

HEROES

THE MAGAZINE OF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEW ORLEANS | FALL 2023



**Bringing mental
healthcare to kids
in the community**

Changing the health of a
generation starts in our schools





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Foreword

HEROES

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LUCIO A. FRAGOSO, PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear friends and supporters,

It is hard to be a kid today – mental illness and the demand for psychological services are at all-time highs, including here in Louisiana. Our children are facing unprecedented rates of violence, depression, anxiety, food and housing insecurity, sexual abuse, bullying, and societal pressures – it is a hard reality. But as we have done since our founding in 1955, Children's Hospital New Orleans is committed to standing in the gap for kids and running toward the problem.

In April 2020, Children's Hospital opened a 51-bed Behavioral Health Center, one of the largest in the country, to help meet the mental health needs of kids in crisis. In 2022, more than 5,000 unique children received services from our inpatient and outpatient Behavioral Health programs.

While we are proud to provide these vital services for more kids than ever before, we also know that giving kids a real opportunity to thrive means being proactive, starting early, shifting from a sick-care to well-care model, and that it requires commitment and unwavering partnership.

Earlier this year, Children's Hospital formed two pivotal partnerships that we believe will make meaningful progress in meeting the medical and mental health needs of our youth where they are – in schools. NOLA Public Schools and Children's Hospital's ThriveKids Student Wellness Program have partnered to bring health services directly to kids in schools to address the mental and physical well-being of children. This \$10 million partnership, which was made possible with support from the City of New Orleans and the New Orleans Health Department, will have a significant impact on the mental health challenges and violence that are affecting young people and their ability to succeed in school.

ThriveKids has also partnered with Agenda for Children to support the medical needs of 5,000 kids, ages 0–3 years old, across 40+ early learning centers. Together with our existing partnership with Jefferson Parish Schools, ThriveKids is now supporting kids from birth through graduation, covering more than 180 campuses, with more than 100,000 students. You will read more about these partnerships in the pages that follow.

ThriveKids stands on Children's Hospital's foundation of more than 67 years of caring for all children and only children. And commitment to community has always been an important part of our story. This is how we change the health of a generation – and the support of our community is more important than ever. Thank you for joining us in our commitment to shape a healthier future for kids.

Appreciatively,

Lucio A. Fragoso
President & Chief Executive Officer
Children's Hospital New Orleans





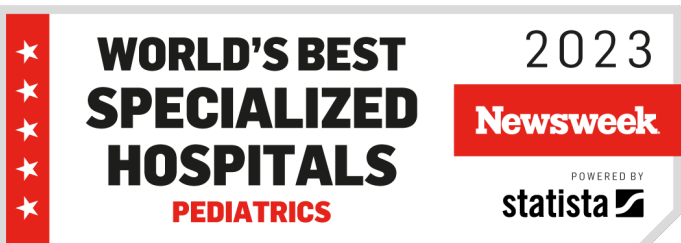
World's Best Care for Kids, right here in Louisiana!

Children's Hospital New Orleans is the only children's hospital in Louisiana and the Gulf South to be ranked among the World's Best Specialized Hospitals for Pediatrics by Newsweek for the third year in a row. The ranking program features the top 200 hospitals for pediatrics worldwide, and Children's Hospital New Orleans ranked #60 in the world, and #32 in the United States for the 2024 rankings.

Additionally, Children's Hospital New Orleans has been deemed a '3 Year Champion' of Newsweek's ranking programs, being recognized consecutively since the recognition was first published in 2021.

"It is an honor to be part of Newsweek's World's Best Specialized Hospitals for Pediatrics ranking program, and to see our team's hard work realized," said Lucio A. Fragoso, President and Chief Executive Officer for Children's Hospital New Orleans. "This is a truly extraordinary accomplishment that reflects our ongoing commitment to provide the best possible care for kids right here in Louisiana."

Additionally, for the first time, Newsweek has introduced new rankings for 'America's Best Children's Hospitals' in seven specialties, and Children's Hospital New Orleans is proud to have one specialty ranked in the Top 25, and three others ranked in the Top 40. The hospital's Oncology Program ranked #23 in the U.S., followed by Pulmonology at #31, Neonatology at #34, and Endocrinology at #39.



3 YEAR CHAMPION

AWARDED YEAR AFTER YEAR SINCE 2021



Get to know the COO: Meet Mathew Timmons

Children's Hospital is proud to welcome Mathew Timmons as the hospital's new Chief Operating Officer. Matt's journey at Children's Hospital began in January 2023, when he came aboard as Interim Chief Administrative Officer. In June, Matt was selected to serve as the hospital's new Chief Operating Officer. We sat down with Matt to learn a little more about what makes him, him!

Tell us about your background? Where are you from, and how did you get to this point in your career?

MT: I am from Alice, Texas, a small town in South Texas. I graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in health education. I actually wanted to be a surgeon and decided in the middle of an organic chemistry exam that I had no desire to be in school for that long. I pivoted to majoring in business and combined that with my love of healthcare to pursue healthcare administration. I then earned my MBA and MHA at University of Houston Clearlake.

My first job in healthcare was a unit secretary in the cardiac cath lab at Texas Children's Hospital. I rose through the ranks and held various leadership positions there for 22 years. My last role at Texas Children's was Vice President of the west and south region, which included responsibility for an 86-bed children's hospital and four large specialty clinics throughout the Greater Houston area.

What brought you to Children's Hospital New Orleans?

MT: During my first visit to campus, I knew within the first hour that it was where I wanted to be because of the culture and the friendly, warm southern hospitality. I talked to more and more people and felt that there was a true alignment to the mission of serving the children of Louisiana – that feeling was the main reason that I decided to take this role.

