcasing one of our amazing individuals with 5p-. We welcome you to join us by providing a short bio and picture of your child or adult with the syndrome. To participate please click on the [information sheet](#), [fill out the form](#) and submit to [fivepminus@gmail.com](mailto:fivepminus@gmail.com).

**FACES OF 5P-**

**5P-**  
WWW.FIVEPMINUS.ORG

Celebrating 40 years supporting individuals with 5p- and their families

*Kate*

33-years-old  
Lakewood, California

**Loves:** Ninja Turtles, Super Kite, my iPad, my dog Rose and her family

**Successes:** Attending a Bachelorette weekend party without my Mom.

**Struggles:** Keeping my room clean

Regional Family Gatherings: We currently have a few Regional Family Gatherings being scheduled around the country and in Alberta, Canada. If you would like to host a Regional Family Gathering, please contact the 5p- Society at [director@fivepminus.org](mailto:director@fivepminus.org) for more information.

# 2026 5P- CONFERENCE SAN ANTONIO, TX

July 23<sup>rd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> 2026

Registration Opens 2/9/26



## HOTEL - SAN ANTONIO MARRIOTT RIVERWALK

You and your families will be steps away from the city's most iconic attraction, The Riverwalk. This is one of the many perks at staying at the conference hotel next year. Being in the heart of downtown, you'll be minutes away from most city attractions.



## A CITY FILLED WITH CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

For over 300 years, the bell towers of Spanish colonial missions have greeted each morning, reflecting a rich history where Mexican, European, and Western influences intertwine to create a one-of-a-kind cultural identity.



## ATTRACTION HIGHLIGHT: MORGAN'S WONDERLAND

Morgan's Wonderland offers 25 Ultra-Accessible™ attractions, sprawled across a 25-acre oasis of inclusion. From a wheelchair-accessible Ferris wheel to catch-and-release fishing, there is truly something for everyone to enjoy!



If you live in Texas and would like to help plan the Texas Conference, please reach out to Angel 832-594-7116 or Adam 512-739-6372. Your help will be greatly appreciated and welcomed.

