

HEROES

THE MAGAZINE OF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEW ORLEANS | SPRING 2021

Building hope

Advancement
in surgical services
delivers new hope for
Louisiana families

Parker,
Children's Hospital patient
age 9





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JOHN R. NICKENS IV, PRESIDENT & CEO



Building hope

Dear friends and supporters,

As we continue to make great progress in the worldwide fight against COVID-19, there is a welcomed sense of hope and renewal in the air at Children's Hospital New Orleans. We are energized daily by the extraordinary work that continues in our hospital, our clinics, and our community, to advance the health and wellbeing of Louisiana's children. Vaccine progress gives us hope for a future where COVID-19 is behind us.

While 2020 was, for most of us, the most challenging time we have faced, it is powerful to reflect on all that we learned, all that we endured, and the many successes we achieved together. These successes will impact the health and wellbeing of the next generation.

At Children's Hospital, we have remained focused on our core mission – the health of the children of Louisiana!

Over the last year, progress toward our campus expansion continued despite the challenges that COVID-19 brought our way. Now just a few months from the completion of construction, our new campus has taken shape and the future of pediatric healthcare for Louisiana is in sight.

In the pages that follow, you'll hear about our expertly designed facilities, including our new Surgery Center, a magnificent space that is amplified by our expert team of pediatric-trained surgeons – and the life changing care they provide.

While we continue the transformation of our main campus, Children's is also increasing access to pediatric healthcare through the expansion of specialty clinics across the state, rapidly increased virtual care services, and innovative community programs like ThriveKids, our Student Wellness Project.

While 2020 was difficult – our Children's Hospital family is strong and resilient, just like the children and families we serve. Each day, we are reminded of our purpose to build a happier, healthier future for all children with renewed focus and optimism.

We are all a part of building the future. The time for excellence in pediatric healthcare is now, and the place is Children's Hospital New Orleans.

With gratitude for your continued support,

John R. Nickens IV
President & Chief Executive Officer
Children's Hospital New Orleans

Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees welcomes new members

Children’s Hospital is proud to welcome three outstanding community leaders as new members of the hospital’s Board of Trustees, including Jessica Brandt, Ashleigh Gardere, and Gregory St. Etienne.

Jessica Brandt, CEO of the Ray Brandt Auto Group and President of the Ray and Jessica Brandt Family Foundation, joined the Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees in January 2021. Jessica is passionate about serving the children of our region. She has served the New Orleans community in business and philanthropy capacities for many years, and will bring her expertise and energy to help lead Children’s Hospital in its vital mission to serve the children of Louisiana and the Gulf South.

In March, Children’s welcomed Ashleigh Gardere, Executive Vice President for PolicyLink. In her role, Ashleigh guides the development and execution of programs to ensure that the 100 million people in America living in or near poverty – particularly those who face the burdens of structural racism – can participate in a just society, live in a healthy community of opportunity, and prosper in an equitable economy. Ashleigh manages programs and strategy to deliver a higher level of leadership and partnership across the broader equity ecosystem, activating common and uncommon partners to realize a shared national equity agenda. Formerly, she served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the New Orleans Business Alliance, and she previously served as a Senior Advisor to former mayor Mitch Landrieu. She is an expert in economic and workforce development, organizational leadership and culture change, and large-scale systems transformation. She will bring great perspective and leadership to her role on the Children’s Board of Trustees.

Gregory St. Etienne, Chief Strategist at Innovative Strategic Partners, Inc., also joined the Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees in March. Gregory, a life-long New Orleans resident, is accomplished in banking, finance, management, and strategic analysis. He has held executive positions in city government, wealth management, and technology engineering firms, and has served the bulk of his career in the banking industry. As a member of the Board of Trustees, Gregory’s expertise will further advance the strategic priorities of Children’s Hospital.



Jessica Brandt



Ashleigh Gardere



Gregory St. Etienne



Children’s Hospital launches ThriveKids, The Student Wellness Project

Children’s Hospital is investing in innovative programs to advance the physical and mental health of children in the school setting, as part of the hospital’s mission-based work in the community.

Last fall, Children’s Hospital announced the launch of ThriveKids, The Student Wellness Project – a comprehensive school wellness initiative that is focused on one thing – advancing the mental and physical health of all kids.

ThriveKids is a community-based program that provides school-based virtual care, mental and behavioral health services, sports medicine, chronic condition management, COVID-19 support, school nurse support, a dedicated nurse hotline for school wellness, and best practice reference materials for schools throughout Louisiana.



“In addition to funding our new Office of Educational Initiatives with professionally trained staff, technology, and infrastructure to support school-based health, Children’s Hospital is inviting the community to join us in supporting this vital work,” said John R. Nickens IV, President and CEO of Children’s Hospital New Orleans. “In addition to \$5 million in direct funding, Children’s is setting aside \$2.5 million as matching funds for individual donors, businesses, and foundations who contribute to the ThriveKids project. This is how we can be extraordinary together.”

ThriveKids currently includes sports medicine services in 34 schools across Southeast Louisiana, school-based virtual care in 30 schools, pilot programs for in-school behavioral health services in nine schools, COVID-19 support for 130+ schools, and a statewide collaboration with the Louisiana Department of Education to support 3,000+ schools and childcare centers. The program also includes a developing team of six full-time nurses dedicated to providing school nurse support, 32 specialty care nurse navigators who support school nurses with chronic condition management, and COVID-19 testing teams who provide expedited drive-thru and onsite campus testing for students, teachers, and school staff.