What is your favorite part about coming to work every day as the COO of Children's Hospital New Orleans?

MT: Seeing the culture of this hospital in action- every single person I pass looks you in the eyes, talks to you, and no one is a stranger. Every day, I get to feel the warmth that I felt on the very first day on campus.

What is the biggest culture shock about moving to New Orleans?

MT: It has been an adventure. It didn't take me long to get into the foodie scene. New Orleans is just a really friendly city- very warm and welcoming. I quickly grew to love all the music, culture, and of course, the food. I also got to experience actually living here during Mardi Gras and it was great seeing my kids experience it for the first time.



What is your favorite restaurant in the city? Favorite Food?

MT: Right now, Jacques Imo's is my favorite. I love their Shrimp & Alligator Cheesecake. My favorite food in general is Tex-Mex, but you don't find a lot of that here.

What's the best piece of professional advice you've ever received, and how has it influenced your career?

MT: "Never lead from behind your desk. Listen to your team, spend time with them, and be visible."

Outside of work, what's a passion, interest, or hobby that you're enthusiastic about?

MT: I love to karaoke, and I enjoy golf although I'm terrible at it.

What's a travel destination you've always wanted to visit but haven't had the chance to yet?

MT: Greece is at the top of my list. I want to see a sunset in Santorini.

How do you balance your busy work life with your personal life and family commitments?

MT: Constant communication- keeping a calendar and always keeping in touch, and prioritization- ensuring that I make time for family.

If you weren't in your current role, what other career path might you have pursued?

MT: Other than karaoke star... I probably would be a high school English teacher – weird but I love editing, proof reading, and grammar.

What are your long-term goals and vision for the hospital as COO?

MT: Partnering with leaders, staff, and physicians to achieve operational excellence in all facets of the organization; strengthening our ability to serve more children across Louisiana and the Gulf South; and improving upon quality and safety: making sure we continue to lead the way in providing safe, high quality patient care.

Welcoming new Associate Chief Medical Officers



Dr. David Yu appointed as Associate Chief Medical Officer - Surgery

Children's Hospital is proud to announce the appointment of Dr. David Yu as the hospital's new Associate Chief Medical Officer for Surgery. Dr. Yu has been a member of the Children's Hospital family for more than ten years as a valued member of the Medical Staff. Throughout his tenure, Dr. Yu has served as a dedicated pediatric surgeon and has also taken on a variety of leadership positions, including current Medical Staff President.

Dr. Yu also serves as Medical Director for Children's Hospital's Level II Trauma Center, and has helped spearhead the development of this lifesaving program since 2016, positively impacting the lives of children and adolescents in our community. He is an Associate Professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, and Program Director for General Surgery Residency at Tulane University School of Medicine.

Originally from the Boston area, Dr. Yu attended Tulane University for his undergraduate education, then went on to attend medical school and complete his residency training at Tulane University School of Medicine. After completing a fellowship in Pediatric Surgery at the University of Alabama School of Medicine in Birmingham, he returned home to New Orleans to begin his tenure at Children's Hospital, where he was also a faculty member at LSU Health New Orleans for eight years.

In his new role of Associate Chief Medical Officer for Surgery, Dr. Yu will work with the hospital's Chief Medical Officer and Physician-in-Chief, Dr. Mark Kline, and the hospital's operational team, to lead, enhance, and continue to grow the perioperative services division.



Dr. Jacqueline Urbine appointed as Associate Chief Medical Officer - Faculty Development

Dr. Jacqueline Urbine recently joined Children's Hospital as Service Line Chief for Radiology and Associate Chief Medical Officer for Faculty Development. In this role, Dr. Urbine will serve as an executive leader supporting the Medical Staff in advancing scholarly and academic activities, in collaboration with LSU Health Science Center and Tulane University School of Medicine.

Dr. Urbine earned her medical degree from Temple University Lewis E. Katz School of Medicine in Philadelphia, and completed her residency in Diagnostic Radiology at Bryn Mawr Hospital in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. She then went on to complete a fellowship in Pediatric Radiology at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children in Philadelphia. Dr. Urbine began her career in Pediatric Radiology at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, eventually serving as Chief of the department.

Most recently, Dr. Urbine served as Section Chief & Director of Pediatric Imaging at Children's Hospital of Richmond, Virginia and the Virginia Commonwealth University. She has held numerous faculty appointments throughout her career and holds double board certifications in Radiology and Pediatric Radiology.

Children's Hospital welcomes new physician leaders



James Spaeth, MD – Service Line Chief for Pediatric Anesthesiology

Dr. James Spaeth joined Children's Hospital earlier this summer to lead the hospital's Anesthesiology Department as Service Line Chief. Dr. Spaeth joined Children's Hospital New Orleans from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, where he served as director of the hospital's pediatric anesthesia cardiac team for more than 20 years. He also served as Professor of Clinical Anesthesia and Pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and served in a variety of leadership roles throughout his tenure with a focus on quality improvement, training, and teaching. Dr. Spaeth earned his medical degree from the University of Virginia, where he also completed an internship in Internal Medicine. He then completed his Anesthesia residency from the University of California, San Diego Medical Center, followed by a fellowship in Pediatric Anesthesia at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He is board certified by the American Boards of Anesthesiology and Pediatric Anesthesiology.



Anita Dhanrajani, MD – Service Line Chief for Pediatric Rheumatology

Dr. Anita Dhanrajani has joined Children's Hospital as Service Line Chief for Rheumatology. She joins Children's Hospital from the University of Mississippi Medical Center, with nearly 20 years of experience and dedication to patient care. Dr. Dhanrajani earned her Diploma in Child Health and her Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from Maharashtra University of Health Sciences in Mumbai, India. She also completed a variety of clinical and research fellowships on expert areas including childhood lupus, childhood vasculitis, and pediatric rheumatology.