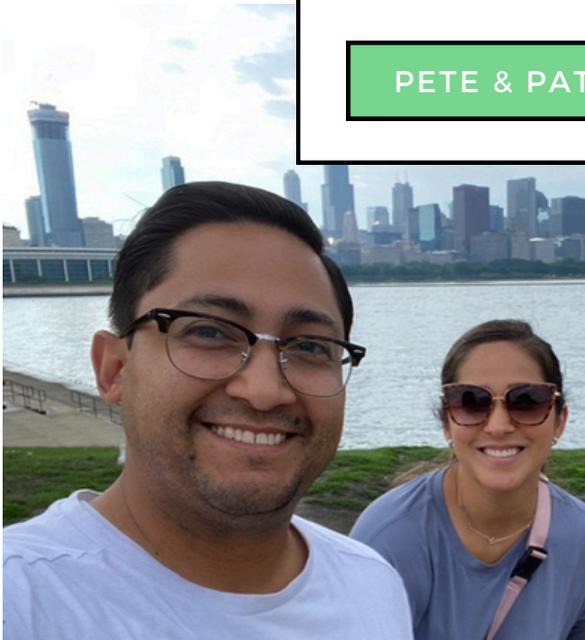


# MEET YOUR 2026 CONFERENCE HOST FAMILIES

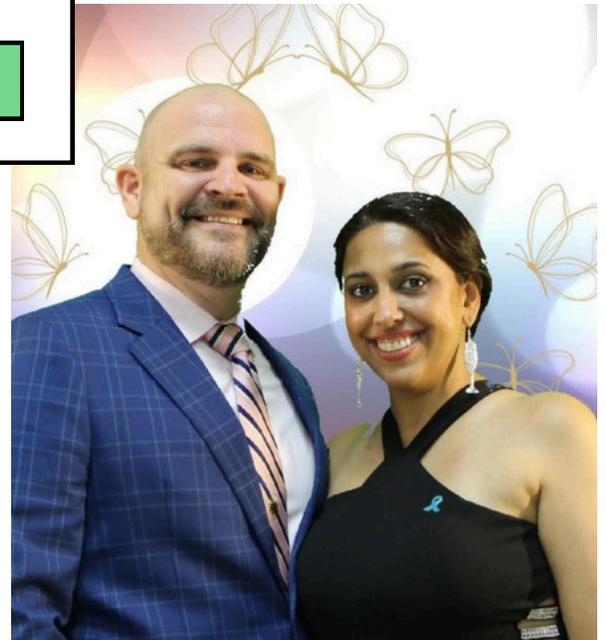


PETE & PATRICIA LONGORIA

NEW  
HOST  
FAMILY



ANGEL & AMABEL ARELLANO



ADAM & ZEENA QUERBACH

# 5p-Tequila Tasting

## A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The Texas Families of the 5p- Society hosted a memorable tequila tasting fundraiser that brought together friends, family, and loved ones in support of a shared mission: education, awareness, and raising critical funds for the Texas 5p- Conference. The Texas families—The Longorias of Buda, The Querbachs of Dripping Springs, The Velas of San Antonio, and The Arellanos of San Antonio—came together to create an evening rooted in community, generosity, and purpose.

The evening was made even more meaningful by the presence of Laura, Executive Director of the Five P Minus Society, who joined the celebration all the way from California. Her visit was truly special and underscored the national support and unity behind the Texas 5p- community.

Guests enjoyed a vibrant night filled with connection and celebration, featuring a lively live auction, an exciting tequila bottle pull, and a heartfelt cash appeal. Adam served as auctioneer and did an outstanding job energizing the room and inspiring generosity throughout the evening.

The night concluded on a high note with an incredible mariachi performance that perfectly captured the spirit of the celebration. Thanks to the overwhelming support of attendees and donors, the event raised just over \$90,000!!

It was an unforgettable evening that showcased the power of community when united for a single cause.



# 5p- Tequila Tasting

## A NIGHT TO REMEMBER



# Family Fun in San Antonio

- River Walk – Stroll along the river, enjoy family-friendly restaurants, and hop on a relaxing boat ride.
- The Alamo & San Antonio Missions – Explore Texas history together at these famous landmarks and scenic outdoor sites.
- Market Square (El Mercado) – A colorful spot filled with music, food, and fun shopping for all ages.
- La Villita Historic Arts Village – A charming area where families can discover local art and culture.
- San Fernando Cathedral – Don't miss the evening light show that brings San Antonio's story to life.
- Theme Park Fun – SeaWorld San Antonio, Six Flags Fiesta Texas, and Morgan's Wonderland offer excitement for kids of all abilities.
- Hands-On Kids' Attractions – The DoSeum, LEGOLAND Discovery Center, SEA LIFE Aquarium, and Magik Children's Theatre.
- Outdoor Adventures – Visit the San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park, Botanical Garden, or enjoy the nearby Hill Country.
- Iconic Views – Take in amazing city views from the Tower of the Americas.







# 2026 Annual Board Meeting

## Board Meeting Update



**THE 5P- SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD ITS ANNUAL WINTER BOARD MEETING IN LAS VEGAS ON JANUARY 23-25. THE BOARD MEETS FOUR TIMES EACH YEAR-TWICE IN PERSON AND TWICE VIA ZOOM-TO GUIDE STRATEGY, SUPPORT FUNDRAISING EFFORTS, AND PLAN FUTURE CONFERENCES.**

**ELEVEN BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDED IN PERSON, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAURA CASTILLO AND NEW MEMBERS CHRISTINA BROWN AND CLARA THOMSEN, WITH THREE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS JOINING VIA ZOOM. WHILE LAS VEGAS IS NOT CURRENTLY SLATED AS A FUTURE CONFERENCE SITE, THE MEETING INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL LOCATIONS BEYOND LOUISVILLE IN 2027.**

**KEY AGENDA ITEMS INCLUDED UPDATES ON THE 2026 SAN ANTONIO CONFERENCE, PROGRESS TOWARD LOUISVILLE 2027, AND EXPLORATION OF NEW FUNDRAISING AND MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES. THE BOARD'S FOUR SUBCOMMITTEES-MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS, FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH, INTERNAL OPERATIONS, AND CONFERENCE OPERATIONS-ALSO MET TO IDENTIFY WAYS TO STRENGTHEN SERVICES FOR MEMBERS.**