“ThriveKids provides schools with resources designed to help Louisiana’s children grow up healthy,” said Stephen Hales, MD, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Children’s Hospital. “At Children’s Hospital, we are making a significant investment to help empower healthy schools and healthy communities, because we know that the future wellbeing of our children is depending on it.”





ThriveKids[!]

The Student Wellness Project



"Today, Louisiana's children rank near the bottom for health outcomes in our country," Nickens stated. "Our vision is that by providing access to comprehensive school wellness programs, all children have the opportunity to reach their highest potential and thrive."

"Collaboration between our education and healthcare communities is critical to improving the total wellbeing of Louisiana's children," said State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Cade Brumley. "I am proud to see the progress we're making in bringing health services directly to students in the school setting through Children's Hospital's ThriveKids Program."

Children's Hospital's growing school-based virtual care program allows students to see a pediatrician or specialist from their school campus through a secure video visit, in coordination with the school nurse or designee for minor conditions and common concerns. The on-demand service saves a trip to the doctor's office, allowing parents to join in remotely—keeping kids in school and parents at work.



School-based psychiatry is also being piloted in a few select schools across the greater New Orleans area, an important part of the ThriveKids program that the hospital plans to expand in the future.

Children's Hospital understands the need to not only support children, but to also support those who care for them. A key addition to the growing list of ways

Children's Hospital is supporting schools is the recent development of a dedicated school nurse team. This resource is specifically-designed to offer in-person and virtual on-demand support to schools, and provides training and educational opportunities.

"School-based health services present a unique opportunity to provide much needed care, while eliminating some barriers to access – including transportation and health education. Other benefits include less class time missed, less work missed for caregivers, and more opportunity for collaboration between school staff and pediatric health professionals," said Joseph A. "Tony" Gonzales, MD, Medical Director of School Wellness Initiatives at Children's Hospital.



Children's Hospital establishes the Walter Pierre Diversity Committee

Based on Children's Hospital's six core values, Caring, Honor, Nice, Ownership, Leadership, and Advocacy, the hospital's leadership team saw the need to create a Diversity and Inclusion Committee in 2019. Natasha Richardson, Vice President of Academic Affiliations and Community Programs, was appointed as Committee Executive to lead the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at Children's.

In the Spring of 2020, Children's established the committee, formally named the Walter Pierre Diversity Committee. The moniker holds special meaning, bearing the name of the late Walter Pierre, who graciously served Children's Hospital as front desk supervisor for 35 years. Walter epitomized inclusivity as he represented the Children's Hospital values, greeting every person who walked through the doors of the hospital with a smile and a high five. To honor Walter, and to serve as an example and reminder of the ideal team member, the committee was named for him.

At the helm of the committee, Natasha has taken on the role of planning and executing organizational efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion. She works closely with the Office of Medical Education to ensure that the hospital and its academic partners, Tulane University School of Medicine and LSU Health New Orleans, have programs in place that allow for the fair and equitable treatment of our trainees. She also provides strategic direction for training initiatives on cultural competency, harassment, and other topics to increase awareness and support of equity and inclusion.

Natasha organized and formed the committee to include a diverse group of physicians and other stakeholders to carry out the group's mission of creating a more inclusive, welcoming community and ultimately to improve patient care and employee satisfaction by assessing the inclusivity of the workforce, cultural competence, the patient experience, community engagement, and health disparities.

In just one year, the Walter Pierre Diversity Committee has come a long way and made strides in both building the program and putting plans and ideas into action. In 2021, the committee's goal is to provide coaching and training for leaders and team members around diversity and inclusion topics. The team will also develop metrics and tools to assess diversity efforts in addition to infusing diversity into the academic and clinical experience of students, and with all aspects of patient care, quality, and safety.

This year will give rise to an even larger and more diverse committee, with the creation of six taskforces to focus in on key improvement areas, including: Clinical Learning Environment, Inclusive Workforce, Cultural Competence, Patient Experience, Community Engagement/Programs and Initiatives, and Health Disparities. While there is still much work to be done, Children's Hospital is proud of the work the Walter Pierre Diversity Committee led in 2020, and looks forward to a brighter, more equitable future for all Children's Hospital team members, our patients, families, and communities.

Children's Hospital's Inpatient Rehabilitation Program recognized for outstanding achievement

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, also known as CARF International, has issued a three-year CARF accreditation to Children's Hospital New Orleans, which indicates dedication and commitment to improving the quality of patient care through an in-depth survey conducted by a team of expert practitioners.

The Children's rehabilitation program was recognized by CARF in the areas of inpatient rehab, pediatric specialty, and brain injury specialty. This accreditation sets Children's Hospital apart as the only CARF accredited pediatric rehab program in the Gulf South.

Since 2005, the Children's Hospital rehabilitation program has set a high standard through the leadership of its medical staff members, including Dr. Ann Tilton, Dr. Scott Schultz, and Dr. Lindsay Elliott. Their goals are to always personalize the care and rehabilitation of each patient, provide an avenue for those patients to gain their lives back, and to make a positive impact on the families each day.



Photos were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advancement in surgical services delivers new hope for Louisiana families



When Kristen Porche was 30 weeks pregnant, an ultrasound revealed that her baby's kidneys were not functioning normally. The son she was expecting was diagnosed with a genetic disease known as autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease (ARPKD). The diagnosis was serious. Her maternal-fetal medicine specialist pronounced that the medical malaise which affected her son was incompatible with life.