Jerome Volk, MD – Service Line Chief for Pediatric Neurosurgery

Dr. Jerome Volk has been appointed Service Line Chief for Pediatric Neurosurgery at Children's Hospital. Dr. Volk has served as a trusted and respected colleague and member of the Children's Hospital Medical Staff for more than seven years, including five years as Interim Service Line Chief for Pediatric Neurosurgery. Dr. Volk was born and raised in the New Orleans area, and completed a Bachelor of Science in Genetics at the University of Georgia, and then made his way back home to attend medical school and complete his residency training with LSU Health New Orleans. He completed a Pediatric Neurosurgery fellowship at Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine and the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. He is certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery and the American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery. Dr. Volk serves as an Assistant Professor of Clinical Neurosurgery at LSU Health New Orleans.



Bringing mental healthcare to kids in the community

Bringing mental healthcare to the kids of our community takes a multi-pronged approach, and Children's Hospital New Orleans' ThriveKids Student Wellness Program has been on the forefront of making this happen. Now, partnering alongside NOLA Public Schools and Agenda for Children, a child advocacy organization which has been around for nearly 40 years, the collaboration took shape just months ago, and is already having an impact. With support from the City of New Orleans and the New Orleans Health Department, this program will directly affect a child's ability to succeed at school and in life.



Children's Hospital CEO Lou Fragoso visits an Agenda for Children early learning center.



Jen Roberts, CEO of Agenda for Children, addresses attendees during partnership announcement.



Children's Hospital CEO, Lou Fragoso; LCMC Health CEO, Greg Feirn; and NOLA Public Schools Board President, Olin Parker, celebrate at the partnership announcement press conference.

ThriveKids is an organization under the umbrella of Community Benefits Programs at Children's Hospital, and its mission is to increase access to healthcare for kids at a place where they spend most of their time – in their schools. Now nearly three years into its mission to boost kids both academically and in terms of better health outcomes, this new program helps staff schools with trained medical and mental health professionals, and coordinates with schools to hone in on those kids most in need. With an existing partnership with Jefferson Parish schools, ThriveKids has now expanded into 70+ schools within Orleans Parish, and is serving 5,000 kids ages 0-3 in 40+ City Seats early learning centers overseen by Agenda for Children, an agency that will fund \$1 million annually over the next 20 years through a public millage approved by taxpayers in 2022.

Childhood developmental experts have known for quite some time that if you want to change a generation, you must begin early, and that means before kids ever get to school. The die is cast from the time kids are born, and ignoring milestone markers from the get-go can foretell a perilous journey later in life.

"Why is Louisiana trailing other states in early development?" asked Jen Roberts, CEO of Agenda for Children. "It's important to know, because from ages 0-5 your brain is developing, reaching 90% of its full size by age 5. So, we assess a child's development very early to determine their readiness eventually for kindergarten. Do they play well with others, and are they behaving age-appropriately when it comes to social responsiveness? For instance, a child taking a toy away from another may not always be a bad thing. They may be developing a sense of agency that is right on target for their developmental stage. We can teach them about sharing once we understand their own motivations."

With the ThriveKids teams in place in the schools, assessing the interaction between the adults and the kids in any environment informs the experts as to the dynamic within the classroom, and helps them understand who in the group may need extra support. This process allows individual children the opportunity to receive a highly customized assessment. Are they making eye contact with those who are speaking to them... are they redirected easily back to a group if they are wandering off mentally... how do they respond when there's a lot of noise? Screeners are in place to assess a whole host of scenarios in many different environments.

Beginning early on with preschoolers means that these children have a leg up by the time they reach kindergarten and beyond. It allows kindergarten teachers to concentrate on teaching in a group setting, rather than being part social worker, psychologist, and counselor to individual kids who aren't yet ready to learn.

Beyond developmental health, the mental health of many very young kids can be fractured early on. Unless there are professionals who are getting these kids help with their grief and trauma, learning can get relegated to the back burner.



Case in point, an incident at an early learning center wherein a child had just witnessed the murder of her mother. The information was relayed to a social worker at the school, and triage related to the child's well-being began with a ThriveKids team member from Children's Hospital intervening. A comprehensive care team including a pediatrician, a psychologist, an early interventionist, a social worker, a nurse, and a trauma and grief counselor were immediately on hand to support this child.

"Healthcare and education have never been linked like this, where kids can get help within the school environment," explained Emily Wolff, Senior Director of Community Benefits Programs at Children's Hospital New Orleans. "There have been smaller initiatives within the city, but this is the first comprehensive program which is available to anyone in our public schools or who is enrolled in the early learning centers. We'll now reach a lot more kids with our systems aligned, eliminating the places where kids previously fell through the cracks."

Until recently, if a child arrived at the Emergency Department of Children's Hospital with a gunshot wound, they would be attended to medically, and would ultimately leave. But no one ever followed them back to their school environment, getting them help with their trauma, not just medically but emotionally. That's now changed, as this program follows these kids as they navigate through the system.

