

LEADERS IN Care

STORIES OF THE MOST AMAZING CARE ANYWHERE

SPRING 2024

Adventure Awaits

Shriners Children's
camps give patients
a sense of belonging



Shriners
Children's™



OUR MISSION

At Shriners Children's™, 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 healthcare 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 or insurance status.



WHAT ARE OUR PEDIATRIC SPECIALTIES?

- + Treatment for orthopedic 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 Children's as its official philanthropy in 1922. What began as one hospital is now a world-renowned healthcare system with locations in three countries. The fraternity, which has approximately 200 chapters in several countries and thousands of clubs around the world, continues to support this unique healthcare system. To learn more, please visit shrinersinternational.org.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Dear Readers,

Spring has sprung – according to the calendar, that is! While some parts of



the country and the world are still weathering snowstorms, others are embracing rain showers. Whatever the weather, spring is an excellent reminder

that seasons change, and so do we. Time really does fly – we see it as we watch our patients grow!

This spring, I am thinking of the changes Shriners Children's has seen – how deftly our caregivers adapt and innovate, how our high-quality care continues to advance, and how the experience for our patients gets better and better. As an industry, healthcare is changing fast. Shriners Children's is at the forefront of technology with medical advancements like bridge-enhanced anterior cruciate

repair (BEAR), which enables young patients with a common injury in sports, a torn ACL, to heal faster and get back to doing what they love.

I hope this issue brings a smile as sweet as spring as it previews summer camps, highlights outstanding providers and gives a peek into hospital classrooms. In addition, we'll introduce a former patient who overcame great obstacles and is now a voice, literally, with her very own podcast, for a community of people with disabilities.

As April showers yield to May flowers, I am excited to see what the future has in store. Change can be scary, but like spring, it is a lovely reminder of how beautiful life can truly be.

Sincerely,
Mel Bower
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer,
Shriners Children's

PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

Kristin is the mother of a child who recently switched her long-term care to Shriners Children's Chicago. She had this to say in a Google review:

"Shriners understands what it means to be the best children's hospital. Their bedside manner with kids is stellar. Additionally, it seems there is always something magical happening at this hospital. Want to pet a pony or meet a superhero? It's happening when you're there! This is enough for practically any child to forget to be nervous and become genuinely excited to be at this hospital. Of greater importance is their medicine. They have some of the top names in the specialty fields. I feel like this is the unicorn of hospitals. Our daughter thinks this hospital is like Disney World, which is for a kid with multiple MRIs, blood draws and tests galore. From a parent who can tell you the pros and cons of each, nothing can compare to this hospital. It is one of a kind."



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

ON THE COVER: Rosie, a Shriners Children's patient, enjoys kayaking at Camp Un-Limb-ited in Salt Lake City.

Research to Reduce Anxiety

POSNA grant funds Shriners Children's Southern California video intervention project



*Hannah Knott, Ph.D., CCLS,
and Natalie Chicas, MA, CCLS*

Shriners Children's and the Pediatric Orthopedic Society of North America (POSNA) share a common mission of research. Both organizations work to improve the care of children through education and advocacy. Every year, POSNA awards grants to different projects. The POSNA QSVI Grant encourages members to develop and implement quality and patient safety programming at their institutions or among colleagues.

In 2020, POSNA awarded Hannah Knott, Ph.D., CCLS, and Selina Poon, M.D., Co-PI, the QSVI grant of \$8,500 for "The Effects of a Video Intervention on Children's Preoperative Anxiety and Post-Hospital Behaviors" project, which showed that a video could help reduce anxiety and negative post-hospital behaviors.

Natalie Chicas, MA, CCLS, child life specialist at Shriners Children's Southern California, and Knott, who is an associate professor at Azusa Pacific University and a child life specialist, conducted the research. Child life specialists are pediatric healthcare professionals who work with children in healthcare settings to help them cope with the challenges of illness, disability, cast removals and surgeries.

POSNA's grants and awards are available to help offset the cost of educational or research endeavors in pediatric orthopedics and are open to broad areas of research. Read more about the impacts of the study on page 14.

Hope on the Horizon

Surgeon's research could help improve treatment for scoliosis

Roughly two years ago, the chief of spine surgery at Shriners Children's Portland reported that a molecular marker found in the bloodstream might dramatically improve scoliosis care.

Now, Michelle Welborn, M.D., has received a professorship from Shriners Children's, allowing her to continue pursuing this research work.

The majority of children who have some scoliosis – that is, a curvature of the spine – do not require treatment. But of those who do, about 75% will be treated with bracing. These are the patients Dr. Welborn's work could help.

"We don't know if we can say why some of the kids in a brace don't get worse, yet others do," she says.

Her work could help with that. The marker, a breakdown product of bone growth known as collagen X biomarker, could let a physician know precisely when a patient is growing – and when they have stopped. The scoliosis brace, a plastic cast worn around the midsection at least 12 hours a day, only helps while a child is growing.

Currently, some patients may stop wearing the brace too early and others may wear it longer than necessary.

The professorship awarded to Dr. Welborn, the Diane Ruth Abramson Shriners Children's Professorship, lasts five years and comes with a monetary award to support her research.