"We were told that he wouldn't survive... that we should plan a funeral, after he was born," remembered Porche. "As parents, we just didn't want to accept that fate, and began to get other opinions, some only slightly more encouraging. I delivered via C-section at 35 weeks. Parker's kidneys were four times the size of what they should have been. At this point, we had Parker transferred to Children's Hospital New Orleans, where he was assessed. At just 19 days of age, both of his kidneys had to be removed, as their disproportionate size was interfering with his lungs and his ability to breathe on his own."

In the absence of functioning kidneys, Parker would be on dialysis for the first two years of his life, at which point he would be old enough and weigh enough for a kidney transplant. By this time, Parker had become a fixture around Children's Hospital, known to the nephrologists and transplant team members as an extraordinary boy. The family's hope was that when Parker was ready, the kidney transplant surgery would be done at the hospital where they felt the medical team treated them like family. During this difficult time, there was good news. Parker would receive a kidney from his mom's second cousin, who had asked to donate one of her kidneys, as one healthy kidney is all that's needed. The stars aligned for the Porche family.



“Parker is a very strong, smart, sweet boy **who has shown resilience in the face of adversity,** and always has a smile for everyone,” recounted Dr. Arias.



But because those with ARPKD are very often susceptible to liver disease as well, matters soon became more complicated.

“The same genetic causes for this type of kidney disease often leave the patient susceptible to congenital hepatic fibrosis,” said Dr. Patricio Arias, a Stanford-trained hepatologist, who came to Children’s Hospital in 2015, and specializes in diseases of the liver, biliary tree, gallbladder, and pancreas. “That condition leads to scarring of the liver tissue, which can happen over months or even years, before it can lead to chronic liver disease, which then necessitates a liver transplant.”

Because of the symbiosis of the kidney and liver, it would be necessary to have the kidney transplant done at a facility which engaged in both kidney and liver transplants, should something unexpected arise during the surgery. At that time, Children’s Hospital New Orleans had not brought back its liver transplant program, which dissolved following Hurricane Katrina with the relocation of some staff and physicians to other cities.

Since his case could not be handled in Louisiana, Parker was off to Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), at the age of two. The kidney transplant was successful there, and the family returned home to New Orleans. Parker was monitored on a regular basis for any signs of rejection of his transplanted kidney, and a close watch was kept on his liver function.

Meanwhile, the year after Parker received his kidney transplant, the leadership at Children’s Hospital was making overtures to get back in the business of performing liver

transplants, as they had been doing nine years earlier. This meant putting another multidisciplinary team of top-notch experts together, from local institutions and from across the country.

“We had our very stable kidney program, and we had surgical relationships from Tulane,” remembered Jamie Wiggins, RN, Senior Vice President, Chief Clinical and Chief Nursing Officer. “And then, we hired Dr. Arias from the Lucile Packard

Children’s Hospital at Stanford, and entered into an agreement with Tulane to no longer perform pediatric kidney transplants at their facility, but to perform the transplant surgeries at Children’s, where the team would be made up completely of ancillary pediatric specialists.”

“We took the Children’s team back to Stanford in California, and walked through the process from beginning to end,” recalled Evie Freiberg, RN, Senior Director of Patient Care Services. “We went from the selection process all the way through the surgery, so that everyone involved had a clear understanding of exactly what was involved in an arena such as Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital where the transplant center is a national Center of Excellence.”

As the stand-alone program at Children’s was evolving and the liver transplant team was coming together, the new Surgery Center at the hospital was completed in April 2020, as part of Children’s Hospital’s overall campus transformation.

“In 2019, I came from Texas Children’s Hospital to organize the surgical teams,” explained Dr. Ellis Arjmand, Surgeon-



in-Chief at the hospital. “We have always been a trusted community resource, but we wanted to be more firmly established as a resource for regional complex care – to be a place to bring children for colorectal and heart surgery, GI surgery, and kidney transplants. By 2020, we had fully expected to once again be doing liver transplants.”

To that end, a leading hepatologist from Stanford had been recruited to oversee the endeavor.

“I came here in 2015 to restart the liver transplant program,” said Dr. Patricio Arias. “We needed a liver transplant team that could succeed without being an extension of another hospital’s adult program. Over time, we put all of the pieces in place to do these surgeries with our multidisciplinary team made up

his case was presented to the multidisciplinary transplant committee which encompasses the surgeons, their staff, the PICU staff, and respiratory therapy. We brought Parker’s parents into the larger multidisciplinary meeting and set them up with pre-transplant clinics. Coordinators also reached out to the family to discuss post-operative care.”

With Dr. Hoonbae Jeon, Director of Transplant Surgery at Tulane as chief surgeon, assisted by Children’s Hospital general pediatric surgeon Dr. Jessica Zagory, Parker’s liver transplant was scheduled for September 23, 2020. Parker would have the same family donor for this transplant, which was unusual, but the donor insisted on contributing to Parker’s well-being for a second time. Having the same donor

“We have always been a trusted community resource, but we wanted to be more firmly established as a resource for regional complex care...” recounted Dr. Arjmand.

of hepatology, Pediatric Intensive Care, surgeons, infectious disease specialists, social workers, and interventional radiology. These services have been optimized over the last few years to make sure the redevelopment of the program is the absolute best.”

