LEADERS IN care
STORIES OF THE MOST AMAZING CARE ANYWHERE
SPRING 2021

Celebrating Victories
At Shriners Hospitals for Children, patients achieve success in many ways
ABOUT SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN

OUR MISSION
At Shriners Hospitals for Children®, our three-part mission has one goal: to change and improve lives. We do this by caring for our patients, conducting research to gain knowledge and develop new treatments, and providing educational opportunities for physicians and other health care professionals.

WHO DO WE TREAT?
Children under age 18 may receive care and treatment when there is a reasonable possibility they could benefit from the specialized services we offer. All services are provided regardless of a family’s ability to pay.

WHAT ARE OUR PEDIATRIC SPECIALTIES?
- Treatment for orthopaedic conditions
- Burn care
- Spinal cord injury rehabilitation and management
- Cleft lip and palate care

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH
We strive to discover answers that will one day improve lives. Our innovative researchers have made significant breakthroughs in all four of our service lines, improving patient care and adding to the global body of medical knowledge.

CONTINUING EDUCATION
One way we help improve the lives of children worldwide is by offering educational opportunities to medical professionals. We maintain relationships with several medical teaching facilities, and our clinicians are known for sharing their experience and knowledge with other medical communities.

THE SHRINERS FRATERNITY
Shriners International, a fraternity based on fun, fellowship and the Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, founded Shriners Hospitals for Children as its official philanthropy in 1922. What began as one hospital is now a world-renowned health care system with locations in three countries. The fraternity, which has nearly 200 chapters in several countries and thousands of clubs around the world, continues to support this unique health care system. To learn more, please visit shrinersinternational.org.
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Dear Readers,

As this is the first edition of Leaders in Care for 2021, I believe it’s still appropriate to wish you a Happy New Year! Let us hope 2021 marks the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have all been through so much in the last 12 months. Quite honestly, it is difficult to truly absorb and comprehend everything we have faced and dealt with, collectively and individually.

Still, the resiliency and strength of the human spirit continues to prevail, and we look to 2021 with renewed hope and fresh goals. For example, this year, our marketing and communications department will launch new, targeted promotional campaigns designed to showcase the excellence and expertise of Shriners Hospitals for Children, as well as a redesigned website. We will also continue planning for 2022, when we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of our amazing, unique health care system, and the 150th anniversary of Shriners International, the fraternity that founded and continues to support Shriners Hospitals.

A century of service is certainly a success – and worthy of recognition. However, success takes many forms, and at Shriners Hospitals, we celebrate our patients’ accomplishments and victories every day. We cheer and applaud as the children overcome challenges and take their places on the playing fields, discover the power of art or learn to communicate using sophisticated technology. We invite you to discover the joy of success through a few of their stories, found on the following pages.

Sincerely,

Mel Bower
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
Shriners Hospitals for Children

PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

ARMANY, A PATIENT of Shriners Hospitals for Children — Springfield, had surgery for his orthopaedic condition, performed by Orthopaedic Surgeon Ahmad Bayomy, M.D. Here’s a letter of thanks he wrote to the staff.

Dear Shriners Hospitals staff,

Thank you very much for all the help. This was my first surgery ever, and I was very scared. But you guys helped me get through it. Thanks to you guys, I’m feeling better. I’ll be back to sports faster than ever. Not only were there really good surgeons, but the nurses were really nice and kept me happy. I also want to thank you, Dr. Bayomy, for helping with the surgery. You were very nice and made sure I knew everything I needed to. If I were to get surgery again, I would ask if I could go to Shriners.

Best, Armany R.

Armany works with his care team to recover after surgery.

SPRING 2021

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VISIT US ONLINE to find more stories like these at myleadersincare.com.

ON THE COVER: Missy has reached her goal of joining her school’s junior varsity cheerleading team. Image by Purple Moss Photography.
Shriners Hospitals for Children Names New Chief Medical Officer

We are pleased to introduce our new chief medical officer, Frances A. Farley, M.D.

Dr. Farley earned her undergraduate degree from Duke University, where she majored in history and zoology. She received her medical degree from Weill Cornell University Medical College in New York City, and she completed a residency in orthopaedic surgery at the University of Michigan and a pediatric orthopaedic surgery fellowship at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas, Texas.