Michelle Welborn, M.D., received a professorship – as she pushes the boundaries of scoliosis research.



expertise
& EXCELLENCE

SPECIALTY CARE FUELED BY INNOVATION & RESEARCH

BEARing a Successful Outcome

BEAR Implants help patients overcome ACL injuries and accelerate recovery

It was the last jump of the day. Karli, a high school senior, was practicing with her cheer squad when she landed hard. “I heard a popping noise in my knee and knew immediately that something was bad,” she said.

When an MRI revealed she had torn her ACL, Karli was heartbroken. Her cheerleading season was over.

Karli had the worst type of ACL injury, a complete tear of this important ligament that connects the thighbone to the shinbone. ACL injuries most commonly occur during sports that involve sudden stops or changes in direction, jumping and landing. As participation in youth sports increases and competition intensifies, sports injuries are on the rise, especially for teenage athletes. >>

Karli was the first patient to receive the innovative BEAR Implant at Shriners Children's Hawai'i.



Shriners Children's orthopedic surgeon Jonathan Koenig, M.D., holds the BEAR Implant in his hand. He was part of the team that performed the first pediatric BEAR Implant procedure in Pasadena, California, in June 2022.

Revolutionizing ACL repair

Historically, orthopedic surgeons have had limited options in treating a torn ACL, and major reconstruction surgery has long been the approach to repairing the ligament. This typically includes surgically removing a tendon from another part of the patient's body and using it for repair. But Shriners Children's is at the forefront of a new technology offering a less invasive ACL repair approach.

The BEAR® Implant, or bridge-enhanced ACL repair, is the first FDA-approved medical advancement that enables the body to heal its own torn ACL. This new approach is the first innovation in ACL treatment in more than 30 years. Four Shriners Children's locations currently offer BEAR

**Shriners
Children's Hawai'i
was the first
hospital in
Hawai'i to offer the
BEAR Implant,
and Karli was the
first patient in the
state to undergo
the surgery.**

Implant treatment for qualified patients: Honolulu, Hawai'i; Pasadena, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Greenville, South Carolina.

Shriners Children's Hawai'i was the first hospital in Hawai'i to offer the BEAR Implant, and Karli was the first patient in the state to undergo the surgery.

What is the BEAR Implant?
Shriners Children's Hawai'i orthopedic surgeon Craig M. Ono, M.D.,

describes it as a small cylinder made of tissue inserted between the torn ends of the ACL. It is injected with a small amount of the patient's blood, enveloping the repair site and promoting healing. Since the BEAR Implant does not require a second surgical site, the treatment minimizes complications, decreases pain and can make for a less difficult rehabilitation after surgery.

"Karli has healed very well with this novel approach. Like most of our Shriners Children's patients, she is confident and highly motivated, which helped in her recovery. We are very happy with this successful outcome," said Dr. Ono.

Rebounding from injuries sooner

Sean R. Waldron, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine, is leading the way in offering this breakthrough technology at Shriners Children's Philadelphia. The hospital started offering the BEAR procedure in 2023.

"Currently, the BEAR Implant is approved for patients 12 and older with closed growth plates, though depending on the surgeon's expertise and clinical judgment, we can offer this procedure to our younger patients as well," said Dr. Waldron, who was the first pediatric surgeon in the Philadelphia area to offer this innovative approach to ACL repair.

For Richard, 16, it was a typical day playing basketball with his friends when a collision sent him to the ground. He felt his knee pop and hyperextend. "As a competitive swimmer for my high school team, I never expected to tear my ACL," he said.

That's when he consulted with Dr. Waldron and became the first Shriners Children's Philadelphia patient to undergo the BEAR Implant procedure.

Physical therapy is important for all sports injuries, and the on-site rehabilitation team created a personalized care plan for Richard. "I was kind of scared to try this new procedure at first, but within three weeks of surgery, I was already able to bend my knee 90 degrees," he said.

"I am excited to offer this groundbreaking technique to the pediatric athletes in our area," said Dr. Waldron. "Early data shows positive long-term outcomes, and our patients are doing very well. They feel better and progress more quickly through their rehab. We are happy to help them return to the sports they love." 🧡



Richard remains determined in physical therapy after tearing his ACL during a basketball game with friends.



FOR MORE INFORMATION on BEAR Implant surgery at Shriners Children's, call **800-237-5055**.

Where Heroes and Healing Intersect

How a pivotal moment helped Sara Higginson, M.D., lead one of the world's top burn centers

Sara Higginson, M.D., was working as an emergency medical service pilot for MedFlight of Ohio when a chance encounter changed the direction of her life. She flew a trauma patient to a Columbus hospital, and that's where she witnessed the trauma surgeon in action. To her, he was a superhero.

"He entered with a cape billowing, four pagers on his waist, and in an instant, he had full command of the room," Dr. Higginson described. "I knew in that moment I wanted to be 'that guy.'"

Last fall, Dr. Higginson, now a burn surgeon, joined the team at Shriners Children's Ohio as the new chief of staff. You could call it a homecoming – returning to the state where one powerful encounter defined what would become her life's work.

"Shriners Children's is the rock star in the burn world. They've been part of every major advancement in the prevention and treatment of burns and have some of the best outcomes," said Dr. Higginson. "When I saw the posting for the chief of staff position at Shriners Children's Ohio, I felt like I was shown my destiny," she added. >>

"Shriners Children's is the rock star in the burn world. They've been part of every major advancement in the prevention and treatment of burns and have some of the best outcomes."

