



HOPE RISES

Event Guide



A Masquerade Ball Benefiting Axel's Army

October 10, 2026 | Schnepf Farms | Queen Creek, Arizona

Welcome



Thank you for taking a few moments to open the Hope Rises Event Guide.

Whether someone shared this with you or you discovered it on your own, I'm so glad you're here.

Before I tell you about Hope Rises and Axel's Army, I'd like to introduce you to the little boy who continues to inspire it all—Axel.

My son Axel was full of joy, curiosity, and a heart that drew people in wherever he went. He loved superheroes, make believe adventures, traveling, and making people smile. At just three years old, he was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive childhood cancer called Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma. After fifteen months of a courageous fight, he became our angel and will forever be five years old.

As heartbreaking as losing Axel has been, one thing became clear almost immediately: his story wasn't meant to end. In many ways, it was only the beginning of a story that continues to unfold today.

That story lives on through Axel's Army—a nonprofit dedicated to carrying his light forward by funding research for rare childhood cancers like Axel's, creating moments of joy that remind children and their families they are more than a diagnosis, and providing comfort and connection for those navigating life after the loss of a child to cancer.

Hope Rises is the next chapter of that story.

This guide is an invitation to meet Axel, discover the future we're building in his honor, and explore the many ways you can become part of it. Whether you're opening these pages simply to learn more, considering attending Hope Rises, or exploring a partnership opportunity, I hope you'll find something that speaks to your heart.

People often ask me how I keep going.

The answer isn't that grief has become easier.

It's that loving Axel didn't end when his life did.

Keeping his memory alive, helping other families in his honor, and watching his love continue changing lives gives purpose to even the hardest days.

While I can't give Axel the future childhood cancer took from him, together, we can give that future to someone else.

That's how his story continues.

My hope is that as you turn these pages, you'll not only meet the little boy at the heart of this mission—you'll discover why so many others have chosen to become part of his story.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Hope Rises and Axel's Army.

With love, hope, and gratitude,



Axel's Mom and Founder of Axel's Army



Every story has a beginning.
Ours begins with Axel.

The Boy Who Started It All



A Life Filled with Joy

Before there was a mission, there was simply Axel—a little boy who loved with his whole heart and lived with extraordinary joy. Most treatment days, he insisted on dressing up as a superhero before heading to the hospital. Iron Man was his favorite—not necessarily because he could fly, but because they both had a port.

Captain America, Spider-Man, Thor...if there was a superhero, Axel probably owned the costume.

One day, someone asked him who his favorite superhero was. Without missing a beat, he smiled and replied, "Me". That was Axel. And he truly was a superhero. If it weren't for his bald head, you would never have guessed he was fighting the battle of his life. He loved going to the hospital, looked forward to his "superhero power juice" (chemo) and overnight stays, never complained about having his port accessed, and proudly told everyone he loved radiation because going to sleep felt like "getting a massage".

His joy was contagious. Doctors, nurses, and hospital staff couldn't help but smile when he walked through the doors. He endured things that would make most adults crumble, yet he never stopped laughing or loving the people around him.

Cancer never took away what made Axel...Axel.

A Promise That Lives On

When Axel was diagnosed, our world suddenly felt smaller.

But our family was never left to carry that weight alone. Something extraordinary happened.

The world around us grew bigger. Friends showed up. Strangers became family.

Together, they became known as Axel's Army—a community bound by love, hope, and a shared promise that no family should walk this journey alone.

When Axel left this world, that Army didn't disappear. They stayed. They remembered him. They continued to love our family. They reminded us that while his life here on Earth had ended, the impact of his life had not. That's when I realized Axel's Army had become something even greater than a community. It had become a promise.

A promise to help create a future where fewer families face the heartbreak of losing a child to rare childhood cancer. A promise to create moments of joy that remind children and families they are more than a diagnosis. A promise to ensure grieving families never have to walk this road alone.

Today, that promise lives on through Axel's Army.

How We Keep That Promise: The Mission of Axel's Army



Three pillars guide everything we do at Axel's Army.
Together, they reflect our commitment to creating a brighter future
for children and families impacted by childhood cancer.

Relentless Pursuit

Funding bold, innovative
research to find better
treatments and cures for
rare childhood cancers

Moments That Matter

Creating joy, wonder,
and meaningful
experiences for children
and families
during treatment

Love Carries On

Providing comfort,
community, and
connection for families
navigating life after loss

As Axel's Army grows, we'll continue partnering with hospitals, researchers, and organizations
to bring hope, joy, and healing wherever children and families need it most.

