

LEADERS IN *Care*

STORIES OF THE MOST AMAZING CARE ANYWHERE

SUMMER 2026

Unstoppable Kids

No matter the challenge, these patients are up for the fight



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,



Unstoppable.

At Shriners Children's, we use that word a lot. It captures what distinguishes our healthcare system, our clinicians and, most importantly, our patients.

Shriners Children's is unstoppable in the most literal sense. For more than 100 years, we have been caring for children — and we haven't slowed down. Since the 1980s, we've grown to more than 100 locations delivering care across the country and around the world. And we have no plans to stop.

Our quality is what fuels that momentum. "Unstoppable" also speaks to our unwavering commitment to our patients and our mission of delivering care that changes lives. That kind of excellence requires relentless focus, innovation and hard work.

But above all, "unstoppable" belongs to our patients.

We provide the care and support they need — and then they take it from there. When children are cared for and believed in, courage rises. Confidence grows. Ambition takes root. Resilience becomes second nature. Our kids? Get out of their way.

In this issue of *Leaders in Care*, we feature some of our unstoppable patients — young people who were once told, "You'll never ..." and who have gone on to prove otherwise. Their stories remind us why we do what we do.

We hope that in these pages, you glimpse "unstoppable" in every word you read.

Sincerely,

Mel Bower
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
Shriners Children's

PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

Henry has been receiving care at Shriners Children's Erie since he was a toddler. He was born with achondroplasia (a form of dwarfism) and experienced a stroke in utero. He has received care through our outpatient clinic, as well as occupational and physical therapies. His mother, Natalie, shared this note in appreciation:

I'm fairly certain that every single staff member we have encountered in our 16 years there has in some way impacted our visit that day! Shriners only picks the best and we have experienced just that! Thank you, to ALL our friends!

-Natalie

SUMMER 2026

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ON THE COVER: Phippin, 15, is a real-life superhero who operates a theater company to keep his — and everyone's — spirits flying high.

Five Questions With Our New CMO

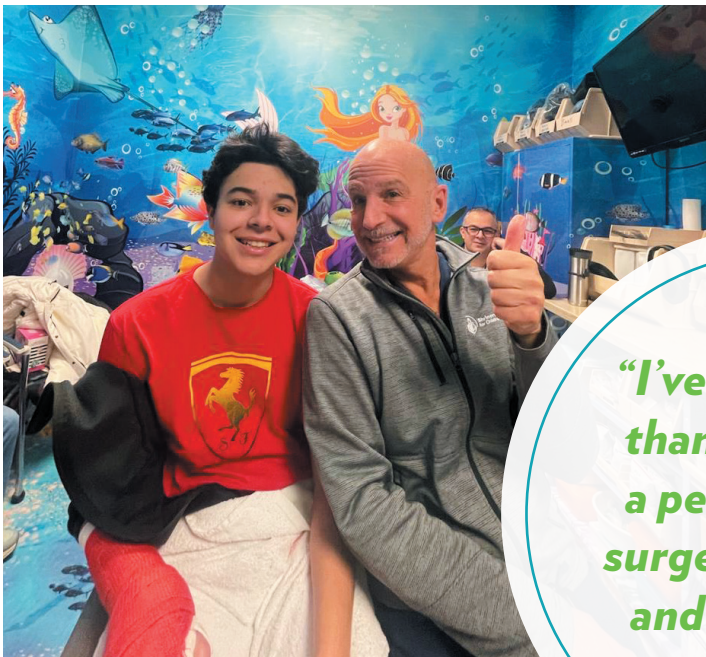
After more than three decades caring for children and their families, Scott H. Kozin, M.D., has stepped into the role of chief medical officer (CMO) for Shriners Children's. We asked him what families can expect in this next chapter of his career.

What does serving as chief medical officer mean to you?

Serving as CMO is both an honor and a responsibility. Shriners Children's has a long tradition of providing exceptional pediatric specialty care. My role is to provide support and guidance to all our physicians and advanced practice providers across the system so we can continue delivering the highest quality care to children.

How does your experience as a surgeon influence your leadership?

I've spent more than 30 years as a pediatric hand surgeon, educator and researcher. I've had the amazing opportunity to train residents and fellows, lead multidisciplinary teams and serve as chief of staff at Shriners Children's Philadelphia. The pinnacle of my clinical career was performing the world's first bilateral pediatric hand transplant in 2015, which reinforced the importance of team collaboration, innovation and systemwide excellence.



"I've spent more than 30 years as a pediatric hand surgeon, educator and researcher."

— SCOTT H. KOZIN, M.D.

Caring for children is a privilege and keeps you grounded. When parents entrust you with the care and treatment of their children, that trust represents the ultimate responsibility. The experience reminds you that behind every diagnosis is a family trusting you with something precious. That perspective guides my decisions every day.



Scott H. Kozin, M.D.

What should families know about Shriners Children's?

We are built entirely around kids. Every decision we make is guided by one question: What is best for the child? This unpretentious concept and focus shapes everything we do and every decision we make.

What excites you most about this moment?

The opportunity and the responsibility. We have extraordinary talent across our system. Aligning that talent through research, education and collaboration will lead to innovation, better treatments and better outcomes for children. Ultimately, it means we can reach and care for even more families.

What is your vision for the future?

The best way to predict the future is to create the future. We will continue to innovate, expand and invest in care — ensuring that every child who comes to Shriners Children's receives exceptional treatment and the compassion every family deserves.