– SARA HIGGINSON, M.D.



Sara Higginson, M.D.,
with Merhria, a patient at
Shriners Children's Ohio.

“I want us to be the first call providers make if they have a child with a burn injury. I want us to say ‘yes’ to some of the most complicated craniofacial conditions.”

– SARA HIGGINSON, M.D.

A shining smile: Young Bibiana receives care at Shriners Children’s Ohio.

Providing unmatched expertise

As chief of staff, Dr. Higginson leads a medical team committed to providing the best outcome for every child who needs burn or craniofacial care. That team includes plastic surgeons who perform cleft lip and palate and complex craniofacial surgeries but also treat patients with complex burn reconstruction and scar modification.

“I want us to be the first call providers make if they have a child with a burn injury,” she explained. “I want us to say ‘yes’ to some of the most complicated craniofacial conditions. What our surgeons are able to do is magic,” Dr. Higginson described.

“Some of the children we care for would likely not survive without these surgeries. Sometimes, our doctors are literally reconstructing a child’s skull or face; the team includes a neurosurgeon to give the child the best functional outcome.”

Dr. Higginson stresses that for parents dealing with a child’s burn injury or learning their baby will be born with a craniofacial condition, there is no such thing as a “simple case.”

“You want the best for your child, and that’s what you’ll get at Shriners Children’s Ohio,” she said.

Dr. Higginson also quickly points out another hallmark of the Shriners Children’s mission: wrap-around care by a multidisciplinary team.

“I’m so impressed by the experience of the clinical team who are all working toward the same goal: the best outcome for that child,” she said. “We have rounds multiple times a day with every discipline involved in that child’s care – from nursing and rehab to nutrition and pharmacy. Social workers and care managers make sure the parents and families are also part of the process.”



Sara Higginson, M.D., says advancing the care for young patients and supporting the Shriners Children’s mission is a gift.

From superhero fan to leading pediatric surgeon

Her encounter with the superhero surgeon led Dr. Higginson to enroll at The Ohio State University and earn her medical degree. After completing her surgical residency and fellowships, she became the medical director of burns at the Leon S. Peters Burn Center in Fresno, California.

Dr. Higginson said that even while working at other hospitals, everyone knew the reputation of Shriners Children’s.

She spent her career improving her skills as a surgeon and elevating the type of care she delivered to patients, so when she was named chief of staff at Shriners Children’s Ohio, it seemed like fate.

“Working with children and being part of their continuity of care is especially meaningful. Having the opportunity to advance the care for our young patients and support the Shriners Children’s mission is a gift,” said Dr. Higginson. 🦸

A person wearing a red helmet and a life vest is kayaking through white water rapids. The kayak is orange and black. The background shows a rocky riverbank with green vegetation.

champions

IN HEALING

EMPOWERING PATIENTS, FAMILIES & CARE TEAMS

Unforgettable Experience

Shriners Children's camps give patients a sense of belonging

David, a patient at Shriners Children's Salt Lake City, navigates the water at Camp Un-Limb-ited.

Living with serious medical conditions can be frightening and isolating for children. Shriners Children's supports patients nationwide with special summer programs for children living with orthopedic conditions, congenital hand and upper limb differences, and more. These camps not only accommodate patients with those disabilities, but they also help kids enjoy tackling challenges in environments where they'll be safe, gain confidence and independence, and can make friends and memories that last a lifetime.

Camp Fez

"For many of our campers, this is the first experience where they spend an extended period away from family," said Beth English, a certified therapeutic recreational therapist at Shriners Children's Lexington and an organizer of Camp Fez. "Campers are provided an opportunity to build independence during manageable daily life challenges in a nurturing camp environment with a counselor and peer support."

Camp Fez is a three-day, two-night camp hosted at the beautiful Camp Horsin' Around facility in Perryville, Kentucky. It offers a camp experience for children and teens with orthopedic conditions who receive services at Shriners Children's Lexington. >>

Building Confidence with FLOW

The recreational therapy staff at Shriners Children's Chicago provides year-round FLOW (Friendship, Leisure, Opportunity and Wellness) programming. Recreation therapy may seem fun – and it is – but each interaction or activity within the FLOW program has a defined purpose.

Classes and workshops allow patients to build confidence, socialize, and learn sports and recreation skills. The program allows Shriners Children's to extend hope and healing into its patients' lives and communities.

FLOW is provided to patients at Shriners Children's Chicago with physical disabilities, cognitive impairments, developmental disorders and speech delays. Individual programs, which include a variety of sports, social activities and art, are designed for specific age and ability

 **FOR MORE INFORMATION**
and a current FLOW program list, visit
shrinerschildrens.org.

Campers experience many adventurous outdoor activities, including fishing, swimming, a rock-climbing wall, paddle boating, archery, miniature golf, team-building games, creek adventures, evening bonfires and crafts.

"The kids who attend our camps are so excited to be around kids with similar disabilities. At the end of each camp, the kids tell me, 'I love this camp because no one makes fun of me here, and I can be myself,'" said Frazann Milbern, a certified therapeutic recreational therapist.