Gun violence is responsible for a lot of mental health trauma in New Orleans, as Dr. Fabienne Gray has witnessed first-hand. As a pediatric surgeon at Children's Hospital New Orleans, she sees a gunshot wound, on average, once per week. This doesn't account for the teenagers who may end up at another trauma center like University Medical Center. Many of the shootings are accidental, or the by-product of a child gaining access to an unsecured gun in the home. This can result in young children playing with a gun and shooting one another, a teenager who uses a gun to commit suicide (which now accounts for 40% of gunshot injuries), or a child who takes a gun to commit a crime against others. The point is that access shouldn't be a factor, and to that end, Dr. Gray has helped initiate a program called BE SMART, which began eight years ago after the Sandy Hook school shooting tragedy in Connecticut, and has gained national momentum since that time. The premise is that all guns should be under lock and key, kept away from children.

"There was an increase in gun ownership during the pandemic, as people were isolated, and many folks bought

them for protection," Gray said. "The education portion, unfortunately, didn't grow as quickly as the increase in gun ownership, and many people are not storing their firearms appropriately. The Louisiana Department of Health did some research talking to gun owners and gun sellers and the BE SMART campaign was tailored based on the questionnaires. One answer to the problem of access was biometric lock boxes which can be unlocked with a fingerprint, as well as a key. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no guns be kept in homes with kids. Or, if that's not realistic, that they be stored locked and unloaded. It's imperative that the gun is absolutely inaccessible to children."

The program gives gun safes away at various events throughout the city, including once a month at Children's Hospital New Orleans. And while Gray knows that the topic of guns can be very polarizing, she says that no one on either side of the aisle has an issue with gun safety. In a country where firearm injuries are now the leading cause of death in young people, overtaking motor vehicle crashes for the first time in 60 years, it's never too early to have a conversation with your children about guns, and keep them secured in your home, car, or wherever they are.

Gun violence is only one part of the equation when it comes to the mental health of our children. Sexual abuse, domestic violence, bullying, eating disorders, and many other factors play into the well-being of our kids. For students to function at a high level of proficiency in school, it's important to tackle the underlying issues of mental health first. In that vein, being monitored for all sorts of health factors is the purpose of the joint effort between Children's Hospital and the schools of which they've become an integral part.

"We have needed a more coordinated approach for our scholars and their parents for some time now," explained Dr. Avis Williams, Superintendent of NOLA Public Schools. "I couldn't be more thrilled with how things have moved so quickly since the beginning of the school year. I've spoken with our school counselors, and they're all very optimistic about connecting families to community services and getting kids the help they need right here at school. Now, if a family or a child has medical needs or is looking for counseling, or even has transportation needs, ThriveKids is there to solve these problems."

Williams believes that the pandemic and its isolation brought many of these mental health issues to the forefront. When schools opened up again, she says it was evident that



people had suffered many different mental health crises, and that included the city's teachers. She knew then that the issues had to be addressed.

"We are now having these conversations that were formerly taboo," Williams said. "What does it mean to center yourself or take a mental minute? We want to give our teachers some resources and tools to work with, for themselves and our scholars. At our school board meetings, we now do a mental minute to think about being centered, to take some deep breaths, and to address one's own wellness. You cannot give what you do not have. You must take care of yourselves before you can take care of the scholars or begin to figure out their family dynamics."

The ancillary benefits of these partnerships are tremendous. Focusing on early learners, as part of the program, is good not just for the children who are enrolled in the program, but for the parents who need to work, and are often worried about childcare – both where to get quality care, and how to pay for it.

"So many parents find themselves in untenable situations when it comes to affordable childcare," said Chelsea Moore, a licensed clinical social worker and Director of ThriveKids at Children's Hospital. "Depending upon income and circumstance, the goal is to get financial support so parents can go to work, knowing their children are being taken care of. Now, rather than staying with grandma, your child is in a qualified center. By targeting the earliest learners, which could mean six weeks through three years old, we can affect so many issues down the road."

So, how exactly does this work? Parents must opt in to be a part of any evaluation. It is referral based, where a teacher, school nurse, or counselor at an individual school may notice that there's a particular problem with an individual student, and then calls the parent or parents. An agreement to participate in the program is the next step, and from there needed interventions can take place.

It may be something as simple as being a late-talker, or having an ear infection that no one has noticed, which is derailing a child from concentrating. Or it could be something far more urgent which requires immediate attention. John (not his real name), a two-year-old, was licking the floor at his early learning center. As it turns out, he was legally blind, after being a victim of shaken baby syndrome, at the hands of an abusive parent. His foster parents weren't fully aware of his problem, and John was using another sensory device he had in his arsenal because he couldn't see. The team brought in tools that were custom made for him, along with a pair of glasses which changed his world. They taught the foster parents how to better support him at home, and now a review of his medical records may determine any other subsequent issues which need to be addressed.

For Hope Greux, a sophomore now at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, learning about this collaborative program came about when she applied to become a member of the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council. When she was still a freshman and the president of her student council, she already knew she wanted to be a voice for her generation. Having formerly been a student at Warren Easton, a charter school, she knew first-hand about mental health issues facing young people.

Children's Hospital, Agenda for Children, and City leaders at partnership press conference in June





Student, Hope Greux speaks at NOLA Public Schools press conference

"I knew there were not a lot of mental health options in my school," said Greux. "There were two gun-deaths my last year at Warren Easton. One incident was where a gun went off accidentally, and another was a sleepover where the girl's brother found the gun, and it went off before he knew what happened. My school was very affected by it. It was posted on Instagram, and everyone arrived at the school crying. A guest speaker came and talked to us about losing someone to gun violence. I was impressed that the BE SMART program is now part of the ThriveKids program within the schools."

Greux found herself giving a talk later at the KIPP Morial School in New Orleans East about the ThriveKids Student Wellness Program partnerships.

"I realized that not a lot of people at Easton were talking about their mental health," said Greux. "It's nice to know that the public schools will now have counselors and others paying attention to people who need help."