Champion of Change

As CMO, Dr. Kozin brings a strong record of surgical and organizational leadership. He became the first full-time pediatric hand surgeon at Shriners Children's Philadelphia and most recently served as chief of staff there. Dr. Kozin is an advocate for improving the lives of children through research, education and patient care. "Innovation leads to excitement and the desire for growth. We must grow to expand care to more children across North America and around the world," he said.

expertise
& EXCELLENCE

SPECIALTY CARE FUELED BY INNOVATION & RESEARCH

From Fiji to Fairbanks

On an outreach visit to Guam, Hawai'i-based orthopedist Jonathan Pellett, M.D., examined Jesiah to determine the next steps in his care plan.

Shriners Children's care spans the Pacific, from the frigid north to the South Seas



The Pacific Basin has some of the more remote and medically underserved places in the world. Thanks to Shriners Children's, families in distant communities, from South Pacific islands to the interior of Alaska, have access to world-class pediatric orthopedic care.

For over 20 years, medical teams from Shriners Children's Hawai'i have made annual and semi-annual outreach trips to Guam, Saipan and many South Pacific islands, including Fiji, Tonga and American Samoa, providing the same specialized care offered at the Honolulu hospital. >>



“These communities are extremely vulnerable. Without this outreach, children in these areas would likely not receive orthopedic care and could end up with complications that could not be fixed,” said Andrew Graul, corporate administrator at Shriners Children’s Hawai’i.

At the other end of the Pacific, clinicians from Shriners Children’s Spokane have traveled to Fairbanks, Alaska, typically every other month, since 2018, examining and treating roughly 50 children each visit.

Even when adult orthopedists are available, they can’t provide the specialized care provided by Shriners Children’s specialists. Pediatric orthopedists — unlike adult orthopedists — treat conditions rarely seen in adults, like clubfoot and scoliosis. These specialists are rare, representing about 10% of U.S. orthopedists. In the South Pacific, outside Hawai’i, New Zealand, Australia and the Philippines, pediatric orthopedists are essentially nonexistent, according to Graul.

“We see everything from scoliosis, deformity of the legs and arms, and congenital differences to everyday fractures, sprains and tendinitis,” said Jennifer Weiss, M.D., chief of staff at Shriners Children’s Hawai’i.

Building trust across the miles

Because clinicians return to each of the 12 different islands they visit, they establish relationships with families — sometimes deep ones.

“We follow patients over time,” Dr. Weiss said. “Some have been coming to us for many years. It is beautiful to witness the relationships between these families and our outreach team.”

While most Shriners Children’s locations have outreach clinics, Hawai’i’s program is one of the most extensive in the network, with a cultural element that might not be obvious to someone from the outside, said Graul.



“These communities are extremely vulnerable. Without this outreach, children in these areas would likely not receive orthopedic care and could end up with complications that could not be fixed.”

— ANDREW GRAUL, CORPORATE ADMINISTRATOR, SHRINERS CHILDREN’S HAWAI’I

“In the Pacific, there is a cultural understanding across the region that the islands are connected, which gives the outreach broader significance,” said Graul. “The water is not considered a separation, but rather the connection, between all of us.”

Fairbanks serves a wide area

While the Hawai’i outreach clinics are staffed by physicians and clinicians, the Fairbanks clinic is managed primarily by Bryan Tompkins, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at Shriners Children’s Spokane, who emphasizes that the impact goes beyond the one- or two-day clinics.

“These clinics aren’t just about seeing patients,” Dr. Tompkins said. “We also train local doctors and provide education to help communities care for children with complex orthopedic needs.” He’s even presented at medical conferences at the Fort Wainwright

U.S. Army base in Fairbanks.

Unlike the Pacific Islands, Alaska has a pediatric orthopedist — just one, based in Anchorage, in the south, which is why the Spokane team travels to Fairbanks, roughly an eight-hour drive from Anchorage. Some of the patients come from even farther north.

“We aren’t just seeing kids in Fairbanks, we’re seeing kids from small rural towns that can sometimes only be accessed via snowmobile, small planes or snowcat,” said nurse executive Missy Martin, MBA, BSN, RN.

Expanding access to high-quality care

Outreach clinics across the Pacific Basin allow Shriners Children’s to bring specialized pediatric orthopedic care

to children where they live, rather than requiring families to travel long distances. While some children are eventually brought to Spokane or Honolulu for complex surgeries, many benefit from care close to home.

Both missions have grown over the years. Hawai’i has increased visits to Fiji to make up for appointments missed during COVID-19 lockdowns, and Alaska has seen a 50% increase in children served since 2021.

“Outreach clinics also allow us to have a connection to the community by more closely interacting with local pediatric providers,” Dr. Tompkins says. “This outreach embodies Shriners Children’s mission to take care of children in need of our specialized care regardless of their ability to pay,” added Graul. 🇺🇸



Cleft Care That Grows With Your Child

Adolescence can be one of the most complicated phases of cleft care. Surgeries may carry greater impact — not only medically but socially — affecting school schedules, activities and a teen’s growing sense of independence. Permanent teeth emerge. Voices change. Confidence becomes just as important as clinical outcomes.



Rachel Hogan, MA, CCC-SLP

“Families sometimes feel like they’re ‘done’ after early surgeries, but that’s not the case,” said Rachel Hogan, MA, CCC-SLP, speech-language pathologist and cleft team clinical coordinator at Shriners Children’s Texas. “Cleft care really evolves as kids grow — and no two journeys are the same, especially in the tween and teen years.”

For the past eight years, Hogan has supported patients from infancy through skeletal maturity, helping families anticipate what comes next and understand why timing matters.

Across the Shriners Children’s system, cleft lip and palate care is designed to evolve alongside each child, addressing medical, developmental and emotional needs at every stage.

“As children grow, new treatment phases emerge,” said Kavitha L. Ranganathan, M.D., co-director of Shriners Children’s

Boston’s Cleft and Craniofacial Center. “Our team works closely together to time each step appropriately, always keeping the child’s overall well-being in mind.”