Camp Winning Hands

That's also the mission of Camp Winning Hands, which is organized every summer by Shriners Children's Northern California in partnership with the University of California San Francisco Benioff Children's Hospital. Here, kids can focus on typical camp activities without worrying about explaining their hand differences.

Many campers are Shriners Children's patients with congenital hand and upper limb differences, including missing arms, hands or fingers; webbed or fused fingers; extra fingers;

levels and identified in program descriptions.

Certified therapeutic recreation specialists lead and plan all offered programming to ensure the participants have access to programs and social events that benefit their mental, emotional and physical well-being.

The sports and recreation programs provide benefits such as increased self-esteem, development of rule-following and sequencing, sportsmanship, increased strength and endurance, flexibility, balance and coordination. Some sports included are summer horseback riding, adaptive golf and adaptive waterskiing.

Participants can express their emotions; develop social skills, self-awareness and coping skills; and advance gross and fine motor skills within the creative arts. Programs include dance, play/movement therapy, art, science, music therapy and horticulture therapy.

undergrowth or overgrowth of hand parts; and constriction band syndrome.

"The intent was to create a safe space for kids with hand differences, so they could be together and try new things they may not have otherwise, in a supportive environment," said Michelle James, M.D., one of Camp Winning Hands' founders and former chief of orthopedics at Shriners Children's Northern California.

Campers ages 7 to 17 participate in rock climbing, archery, swimming, roasting s'mores, nature walks, ziplining and more. Besides your typical camp activities, kids also participate in group activities such as "teen talks," which offer a safe space to ask questions and share experiences with peers.

"There's something so powerful about finding a community where you can be completely at ease with your differences," said Sarah Tuberty, an occupational therapist at Camp Winning Hands and a former Shriners Children's Northern California patient.


Camp Un-Limb-ited

Salt Lake City's Un-Limb-ited camps are for Shriners Children's teen patients across the country who are living with limb loss or limb deficiency.

The Un-Limb-ited summer camp takes teens out of their comfort zone on an epic weeklong whitewater rafting adventure down the Green River. The experience is full of hikes, water fights, kayaking, stargazing and who knows how many inside jokes.

But the real draw to the camp is the opportunity for teens to gain self-confidence and form strong bonds with peers who also have limb differences and can understand them better than most.

Shriners Children's mission is to provide kids with opportunities to reach their dreams and live without limits. 🌟

 **TO LEARN MORE** about summer camps, visit shrinerschildrens.org or contact the Shriners Children's location nearest you.



Sarah participates in adaptive biking through the FLOW program.

Rock climbing is only one of the activities offered at Camp Fez, run by Shriners Children's Lexington.



Where Learning and Recovery Go Hand in Hand

Shriners Children's hospitals offer academic support to help children thrive during treatment



Amid the sterile operating rooms, high-tech exam rooms and busy nurses' stations at Shriners Children's Chicago, there is a large, bright, open space with live plants that serves as a school classroom.

It may be among the most important places in the hospital.

The "classroom" and its Chicago school district teacher, Mary Vokoun-Sommers, are critical to patients' recovery. It's one of the many classrooms across Shriners Children's locations, where our patients can keep up with their coursework while they are at the hospital for treatment. But they can also serve as a refuge in the hospital for children in difficult circumstances, and having that sanctuary provides critical emotional medicine – healing medicine.

"The school is a vital part of our kids' hospital experience," says Sue Mukherjee, M.D., the medical director of rehabilitation at Shriners Children's Chicago. "It helps keep their mind active when appropriate, and it helps connect them with life back at school."

Empowering young patients through education

While many Shriners Children's patients receive outpatient care or experience short stays at one of our hospitals, some remain inpatient for weeks or months. The patient may have just experienced a life-changing injury, such as a spinal cord injury or a burn. They may have a congenital condition that requires frequent hospitalization and multiple surgeries. They may be in physical or emotional pain, and they may be frustrated to

be stuck in a place they don't want to be.

Being in the hospital is disorienting and upsetting for anyone, but as parents know, it is worse for children who are more vulnerable and less able to comprehend why they must be there. And it jives with observations psychoanalyst Anna Freud, Sigmund Freud's daughter, made in the 1930s: Children experience a loss of autonomy and confidence. Time slows for them. Being removed from home, they can feel a sense of abandonment.

In that unsettling environment, the hospital schoolroom is a place where they can find a bit of familiar normalcy.

David Greenhalgh, M.D., chief of burns at Shriners Children's Northern California, says it is a place that reminds them that they will be going home and back to school eventually – a powerful message.

"It gives them a distraction, and it helps them see that there is light at the end of the tunnel," Dr. Greenhalgh says. "They have to heal physically, mentally and emotionally. School helps with the mental and emotional healing." >>

Shriners Children's integrates schooling with our care framework, allowing patients to maintain academic progress and a sense of normalcy and positivity that is crucial to their recovery.

Barbara Brooks helps Roman stay on track with his studies at Shriners Children's Northern California.



“School helps children heal physically, mentally and emotionally.”

– DAVID GREENHALGH, M.D.

