

## Nonprofit helps parent care for seriously ill 3-year-old

By CHRIS COUNTS

A NONPROFIT that recently received a grant of \$1.2 million from federal taxpayers to help care for severely ill or disabled youngsters, Salinas-based Coastal Kids Home Care is caring for a youngster who lives at the mouth of Carmel Valley and is suffering from a rare type of cancer.

Founded 15 years ago as a pediatric home health agency and serving Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Santa Clara counties, the Salinas nonprofit cares for “650 medically fragile infants and children with illness and disabilities.” “It’s such a critical service that we offer, and there’s so much demand for it,” Kelli Brown of Coastal Kids Home Care told The Pine Cone.

There are few providers in the marketplace offering what Coastal Kids Home Care does, Brown suggested. “We’re the only nonprofit in California who is doing this,” she said. The nonprofit is committed to the idea that it’s better to keep kids at home. “Kids thrive when they can sleep in their own beds, eat their favorite foods and spend time with their friends,” the group’s mission statement reads. Caring for a severely ill or disabled child is not an easy job under normal circumstances, and particularly challenging during a pandemic. “Someone has to stay for eight hours with a child who has significant medical problems and a compromised immune system,” Brown explained. “It’s super-complicated.”

### Nonprofit aids local child

One of the children who benefits from the services the nonprofit offers is Anthony Biletsky, a 3-year-old who lives at the mouth of the valley and is suffering from a rare type of childhood cancer, neuroblastoma. Because of his condition, the youngster needs frequent blood tests done at Stanford Medical Center. Initially, his family had to drive him there every time, but now, a Coastal Kids Home Care nurse comes by his family’s home to take the blood samples.

“This allows the family to stay home with their child,” explained Kim Hell, the nurse that visits Anthony and takes his blood. “It’s a real blessing for the family.”

Anthony’s mother, Natalia Biletsky, said the service the nonprofit offers has made a big difference in her family’s lives.

“Stanford is two hours from my home,” Biletsky said. “If I needed a blood test, I needed to drive two hours each way.” The long trips were particularly hard on her son. “He feels very bad and very weak after chemo, and driving was a terrible experience for him,” she explained.