By 2020, as Parker approached his ninth birthday, it became clear that the time had come for the liver transplant the professionals knew he would eventually need. And, Children’s Hospital’s liver transplant team was ready to see its first patient.

“Parker’s mom had kept in touch with me since the kidney transplant in Philadelphia, and she wanted the liver transplant done at Children’s Hospital New Orleans,” said Freiberg. “So,

makes for a simpler situation when it comes to planning for anti-rejection medications, always part of the equation with transplant cases.

“None of this is simple or easy, as with any major surgery,” explained Dr. Arias. “Parker has had some bile duct narrowing, which required a stent, but he’s still technically in recovery and his liver is working perfectly with good function. He just needs time to grow and get better.”

For Parker, who calls Dr. Arias “the boss,” his relationship with the hospital staff and his surgeon, Dr. Zagory, has been familial in nature.

His parents, Kristen and Jason, have been the cornerstone of his support system. Two transplants can be incredibly difficult, both physically and emotionally for the patient, but his parents have read incessantly, and are prepared for what’s next.

And while the hospital is anticipating more liver transplants on the horizon, Louisiana lawmakers have now changed the whole dynamic of engaging in organ transplantation here in the state.

“It was just a matter of months ago with this recent legislation that now allows doctors in Louisiana to use organs of the deceased,” said Evie Freiberg. “So now, if someone is pronounced dead in the operating room, and they are an organ donor, these organs can be donated to those desperately in need, immediately.”

Transplantation is only one part of the surgical expansion at Children’s Hospital. With the massive expansion of the entire Children’s Hospital campus, there have been major changes in the surgical realm. With medical advancements, the 12 new ORs were doubled in size to accommodate higher tech equipment, like robots. The design build-out has been redone with a central core and operating rooms emanating out from





that center. The surgical suite now includes two entire floors with instruments sterilized on the first floor and an elevator to transport everything to the second floor. The surgical space has been totally reconfigured for optimal workflow.

The brick and mortar components are just one element of an expanded care scenario at Children's Hospital New Orleans.

"In the couple of years since I came to New Orleans from Texas Children's, we've added many more pediatric surgeons," said Dr. Arjmand. "We've brought in a senior heart surgeon, who was formerly the clinical director at Boston Children's. And, we recruited our Chief of Cardiology from Cincinnati. We are implementing 20 years of expansion in three years, and it's all coming together."

Having extra surgical hands on deck at the hospital means a greater ability to perform more complex diagnoses and procedures. For one mother whose daughter was born with Downs Syndrome, understanding the depth and breadth of her daughter Diana Grace's heart problems was critical.

"We had been at another facility where we were told that she had three holes in her heart, shortly after she was born," said mom Raquel Diaz. "We were told the biggest hole was 9 mm, and that she had problems both in the upper and lower chambers of her heart. We were also told she wouldn't need surgery until she was six months of age, to go home, and monitor her symptoms."

Diaz, an ICU nurse, wasn't comfortable going home with this diagnosis, and called her sister, a pediatric nurse at Children's Hospital New Orleans. It was suggested she get a second opinion from Dr. Michael Brumund, a cardiologist at the hospital.

"I told him that Diana Grace's father and I were very concerned and confused about her diagnosis and our instructions," said Diaz. "Dr. Brumund suggested he do his own diagnostic work, and come up with a plan to fix her defects. He drew a picture of a heart on a card in elaborate detail, and put his recommendations for treatment at the bottom. He let us as parents decide where we wished to go for any future surgeries."



Diane Grace,
Heart Center patient

The new diagnosis showed a larger hole in her heart, and more of them... five holes, not three.

Three months later, after gaining weight, Diana Grace underwent surgery, performed by Children's Hospital cardiovascular surgeon, Dr. Tim Pettitt. The largest hole in her heart was actually 12-13 mm. The full repair closed up all defects and returned her pressures to normal. Recovering, Diana Grace spent the next two weeks in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU).

"I can't say enough about how attentive the staff was to our needs," remembered Diaz. "Dr. Pettitt would come in every morning, go do his surgery, and come back for rounds. He was hands on 100 percent with her. Dr. Brumund would often work as the attending physician in the CICU, checking on us constantly, asking that I text him with any problems or concerns. I was kept in the loop 24 hours a day. The staff here knows how to talk to parents because all of the patients are kids."

And, that's the essence of Children's Hospital and its integrated team of experts — garnering the best and brightest talent locally and from around the country, specially-trained in the care of kids.

"When John Nickens came to Children's New Orleans three years ago, he had a great vision," explained Dr. Frank Pigula, cardiovascular surgeon and Co-Director of The Heart Center at Children's Hospital. "He knows what excellence looks like, and he wasn't afraid to recruit from Centers of Excellence everywhere to round out an already stellar staff."

The hospital is now doing complex ventricular cardiac repairs in children, rather than replacing heart valves which ultimately don't grow with the child. As Children's expands its programs, they have become a regional center, treating patients from Shreveport and Lake Charles, and the entire Gulf Coast. Dr. Pigula, who spent a large portion of his career at Boston Children's Hospital and a former Associate Professor at Harvard, believes new technology has changed the entire field of cardiology, and the adjacent surgery.