After completing her education, Dr. Farley returned to Michigan, where she practiced pediatric orthopaedics at the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital for 26 years. For 18 of those years, she served as chief of the pediatric orthopaedic surgery service. During her time as chief, the service consistently earned recognition as a top hospital in orthopaedics in the U.S. News & World Report annual rankings.

In addition, she is the author of more than 200 published works.

“Dr. Farley has an impressive background in pediatric orthopaedics, as well as a strong academic record. These qualities will enhance Shriners Hospitals’ ability to provide the highest-quality, innovative care to our patients, which is always our first priority, as well as positively impact our standing in the academic community,” said Jerry G. Gantt, chairman of the board of trustees of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

“We look forward to Dr. Farley’s leadership, guidance and perspective as we prepare for our second hundred years of service to the world’s children.”

– FRANCES A. FARLEY, M.D.

Cincinnati Facility Moves to Dayton Children’s Hospital

For more than 50 years, Shriners Hospitals for Children — Cincinnati has been the region’s premier destination for pediatric specialty care. In addition to providing life-changing treatment for a wide range of burn injuries, plastic and reconstructive surgery, and complex wound and skin conditions, the hospital has also been an innovator in burn treatment research. Scientists’ breakthroughs there have changed the outcomes for major burn injuries, making it possible for children to thrive after what were once devastating wounds.

Now, the hospital has moved to the widely respected Dayton Children’s Hospital, becoming a “hospital within a hospital.” The change is part of a system-wide revamping, helping to ensure that we can continue to improve the lives of children, regardless of the family’s ability to pay, for the next 50 years and beyond.

“Current health care trends require us to adjust our delivery model to more accurately reflect today’s environment,” said Randy White, hospital administrator for the new Shriners Children’s Ohio. Today, approximately 85% of pediatric medical procedures are performed in an outpatient setting. Additionally, the severity and number of pediatric burns in the U.S. has declined in recent decades, especially those requiring a lengthy hospital stay. This is largely due to education and prevention efforts, many of which were spearheaded by the Shriners Hospitals for Children system.

The new location will allow Shriners Hospitals to maintain its southwest Ohio presence with a surgical facility designed to deliver exceptional care, while optimizing efficiency.

“It is a privilege to be part of an organization where everyone is so focused on the mission of improving the lives of children and families.”

– FRANCES A. FARLEY, M.D.

“Current health care trends require us to adjust our delivery model to more accurately reflect today’s environment,” said Randy White, hospital administrator for the new Shriners Children’s Ohio. Today, approximately 85% of pediatric medical procedures are performed in an outpatient setting. Additionally, the severity and number of pediatric burns in the U.S. has declined in recent decades, especially those requiring a lengthy hospital stay. This is largely due to education and prevention efforts, many of which were spearheaded by the Shriners Hospitals for Children system.

The new location will allow Shriners Hospitals to maintain its southwest Ohio presence with a surgical facility designed to deliver exceptional care, while optimizing efficiency. ©

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– FRANCES A. FARLEY, M.D.
A FUTURE WITHOUT FEAR

Extraordinary advancements in burn care allow patients to thrive

Trang, now 16, grew up in Vietnam with her siblings, parents and grandparents. When she was 10, a neighbor was grilling squid in the yard and a terrible accident occurred. His liquid fuel splashed, causing a flash fire. Suddenly Trang was on fire. Trang’s mother, Sen, wrapped her in a bear hug, saving her life.

Trang traveled from Vietnam to Boston with her mom, Sen, for burn injury treatment, under the care of Richard Ehrlichman, M.D.

Trang’s parents with Dr. Ehrlichman.
Trang finds specialized care
Trang received urgent care in a local hospital for nine days and then was transferred to the National Institute of Burns in Hanoi. She was hospitalized for three months and had numerous surgeries, including grafting to her face, thigh and hands. Over the next five years, Trang underwent more than 10 surgeries to help heal her wounds.

Trang and her family knew that she needed more specialized care. Their search led them to Shriners Hospitals for Children — Boston, where, over the last year and a half, Trang has had more surgeries on her hands, lips and arms. In August 2020, she had laser surgery that separated her fingers, which had been partly fused by scars.