**THE WEEKEND CONCLUDED WITH A FUN TEAM-BUILDING MURDER MYSTERY DINNER, FEATURING A SURPRISE ROLE FOR BOARD PRESIDENT NICK WALLACE. THE NEXT BOARD MEETING WILL BE A VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING IN MAY AND THEN THE BOARD WILL CONVENE IN SAN ANTONIO DURING THE JULY CONFERENCE. MEMBERS INTERESTED IN OBSERVING A BOARD MEETING OR SERVING ON THE BOARD ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT LAURA CASTILLO OR ANY BOARD MEMBER.**



**- HUTCH RENK**



# 2026 ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

## COMMITTEE UPDATES



# *COMING SOON*

The Five P Minus Society ([fivepminus.org](http://fivepminus.org)) is excited to announce an important enhancement to how we connect with our members: the addition of SMS text messaging as a new communication channel.

Emails can get buried, and phone calls aren't always convenient. That's why we're expanding our toolkit to include direct SMS text messaging.

This new capability will complement our existing methods rather than replace them. We'll use SMS thoughtfully, while continuing to respect privacy and comply with all relevant regulations (members will have clear options to opt in or out).

We're rolling this out gradually to ensure a smooth experience. Keep an eye out for details soon on how to opt in to text updates.

You can always visit [fivepminus.org](http://fivepminus.org) or contact us directly to learn more or provide feedback. By adding SMS, we're taking another step toward making our support more reachable and responsive. Thank you for being part of the 5P- Society community!



## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

# Traveling with Mila



Traveling has always run through my veins for as long as I can remember. I knew I wanted to be a family who thrived on fun and adventure. Although having its set of challenges, that dream did not change when I became a mom to a daughter with 5p- and then having twins shortly after. Although the future was murky in the moments after the diagnoses, I came into the mindset that we will make it possible.

After years of domestic travel including driving across the country in our 5th wheel to meet at 5p- conferences and explore new cities, we decided to tackle the trek abroad to Europe. Our twin daughters had a wonderful opportunity to attend a summer program in Pistoia, Italy and we decided to include France in our journey for a six week trip of a lifetime.

We have accepted the reality of how hard it is to travel with a child with special needs. I always say, "Let's save a little for next time." We simply cannot see it all. We have learned to stay in locations longer and go slower.

We have learned to pack and travel with less since our daughter has the largest and heaviest luggage filled with medical supplies, formulas, diapers, a travel bed, and special toys. We always expect the unexpected at this point and have become pretty flexible with plans. We have learned helpful tips with airports, tours, lodgings, and feedings. There are also kind people all over this world who have been immensely accommodating and helpful. We hope to inspire other families to take a leap into what may seem impossible whether it's an outing, weekend trip, or even a trip around the world.

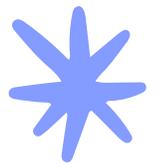
-Candice Rodriguez





# Last call! What sessions would you like to see at the San Antonio conference?

**WE ARE WORKING HARD TO MAKE SURE  
THAT THIS YEARS CONFERENCE IS VALUE-  
ADDED FOR ALL OF OUR ATTENDEES. IF  
THERE IS A TOPIC FOR A SESSION THAT  
YOU WOULD LIKE FOR US TO CONSIDER,  
PLEASE REACH OUT TO ONE OF THE HOST  
FAMILY MEMBERS**



**WE WANT YOUR  
FEEDBACK !**





# Louisville 2027

## UPDATE

Our family has supported the 5p- Society and the upcoming 2027 National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky through a series of grassroots fundraising and community-building efforts designed to both raise support and generate excitement. We hosted a restaurant give-back night, partnering with a local pizza restaurant that donated a portion of that evening's sales to support the conference, providing an easy and family-friendly way for our community to participate. We also created and sold custom-designed shirts through an online pop-up store, allowing friends, family, and supporters to contribute while helping spread awareness of the conference and the 5p- Society beyond our local area.