Since that time, a mental health summit was held at Children's Hospital geared directly towards pediatricians, family physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and other allied health professionals. Discussions ranged from challenges facing the pediatric population, to suicide awareness and prevention, and how depression can present in a child. And, the documentary film, "My Ascension" was screened. It details the circumstances of Emma Benoit, a girl who survived her own suicide attempt in 2017, and has now become a vocal advocate for suicide prevention. Attendees said this symposium

was enlightening, and the hospital has started to bring this same message into schools, raising suicide prevention awareness among students and school professionals.

"If I could look at what success in this partnership overall looks like, I'd say that first and foremost I want this program to normalize the conversations surrounding mental health," Dr. Avis Williams said. "I want the young people in our schools to know there's help and support, and to take advantage of it. We should prioritize this just as much as preparing for academics, because if people aren't well, they won't do well in life."

That sentiment is echoed by Emily Wolff, who runs the umbrella programs over ThriveKids.

"When we talk about outcomes, the long-term goal, and our mission is to change the health of a generation," Wolff said. "What will prove this concept is if the kids we're reaching have the ability to move the needle. We know case-by-case patient-impact stories, and we know that their physical and mental health is better. However, the ancillary benefits are staying in school, and doing well there. These students then grow academically and enter the job market, and the downstream effect is enormous. It's a win, win, win.... for the kids, the schools, and the families and communities which are ultimately affected."

"I want the young people in our schools to know there's help and support, and to take advantage of it. We should prioritize this just as much as preparing for academics, because if people aren't well, they won't do well in life."



- Dr. Avis Williams, Superintendent of NOLA Public Schools announces ThriveKids partnership



Inside Children's



Children's Hospital hosts inaugural Back to School Boogaloo

Children's Hospital New Orleans, in collaboration with NOLA Public Schools, Agenda for Children, and the City of New Orleans, orchestrated a spectacular "Back to School Boogaloo" in July, bringing smiles and excitement to children and families ahead of the new school year. The health and wellness event, held at Joe Brown Park Recreation Center in New Orleans East, was a comprehensive one-stop shop for preparing kids and teens for the 2023-2024 school year. Families with school-aged children were invited to join the event and receive free immunizations, school supplies, sports physicals, haircuts, food, and resources provided by more than 40 organizations who tabled at the event.

Excitement was in the air as a line formed outside the building hours before doors opened at 10 am. The event exceeded all expectations with more than 650 packed school supply bags distributed, 50 sports physicals performed, and more than 150 immunizations administered. To add to the fun, the Tulane University football team was on hand to play games and interact with kids, Plum Street Snoballs helped families beat the heat, and marching bands from various local schools performed throughout the event.

The back-to-school wellness event was born from the partnership between Children's Hospital's ThriveKids Student

Wellness Program and NOLA Public Schools. This collaborative effort aimed to foster both physical and mental well-being for kids in schools, setting a powerful precedent for the new academic year and beyond.

"United in our efforts, we will strive to provide equitable resources, care, and expertise to children, dismantling barriers that hinder positive academic outcomes," expressed

Dr. Avis Williams, Superintendent for NOLA Public Schools. "By fostering collaboration between our educational and healthcare communities, our goal is to make significant strides in addressing the physical and mental well-being of our scholars. In these challenging times, our babies urgently require this transformative action."

ThriveKids has also formed a transformative partnership with Agenda for Children, Louisiana's most esteemed child advocacy organization. Under this visionary partnership, Agenda for Children has committed to annual funding of \$1 million for ThriveKids to provide critical services and early interventions that are essential for the well-being of the city's most vulnerable children.

This event is just one way that ThriveKids, in partnership with NOLA Public Schools and Agenda for Children, is working to make a difference for local children and families. The partnerships emphasize our shared commitment to create a brighter, healthier future for the youth of our community.





Immunization program celebrates 25 years of providing immunity for the community

In 1998, the Greater New Orleans Immunization Network (GNOIN) was established to bridge the accessibility gap for immunizations in underserved communities. In order to actively serve these communities, the mobile immunization unit was created, affectionately known as the Immunization Bus. Often these communities include families who may be undocumented, unable to get a pediatrician, and may lack transportation or awareness of the vaccination requirements for school enrollment. Since 2007, GNOIN has held immunization events at over 170 schools throughout Orleans, St. Bernard, and Jefferson Parish to make sure that kids are protected and ready for school.

Since its inception, GNOIN has played a pivotal role in vaccinating more than 300,000 children and administering over 600,000 vaccines, with support from Methodist Health System Foundation. The immunizations cover diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis, polio, Hepatitis A and B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, meningitis, rotavirus, HPV, and COVID-19.

This year marks a significant milestone as the Children's Hospital Immunization Bus celebrates 25 years of providing immunity for the community, which the hospital celebrated with a gathering of team members and partners.

"The Greater New Orleans Immunization Network is one of Children's Hospital's longest standing and most vital Community Benefits Programs," said Children's Hospital New Orleans President and CEO, Lucio A. Fragoso. "The immunization program has had a lasting impact for some of the most vulnerable and underserved families in our community – ensuring that all children have access to vital childhood vaccinations."

Studies have proven that vaccines are the best way to protect against a wide range of preventable diseases. However, the Immunization Bus provides more than just vaccinations for the community. GNOIN sees the bus as an entry point for families to gain access to important health education and resources and to get connected with a pediatrician down the line. The Immunization Bus uses a systematic method to register each child's information into a database the day they receive their vaccine, so their information is always up-to-date and can be accessed in real-time.