Trang said physical and occupational therapy sessions at the hospital have given her the freedom to be more independent. When mother and daughter first arrived at the hospital, Sen had to take Trang to school on the back of her bike. Now, Trang will be able to ride her bike there on her own.

Wrap-around care powers Carrie through recovery

The 2006 car accident was horrific. Carrie, three days from her 17th birthday, was trapped and unconscious. An off-duty firefighter and a carpenter happened upon the scene. The carpenter used his hammer to break the window, and both men worked to free Carrie from the wreckage right before the SUV exploded into flames. With second-, third- and fourth-degree burns over 70% of her body, as well as a serious brain injury, Carrie was airlifted to Massachusetts General Hospital, then transferred to the Boston Shriners Hospital.

Doctors put Carrie into a medically induced coma for three months. Carrie said she “woke up to a whole new life and a whole new body.” She recalled, “I woke up from my coma missing my dominant right hand and with half of my left foot amputated. My right foot was also removed. Doctors wanted to leave the ultimate decision up to me as to how much of my legs to amputate.”

In consultation with her Boston care team and providers at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Springfield, Carrie decided to amputate evenly below the knee to obtain the best prosthetic function. Carrie received her first pair of prosthetic legs eight months after the accident, returned to high school for her second semester of senior year, and graduated on time in 2007.

Carrie credits the care she received at the Boston Shriners Hospital with helping her succeed after the car accident. “There are so many people who made an impact on me at the Boston Shriners Hospital,” she said, mentioning her surgeon, nursing staff and therapy teams.

“If I needed to cry, they would be there to listen. If I wanted to be a silly teenager and jam out to music, they would sing and dance with me. No matter what, they were always there.”

- CARRIE
The Boston Shriners Hospital has been a trailblazer in defining and measuring what happens to patients after their burns are initially treated. Colleen M. Ryan, M.D., FACS, serves as the clinical director at the Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System (for which the Boston Shriners Hospital is a participating site).

“A burn injury can change the trajectory of a child’s life,” said Dr. Ryan. “We are developing sensitive instruments to measure the impact of burn injuries on a child’s physical, psychological, social and emotional development.”

Doctors study patients’ growth and milestones in physical and psychological function, sleep, communication and speech development, social interactions with family and friends, and community and school performance. This can help them identify which treatments and interventions are most effective, she said.

Dr. Ryan is working on several studies on patients’ long-term outcomes, with the hope that the rehabilitation and recovery process can be made easier. “The thought is that if we can measure it, we can improve it,” Dr. Ryan said.

Living a full life after a burn injury
In October 2020, Carrie made a virtual return to the Boston Shriners Hospital from her home in Texas, sharing her story at an online educational symposium.

“Burn injuries are the most debilitating and disfiguring injuries the human body can endure,” she told the attendees. “Thanks to modern medicine and skilled, dedicated medical professionals, I am now thriving more than 14 years after my injury.”

Now in her early 30s, Carrie lives with her husband, Justin, and three active dogs. She works as a senior communications consultant and enjoys camping, walking and hiking, lifting weights and writing.

Carrie and Trang have some powerful advice for others who are dealing with severe injuries. “Trust someone who has been there: There is hope in your darkest moments,” Carrie said. “Life after a burn injury is not easy by any means, but a full and abundant future still exists for you as long as you put in the work.”

Trang agrees. “Try to do your best to overcome the situation. I don’t have to be afraid for the future. I can hope to have a better life, and you can, too.”

The Shriners Hospitals for Children health care system has other locations that offer treatment for burn injuries in addition to our Boston location, including facilities in Ohio, Texas and California. Visit shrinershospitalsforchildren.org for more information.
Hope for Improving Muscle Atrophy

Newly published research provides answers

Recent research conducted at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Boston and published in the New England Journal of Medicine has highlighted the important role of specific proteins called sestrins in the regulation of skeletal muscle mass and strength. This new understanding may lead to new possibilities for the treatment of muscle weakness and atrophy.

J.A. Jeevendra Martyn, M.D., chief of anesthesiology, and Masao Kaneki, M.D., Ph.D., scientific investigator at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Boston, have been researching the causes of muscle weakness and atrophy, a common result of burn injuries. While it will take time, we are hopeful that activators of sestrins will be developed as a new drug to prevent and/or treat muscle atrophy. Currently, there is no specific treatment for muscle atrophy other than exercise, which is not a viable option for many patients.