Become Part of the Story



Every partnership helps write part of the story.
Some will help researchers pursue breakthroughs that are desperately needed.
Some will create moments of joy for children facing childhood cancer.
Others will walk alongside grieving families so they don't feel quite so alone.

Every partnership matters.

Hope Rises and Axel's Army is only possible because individuals, families, businesses,
and community partners choose to believe in a future that looks different than today.

A future where more children survive.
More moments that matter are created.
More hope is shared.

Whether your partnership helps shape Hope Rises or carries Axel's Army forward long after the evening ends,
you become part of something that will continue changing lives for years to come.

**We invite you to choose the partnership that speaks to your heart
and become part of the story that Axel is still writing.**



Event Details

Saturday, October 10, 2026
The Big Red Barn at Schnepf Farms
Queen Creek, Arizona

Formal Attire | Masquerade Masks (optional)

Evening Schedule

6:00 PM | Cocktail Reception & Silent Auction

7:00 PM | The Hope Rises Story
*Honoring Axel's life and sharing the heart,
mission, and future of Axel's Army*

7:30 PM | Plated Dinner

8:30 PM | The Hope Rises Celebration
Music • Dancing • Silent Auction Finale

An evening inspired by Axel's light
and dedicated to bringing hope, joy, and
connection to families impacted
by childhood cancer.



More Than A Gala

Every detail of this evening has been intentionally chosen to reflect the heart of a little boy who chose joy in the face of unimaginable challenges and inspired everyone around him to do the same.

This isn't simply a night to raise money.

It's where stories become action, generosity becomes impact, and hope continues to rise.

Behind The Mask

Axel loved dressing up as a superhero.

To him, costumes were never about pretending. They were about becoming the hero he already believed he was.

Every cape, every mask, every costume gave him the courage to face whatever battle lay ahead.

Our masquerade honors that same spirit.

For one evening, we invite every guest to celebrate the courage, kindness, and compassion that already lives within them.

Where It All Begins

There was never another place to begin than Schnepf Farms, where some of our family's most treasured memories were made. It's a place forever woven into Axel's story, and it felt only right to begin where his laughter still echoes.

On this special evening, we invite you to gather, celebrate, and help write the next chapter of Axel's story.

What Comes Next: Partnership Opportunities



Your partnership is more than sponsorship of a single evening.
It's an investment in the future of Axel's Army.

Hero Partners and **Legacy Partners** play a vital role in launching Hope Rises and helping build what comes next. Your investment fuels Axel's Army's mission to fund rare pediatric cancer research, create moments of joy for children in treatment, and provide connection for families navigating life after the loss of a child.

Benefit	Hero Partner \$2,500	Legacy Partner \$5,000
Reserved Table for 10 Guests	✓	✓
Seating	Preferred	Premium
Event Signage	Logo recognition	Featured logo recognition
Printed Program	Half-page recognition	Full-page recognition
Hope Rises Website	Recognition	Featured recognition
Event Slideshow	Recognition	Featured recognition
Table Signage	✓	✓
Verbal Recognition during the Program	✓	✓
Founding Partner Recognition	—	✓

Founding Partner Recognition

There will only ever be one inaugural Hope Rises Gala.
Legacy Partners represent the highest level of partnership
for Hope Rises and thus Axel's Army.

As Founding Partners of Axel's Army, you'll forever be recognized
as the individuals, families, and businesses who believed
in this mission from its very beginning.



As a Founding Partner, you'll receive:

- Recognition as one of the Founding Partners who helped launch Axel's Army from its very first chapter
- Permanent recognition as a Founding Partner on the Axel's Army website
- An exclusive annual Founding Partners Briefing, sharing the impact you've helped make possible and what's ahead.
- A personalized Founding Partner framed certificate

A limited number of Hero and Legacy Partnership opportunities are available. We encourage early commitments to ensure availability and maximize recognition.

BECOME A HOPE RISES PARTNER
Scan to select your partnership level
or visit: axelsarmy.org/partner



Partnership Opportunities: Create a Signature Moment



These exclusive partnerships allow you to bring a specific moment of the evening to life—creating an experience guests will never forget, while connecting your name to something deeply meaningful.

Mask Gallery Partner | \$2500

The masquerade theme was inspired by Axel's love of dressing up. As guests arrive, they'll be welcomed by a beautifully curated gallery of masquerade masks, where each guest will be invited to choose a mask to wear throughout the evening—and then take home as a keepsake of Hope Rises.

Your partnership creates the evening's unforgettable first impression, inviting every guest to become part of Axel's story from the moment they arrive.