Reading, studying and interacting with peers can help alleviate or eliminate feelings of distress, which can impair and delay healing and recovery. This was first observed definitively in patients recovering from heart bypass surgery. But it has since been shown to extend to other injuries and conditions. In 2006, scientists from Yale University reported that it even applies to recovery from surgery. More specifically, their research found that negative emotional states could affect how much anesthesia patients need, how long they are in the hospital and how much function they recover, among other things.

That's why the classroom at Shriners Children's holds a special role in providing a sense of normalcy and comfort through the familiarity of dedicated teachers, pencils, books and more. This environment not only nurtures the learning spirit but also brings hope and brightness to each day.



Mary Vokoun-Sommers and Christina go over a lesson together.

Providing education for healing and success

Many of the largest children's hospitals have schools within their walls. Shriners Children's recognized the need for schools early on. By 1938, 15 Shriners Children's hospitals had teachers on location.

Currently, 11 Shriners Children's locations have a comprehensive school program. In Montreal, Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada has two teachers, Marie Donato and Leanne Stachecki, instruct in French and English. In Chicago, Vokoun-Sommers sometimes uses high-tech devices to work with patients who need help, including a gaze device that allows patients to type messages using only their eyes.

Usually, the schools teach the students' home curriculum. At Shriners Children's Northern California, for example, teacher Barbara Brooks, who, like Vokoun-Sommers, is a local school district employee, contacts a patient's school within the first few days of a patient's hospitalization and gets information on what the student needs to do. Shriners Children's Northern California has patients who are in the hospital for months. But even patients who are there for just a week or so can attend school.

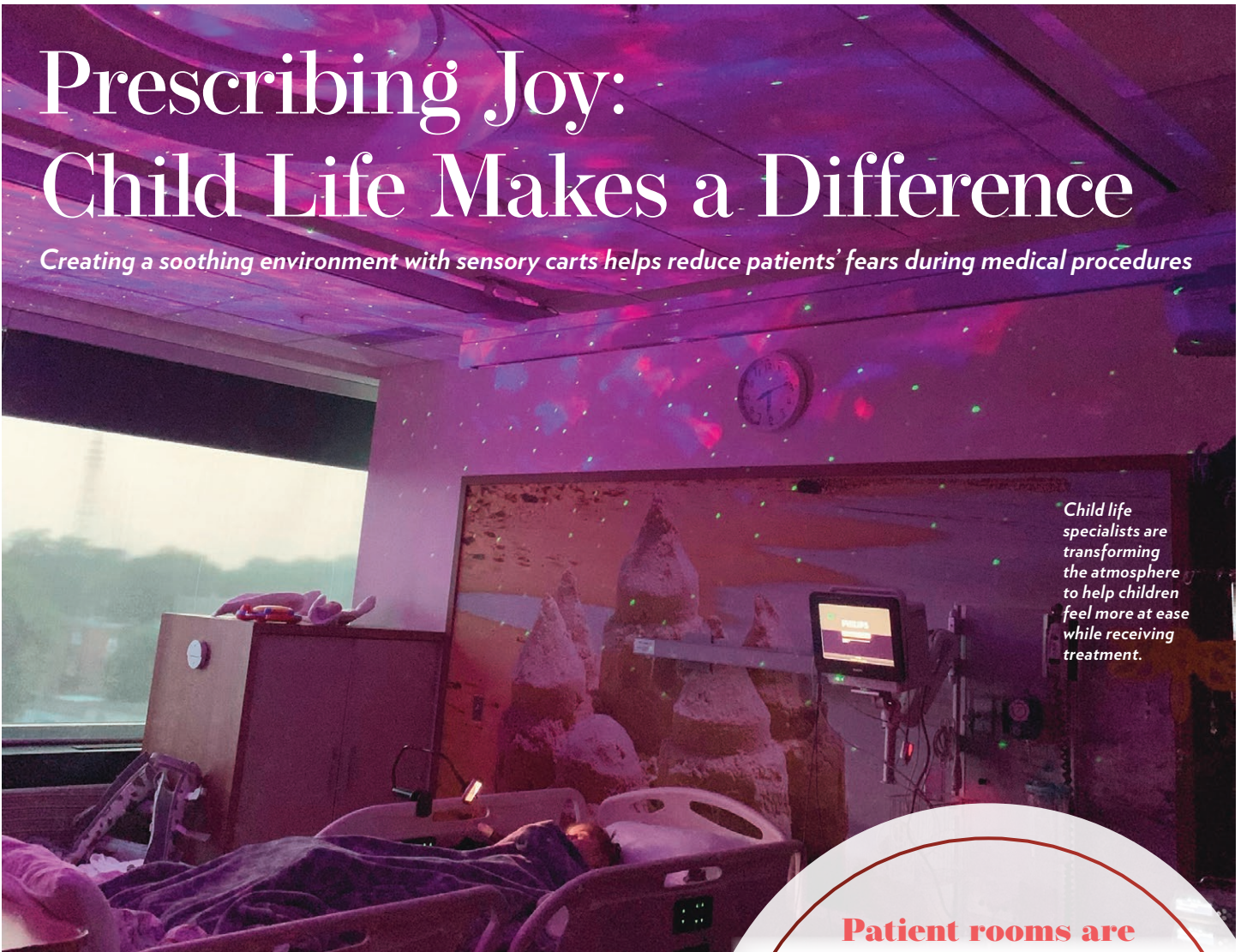
When the patient is discharged, Brooks or the hospital's schoolroom coordinator, Kerry Martini, will visit the child's school – no matter how far away – to prepare the school and the patient's fellow students for the patient's return, as they may be returning in a very different condition than before.