For many patients, that includes an alveolar bone graft between ages 7 and 10 to create a stable foundation for permanent teeth.

Timing is everything

Once permanent teeth emerge, orthodontic preparation becomes essential. Oral hygiene — especially for teens with braces — can directly affect surgical timelines. Poor dental care may delay procedures, so teams need to coordinate orthodontic and surgical steps carefully. “I work closely with the orthodontist, dentist, oral and maxillofacial surgeon and the family to prepare for procedures and time treatment appropriately,” Hogan said.

It’s common for scheduling to revolve around school and family routines. “We see older children later in the day so they can attend school before visiting Shriners Children’s,” Dr. Ranganathan said.

As tweens and teens mature, orthodontics often becomes central, supporting tooth alignment and jaw growth. Additional procedures may include bone grafting, pharyngeal flap surgery to improve airflow during speech and later jaw surgery to improve bite and facial balance.

“Our team can care for health and well-being beyond surgical restoration of the face,” offered Dr. Ranganathan.



Eliza has been a patient of Dr. Ranganathan’s since shortly after she was born.

When speech and confidence intersect

Adolescence can shift how a child’s speech sounds. Growth affects how sound travels through the nose and mouth, sometimes altering speech that had been stable for years.

As Hogan explained, “Kids may have sounded great for years, and then when they hit adolescence, their speech can suddenly sound more nasal because that tissue was acting like a support.”

These changes are monitored closely as patients near the end of their growth, but outcomes are measured in more than clinical terms.

“If a patient is happy and well adjusted, we may wait on surgical intervention,” Hogan said. “But if there are reports of teasing or fear of speaking up in school, we consider intervening sooner.”

Shriners Children’s uses tools such as the CLEFT-Q — a validated, patient-reported outcome measure — to help the team understand how teens perceive their appearance and well-being. Those insights shape decisions based not only on anatomy but lived experience.

Fueling growth and recovery

Treatment phases often require temporary dietary adjustments. At Shriners Children’s Boston, registered dietitian Jenny Shiel, MS, RD, LDN, monitors growth and nutritional intake while coordinating closely with the cleft team.

For older children preparing for bone grafting or jaw procedures, that may include guidance on meal preparation and oral supplements. Shiel recalls working with Evan, a teenager who created a cookbook of practical blender-based recipes drawn from his experience. >>



Brenda calls Shriners Children’s Boston a “blessing” for the care provided to her son, Jayden.

“It was so nice to work with Evan and get his input,” she said. “He shared recipes he had actually tried, which made it relatable for other kids going through the same experience.”

Nutrition, like speech and orthodontics, is integrated into the broader, carefully sequenced plan of care.

Supporting families along the way

At Shriners Children’s Texas, Hogan helps teens prepare to manage their own health-care as they approach adulthood.

“Part of my role is helping connect them with adult providers and resources, so they’re supported even after they age out of our care,” she said.

In Boston, the Craniofacial Patient and Family Advisory Council, launched in 2025, helps families connect with others at different stages of the cleft journey to shape future programming.

“This program is unique to our hospital because we identify what patients and families need — and then we do it,” says care manager Sandy Barrett, BSN, RN, CCM.

A systemwide commitment

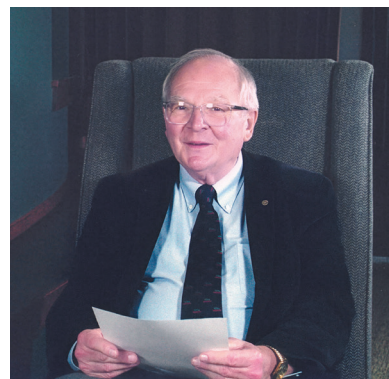
Across Shriners Children’s, cleft care is collaborative, carefully timed and designed to evolve with the child.

From early feeding support to speech refinement, orthodontic coordination, nutrition guidance and psychosocial care, teams work together to ensure patients move forward with strong communication skills and confidence.

“We hope they leave us happy, healthy and engaged — whether that’s college, a trade program or simply confident moving forward,” Hogan said. 🧡



Businessman Leads by Example With Significant Bequest to Shriners Children’s



Tom Collier shared a meaningful gift with Shriners Children’s.

“The more I give, the more I get.” These words, shared by a friend early in his automotive career, stuck with Tom Collier. “My clients are some of the finest people in the world, and this advice has shaped my giving ever since,” he said.

Now retired after 62 years in the automotive industry, Tom plans a significant bequest to Shriners Children’s, split between the Portland and Spokane locations. “I was born in Washington and started my career there, but I made my money in Oregon, so I want to give back to the communities that shaped me,” he shared.

Born at Deaconess Hospital in Spokane, just across from Shriners Children’s, Tom has stayed connected to his hometown. He belongs to The Spokane Club and was part of the original Friends of the Historic Davenport Hotel. Tom began his automotive career in Washington before relocating to Bend, Oregon. He later founded Classic Motor Car Company and sold luxury cars worldwide.

A longtime community leader, Tom served on the Bend Chamber of Commerce Board and is a 50-year Rotary member, raising substantial funds for their foundation. In the late 1980s, he purchased 200 acres in Bend as an investment, including a 70-acre solar farm.

Tom’s first introduction to Shriners was a hardworking, sophisticated uncle he admired who was a Mason and a Shriner. When thinking about his legacy and where to donate the land, he chose Shriners Children’s.

“A friend of mine had polio as a child and traveled alone on a train from eastern Oregon to Shriners Children’s Portland for surgery. He later received treatment at Shriners Children’s Spokane,” said Tom. “I am amazed by how many friends and community members have been touched by Shriners Children’s care. The more people I chat with, the more I hear of others who have been helped.”