The bus and its dedicated team have been providing vaccines and raising awareness to some of the most vulnerable children in our community for 25 years and counting. Today, the bus operates at various accessible locations throughout the community four days per week. To see the schedule and learn more about the Immunization Bus, check out chnola.org/GNOIN.



Representative Aimee Freeman secures new funding for CARE Center

In June, Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman aided in securing \$100,000 from the State General Fund to be allocated for mental health services for child victims of sexual assault. Children's Hospital's Children at Risk Evaluation (CARE) Center welcomed Representative Freeman in August for a tour of the Center and to celebrate these vital funds that will be put to work to help some of the state's most vulnerable children who seek help at the CARE Center. Children's Hospital and the CARE Center are grateful to Representative Freeman, who has focused much of her legislation on women, children, social services, and domestic violence, for helping to ensure that children who are victims of sexual abuse can receive the mental healthcare they so desperately need.

The CARE Center is a program of Children's Hospital New Orleans that provides care to children who are victims of abuse, neglect, and human trafficking. The program serves young victims through comprehensive medical evaluations, forensic interviews, and therapeutic treatment, and also offers prevention, training, and education for the community. The specialized physicians, nurses, therapists, and forensic interviewers serve more than 1,200 children and adolescents each year from across Louisiana and coastal Mississippi.





We're halfway there! Fundraising progress and project planning for Walker's Imaginarium are helping this dream become a reality.

Last October, Children's Hospital and Kids Join The Fight launched a capital campaign to raise funds for a first-of-its-kind child enrichment center, named Walker's Imaginarium, that will be located adjacent to the inpatient tower at Children's Hospital. The 12,000 square foot center will bring play, learning, and fun to children receiving care in the hospital. The center is named in loving memory of Walker Beery, the brave boy who launched the nonprofit, Kids Join The Fight, before he passed away following a courageous fight against pediatric brain cancer in September 2021.

Thanks to Walker's vision to make a difference for other children like him and the generosity of friends and supporters, this inspired project will provide a therapeutic space for patients and families to thrive, find joy, and enjoy time together while in the hospital. Walker's Imaginarium will enhance each patient's care and provide joyful moments while families navigate their healthcare journeys.

From \$10 gifts to major supporters, the community is all in, and this extraordinary dream is close to becoming a reality! The project steering committee has secured more than \$7.8

million in commitments to date. Major contributors include Kids Join The Fight, Joy and Boysie Bollinger, The Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, the Family of Fran Villere, Gallo Mechanical, the D.J. Batiste Family Office, the Fore!Kids Foundation, the Eugenie & Joseph Jones Family Foundation, and the Greater New Orleans Foundation – just to name a few.

Project planning is also well underway! Children's Hospital is proud to be working with Eskew Dumez Ripple for architecture design, Gyroscope for exhibit design, and the Solomon Group for exhibit fabrication. Fundraising and design will continue over the coming year, and the project is expected to break ground in the fall of 2024.

Supporters, friends, patients, and families gathered on Saturday, September 30 to 'Party for Walker's Imaginarium', celebrating the halfway mark, and building excitement and momentum for the second half of the fundraising effort.

To join the fight, please visit chnola.org/imagine.

PHILANTHROPY

Chick-fil-A continues its support of Children's Hospital

Since Children's Hospital and Chick-fil-A New Orleans forged a meaningful partnership in 2019, Chick-fil-A New Orleans has donated more than \$200,000 in support of children and families seeking care at Children's Hospital. In addition to their monetary contributions, local owners and operators across the Greater New Orleans area collaborate with the hospital on numerous initiatives, raising funds on GiveNOLA Day and holding an in-store Light Up the Season campaign, encouraging their patrons to donate to the hospital throughout the holidays. In addition to their holiday campaign, Chick-fil-A also conducts Superhero/Sidekick in-store campaigns to highlight Children's Hospital's "Superhero" patients, who are courageously fighting



some of the toughest health battles. Most recently, Chick-fil-A New Orleans managers, operators, and team members visited the hospital to share a warm meal with patients and families, and present a check of \$80,000 to the hospital. The famous Chick-fil-A cow was on hand to share hugs and smiles with the children in attendance.

Chick-fil-A's contributions directly benefit the Kids Fund, which enables Children's Hospital to provide critical care for the sickest children and babies, conduct lifesaving research projects, and remain at the forefront of pediatric healthcare. These generous donations allow Children's Hospital New Orleans the ability to provide expert care for every single child, regardless of their family's ability to pay.



Subaru and LLS Love to Care



This summer Children's Hospital New Orleans received special visitors from Bryan Subaru and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society to commemorate Subaru's Love to Care program. Children's Hospital was chosen as a beneficiary of the 2023 program, which aims to spread love, hope, and warmth to cancer patients through the distribution of blankets, patient care kits, and greeting cards.

"We cannot thank Byran Subaru and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society enough for this very generous donation to our patients," said Lynn Winfield, Senior Director of Patient Care Services. "It's gestures like these that mean the most to our patients and families. Just to know that there are people thinking about them wishing them well can do wonders in boosting spirits."

Children's Hospital received 80 blankets and 30 patient care kits to distribute to children currently undergoing treatment in the hospital's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. Children's Hospital patients are just some of the nearly 300,000 cancer patients receiving support from the Subaru Loves to Care initiative.

This isn't the only way Subaru gives back. Children's Hospital is also grateful to be selected as a hometown charity by Bryan Subaru receiving funds each year from their Subaru Share the Love event. Bryan Subaru and Subaru of America have donated nearly \$300,000 to Children's Hospital New Orleans.