While the healing aspect of education is important, so is the coursework. Patients have had graduation ceremonies in the hospital, and Vokoun-Sommers was once invited by a former patient to attend their eighth-grade graduation. She went.

Brooks says the atmosphere in her classroom tends to surprise visitors. She stands and gestures to her bright, cluttered classroom and the rest of the hospital. “I think visitors are surprised that it is not a depressing place. It's a happy place. It's cheerful.” 🍷

Prescribing Joy: Child Life Makes a Difference

Creating a soothing environment with sensory carts helps reduce patients' fears during medical procedures



Child life specialists are transforming the atmosphere to help children feel more at ease while receiving treatment.

On a special cart at Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada, a collection of items awaits, ready to help soothe the senses and ease the mind of a worried child.

The primary role of a child life specialist is to reduce the stress and anxiety of hospitalization on patients. Whether a patient is coming to the hospital for a one-time surgery or has a chronic condition that requires them to visit longer or more frequently, child life specialists must engage with the child as early as possible to have the best outcome.

Child life specialists are integral to many interdisciplinary care teams at Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada. These include the Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) team, Metabolic Clinic, Aredia Treatment Clinic and many other specialty clinics where patients undergo procedures that may cause anxiety. They also assist in the pre-operative clinic by allowing patients 2-5 years old to learn about their upcoming surgery. Patients can personalize a doll, dress it up like a doctor and learn about the surgery step-by-step. This helps them become familiar with what to expect when they come in for their procedure.

Child life specialists are present to help with pain coping skills or discomfort during procedures such as IV insertions, blood tests, injections, dressing and cast changes or any acute post-operative pain. For blood tests and IV insertions, the specialists use strategies such as breathwork or deploy distraction tools to redirect the child's attention. After surgery, patients sometimes experience pain, discomfort or anxiety that medication alone >>

Patient rooms are transformed into an oasis of calm to relieve the anxious mind, soothe the spirit and bring the healing power of beauty to patients and their families.

The Impact of Child Life Specialists and Pre-op Education



Natalie Chicas, MA, CCLS

Child life specialists understand how being sick or injured affects kids. They are specially trained to make sure young patients and their families feel cared for and supported throughout their journey.

When children need surgery, it's normal to feel scared and anxious beforehand. These emotions can sometimes lead to changes in behavior after the procedure. But here's some good news: with the help of child life specialists, we can make this experience a little easier.

In a special research study conducted by Natalie Chicas, MA, Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS), at Shriners Children's Southern California, staff at Shriners Children's demonstrated that showing a video to children about what to expect before surgery can help reduce anxiety and prevent negative behavior changes. The study involved 60 children ages 5 to 10 randomly assigned to either watch the video in addition to standard child life support or to receive standard child life support without the video.

"It's not often a child life project gets funded," said Selina Poon, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at Shriners Children's Southern California. "Natalie's work is very important and helps children with anxiety before they enter the surgery center."

The video, designed by Chicas, was proven to significantly decrease preoperative anxiety and postoperative behavior changes in kids having outpatient surgery. And it didn't stop there. Parents' anxiety levels were also lowered when they saw how well their children were prepared.

We believe that videos like these, guided by the expertise of our child life specialists, can be amazing tools for helping kids get ready for surgery. We're here to make sure your child's experience is as comfortable and positive as possible.

Our team of researchers

Chicas is a child life specialist and a professor at California State University Los Angeles and California State University Northridge. Hannah Knott, Ph.D., CCLS, is another valuable team member, serving as an adjunct professor at Azusa Pacific University. Dr. Poon and Daphne Lew, Ph.D., MPH, who specializes in biostatistics at Washington University in Saint Louis School of Medicine, also contributed to this study.

At Shriners Children's, we aim to help children heal and thrive. We are dedicated to providing the best care possible, and our child life specialists play a crucial role in making that happen.



Child life specialists Angie Gugliotti (left) and Mary Curtin (right) prep items in sensory carts such as light toys, projects, aquariums and essential oil diffusers.

can't relieve. This is where relaxation and guided imagery sessions come into play.

Healing power that's portable

A recreational therapy student intern helped the child life department develop a special project to enhance their relaxation toolbox. They decided to transform the patient rooms into an oasis of calm to relieve the anxious mind, soothe the spirit, and bring the healing power of beauty to patients and their families. Some sensory items were already stored in a cupboard in the department. Still, it was decided that they would be more readily available for wider use if placed permanently on a cart.

The sensory cart items include various light toys, projects, aquariums and essential oil diffusers. Studies have shown that sensory immersion can reduce stress and anxiety and improve emotional regulation, which is another goal of the sensory cart. The staff has found that allowing patients to choose their items for sensory stimulation and feel in control is more likely to create positive changes in emotional regulation.

The sensory cart is available at Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada, primarily in the inpatient unit, and is making its way to more areas of the hospital. Patients and families give glowing reviews and appreciate having the cart available to them during stressful times. The cart also serves as a useful resource for parents. Since the items on the cart are widely available for purchase, parents can easily replicate the beautiful and calming environment they offer at home. 🏠

Sensory immersion can reduce stress and anxiety and improve emotional regulation.