The effects of muscle atrophy

Muscle atrophy can have mental, social and physical health consequences that diminish quality of life and increase the risk of additional diseases, and possibly even death. For example, muscle weakness decreases the ability to independently perform activities of daily living, such as feeding and bathing. In addition, during a critical illness, such as severe burn injury, muscle weakness can result in difficulty breathing. This can lead to dependence on mechanical ventilators, increasing the risk of lung damage and infection.

Muscle mass loss also impairs physical development in children. Unfortunately, no specific treatment is currently available for correction of muscle atrophy and weakness.

The next step

Discovering sestrins is the first step. Further research is necessary and important to develop new preventive and/or therapeutic strategies to reverse muscle loss and to improve clinical outcomes of patients with burn injuries.


Excellence Personified

Staff members at the Portland Shriners Hospital receive prestigious recognitions

Last October, two staff members of Shriners Hospitals for Children — Portland were honored with prestigious awards from nationally recognized organizations for their exceptional contributions and demonstrated leadership in their respective fields.

Ellen Raney, M.D., pediatric orthopaedic physician at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Portland, was presented the Distinguished Service Award by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in the Section on Orthopaedics. The Distinguished Service Award is given to a former or current Section on Orthopaedics member who has provided outstanding leadership and service to the organization. Excellence in education, patient care, mentoring of younger members, volunteer work and service, research and character are all considered. Dr. Raney is the first woman to receive this award.

Susy Molano, certified medical interpreter (CMI) at the Portland Shriners Hospital, was honored with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Award for Health Equity, presented by the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health. This award is given each year to a leader who has made outstanding contributions toward achieving health equity and implemented system changes in their community. Molano has worked tirelessly throughout her career as an interpreter to improve access to quality health care for communities with limited proficiency in English.

We congratulate both professionals on their significant contributions and achievements.

Ellen Raney, M.D.

Susy Molano, CMI

We are hopeful that activators of sestrins will be developed as a new drug to prevent and/or treat muscle atrophy.
Success means a wide range of things for our patients: from gaining independence in day-to-day living to participating in sports and art. Shriners Hospitals for Children is dedicated to helping our patients achieve their goals and reach their highest potential.

MIKA

Taking those first steps, again

“Look at my new foot! I have toes!” Those were the first words Mika said after being fitted with a customized purple prosthesis from Shriners Hospitals for Children — Honolulu.

“She was ecstatic to have a foot, and she just took off with her walker and was headed out the door,” Mika’s mom, Allison, said with a laugh. “It was very exciting. We couldn’t wait to see her take her first steps again and become a little more independent.”

The journey to Mika’s second “first steps” began several months earlier, when Mika developed fulminating viral myocarditis a week before her third birthday. The rare heart condition required Mika to undergo emergency treatment; unfortunately,
“It was a struggle in the beginning because Mika kept saying she didn’t want to walk ... She said she wanted to walk like before, and she wanted her own foot back.” — Allison, Mika’s mom

A complication resulted in the loss of Mika’s right foot. As Mika’s heart health steadily improved, her parents’ concerns soon changed from whether or not their daughter would live, to whether she would ever be the active little girl she had always been. An orthopaedic surgeon recommended that the family contact Shriners Hospitals for Children. “It was a struggle in the beginning because Mika kept saying she didn’t want to walk. She couldn’t walk because she only had one foot. She said she wanted to walk like before, and she wanted her own foot back,” Allison remembered.

One way the Honolulu Shriners Hospital care team helped inspire Mika’s progress was by involving her in the creation of her new foot. “She said she wanted a purple foot from early on,” Allison said. “As long as she will be able to play, dance and hop, she is happy,” Allison said. Mika is on her way to doing just that, Allison reported, thanks to the teamwork of all those who have been involved in her care at the Honolulu Shriners Hospital.

Jack became a patient of Shriners Hospitals for Children — Portland when he was 6 months old. Due to complications during his birth, he has complex medical needs associated with cerebral palsy.