"The field of congenital heart disease has evolved considerably, and syndromes which used to be a death sentence, like hypoplastic left heart syndrome, now have a 90% survival rate at one month," said Dr. Pigula. "Being at an academic heart center means everyone is pushing him or herself to be on the cutting edge. We are doing things here that aren't being done anywhere else in the state." And, his sentiments have been echoed everywhere.

"I believe in what John (Nickens) is trying to do for this city and the region overall," said Arjmand. "That vision has built on itself, as one doctor after another has come to this facility. For instance, we have seven full-time orthopedists who can do everything done anywhere in the country. And, we now have our own burn surgeon, so we are currently enhancing the Burn Center. The nearest pediatric Burn Center has been Galveston, Texas, but now patients from across Louisiana and the Gulf South can come here. We have massive construction here at the hospital that's been going on for years, but it isn't visible to the public, unless you happen to be driving along the river. The community may not fully know what's going on at this hospital, but we're here to tell the story and to change lives."



Children's Hospital becomes **recognized Pediatric Level II Trauma Program**



Children's Hospital's dedicated critical care transport team.

If there is one specialty that Children's Hospital New Orleans is known for locally, it is Emergency Medicine. Many children, and now adults, have come through the Children's Hospital Emergency Department, with a sports injury, broken bone, or even a late-night fever. But what about when a child has a more serious injury? In 2015, Children's Hospital leadership identified the need for more specialized emergency services

that would provide expert care for children involved in motor vehicle accidents, gun violence, or abuse. This is when the hospital's journey to become a recognized Trauma Program began.

To accomplish this task, Children's recruited the help of a dedicated trauma team to identify the specific needs that supporting a trauma program would entail. To be a recognized program by the



All new operating rooms opened in 2020 as part of Children's campus expansion.

American College of Surgeons (ACS), a hospital must have 24/7 coverage in the Operating Room, Radiology, and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Another requirement comes in the form of physician coverage, and includes general trauma surgeons, neurosurgeons, orthopedic surgeons, and anesthesiologists on call and backup call. Children's Hospital invested in bringing each of these services on board 24/7. In early 2021, the hospital had established all the needs for an effective trauma program, and became a Recognized Pediatric Level II Trauma Program by the State of Louisiana.

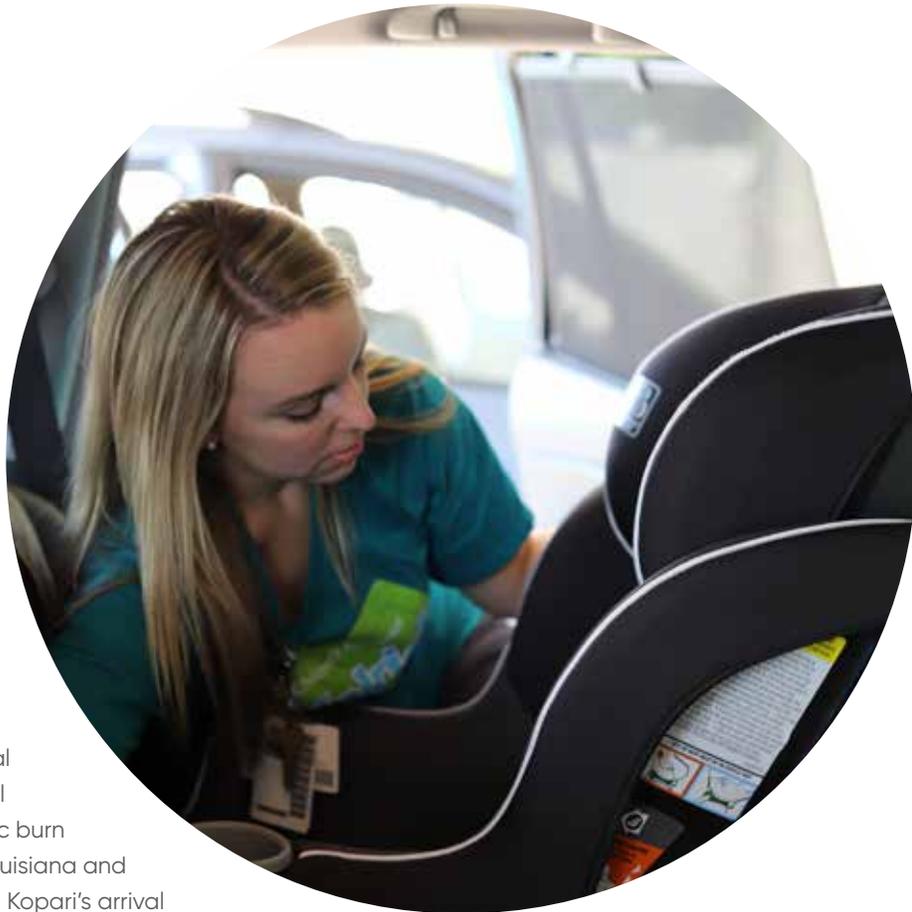
While having the right people like specialists, surgeons, and staff all in one place is an integral part of the trauma program, the ACS requires the hospital to have an injury prevention and community outreach program. One way Children's Hospital accomplishes this is through its Passenger Safety Car Seat Fitting Station, held once per month, free, and open to the public. The program, established in 2017, offers community members the opportunity to have their car seats fitted or installed for free by our own certified car seat technicians. Having this service available to the community helps decrease the number of traumas

caused by motor vehicle accidents.