DEDICATED TO CARING FOR MORE KIDS IN MORE PLACES

Ahead of the Curve

Natalie is one of many patients benefiting from the compassion and expertise at Shriners Children's.



**A Q&A with
Chief Medical
Officer Frances
A. Farley, M.D.,
about innovation at
Shriners Children's**

In a fast-evolving health-care landscape, Shriners Children's is adeptly leveraging technology and compassionate expertise to ensure that every child's needs are met with efficiency and care. With a keen eye on the future, Shriners Children's is at the forefront of a transformative journey in pediatric healthcare. We spoke with Chief Medical Officer Frances A. Farley, M.D., to discuss how Shriners Children's is tailoring its resources to not only meet but exceed these evolving demands. >>

Long-time patient Emmy takes a picture with her favorite doctor! Chief of Staff Scott Kozin, M.D., has cared for Emmy since she was a baby born with symbrachydactyly. Despite her limb difference, Emmy has lived a full life playing the violin, playing basketball and dancing.

With 80% of our patients with orthopedic conditions and an increasing number of patients with burns and/or reconstructive surgery needs having migrated to outpatient care, we prioritized the Epic rollout for our outpatient departments and ambulatory clinics.

How is Shriners Children's meeting today's challenges and opportunities?

We need to stay ahead of the national trends in healthcare. There has been an evolution toward outpatient care for a number of years. Currently, there is a shift in patient expectations. Patients are looking for more convenient, more localized access to healthcare. It is no different for our families. Our strategic vision is to treat more kids in more places.

Parents today also want providers to guide them through their child's healthcare experiences, making the medical journey easy and simple to understand. To meet these needs, we are streamlining our workforce and investing in resources that enhance our ability to provide more efficient, local, high-quality care for our patients and families.

What systemwide initiatives enhance the patient experience?

We are very excited about the Shriners Children's Medical Group, which is the largest medical group for pediatric orthopedists in the country. This structure is a natural evolution of a healthcare system that is moving away from being hospital-centric.

What does having a medical group mean for our moms and dads who want the best and most convenient care for their children? This approach allows us to come together and engage with the doctors, physician assistants and nurse practitioners at our locations to elevate standards of medical expertise, safety protocols and overall patient experience. The medical group enhances our ability to provide the most innovative and efficient care to more children.

We are also making a huge investment in our infrastructure. Over the past year, Shriners Children's transitioned to Epic, an electronic medical record system that enhances the way our sites share and store patient records. For patients and staff alike, Epic provides great efficiencies and enables our clinicians to communicate with other providers with more ease, as well as tap into a wealth of knowledge with one of the largest healthcare databases in the world. Epic is the same medical record system used by most children's hospitals, so our move brings us in line with other

The dynamic “Superhero Staff” with Kenidee at Shriners Children’s Chicago.



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– FRANCES A. FARLEY, M.D.,
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

healthcare facilities and makes the medical journey easier for our families to navigate.

With 80% of our patients with orthopedic conditions and an increasing number of patients with burns and/or reconstructive surgery needs having migrated to outpatient care, we prioritized the Epic rollout for our outpatient departments and ambulatory clinics. We are now bringing Epic to our inpatient units and operating rooms, providing the same enhancements to our families they have experienced on the outpatient side.

As the chief medical officer for Shriners Children’s, what are your priorities?

I continue to have my eye on the highest quality of care for our pediatric patients – many of whom come to us with the most complex medical conditions and injuries. We are focused on cultivating the best clinicians who desire to be at our locations practicing specialized medicine. We are forming physician work groups that will examine areas such as practice management, clinic operations, safety and research.

Quality of care speaks to the level of expertise of our medical teams, but quality also refers to meeting our patients’ overall needs. People want to be taken care of at their convenience, closer to

home. They want shorter wait times at their clinic appointments and easy communication between their Shriners Children’s doctors and their other providers. The investment we are putting into Epic and the exciting synergies provided by our medical group will keep Shriners Children’s at the forefront of healthcare as we move into the future, helping more children in more places. 📍

Dr. Farley has been the chief medical officer at Shriners Children’s since 2021. She is an orthopedic surgeon who received her medical degree from Weill Cornell University Medical College and spent 26 years practicing pediatric orthopedics at the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital. She served as chief of the pediatric orthopedic surgery service for 18 of those years before joining the team at Shriners Children’s.



A speech therapist conducts a detailed examination of a new patient with a cleft lip at Shriners Children’s Chicago.

In Their Own Words

Inspired by the incredible accomplishments of former patients, current patients tell us about their hopes and dreams for the future.



Snyders, 6 | BOSTON

“I want to be a fireman so I can save many lives.”

Ashton, 14 | ERIE

“I would love to run track in the Special Olympics someday.”



Brady, 20 | CHICAGO

“I spend three nights a week behind the wheel of a race car. I want to race a ‘late model’ (the highest class car at many local tracks), and one day join a race team as a full-time driver.”



Belen, 13 | TEXAS

“I love art and veterinary medicine. I love animals and I’d love to help them.”