Cocktail Reception Partner | \$2000

Every meaningful evening begins with connection. Before dinner, guests will gather over cocktails as old friends reconnect, new relationships begin, and a community united by purpose comes together.

Axel never met a stranger. He had a way of making everyone feel welcome, seen, and loved. This reception reflects that same spirit—bringing people together around hope, generosity, and a shared belief that together we can change children's lives.

Your partnership creates the atmosphere where the evening truly begins.

Dessert Partner | \$1500

Some of life's sweetest moments happen around dessert.

Guests will enjoy an elegant dessert experience that brings a joyful close to the evening—and celebrates one of Axel's most favorite things.

Dessert held a special place in Axel's heart. He never passed up something sweet, and two of his favorites—cupcakes and chocolate chip cookies—will be part of the evening's celebration.

Your partnership helps create a moment of joy while honoring the legacy of a little boy who believed life was always better with dessert.

Photo Booth Partner | \$1000

Some moments deserve to be remembered forever.

Our beautifully designed photo experience invites guests to capture the joy of the evening together, creating keepsakes they'll treasure long after the last dance.

Axel loved making memories. Whether he was dressed as a superhero, laughing with his brothers, or wrapped in one of his favorite cozy blankets, he had a way of making ordinary moments unforgettable. Your partnership helps preserve the smiles, laughter, and connections that make Hope Rises so special.

INTERESTED IN CREATING A SIGNATURE MOMENT?

Call/Text: 602-332-7369 | Email: heather@axelsarmy.org

More Ways To Get Involved



Join the Celebration (Individual Ticket) | \$150

Every seat helps create something bigger than a single evening.
Whether you're coming on your own or with friends,
your ticket supports rare childhood cancer research and programs that bring
hope, joy, and connection to families who need it most.
Individual Ticket | \$150 per guest

Gather Your People (Reserved Table) | \$1500 for 10 people

Some evenings are simply better when they're shared.
Hope Rises was created to bring people together—
to remember, to celebrate, and to create hope for children and families facing childhood cancer.
Whether you're inviting family, friends, clients, colleagues, or neighbors, hosting a reserved table
is an opportunity to experience an unforgettable evening together while helping launch a mission
that will continue long after the last guest has gone home.
Reserved Table Host | \$1,500
Includes a reserved table for 10 guests

Donate a Silent Auction Item

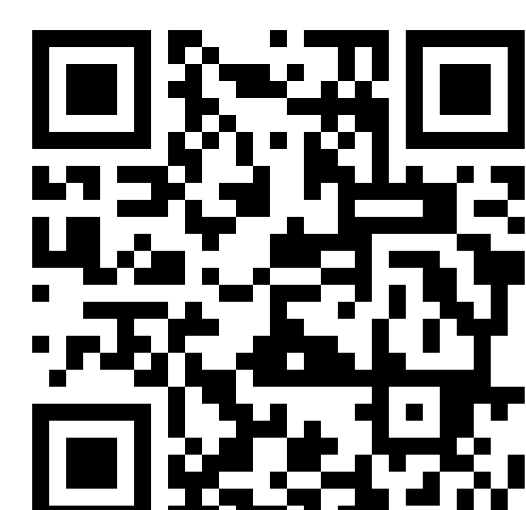
Every donated item becomes part of something bigger.
Whether it's a vacation stay, tickets to a special event, artwork, a dining experience, professional services,
or a favorite local business, your donation helps transform generosity into life-changing impact.
Every item—large or small—helps carry Axel's mission forward.

Have Another Idea?

We know every business and every family gives differently.
If you're interested in a customized sponsorship, in-kind partnership,
or another unique way to support Hope Rises, we'd love to start the conversation.
Together, we can create a partnership that reflects your generosity while advancing the mission of Axel's Army.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Scan to explore ways to attend, partner, or support Hope Rises
or visit: axelsarmy.org/partner



QUESTIONS OR INTERESTED IN A CUSTOM PARTNERSHIP?

Call/Text: 602-332-7369 | Email: heather@axelsarmy.org



Axel's Army is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN: 83-2886160).
All eligible contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law, and donation receipts will be provided.



The Next Chapter Begins With You



Hope Rises is more than an event.

It's the beginning of everything we'll build together.

Whether you choose to attend, become a partner, donate an auction item, or support in another meaningful way, you're helping shape the future of Axel's Army from its very beginning. Together, we can fund research for children facing rare childhood cancers, create moments of joy for families in treatment, and let grieving families know they are not alone.

Axel's story doesn't end here.

It continues with every person who chooses to become part of it.

We'd be honored to have you join us.

Let's Write The Next Chapter Together



READY TO BE PART OF WHAT COMES NEXT?

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