Hyundai Gives Hope △ ▽ △ ▽ △ ▽ △ ▽ △ ▽ △ ▽ △ ▽

To usher in the start of Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month in September, Children’s Hospital New Orleans welcomed representatives from Hyundai to campus for an extraordinary celebration. The visit was to announce a \$100,000 Impact Award from Hyundai Hope on Wheels® to support the hospital’s Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders.

“Receiving a life changing diagnosis is just that, totally life changing,” says Children’s Hospital New Orleans President and CEO, Lou Fragoso. “Our Hematology/Oncology team is second to none in creating an environment of hope, support, and comfort for children receiving treatment for cancer or blood disorders and their families, most of whom spend months, even years in treatment with us here. The generous grant from Hyundai Hope On Wheels® helps us amplify their work.”

The donation will be used to provide financial assistance to families to help cover the cost of food, housing, and toward improving the hospital’s cancer research database. Additional funds will support Child Life programming for cancer patients, including games, art, and other therapeutic activities.

“Every 36 minutes a child is diagnosed with pediatric cancer. It drastically changes their lives, with treatments including chemotherapy, radiation, and surgeries – during a time when they should be experiencing the simple joys of childhood,” says Tim Wallwork from Hyundai Motor America. “That’s why Hyundai Hope On Wheels® joined this fight 25 years ago – to raise awareness, drive hope, and to one day end childhood cancer.”

Following the donation presentation, patients were invited to leave painted hand prints on a Hyundai vehicle that will travel the nation during Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month while the organization awards \$25 million in grants to children’s hospitals across the country.

Caring for over 1,000 children annually, the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Children’s Hospital New Orleans provides treatment and transplantation for children with leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, and other childhood cancers and blood disorders. Children’s Hospital is the only accredited pediatric facility in the state, performing bone marrow transplants and actively conducting cancer research on therapies at the forefront of medicine. The center also has the largest, most experienced group of pediatric cancer specialists in the region, staffed by faculty from LSU Health New Orleans and Tulane Pediatrics.





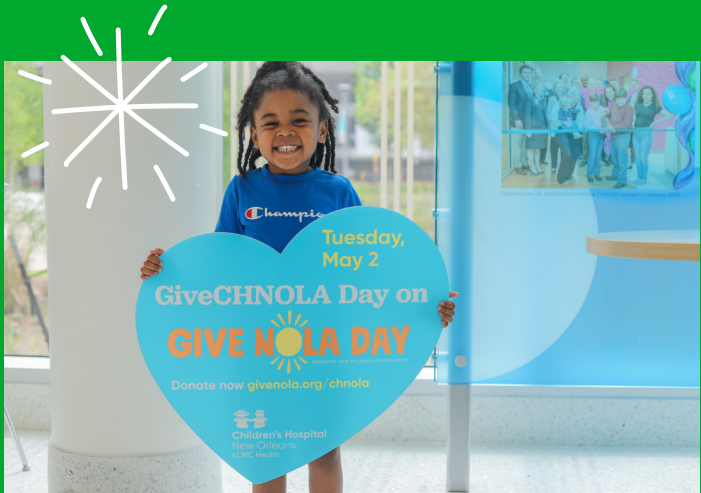
Al Copeland Foundation continues its legacy of giving

Al Copeland, Jr. is no stranger to giving back to a cause he believes in. In 2008, he founded the Al Copeland Foundation (ACF) with the mission of helping to improve cancer care for patients in Louisiana; patients like his father, Al Copeland, Sr., who lost his brave battle to Merkel Cell Carcinoma earlier that same year.

Since its inception 15 years ago, the Al Copeland Foundation has helped oncology patients through clinical trial access and funding important research. In 2022, Al Copeland, Jr. set his sights on a new way the Foundation could help the most vulnerable patients battling cancer – children. In September 2022, ACF launched its SuperDucks campaign, and through numerous events, raised more than \$168,000 for Children’s Hospital New Orleans. With this generous donation, the Al Copeland Foundation Cancer Patient Assistance Fund at Children’s Hospital New Orleans was born. This fund was established to help ease the financial burden of families with children diagnosed with cancer. Since the fund was created, nearly 45 families have been awarded funding to help with expenses including household bills, transportation, medicine, and living expenses.

ACF is continuing its legacy of giving to help these families. In June of 2023, Al Copeland, Jr. presented Children’s Hospital with an additional \$40,000 gift to the ACF Cancer Patient Assistance Fund to continue to support families of children fighting cancer. The hospital and families alike appreciate the ongoing generosity of the Al Copeland Foundation and the Copeland family. To learn more about the SuperDucks campaign, visit alcopelandfoundation.org/superducks.





Counting on the community: GiveNOLA Day success

On May 2, Children's Hospital New Orleans participated in the Greater New Orleans Foundation's annual GiveNOLA Day campaign. During this 24-hour day of giving, people across the city, state, and even the country donate to non-profits of their choosing, with the collective goal of rallying the community and fostering the spirit of giving.

New Orleanians wholeheartedly showed their support of Children's Hospital New Orleans and the importance it plays in the region, bringing in a total of \$132,000 through online donations and sponsorships! Children's Hospital also secured the #2 spot for most unique donors, with a total of 1,439 donations from 28 states. This achievement earned the hospital an additional \$5,000 in grants from the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

On GiveCHNOLA Day, a friendly competition takes place among hospital teams. Each department of the hospital competes to raise the most funds during the 24-hour period by soliciting friends, family, and most notably, by generously dipping into their own pockets. The Support Services Department came out on top, bringing in an impressive \$17,500 through their department, alone! Witnessing employees contribute to the hospital on GiveNOLA Day is a true testament to the culture and spirit of Children's Hospital!