In addition, we organized an outdoor movie night in our neighborhood, bringing families together for a fun, inclusive evening that highlighted the mission of the Society and the importance of the Louisville conference. We also hosted a regional family gathering for local 5p- families, which, while not a direct fundraiser, played a key role in building excitement, strengthening relationships, and engaging new families in the vision for 2027. Together, these efforts have helped grow local and regional enthusiasm, expand awareness, and build a strong foundation of community support as we continue preparing for a meaningful and impactful conference in Louisville.

# Louisville 2027

## UPDATE



☰ **BONFIRE**

**Different Not Less**

Benefiting the 5p Minus Society 2027 Annual Conference

by Hollie Brookman

5S for 5p Society





# Help Shape the Future of the 5p- Society by Joining Our Board of Directors!



The strength of the 5p- Society lies in its passionate and dedicated leadership. We are looking for parents, friends, and advocates to take on a vital role in guiding our organization forward. If you believe in our mission and want to make a meaningful impact, we invite you to consider joining our Board of Directors.

## Why Serve on the Board?

Becoming a board member is more than a title—it's an opportunity to lead, inspire, and drive change. As a director, you'll help shape policies, strengthen outreach, and ensure we continue to provide resources and support to families affected by 5p- Syndrome. Whether you bring experience in advocacy, fundraising, communication, or simply a deep commitment to our community, your voice matters.

## Who Should Apply?

We welcome parents, friends, and dedicated supporters who want to take an active role in shaping our future.

### Responsibilities:

- Guide the strategic direction of the organization
- Support fundraising and awareness initiatives
- Advocate for the needs of families in the 5p- community
- Assist in planning events, including the annual conference
- Foster collaboration and engagement within our network

## How to Get Involved:

If you're ready to step up and help lead the 5p- Society, we'd love to hear from you! Whether you have extensive experience or simply a passion for making a difference, your contribution is invaluable.

To learn more or express interest, contact Laura Castillo or one of the 5p- Society Board Members. Together, we can continue building a stronger, more connected community!

QUESTIONS?? PLEASE CONTACT LAURA AT [DIRECTOR@FIVEPMINUS.ORG](mailto:DIRECTOR@FIVEPMINUS.ORG).





# Join a Committee—Make a Difference in the 5p- Society!

The 5p- Society thrives on the dedication and passion of its members. Whether you're a parent, sibling, or friend of someone with 5p- Syndrome, your involvement can make a lasting impact. We are calling on our community to step forward and help shape the future of our organization by joining one (or more!) of our committees.

## Why Get Involved?

Volunteering for a committee is an opportunity to lend your skills, build connections, and support the 5p- community in meaningful ways. We especially encourage siblings to get involved—your unique perspective and energy can help us amplify awareness through social media, engage with families, and spread the word about the incredible work being done.

## Our Committees:

**Marketing & Communications** – Help craft and share the messages that raise awareness, educate, and connect our community. If you have experience in writing, design, or social media, this is the perfect place to contribute. Siblings, your expertise in digital platforms can truly elevate our outreach!

**Family Engagement & Outreach** – Strengthen the bonds within our community by coordinating events, resources, and support networks. If you're passionate about making connections and offering guidance, this committee needs you.

**Internal Operations** – Keep the 5p- Society running smoothly by assisting with logistics, planning, and administrative tasks. If you're organized and detail-oriented, your help is invaluable.

**Conference** – Help plan and execute our annual conference, a vital gathering that brings families, professionals, and advocates together. If event planning excites you, this is your chance to create meaningful experiences.

## How to Get Started:

We welcome parents, siblings, and friends who are eager to contribute their time and talents. Whether you have an hour a week or a few hours a month, every effort makes a difference.

Ready to make an impact? Join a committee today and be a part of something extraordinary!

Reach out to Laura Castillo or any of our board members to get started.

QUESTIONS?? PLEASE CONTACT LAURA AT [DIRECTOR@FIVEPMINUS.ORG](mailto:DIRECTOR@FIVEPMINUS.ORG).