Another notable component of Children's Hospital's program, that is not required by the ACS but is a tremendous asset to the program and to the children of our region, is having a dedicated pediatric burn surgeon. In 2021, Dr. Nicole Kopari was brought on to the Children's Hospital surgical team, making our hospital home to the only pediatric burn surgeon in the State of Louisiana and the Gulf South. Prior to Dr. Kopari's arrival to Children's Hospital, patients with serious burns had to be sent to Texas or Alabama for the specialized treatment she now provides in our community.

A few years before the initiation and formation of the trauma program, another important facet of trauma care was put into place: our Pediatric Critical Care Air Transport Helicopter. The air ambulance, named Abby after a young trauma patient, flies nearly 350 children each year to Children's Hospital to receive life-saving care. Many of these transports are trauma cases that are transferred from hospitals around the state and region to Children's Hospital to receive the most specialized and multidisciplinary care available in the state.

Since the initial inception of the trauma program in 2015, Children's Hospital has



invested significantly in the expansion of surgical space, with its new 57,000 square foot Surgery Center completed in 2020; world-class surgeons, recruited from across the country; and programs that not only benefit the community but serve as trauma prevention. As the trauma program forges ahead in its mission to become a Recognized Trauma Center by the American College of Surgeons, the dedicated, multidisciplinary team of surgeons, physicians, therapists, and nurses continues to provide unmatched, specialized trauma care to the children in our city, state, and region.

Inside Children's



Children's Hospital answers the call for testing and vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic

In the early days of community spread of COVID-19 across the city and state, school administrators grappled with decisions on how to keep educators, staff, and students safe. Most schools opted to allow students to finish out the year virtually and re-evaluate over the summer how the 2020–2021 school year would play out. It became clear that as the health experts for kids in Louisiana and the Gulf South, Children's Hospital had a significant role to play in supporting schools and families in safely returning students to their classrooms.

In July 2020, when many schools announced their plans to return to in-person learning, Children's Hospital's team sprung into action and cultivated a partnership with NOLA Public Schools to set up a COVID-19 testing clinic for students, their families, and school staff at various school campuses. In September, testing moved to a drive-through model at Children's Hospital's main campus to allow families and school

staff to remain safely in their vehicles while being tested. In October, the hospital formally launched its school wellness project, ThriveKids, to serve as health support for students, administrators, teachers, and school nurses, and through this initiative continued to provide COVID-19 testing for schools. As of March 2021, Children's Hospital tested 25,678 unique patients not only through the drive-through testing site, but also through the hospital's Emergency Department, Surgery Center, and inpatient units.

After a successful return to school, 2020 ended on a hopeful note with the release of the COVID-19 vaccine. Beginning on December 15, 2020, the first Children's Hospital nurse received the vaccine, and in the weeks to follow, Children's Hospital nurses stepped up once again, as the state continued to expand vaccine eligibility. The Children's Hospital Conference Center quickly became a vaccination hub for the community, and for school personnel. The ThriveKids team coordinated directly with NOLA Public Schools, as well as private, charter, and parochial schools across the Greater New Orleans area to plan and execute widespread, seamless vaccination of all school team members. The team provided vaccinations for these populations on the hospital's campus, but also deployed mobile units to schools and to the NOLA Public Schools headquarters. Children's Hospital's COVID-19 vaccination

team, led by nursing, administered 14,661 doses to the community, and of that, 4,547 doses were administered under ThriveKids as of March 2021.

"This is an important moment in our fight against COVID-19 and a reflection of Children's Hospital's ongoing commitment to do the right thing for kids," said Children's Hospital President and CEO, John R. Nickens IV.

In this time of uncertainty, one thing has remained constant: Children's Hospital's unwavering commitment to creating healthier tomorrows for children and for our community. The hospital looks forward to the future with hope and continued motivation to stand in the gap and provide expert care for kids and support for those who care for them.



NOLA Public Schools nurses, teachers, and other staff rolled up their sleeves to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Zulu partnership gives more than just beads and coconuts

Catching a coconut at a Zulu parade is a bucket list item for many, but the impact of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club extends well beyond

Mardi Gras day. The organization graciously partnered with Children's Hospital New Orleans several times throughout the pandemic, most notably to help celebrate and spread cheer for Christmas and Mardi Gras.

On a cold morning in December, members of Zulu

delivered brand new toys and gifts for hospital inpatients spending the holiday at Children's. The donation was part of their larger community initiative making sure children receive a present during the holidays.

The group was back in February to help bring a little Carnival spirit to the hospital's team members. While there were not parades on St. Charles Avenue this year, the Mardi Gras Mambo was alive and well on Henry Clay Avenue. Members of Zulu passed out their famous coconuts, doubloons, and branded beads to the healthcare workers who longed to second-line. Team members were also treated to king cake, moon pies, and other throws traditionally caught at parades, making for a festive afternoon.





Campus transformation nears completion

Transforming pediatric healthcare in Louisiana today improves the health and wellbeing of kids tomorrow.



In early 2017, Children's Hospital broke ground on the most ambitious project in the hospital's history – a \$300 million campus transformation that is not only improving infrastructure and technology, but the enhancements introduced also make it easier for patients and families across the region to access vital pediatric healthcare services. Now in the final phase of construction, this fall Children's Hospital will celebrate the completion of the expansion project, welcoming a new era of pediatric healthcare for Louisiana.