For Jack, success is about learning the basic skills to make his way through daily life. To help with his unique needs, Jack uses several assistive devices. These include a gait trainer that helps him walk, a stander to help support him as he stands and special chairs that help him sit.

Since beginning physical therapy at the hospital, Jack has made significant gains in his ability to operate a power wheelchair, a device his parents hope to procure for him at some point. “He literally cries when we have to leave after he gets to drive the power wheelchair,” said his mother, Angela. “He loves it so much.”

With the help of Speech Language Pathologist Megan Knight, MS, CCC-SLP, Jack is learning how to communicate using an eye-gaze device. This advanced technology allows patients to operate a speech-generating device solely based on their eye movement. “He spent a lot of his early days practicing through the use of games,” Knight said, “and has begun transitioning to using the device for communication.”

Jack is now able to produce single word utterances, which is a big step toward becoming an effective communicator.

“He literally cries when we have to leave after he gets to drive the power wheelchair. He loves it so much.” — Angela, Jack’s mom
WHEN 3-YEAR-OLD CAMILLE WALKS INTO SHRINERS HOSPITALS FOR CHILDREN — ST. LOUIS, WORD TENDS TO SPREAD QUICKLY: MS. HOLLYWOOD HAS ARRIVED.

“They like to call her ‘Ms. Hollywood’ here because she’ll walk in with these shades on and just announce, ‘I’m here!’” said her mom, Shantay.

That Camille can walk into the hospital powered by her own two feet is a success many around her were unsure she’d reach.

Camille has a rare form of a rare condition called tibial hemimelia, which caused her left leg to be significantly shorter than the right and accompanying knee and ankle problems. Doctors who saw Camille at birth said amputation was the most likely option.

Instead of amputation, Camille has had surgeries to reconstruct her ankle and lengthen her tibia.

“She’s doing great,” said J. Eric Gordon, M.D., orthopaedic surgeon who operated on Camille. “It’s fun for me as a doctor to do something for kids like what we’re able to do for Camille. Because of her treatment here, she’ll likely be able to grow up and live a happy life without restrictions.”

“They like to call her ‘Ms. Hollywood’ here because she’ll walk in with these shades on and just announce, ‘I’m here!’”

— SHANTAY, CAMILLE’S MOM
MISSY

Leading the team

She started out just cheering for her friends. But Missy, 14, soon got the cheer bug. Missy has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair. She didn’t know if being on the high school cheer team was a possibility for her, but that wasn’t going to stop her from trying.

Missy practiced every day for over eight hours. “It was exhausting, but you have to work hard for what you want,” said Missy.

When she showed up for tryouts, Missy knew her execution of the moves would be different from the other girls’. She had her own interpretation, like how to do the foot placements, and she hoped it would be good enough.

Shriners Hospitals for Children — Salt Lake City Physical Therapist Matt Lowell has been working on Missy’s wheelchairs for most of her life. He’s elated that Missy had the confidence to pursue her ambition and didn’t let anything get in the way.

“That’s my goal as a physical therapist,” said Lowell. “Each child is unique, and I want them to pursue whatever they want, however they need to. Missy is an inspiration!”

Missy not only made the junior varsity (JV) team, but she was also named JV Captain. “I believed in myself, and it paid off,” she said.

“Each child is unique, and I want them to pursue whatever they want, however they need to. Missy is an inspiration!”

— MATT LOWELL, PHYSICAL THERAPIST
Making Gains with Speech Therapy

Speech and language problems make it hard for a child to succeed in school. A child may have trouble understanding, following directions or answering questions. Language problems make reading and writing harder. Children who have trouble talking with peers have difficulty making friends. These challenges are all barriers to education. But speech language pathologists can help.

Speech therapists at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Erie work with each patient to find a form of communication that helps them succeed across all settings. "Success is different for every patient and family, depending on their goals and what they wish to get out of therapy," said Bridget Muldowney, speech language pathologist at the hospital. "Ultimately, we want to find functional communication, which could be using first words, understanding language, using a communication device, etc. We determine which manner of functional communication works best, depending on the child’s challenges and goals."

For Audrey, success came shortly after beginning therapy. “Before starting therapy, Audrey could not communicate what she wanted or needed,” said her mom, Lily. “She would have temper tantrums and other behavioral issues.” After learning ways to communicate both verbally and nonverbally, Audrey is “basically a different kid,” Lily added. “We have now given her tools to limit her frustration and allow her to succeed. She is so much happier.”