“There’s a quote about how the most honorable and enjoyable way to use money is giving it to others, and that is what I try to do — to leave the earth a little better as we pass through it,” said Tom. His significant estate gift will leave 200 acres to Shriners Children’s, and the 70-acre solar farm on his land will provide a 60-year flow of income to benefit patients for many years.



LEARN MORE
about leaving Shriners Children’s in your estate plans at shrinerschildrens.org/planned-giving

The Future Is Now

Wireless implant helps Vincent stand tall after lifelong struggle

Imagine this: A 20-year-old holds a small, round device against his leg. With the press of a button, electricity flows invisibly through his skin, powering a tiny motor inside a metal rod implanted in his femur. Slowly, his leg lengthens — no pins, no screws, no risk of infection.

This is no sci-fi story. That young man is Vincent. For most of his life, he walked with a visible difference: His right leg was 15

centimeters shorter than his left. Born in Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada, he grew up wearing shoes with thick compensating soles just to walk properly.

“Doctors told me there was nothing they could do,” he recalled.

That changed last June, when Vincent became the first patient in Canada to receive the wireless metal rod at Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada. The surgery, performed by orthopedic surgeon

Mitchell Bernstein, M.D., marked his third major operation to adjust his leg length — but this time, the rod’s motorized, wireless design meant a faster, safer and less painful recovery than ever before.

Three times a day, Vincent places the external device against his skin at a precise location. An electrical pulse activates the motor inside the rod, gradually lengthening his leg and stimulating new bone growth.

“It’s like charging a cellphone or a wireless watch,” Dr. Bernstein said. “Once the connection is made, electricity powers the motor inside the rod, and it extends.”

Unlike traditional limb-lengthening surgeries, which rely on external fixators held in place by screws or pins that protrude through the skin, the wireless system eliminates one of the biggest risks: infection.

“We’ve eliminated infections related to external pins because nothing comes out of the skin,” Dr. Bernstein said. “This technology is a game changer.”

A college student who hopes to become an electrician, Vincent said the wireless implant was far less painful and restrictive than the external fixators he experienced with previous surgeries.

Since the operation, Vincent’s right leg has lengthened by 4.5 centimeters, adding to previous gains achieved by surgery.

For Vincent, the implant has been life changing. “I’ll be able to learn how to skate,” he said, smiling. “I never thought I’d be able to do that in my life.”

After years of orthopedic procedures, Vincent is finally nearing the end of his medical journey. The remaining difference between his legs is now minimal, and he no longer needs shoe inserts. Doctors expect that the metal rod can be removed next summer.

“It’s a big investment,” Vincent said, “but it’s going to change my life.”

He’s already thinking ahead — skating first, jogging next. 🛼

“The future of medicine isn’t coming — it’s already changing lives.”



Trailblazing technology allows Vincent to incrementally lengthen his leg using a handheld remote that controls an implanted device.

champions

IN HEALING

EMPOWERING PATIENTS, FAMILIES & CARE TEAMS

*Shriners
Children's patients
are making their
dreams work*

Unstoppable Kids

*Meeting challenges to define
what's possible*

At Shriners Children's, our patients face challenges that would make most of us stop in our tracks — but not these kids. They bounce back, figure out new ways to do things and light up every room they enter. They are unstoppable.



For Kruz, playtime is also time for strengthening his arm and shoulder.

Joy in every step

When you meet Carlotta, the first thing you notice is her radiant smile. Her parents, Mike and Lisa, say the best word to describe her is “joyful.” Despite facing more medical challenges than most children ever will, Carlotta exudes happiness and determination.

Carlotta was adopted from China in 2023 at age 7. At the time, she could not walk and had only limited speech. She had significant orthopedic needs, including arthrogryposis, bilateral club feet and hip dysplasia. Her new family knew immediately where to turn. “We knew she needed a lot of medical care, and we knew Shriners Children’s New England had the expertise to help,” Lisa recalls.

Carlotta began outpatient therapy and quickly became a beloved part of the care team’s world. Her physical therapist, Lynn Taylor Glass, PT, DPT, remembers their first meeting vividly. “She came in sitting in a little umbrella stroller, and we gave her a wheelchair to try. Within minutes, she was squealing with delight, wheeling around the clinic, saying hello to everyone. It was the first taste of independence she’d ever had. It was pure joy.”

Over the next year, Carlotta underwent multiple surgeries — first on her hip, then on both feet. She spent much of 2024 in casts, including a chest-to-ankle spica cast. Yet her spirit never wavered. “Even when she was immobilized, she laughed every day,” Mike said. “Her attitude kept us all going.”

Carlotta has made amazing progress in the three years that she has been coming to Shriners Children’s New England.



Making a splash

Kruz’s family calls him “Nemo,” after the plucky clown fish in the movie, “Finding Nemo,” and lovingly refers to his left arm as his “Lucky Fin.” “Just keep swimming” is an unofficial family motto — a phrase that perfectly captures Kruz’s determination. But behind his playful spirit, Kruz has faced challenges that have tested him from the very first moments of life.

Kruz’s birth was difficult, and he was diagnosed with Erb’s palsy, an injury affecting the nerves in his neck and left shoulder. The injury left him with no movement in his left arm, which hung limp at his side. He wasn’t able to crawl or bear much weight on his arms, so he adapted by scooting on the floor to get around.

Everything changed when his family brought him to Shriners Children’s Philadelphia. There, his care team combined surgery with rehabilitation to restore function to Kruz’s arm.

Kruz underwent two surgeries: a closed reduction to push his arm back into the shoulder socket, then an open reduction with a nerve transfer. Combined with physical and occupational therapies, Kruz now has greater rotation of his left arm and improved fine and gross motor skills. He feeds himself, hands out high-fives and is learning to reach his arm out to the side.

Even during weeks in a post-op cast holding his shoulder, Kruz remained cheerful and resilient. At just 2, Kruz is truly unstoppable.