PHILANTHROPY

Community fundraiser raises more than \$33,000

Since 2017, father-daughter duo, Morris and Kristin Hartt have held a fundraiser in their hometown of Venice, Louisiana all to benefit Children's Hospital New Orleans. For the past eight years, the annual Hartt's Exxon Chili Cook-Off has brought both seasoned and amateur chili chefs together for one common cause: to support children and families receiving care at Children's Hospital. The Cook-Off, held at Hartt's Old Cypress Bar in Venice, has brought in more than \$60,000 over its eight years, and that number continues to climb! This year alone, together with their teams and supporters, Morris and Kristin were able to donate \$33,695 to the hospital.

Thanks to the generosity of individuals in the community, like the Hartt family and Hartt's Exxon, Children's Hospital New Orleans can continue to fulfill its mission of caring for all children regardless of their family's ability to pay.



Fundraise How You Wanna

Turn any activity you love into a fundraiser for Children's Hospital. However you choose to raise funds, from golf tournaments to gumbo cook-offs, we want you to make it uniquely your own.



Get started at chnola.org/fundraise.





The Berger and Tiller families create a space for play and healing



This October, Children's Hospital New Orleans, The Parenting Center at Children's Hospital, and families in the community came together to celebrate the grand opening and dedication of the Berger-Tiller Family Playground on the hospital's State Street Campus. Situated outside of The Parenting Center, and in close proximity to families staying at the Ronald McDonald House and Hogs for the Cause Family Center, the playground is one of the final pieces of Children's Hospital's campus transformation. This new addition makes the hospital's campus even better suited to provide the patient and family-centric care at the core of its mission.

The playground was made possible by a generous gift from Louellen and Darryl Berger, and the entire Berger-Tiller families. The families have been part of the Children's Hospital story for many, many years, first as parents and children receiving care, and as supporters of the hospital's long serving mission to build a healthier future for the children of our state and region. The dedication of the Berger-Tiller Family Playground exemplifies the families' support of the hospital and the community at large. "I say it all the time, but it is such a tremendous gift that we

have this beautiful campus to deliver world class pediatric care – there is no hospital campus like this across the country," shared Children's Hospital President and CEO, Lou Fragoso. "Being able to create outdoor spaces for kids to just be kids, and for families to just be families is what creating environments of health is all about, and we could not have done that here without the support of the Berger and Tiller families."





On the horizon

November

4th Annual Light Up the Season Ceremony

Thursday, November 30
5:00 pm

Children's Hospital New Orleans

In what has quickly become a favorite new tradition, patients will officially flip the switch to turn on the holiday lights across the Children's Hospital campus. Helping patients and families celebrate will be dozens of first responders in their emergency vehicles. When the holiday lights turn on, so will the lights on the emergency vehicles illuminating the campus and ushering in the holiday season. The annual lighting ceremony coincides with the hospital's end of year giving campaign that encourages the community to support Children's Hospital's mission.

Learn more: chnola.org/lights



December

Children's Hospital Holiday Parade

Saturday, December 2
11 am

Downtown Parade Route

The second annual Children's Hospital Holiday Parade will roll through the French Quarter and Downtown to mark the start of the holiday season in New Orleans. The parade will feature custom floats and oversized balloons with local marching bands and dance krewes. Sponsorships for the parade are available and all proceeds will benefit Children's Hospital New Orleans.

Learn more: nolaholidayparade.com

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 
				7	8 	9
				14	15	16 
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24			26	27	28	29

3rd Annual Light Up the Season Radiothon

Presented by the Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation

Thursday, December 7 and Friday, December 8

Audacy New Orleans Stations WWL Radio, Magic 101.9, Bayou 95.7, and B97

Tune in to the 3rd annual Light up the Season Radiothon on December 7 and 8 to hear inspirational stories from Children's Hospital New Orleans. The radiothon will run from 6 am – 4 pm on WWL Radio on Thursday, December 7 and from 6 am – 6 pm on Magic 101.9, Bayou 95.7, and B97 on Friday, December 8. The two-day event raises funds and awareness for work being done at Children's to care for the kids of Louisiana and across the region.

Learn more: chnola.org/radiothon

Annual Holiday Gift Donation Day

Saturday, December 16
Noon – 4 pm

Children's Hospital Loading Dock

Children's Hospital invites the community to help make the holiday season bright for patients and families staying in the hospital. Anyone who would like to make a donation of toys to the hospital can drive up to our Donation Day drop-off site and present their gifts to the hospital's Child Life team!

Learn more: chnola.org/childlifedonations

Mental and Behavioral Health by the numbers

Children's Hospital
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER
SERVES CHILDREN
7 to 17



51 
BEDS

7,000 SQUARE FOOT
Behavioral
HEALTH CENTER



1,355 INPATIENT STAYS* 


of outpatient visits YTD:

PSYCHOLOGY
3,878

Medical
PSYCHOLOGY: **1,503**

PSYCHIATRY:
2,344

Autism
CENTER: **2,210**

37.16
AVERAGE
DAILY CENSUS 

6.84 DAYS
Average Length
OF STAY



2,982
VIRTUAL
Behavioral
Health
VISITS*

3,469
Unique Patients
CARED FOR*

3,716 REFERRALS to the Children's Hospital
Behavioral Health Center* 

*Data as of September 2023

Fundraise how you wanna



Turn any activity you love into a fundraiser for Children's Hospital New Orleans!

Step 1

Create your fundraising page at chnola.org/fundraise.

Step 2

Share your link with friends and family to give to your fundraiser.



Children's Hospital
New Orleans
LCMC Health





Children's Hospital
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In proud partnership with our medical schools