Liam is another patient who found the tools to succeed through speech therapy. “Speech therapy has given him more independence,” said his mom, Stacey. “It’s truly given him a voice.” Liam is nonverbal and uses an eye-gaze device to help communicate his needs, likes and dislikes. Although he may not speak, he can now greet friends, pick what song to listen to or tell someone if he is hungry or thirsty.

“We help kids reach their highest potential by targeting specific areas for growth,” added Nicole Lewis, speech language pathologist at the Erie hospital. “We have to determine what kind of support they need to reach their highest potential both socially and academically.”
NATALIA

Creating a lasting impression

A teenager with a rare condition wants people to know that her illness is not a barrier to her success; in fact, she’s inspired by it. It’s a message Natalia strives to send using her artistic talent.

Her illness is called idiopathic multicentric osteolysis, or IMO. Natalia’s bones dissipate over time because her body absorbs their calcium. The condition causes her to be tired and in near-constant pain. She has used a motorized wheelchair since the first grade and has been treated by Peter Smith, M.D., a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago, since she was 3.

Natalia loves to create, especially digital art, which she draws on a tablet. IMO has become a source for Natalia’s latest work.

“I’m working on an art project that is going to show how IMO affects my body. I’m using different X-rays that my doctors have taken in the past years to show what goes on underneath the skin,” she said.

“I’ve taken pictures of my shoulders, elbows, feet, knees, neck, head ... And I take the skin off and then you show all the different bones. Even though some of the bones have disappeared you can see them underneath, even though you can’t see on top of the skin.”

“Natalia’s message is, ‘You are more than IMO,’” said her father, John. “And I believe art is a way for her to express that and demonstrate how the condition has affected her life.”

Natalia’s art projects incorporate her X-rays (top) and use digital media (bottom).
When Marie-Hélène had an ultrasound, it revealed that her unborn baby had fractures, curved bones and limbs that were much smaller than normal. The doctors suspected osteogenesis imperfecta (OI, also known as brittle bone disease), and they told the parents-to-be to prepare for the worst.

Still, when Kaleb’s parents saw him for the first time, their worries melted away, even if for just a moment. He was an adorable, happy baby.

A difficult road ahead
The new parents knew they had a rough road ahead. But their doctors had already been in touch with Shriners Hospitals for Children — Canada in Montréal, Quebec. Kaleb was just 7 days old when Francis Glorieux, M.D., Ph.D., and François Fassier, M.D., Msc. FRCS (C), world leaders in OI treatment and research, examined him for the first time.

However, it was a meeting with social worker Rose-Marie Chiasson that made all the difference. “With Rose-Marie’s help, I was slowly able to accept the diagnosis ... She helped me navigate all the frustration, guilt and sadness I was experiencing,” said Marie-Hélène. “From that point on, I felt supported by Shriners Hospitals for Children.”
Children — Canada. Our family not only received the tools to get over the shock of the birth, but those to help us get through the day-to-day. Despite his pain, Kaleb has never cried when it comes to a trip to Shriners Hospitals.”

Since 2008, Kaleb has had at least 236 fractures and 13 surgeries, with a team of several doctors treating him.

**A proud patient ambassador**

In 2013, Dr. Glorieux asked Kaleb and his mother to share their story at an annual seminar with an audience of about 100 people. Six-year-old Kaleb was hooked, and a star was born. His adventure as a patient ambassador began.

The photogenic young boy with the bubbly personality happily attended countless photo shoots to help the hospital generate promotional materials, ultimately resulting in a social media following. In 2017, at age 10, Kaleb filmed his first video, a tour of the Canada Shriners Hospital.

Kaleb’s personality shines through in everything he does. “He enjoys the satisfaction of knowing that he’s helping other kids like him,” said Marie-Hélène. “Being a patient ambassador is also key to building his self-esteem. He realizes how much he’s accomplished at such a young age, and he’s proud of himself.”

“Being a patient ambassador is also key to building his self-esteem. He realizes how much he’s accomplished at such a young age, and he’s proud of himself.”