He celebrated his first birthday with a “Finding Nemo”-themed party that included swimming. Sometime soon, no doubt, Kruz will be splashing around with both arms as he continues to gain mobility and rotation in his “Lucky Fin.”



When the casts finally came off, Carlotta was ready to move. In therapy, she practiced using walkers, gait trainers and the Zero G — an innovative ceiling-mounted harness system that allows children to practice walking safely.

One of the most memorable moments occurred on the playground. “She had just gotten out of her casts,” Lynn remembers, “and with her walker, she made her way up the ramp to the slide — for the first time in her life. It took her 45 minutes, but she did it. A few weeks later, she climbed it in four.”

Now 10, Carlotta walks with forearm crutches, pedals an adaptive tricycle and proudly manages daily tasks like using the bathroom independently. “Carlotta reminds us why we do this work,” Lynn says. “Her joy and determination make every challenge worth it. She is truly unstoppable — her journey is only just beginning.”

Game on

When Iván was 11, his life changed forever after a tragic car accident took his father’s life and left him with severe burns. His remarkable journey of healing began at Shriners Children’s Northern California, where he underwent nearly 50 surgeries and years of rehabilitation, relearning how to walk and function.

Two passions carried him through the long, painful process: basketball and video games. Shooting hoops gave him a tangible goal, physical exertion and a connection to friends. Mastering a gaming controller required adapting his grip and rebuilding dexterity. “It helped me find my own way of using my hands,” Iván says. These activities became both his escape and his proving ground, showing daily that he could overcome new challenges.

“You are going to save him, and then you are going to talk about what a great achievement it was.”

— PALOMA, IVÁN’S MOTHER

The care Iván received went beyond physical; it reshaped his outlook on life. “My therapists and doctors showed me I don’t have to do stuff the way others do, but to find my own way,” he explains. This mindset unlocked his academic future, giving him the confidence to pursue a psychology degree.

Now 19, Iván’s journey with Shriners Children’s continues. His mother, Paloma, has been a pillar of strength from the start. Early in his treatment, she told the medical team, “You are going to save him, and then you are going to talk about what a great achievement it was.” She has witnessed his unstoppable spirit firsthand. “When Iván was born, I knew that he had a very special reason for coming into this world,” she shares, “and he has shown it to me every day.”

Iván now aims to become a hospital counselor. He is thriving, channeling his loss into a future dedicated to helping others. For Iván, being unstoppable means forever moving forward and honoring his father’s legacy with every step he takes.

Her eyes tell the story

Haylee experienced a serious complication at birth that left her deprived of oxygen. Doctors diagnosed her with quadriplegic cerebral palsy — a condition that affects all four of her limbs, making movement difficult.

Haylee began receiving care at Shriners Children’s Erie in 2021 when she was 3. Now 7, she has come a long way. Occupational therapist Emily Madder, MS, OTR/L, quickly noticed that Haylee understood far more than she could express.

Haylee experiences muscle stiffness, weakness and poor motor control, making it nearly impossible to press buttons or switches. The team turned to an eye gaze device that tracks eye movements to select words or symbols on a screen.

During an early therapy session, when asked to “find the duck,” Haylee’s eyes went directly to the correct toy. When shown a colorful button board, she looked at the right color each time.

Within four months, Haylee learned to request her favorite things. Soon, the screen was filled with words that reflected Haylee’s wishes and personality: “yes,” “no,” “good,” “Grandma,” “ice cream,” “more” — and her most treasured phrase, “I love you.”

“For Haylee, the eye gaze device has been

Iván and his mom, Paloma, are facing the future head on, with dreams and goals intact.





Haylee's eyes are taking her to new heights as she expands her vocabulary on her eye gaze communication device.

the key to communicating with teachers, friends and family,” said Haylee’s grandmother, Loretta. “It allows her to be actively involved with other students, answering when the teacher asks what the weather is like or what day of the week it is. It has fulfilled our hope that one day Haylee would be able to say, ‘I love you’ to her grandma and papa.”

Lighting the stage

“Every now and then you meet a child who is so remarkable they take your breath away,” said Kristen Carroll, M.D., discussing the first time she met Phippin in 2021. “He’s one of those kids.”

Phippin is no ordinary teen. Born with Aicardi-Goutières syndrome, a rare genetic disorder affecting the brain, spinal cord and immune system, he has faced significant mobility challenges from a young age. Phippin’s mom, Emily, said, “We are fighting against something that is actively fighting against us.”

He has endured strokes, nerve damage and surgeries — obstacles that would have slowed anyone down. But for Phippin, these challenges fueled his determination to try new things and chase big dreams, including his breakout role as Tiny Tim in “A Christmas Carol.”

Phippin began care at Shriners Children’s Salt Lake City when he was 10. It was there he met Dr. Carroll. At the time, his feet were turned inward so severely that standing and walking were extremely painful. Dr. Carroll performed corrective surgery that straightened his feet and dramatically improved his mobility, allowing him to continue pursuing his love of acting.

By 2023, Phippin experienced a rapid decline due to the progressive nature of his condition and lost the ability to move his lower limbs independently. Unable to play with friends or participate in theater, the loss was isolating. That’s when inspiration struck, or as he called it, his “big lightbulb.” Wanting to bring people together and >>

“For Haylee, the eye gaze device has been the key to communicating with teachers, friends and family.”

— LORETTA, HAYLEE’S GRANDMOTHER

create joy, Phippin founded his own theater production company, Phip's Theater Co. "I wanted to get kids together and not feel so lonely," he said. In the process, he created a space where kids can connect, have fun and feel included.

With help from Shriners Children's Salt Lake City, Phippin didn't let the degenerative nature of his condition keep him from doing the things he loves. "Shriners Children's has given me so much and they have helped me through really hard times," he shared. "I should give back."