Infrastructure

The transformed campus includes 235,000 square feet of new clinical care space, enabling the expansion of signature service lines – cardiac intensive care, cancer care, surgery and preoperative services, emergency and trauma care, neonatal and pediatric intensive care, and a free-standing Behavioral Health Center.

Patient and family experience

Children's has also enhanced the patient and family experience by providing more private patient rooms, upgrading critical care units fully equipped with the latest medical technology, adding family housing accommodations on campus, and an enhanced Child Life Center featuring play spaces and family support services. Children's has built an environment that supports optimal healing while allowing kids to still be kids, with patient and family-centered care at its core.

Programs and people

In addition to the transformation of the physical campus, Children's Hospital has built innovative programs, invested in technology and research, and recruited some of the nation's top pediatric providers to tackle the significant health challenges our kids and communities are facing. The innovative environment created by the expansion has attracted influential pediatric healthcare leaders from across the country to New Orleans. This influx of new energy, combined with the expertise of existing Children's Hospital providers, will deliver powerful impacts on the health and wellbeing of Louisiana's children.

Upcoming construction milestones

In May, Children's Hospital's all new Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders opens, expanding the nationally-known hematology/oncology program, and co-locating all inpatient, outpatient, and infusion services into one area. 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.

This summer, construction will also reach completion on the hospital's main concourse, a light-filled space that traverses the façade of the campus, connecting the clinic, new medical tower, and hospital, while delivering an unmatched patient and family experience. The concourse houses patient and family-facing services, including: a coffee shop, gift shop, dining area, chapel, family resource center, registration, and the Emergency Department entrance.

In the early fall, Children's Hospital will complete its first-ever dedicated Child Life Center. The new Center will feature age-appropriate playrooms and family support services. The space is designed to promote healing while allowing kids to be kids, and is also a place where patients and their siblings can play together.

The fall will also welcome a completed Emergency Center, with an all new space that allows Children's to advance specialized pediatric emergency services. The department includes a dedicated entrance and intake area, with a safe and secure space for behavioral health patients, as well as designated trauma bays.



Philanthropy

Follow the Yellow Brick Road

For the past 39 years, Children's Hospital New Orleans supporters have gathered in their finest suits and gowns to raise funds and awareness for the hospital and its programs. The annual Sugarplum Ball has long been one of the premier charitable springtime events in the city. Like so many of New Orleans' perennial celebrations, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sugarplum Ball 2021 had no choice but to cancel. Instead, Children's will commemorate the 40th anniversary in 2022 when it is safe to hold large gatherings once again.

Still in need of community support, early this year the hospital introduced "There's no place like home", a three-part dining series fundraiser presented by The Lemoine Company. Themed for The Wizard of Oz and done in partnership with the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group, the dining series promises to take patrons on a culinary journey down the Yellow Brick Road. The concept is simple: keep the community safe by staying at home while still supporting Children's Hospital.

The meals, scheduled for March, May, and July, are inspired by Louisiana ingredients and imagined by the executive chefs at Ralph's on the Park, Red Fish Grill, and Brennan's. Each meal box is portioned for two and comes paired with a bottle of wine and wine glasses. While the first two meals from Ralph's on the Park and Red Fish Grill are offered as dinners, the meal from Brennan's will boast a brunch menu.

To complement each meal, patrons are invited to watch a brief video to welcome them to the series and share sincere



The hospital is on track to raise over **\$400,000** through "There's no place like home," a remarkable result for a first-time fundraiser, not to mention one held in the midst of a pandemic.

gratitude for their support of Children's Hospital.

The video also walks patrons through the three-course meal and highlights an area of the hospital and the incredible work being done there every day. Among those areas being highlighted are the Heart Center, the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

The first meal pickup held in March was an enormous success. Over 200 meals were distributed to patrons at the whimsically decorated drive-through experience. Lollipops, candy, and cupcakes lined the Yellow Brick Road and welcomed vehicles to The Land of Oz. Dorothy and the Scarecrow were on hand to greet guests, wave, and pose for pictures as meal boxes, wine, and other goodies were loaded into vehicles.

The hospital is on track to raise over \$400,000 through "There's no place like home," a remarkable result for a first-time fundraiser, not to mention one held in the midst of a pandemic. The series would not have been possible if it weren't for the generous support of donors including the presenting sponsor: The Lemoine Company; Dorothy sponsors: IBERIABANK, First Horizon Bank, and The McDonnell Group; Scarecrow sponsors: Bank of America Securities, Baker Donelson, Bernhard, Convergint Technologies, Gallo Mechanical, Gootee Construction Inc., Haydel's Bakery, Interstate Electronic System's LLC, Marye and John Nickens, PJ's Coffee, The Ray and Jessica Brandt Family Foundation, and The Sulzer Group.

Meals are still available for the last experience in July. Find out more by visiting chnola.org/home.



Children's Miracle Network partners continue support during COVID-19

For the past 37 years, Children's Hospital New Orleans has been a proud member of Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals. The network, which supports 170 member hospitals across the U.S. and Canada, leverages its long-standing corporate partnerships to raise funds for children's hospitals. The hallmark of the charity is that everything raised stays local to fund critical treatments and healthcare services, pediatric medical equipment, and charitable care. Throughout its celebrated history, CMN Hospitals, with the help of its corporate partners and programs has raised more than \$7 billion for its member hospitals.