– MARIE-HÉLÈNE, KALEB’S MOM

**Making a name for himself**

Kaleb has been part of international campaigns, promotional videos, public service announcements and fundraisers for Shriners Hospitals, as well as for other causes. His work has helped raise money for the OI kits the Canada Shriners Hospital distributes to families.

As a patient ambassador, Kaleb also takes part in the hospital’s annual golf tournament. In 2020, this event wasn’t possible due to the pandemic, so Kaleb and his friend decided to create a virtual lemonade stand. Through the power of social media, the fundraising campaign brought in $77,000 for Shriners Hospitals.

Kaleb has contributed so much to our health care system and is a shining example of the Shriners family spirit.
Carmelo’s Café

A one-of-a-kind Shriners Hospitals employee leaves a memorable legacy

“He knew everyone’s birthday and everybody’s name. I had nurses come up to me and say, ‘He knew my children’s birthdays.’”

- PAMELA PATT, MS, RDN, CSP, LD, CNSC

Carmelo Flores worked for years as the dishwasher and a hospital nutrition services team member at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago. He was widely known among the staff for his friendliness and personable nature. When Flores passed away suddenly in May 2020, the staff was shocked and heartbroken by the loss of such a kind and dedicated co-worker.

After Carmelo’s passing, dozens of co-workers signed cards and a poster with memories of Carmelo for his family – but they wanted to do more. “Members of our staff actually suggested renaming the (hospital’s) Skyline Café after Carmelo. We took it to our hospital Board of Governors who unanimously supported the change,” Mark Niederpruem, hospital administrator, said. The dining destination was officially renamed Carmelo’s Café at a socially distanced ceremony.

“This is a very special moment in the life cycle of our hospital,” Niederpruem said to attendees of the ceremony. “Carmelo was really a part of the fabric of this place for many years.”

Pamela Patt, MS, RDN, CSP, LD, CNSC, director of nutrition services, worked with Carmelo the entire 30 years he was with the hospital. She recalled his gift for making people feel special. “He knew everyone’s birthday and everybody’s name. I had nurses come up to me and say, ‘He knew my children’s birthdays.’ He would always say, ‘Suzie’s birthday is coming up. Make sure that you tell her happy birthday.’”

The number of Carmelo’s relatives who could attend the ceremony in person was limited because of pandemic precautions, so his sister, Norma, broadcast the event live on Facebook. She shared the family’s overwhelming gratitude for this gesture and the support they received after Carmelo’s death. “You all should be proud of yourselves working like that, as a group, as a family. Many places cannot say they are a family. But to literally say it, for my brother, this was a second family.”

TO WATCH the dedication ceremony of the renamed café, visit bit.ly/CarmelosCafe.
Going the Distance

Shriners Hospitals’ global efforts, in collaboration with the World Pediatric Project, change lives across the miles

Narshare watches her 18-year-old son, Kareem, grind through physical therapy 12 days after major surgery at Shriners Hospitals for Children — St. Louis. The pair, who are from St. Lucia, are adapting to life in the United States while Kareem undergoes treatment for Blount’s disease, a problem with the growth plates around the knees that causes severe bowing of the lower legs.

Kareem’s journey began with St. Louis Shriners Hospitals physician J. Eric Gordon, M.D., in the Caribbean. Dr. Gordon has been using his time off to travel there to help children like Kareem in conjunction with the World Pediatric Project (WPP).

The WPP, a St. Louis-based nonprofit organization, brings pediatric specialty care to places where access to such care doesn’t exist. WPP mobilizes dozens of pediatric diagnostic and surgical specialist teams and sends them to 12 partner countries in the Caribbean and Central America. When complex surgery requires advanced technology, equipment and post-operative care, the program works with some of the most advanced pediatric hospitals in the United States, including the St. Louis Shriners Hospital.

“When most people think of the Caribbean, they think of cruise ships and white sand beaches, but the reality for the locals can be very different,” Dr. Gordon said. “There just isn’t the medical specialization to treat some of the common conditions you see there.”

Dr. Gordon and fellow Shriners Hospitals — St. Louis physicians Mark Miller, M.D., and Brian Kelly, M.D., are part of the effort to change that. The typical trip has them fly in on Saturday, see up to 150 patients each, perform between 20 and 40 surgeries, and return home the following Saturday. All the while, they teach local doctors how to diagnose and address the issues they are treating. Some cases are so severe that the WPP arranges for the child to come to the United States for continued care. Such was the situation for Kareem.