In Phip's Theater Co.'s production of "Matilda the Musical," Phippin starred as the infamous Miss Trunchbull. What's more, he donated the proceeds from that production to Shriners Children's and the Make-A-Wish Foundation, excited to give back to the organizations that have supported him. That's true star power. 🌟



Dr. Kristen Carroll has been treating Phippin for over five years and is very impressed with his forward-thinking attitude.

"I wanted to get kids together and not feel so lonely."

— PHIPPIN



Phippin, 15, has never let his condition hold him back from reaching for the stars.

systemwide
STRENGTH

DEDICATED TO CARING FOR MORE KIDS IN MORE PLACES

Inside
Shriners
Children's
fracture clinics

When Every Minute Counts



It's a Wednesday afternoon, and Austin, 13, is on the wrestling mat, working through a drill. He'd been practicing for a week, holding his own and proving, like he always does, that his spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) won't slow him down. Then, in one unlucky moment, he gets pushed, falls backward and both tibias, the main bones in his lower legs, snap. »

Austin's mom, Tabitha, gets the call that he has been hurt. She doesn't hesitate. Austin has been a Shriners Children's Portland patient since birth, so for her, there is only one place to go.

Rather than spending hours in a crowded emergency room, Tabitha knew there was an option for this kind of injury: Shriners Children's operates walk-in fracture clinics at locations across the country, from Portland and Spokane to Chicago, Philadelphia and beyond, each one designed specifically for kids with bone and joint injuries.

A system built around kids

Shriners Children's Spokane pioneered the walk-in fracture clinic model more than a decade ago, treating fewer than 500 patients in its first year, a number that has since more than quadrupled. Shriners Children's Portland followed, and the model has continued to expand across the healthcare system.

Families value the highly skilled team and kid-focused approach to care. Technicians make casting a positive experience, letting kids pick their color to match their favorite team or even opt for a glitter cast. State-of-the-art interventions like virtual reality goggles help distract patients during casting. "A lot of the times a patient says, 'Ow, that hurts,' and then they turn and go, 'Ooh, there's a whale!'" said Shriners Children's Spokane recreational therapist Larissa Sims.

Advanced practice providers staffing the clinic can consult with surgeons if a patient requires same- or next-day surgery, and sports medicine physicians can provide recommendations for healing time, rehabilitation and return to play.

"Our referring providers appreciate the easy access for their patients; our families appreciate expedited care," said Bryan Tompkins, M.D., pediatric orthopedic surgeon at the Spokane location. "In 2025, the number reached a record high, with nearly 400 fractures in one month."

"He has always had a 'can-do' kind of attitude."

— TABITHA, AUSTIN'S MOM



Austin, 13, is finding his rhythm on the basketball court — and he has the trophy to prove it.

Consistency of care across the healthcare system is no accident. Today, sports medicine treatment is coordinated through the Shriners Children's Sports Medicine Consortium, a collaborative effort of 14 sites working together to standardize and elevate care across the Shriners Children's system.

"With that expectation, we are motivated and excited to really ramp up our productivity," says David Louie, sports consortium coordinator.

A different kind of care

Before joining Shriners Children's Portland, physician associate Danielle Chazin, PA, worked in emergency medicine, which gives her a unique perspective on what sets the two apart.

"At our clinics, pediatric orthopedic injuries and fractures are all we do, so our specialists see a much higher volume of these cases than you'd typically find in an emergency room setting," says Dani.

"At our walk-in clinic, patients can get an X-ray, have us read it immediately and walk out with a cast if needed. Everything happens in one place."

The road back

For Austin, that kind of expertise matters more. SMA is a genetic condition affecting muscle strength and bone density, meaning his fractures carry higher stakes than a typical pediatric injury. He was diagnosed before birth, and Shriners Children's has been part of his care ever since.

None of that is lost on Tabitha, who knew the risks when Austin decided to try wrestling but refused to hold him back. "He has always had a 'can-do' kind of attitude," she said.

As for Austin, he couldn't compete at the team's first meet, but he was right there on the sidelines cheering them on. For now, he'll focus on wheelchair basketball, competing with the same strength and determination that have always guided him. 🏀



LEARN MORE about Shriners Children's sports medicine and fracture care: <https://qrco.de/SportsMedicine>.

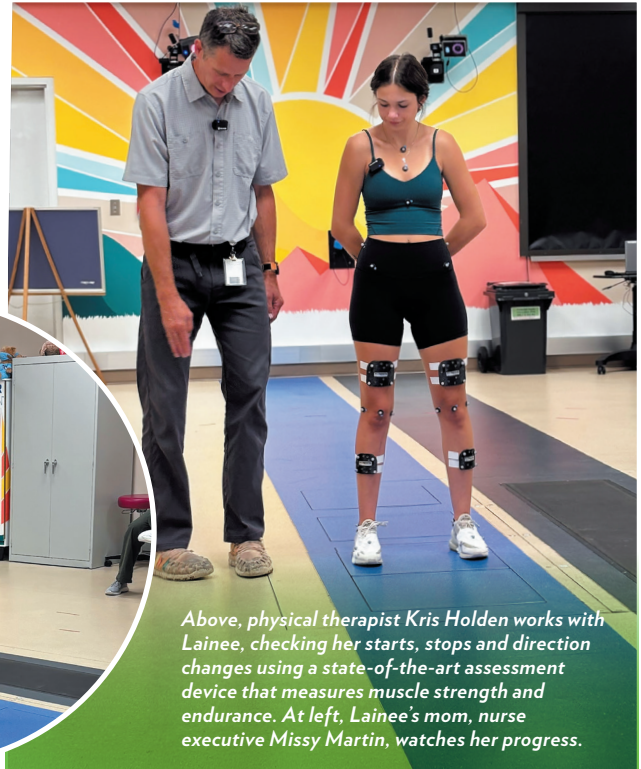
The Science of a Safe Comeback

Sports medicine specialists guide healthy return to play

Returning to activity too soon after an injury is one of the biggest risk factors for reinjury. Shriners Children's Spokane's structured Return to Sport Protocol ensures that young athletes fully recover before they safely return to play, protecting their long-term health.