Julian, 19 | CANADA

“I would love to work on a coaching or managerial staff for a professional football team. It would be amazing to work in the field that influenced me to push myself every day.”



Elliana, 13 | TWIN CITIES

“I want to own a bookshop with a coffee shop inside.”



Fatima, 4 | NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

“I want to be a princess so I can play with my stuffed animals all the time.”



Weston, 11 | SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

“I can’t wait to be a Los Angeles Dodger!”



Drew, 10 | SALT LAKE CITY

“I want to be a paleontologist. I like to dig for things and want to discover new dinosaurs and dinosaur bones. I want to name a new dinosaur after my mom and travel around the world to find dinosaur bones.”

AMPLIFYING HOPE, HEALING AND VOICES

NAME: YEHEE

CONDITION:
CEREBRAL PALSYLOCATION:
SHRINERS CHILDREN'S
SHREVEPORT

"If I didn't get the confidence that Shriners Children's gave me, I don't know if I would've kept going and trying to keep my wings flapping."

Yehee, 28, a self-described math nerd, works as an educator in the education technology field. A former patient of Shriners Children's Shreveport, Yehee was 6 when she moved with her family from South Korea to Houston, seeking a better life and treatment for cerebral palsy, a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture.

Her family first heard about Shriners Children's when Yehee was in second grade through their church pastor, who knew about the healthcare system's reputation for bringing families hope and healing. Although there was a Shriners Children's location in Houston at the time, it was determined that the Shreveport, Louisiana, hospital would be the best fit for Yehee and her family.

Every year, for the next several years, Yehee's family would make the trek to Shreveport. She had a major surgery from her hips to her toes when she was around 8 years old.

"Shriners Children's was a great community, provided a lot of support and I met some amazing people," Yehee said. "I had great physical therapists. They taught me how to tie my shoes and put my braces on, things you don't really think about that are really crucial to my day-to-day life."

Thanks to the wrap-around care provided by her team at Shriners Children's and her family's support, Yehee became more independent.

Her dreams are big. In September, she started a podcast called "Hello, My Darlings," with the goal of amplifying the voices of the disability community and helping people feel unified in their human experience no matter what their background.

She received her U.S. citizenship this year and hopes to work for the Department of Education with a focus on social education by creating opportunities for the disability community. "Some things you miss if you're not in that community," she said. "I want to be the person from the inside making that change."



Amazing Care for Families in Mexico

Shriners Children's opens new orthopedic clinic in Culiacán, Sinaloa

As part of its vision of caring for more children in more places, more conveniently and closer to home, Shriners Children's Mexico has partnered with Hospital Ángeles to open a new clinic in Culiacán, Sinaloa, in northwestern Mexico. To mark the milestone, a ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on Dec. 21 at the Hospital Ángeles facilities.

Mariano González, M.D., General Administrator of Shriners Children's Mexico, emphasized the significance of broadening the organization's reach.

"Extending our noble mission to Culiacán signifies a positive impact on the lives of families in the northwest region of our country who are in need of support for medical treatments for their pediatric patients," he said.

With the opening of this clinic in Culiacán, the Shriners Children's system aims to serve more children in the northwest region of the country who would otherwise have had to travel to Mexico City.

This expansion reflects Shriners Children's ongoing commitment to making specialized medical care accessible to

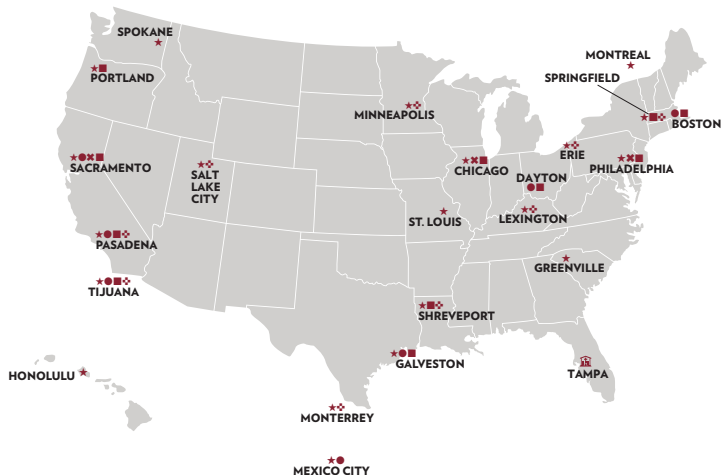


As part of the ceremony, the ribbon-cutting was performed by Angel, a patient ambassador from Culiacán who was proud to represent the children who will now have more convenient access to high-quality specialty medical care.

communities in need and allows Shriners Children's to continue pursuing its mission of providing the most amazing care anywhere. In addition to the new Culiacán location and the hospital in Mexico City, Shriners Children's has clinics in Tijuana and Monterrey.

The Culiacán clinic is open from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, by appointment only and without emergency services. To schedule an appointment, contact the social work department at phone number **56-51-01-51-95** or send an email to mex-infoculiacan@shrinenet.org.

LOCATIONS



- ★ Orthopedics
- Burn care
- ✕ Spinal cord injury
- Cleft lip and palate
- ✕○ Outpatient care only; necessary inpatient care provided at an affiliated facility
- 🏠 Shriners Children's and Shriners International's Headquarters