Kareem had his first surgery in the United States in September, and more will follow. With both his legs in frames (a form of bracing), he is proving to be a “warrior.”

“When a person watches him, they might say he won’t be able to achieve,” said his mom. “I have no doubt, though: He will achieve.”

The medical staff at the St. Louis Shriners Hospital is doing its part to ensure that. And Dr. Gordon’s commitment to the children in the Caribbean remains strong.

“Kids are kids,” he said, “whether they’re from Missouri or Zimbabwe. It’s an area where there are needs that aren’t being met.”
“Just like the end product of a finished painting is so worthwhile, a completed surgery and the positive impact on a child’s life is incredibly satisfying.”

Cheryl Lawing, M.D., is an orthopaedic and spine surgeon at Shriners Children’s Florida and an associate professor of orthopaedic surgery at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. Before pursuing her medical degree, Dr. Lawing considered a career in art. During high school, Dr. Lawing was actively involved in soccer and sustained a string of knee injuries. Post-surgery, while she was off the field and recovering, she focused her efforts on art.

While she attended the University of Georgia, Dr. Lawing continued to channel her creativity and majored in scientific illustration. However, while completing a study abroad art program, she realized she wanted a career in medicine. “I appreciated how much the orthopaedic surgeon who had fixed my knees had helped me, and I decided to pursue medicine, so I could hopefully have a similar ability to be able to help people.”

Dr. Lawing joined the Shriners Hospitals team of physicians in 2016 and is known for her kind demeanor and expertise—which incorporates her creative talents. “Art has helped my career in medicine in several ways,” Dr. Lawing said. “[For example], I can draw out implants and surgical plans to help families better understand what’s next.”

More important, Dr. Lawing credits her history with art for being able to fully comprehend the impact “her mark” makes on a blank canvas—her patients—and having the confidence to make that mark.

Dr. Lawing’s artwork has been featured in several national exhibitions and has been displayed at the United Nations in New York. Pieces of her artwork featuring collages of bones, knee braces and shoes used to treat clubfoot hang in Dr. Lawing’s office. Not only do they serve as a reminder of where it all began, but they also perfectly depict how the worlds of art and medicine blended for her.
Swinging and Singing with the Pros
National Patient Ambassadors share virtual experiences with the PGA

During a typical year, National Patient Ambassadors for Shriners Hospitals for Children, Mia, 16, and Connor, 14, would have hit balls with professional golfers and appeared before the crowd at the PGA TOUR’s Shriners Hospitals for Children Open in Las Vegas.

Like so many events in 2020, the tournament looked different this year due to COVID precautions. But true to the spirit of the PGA TOUR and our Patient Ambassadors, participants overcame the obstacles and made special memories – virtually.

Mia, a patient of Shriners Hospitals for Children — St. Louis for scoliosis treatment, got to experience a part of the Shriners Open at home, when she and professional golfer Harold Varner III shared a video call. Varner commended Mia on her strength and special talent – singing. He even joined Mia in performing, I Want to Know What Love Is, before he got so moved by Mia’s vocal talent, he couldn’t continue.

Connor, a patient of Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago, where he receives treatment for cleft lip and palate, hopes to one day become a golf pro. He and his family are even part of a large local annual golf tournament fundraiser for the hospital. So, it was a special treat when, as part of the online event, Connor got to interview pro players. He also got an incredible surprise: The PGA TOUR arranged for Connor to hit in a professional golf simulator at Fire Iron Golf Chicago. He and his family even got to play “Pebble Beach” on the simulator.

Connor also received meaningful, personal video messages from PGA TOUR players. “Thank you so much to the PGA TOUR,” said Connor. “Those were awesome videos. It is something I’ll never forget.”

TO WATCH clips from Mia’s and Connor’s experiences, visit bit.ly/MiaPGATour and bit.ly/ConnorPGATour.

Connor takes some swings on the golf simulator.

Locations

- Orthopaedics
- Burns
- Spinal cord injury
- Cleft lip and palate
- Outpatient care only: necessary inpatient care provided at an affiliated facility