Patients receive care from a multidisciplinary team within the Sports Health and Medicine program, including sports medicine physicians, physical therapists, athletic trainers, and strength and conditioning specialists.

Clinicians are seeing ACL injuries more often in young athletes, particularly in sports that involve jumping, cutting and quick direction changes, such as soccer, basketball and football. The protocol addresses both the physical and psychological aspects of recovery. "Our goal isn't just return to play — we use evidence-based programs and proven protocols to ensure patients are strong enough to return with confidence," said sports medicine physical therapist Kelly Bartleson, MPT, OCS, CMPT.



Above, physical therapist Kris Holden works with Laine, checking her starts, stops and direction changes using a state-of-the-art assessment device that measures muscle strength and endurance. At left, Laine's mom, nurse executive Missy Martin, watches her progress.

Following the data

The team uses advanced technology in the Motion Analysis Center (MAC) and detailed movement data to guide recovery. Special cameras track markers placed on the body while force plates measure how much pressure joints experience. This shows how the body moves in three dimensions and whether joints are under unusual stress — details the naked eye cannot detect.

"These studies provide precise, objective data that helps tailor treatment and ensure patients are ready to return to the demands of their sport," explained physical therapist Kris Holden.

The Protocol Process

The Return to Sport Protocol gives young athletes the best chance for full participation and long-term health.

1. Injury assessment and diagnosis
2. Structured treatment plan
 - a. Physical rehabilitation
 - b. Strength and conditioning
3. Functional and performance assessments
4. Psychological readiness
5. Collaborative return-to-play determination
6. Monitor progress

Performance checks for safe recovery

MAC specialists use six performance tests to observe kinematic movement patterns and capture biomechanics data on our ACL reconstruction patients.

- **Drop Jump Vertical:** Assesses landing mechanics and knee stability from jumping from an 18-inch box onto two separate force plates simultaneously then jumping back up.
- **Y-Cut:** Running forward and cutting left or right at 45 degrees on force plates to simulate a change in direction evaluates stability, motion and shock absorption.
- **Deceleration:** Moving forward and backward on a force plate simulates a change in deceleration to provide data on stability and the amount of motion that is occurring.
- **Lateral Shuffle:** Checks for hip and core control when performing side-to-side movements on a force plate.
- **Single Leg Squat:** Performing a heel touch on the ground off an 8- to 12-inch box helps find where the center of mass lines up.
- **Single Leg Hop:** Hopping onto a force plate for distance with a single leg and holding the landing for 3 seconds measures power and stability.

While ACL injuries are one of the most studied, the same principles apply to all sports injuries. Return to sport evaluation is a complex process tailored to the needs of the individual, their injury and the patient's chosen sport. 🏀

Avoiding Summer Burns, Breaks and Blasts

Simple measures reduce injuries

Summer brings freedom and fun for families — beach days, barbecues, fireworks and long hours outside. It's also a season when preventable injuries spike. The specialists at Shriners Children's have a simple message: With the right precautions, summer can stay safe and memorable.

Burn dangers lie beneath the surface

Many families believe that once their campfire or fire pit has been extinguished, the area is safe. In reality, ashes and embers can retain heat for hours, creating a significant burn risk.

While flames may be gone, hot coals can remain. "Don't think 'out of sight, out of mind' when covering up a beach fire with sand," said Melissa DiPiro, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC/AC, nurse practitioner at Shriners Children's Boston. "It actually makes the coals hotter. To make it safe, use water to cool the area completely."

At a family celebration on the beach, Sawyer severely burned his feet near a fire pit. Adults at the gathering supervised and extinguished the fire, but after the fire was out, Sawyer walked over the sand where the fire pit had been.

Sawyer required specialized burn care at Shriners Children's Boston, and his experience underscores an important lesson: Sand traps heat — always pour cold water on the area after using a fire pit.

Summer falls, broken bones

Summer means fun outside on bikes and scooters, at playgrounds and camps. At Shriners Children's New England, orthopedic surgeon and Medical Director Lael Luedtke, M.D., sees more fractures in the summer, particularly injuries to the wrist, elbow, ankle and collarbone. "When kids aren't in school all day, they're moving more, and that naturally increases the risk of falls and injuries," she explained.

Dr. Luedtke emphasizes that many fractures can be prevented with simple safety measures and supervision. "Helmets, wrist guards and knee pads significantly reduce both the frequency and severity of injuries," she said.

Not every injury requires medical care, but don't ignore visible deformity, significant swelling or pain that doesn't improve within a day or two — these may signal a fracture. Refusal to use a limb or bear weight are also red flags.

Dr. Luedtke encourages families to focus on long-term health rather than short-term setbacks. "That next game, competition or vacation may feel important in the moment," she said, "but protecting a child's health for the next 60 years matters far more."

After recovering from serious burns on his feet, Sawyer has educated others in his community about fire pit safety.



Sawyer had months of physical therapy following his burn injuries.



When fireworks go wrong

David Westberry, M.D., saw how devastating the unsupervised use of fireworks can be early in his career at Shriners Children's Greenville.

"A young boy lost his hand after a blast," he said. "It is critical that parents caution their children that not only can fireworks cause painful burns — they can also result in catastrophic injuries to the fingers, hands, arms and other parts of the body and leave lasting challenges with function."

Sometimes kids will bundle fireworks together hoping for an even more impressive show, but that multiplies the potential for devastating consequences, Dr. Westberry notes.

To keep a celebration from turning into a tragedy, follow Dr. Westberry's straightforward advice. "The very best way to avoid injury to a child is for the firework to never be placed in their hands to begin with."

Summer should be a season of memories, not emergency visits. With close supervision and smart precautions, families can dramatically reduce the risk of serious injuries and keep the focus on fun. 🐾

POWER AND GRACE

NAME: LUIS

CONDITION: SPINE DISORDER

LOCATION: MEXICO



“Before we came to Shriners Children’s, it was like walking in the dark.”

— CARMINA, LUIS’ MOM

Practicing and competing in shot put offers Luis a chance to be strong and successful.

When Luis was 18 months old, he couldn’t walk. His mom, Carmina, knew something wasn’t right.

Months later, when he finally took his first steps, Luis dragged his left foot. That’s when the real diagnosis came: sacral agenesis. Luis was born without a sacrum or coccyx — the last two sections of the spine — affecting his legs, feet and other body systems. Doctors warned he might stop walking at a very young age.

Nearly three years later, his family discovered Shriners Children’s Mexico, and for the first time, they had answers. Luis started receiving care from specialists in urology, orthopedics, scoliosis and orthotics. He had 10 surgeries. Each time, there was fear that he might stop walking. But after every procedure, Luis stood back up. “Before we came to Shriners Children’s, it was like walking in the dark,” Carmina remembers.

Along the way, Luis found a powerful ally: sports. At 13, he began competitive dance, as well as shot put and javelin. In sports, he found a space to release fear, stress and frustration.

Dance helped improve his posture and his scoliosis. But more than that, it taught him something even bigger: to believe in himself.

“The surgeries and the appointments gave me confidence. In dance, if you don’t have confidence, you can’t shine on the floor,”

he says. And Luis wants to shine: His goal is to reach the world stage in competitive dance.

Today, Luis is not just a patient. He is a dancer. He is an athlete. He is a young man whose greatest achievement is not just walking. It’s never giving up.

Luis enjoys the dynamic movements of dance, where he can combine art and athleticism.

An Ability He Had All Along

Adam shares his story of recovery and purpose

Adam is a Shriners Children's Ohio patient alumnus and now a counselor at Camp Ytiliba ("ability" spelled backward), a summer camp for Shriners Children's burn survivors. In his own words, Adam reflects on his journey — from patient in 1998 to an alumni volunteer today.

"I am blessed because Shriners Children's saved my life, not once, but twice. My burn injury happened just shy of my 12th birthday. My adolescent and teen years were filled with reconstructive surgeries, long recoveries and emotional battles. My final surgery was at 19. When it was done, I thought, "This chapter is over. Now what?"

But life, as it often does, opened a door when I needed it most.

I enrolled in cosmetology school and offered services to patients and families at Shriners Children's, where I ran into someone who had been a junior counselor at Camp Ytiliba when I had been a camper. They asked if I would provide beauty services for the kids' dance performance at camp. That simple invitation sparked a new purpose in my life.

I wasn't just giving back. I was reconnecting with the very community that helped build me. What started as an act of service on dance night turned into a week-long commitment where I get to be [for someone else] the person I needed all those years ago. I can say, without doubt, it is my favorite week of the year.

We often think healing is about getting back to who we were. But I've learned healing is



Adam is more than happy to lend his expertise to today's campers — and get in a bit of fun while he's there.

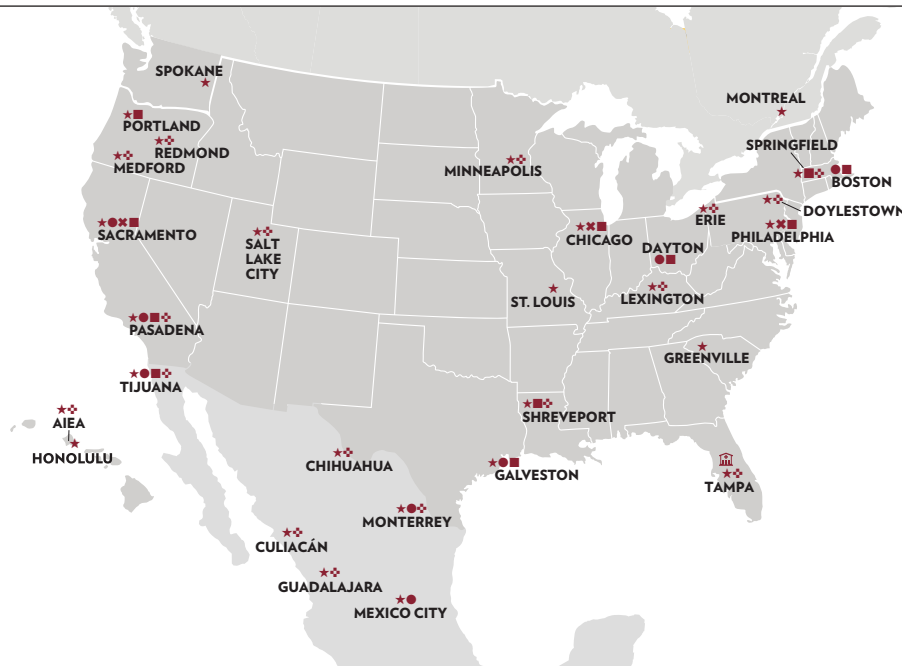
really about becoming someone new — stronger, more compassionate, more open to purpose.

None of this would've been possible without the love and support of Shriners Children's, and the power of a community that refuses to give up on its own."



FORMER PATIENTS can stay connected to Shriners Children's by joining the Patient Alumni Network.

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 Headquarters