During this unprecedented year marked by fear and uncertainty, CMN corporate partners forged on to hold many of their annual fundraising campaigns. With the knowledge that pediatric healthcare never stops, CMN corporate partners, like Sam's Club and Walmart, Panda Express, Love's, Costco, and Marriott among many others, felt it was their duty to support the cause by engaging their employees and customers through unique fundraising campaigns. Last year, one dollar at a time through fundraising efforts like "round-up" campaigns, selling paper "miracle balloons," or simply asking patrons for a donation, CMN Hospitals partners across the region raised more than \$900,000 for Children's Hospital New Orleans through three programs and 22 campaigns. Walmart and Sam's Club's month-long campaign raised \$348,000. Costco employees and members worked together to raise \$55,000, and Coca-Cola's campaign brought in \$31,000. All fundraising in 2020 surpassed the previous year's success.

Children's Hospital is grateful for the extraordinary partnership shared with CMN Hospitals and all its partners. The dedicated individuals raising funds through CMN Hospitals is a testament to the generosity of the community, even in the most difficult of times.



A family with heart

Susan and Dwayne Aucoin of Harahan, LA, understand the pressures on families of children with complex health issues. Their son, Henry, has undergone 11 surgeries at Children’s Hospital to repair a heart defect found in utero. Now age 12, Henry’s battle with Transposition of the Great Arteries is nearly behind him, having survived numerous complex repairs to make his heart fully functioning. This experience having forever shaped their lives, the Aucoin’s started the Henry Aucoin Foundation in 2013 to help other families on similar journeys. Since that time, the foundation has awarded 91 grants to families in need, totaling \$120,000, and counting.

“We wanted to help other families like ours,” said Susan who has two other children, Henry’s twin, Benjamin, and an older sister, Emily. “Having a medical condition like Henry’s is a huge financial burden on these families.”

The Henry Aucoin Foundation helps ease this burden by helping with the cost of medication, equipment, and travel expenses for heart families undergoing treatment in New Orleans. The Aucoin’s have continued to seek opportunities to support heart patients and the hospital and staff they have come to love. Recently, they parlayed their support with a \$100,000 donation to the Campaign for Louisiana’s Children. Through the naming of the Henry Aucoin Foundation Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) Lobby, the Aucoin’s are leaving a lasting impression.

“Henry thinks it’s cool to have his name on the wall,” said Susan. “Children’s Hospital is a second home to him. They fixed him there, and he’s as grateful as we are.”



CICU ribbon cutting, February 2020



Spirit Halloween celebrates \$1 million in giving

Spirit Halloween, the well-known Halloween pop-up retailer, raises money for the Child Life and Creative Therapies Department at Children's Hospital New Orleans and other child life programs across the country each year. Their charitable arm, Spirit of Children, brings fun and funding to local hospitals with a mission to make hospitals less scary for kids and their families. Each October, Spirit Halloween employees host a party for children and families at the hospital. This past year, with COVID-19 visitor restrictions in place, Spirit Halloween shipped decorations, activities, and costumes to provide a little festive fun for patients during Halloween.

Throughout the Halloween season, all Spirit Halloween stores conduct in-store fundraising. Since 2007, Spirit of Children has raised \$77 million to provide funding for art, music, aquatic, and pet therapy programs as well as the purchase of educational items and sensory toys used for distraction during medical procedures. One hundred percent of every dollar donated supports Child Life Departments in 140 partner hospitals across the United States and Canada.

This past season, money raised locally totaled \$182,657, the largest contribution to date. Over the past 10 years, stores in the New Orleans area have raised over \$1 million for Children's Child Life Department.

"We value our partnership with Spirit Halloween and their contributions over the years," said Rene Guilbeau, Director of Child Life and Creative Therapies. "The funds were raised by 11 stores in the New Orleans region and because of their generous support, we are able to focus on the emotional safety of our children and adolescents and provide the resources needed to help more children and teens cope with the stress of illness, trauma, and hospitalization."



Children's Hospital physicians leave a legacy of giving



In 1990, a group of Children's Hospital doctors decided to host an event that would raise funds in support of the hospital and the patients and families they serve. With that idea and their desire to leave a lasting impact on their beloved organization, the Physicians Campaign and Reveillon Dinner were born. Since then, the annual campaign has raised more than \$1.5 million for initiatives chosen by the physicians to improve the lifesaving work they do every day.

In the midst of a global pandemic, nearly every major event in 2020 was postponed or canceled, but the physicians of Children's Hospital thought of a creative way to carry on with their fundraising. The Physicians Campaign Executive Steering Committee, made up of seven physician leaders, decided to carry on in an effort to help fund mannequins for the Pediatric Simulation Center. The mannequins would be used to provide hands on learning in a variety of disciplines. A breakthrough in pediatric medical education, the mannequins utilize dynamic facial expressions, movement, and speech to mimic typical patient interactions.

Instead of the traditional dinner, the Physicians Campaign Executive Steering Committee opted to fundraise through a Reveillon Dinner "I owe you" with the promise to gather together for the annual event once again, when it is safe to do so. Through their efforts, the campaign raised \$100,000 in 2020, bringing the total raised by physicians since the campaign's inception to \$1.5 million. While 2020 was a difficult year, especially for those in the medical profession, the pandemic did not affect our physicians' desire to make an impact by participating in the 2020 Physicians Campaign.



PHILANTHROPY

Peek-a-Boo at the Zoo: Reinvented Halloween fun for the whole family during COVID-19

The beloved Halloween experience, Boo at the Zoo benefiting Children's Hospital New Orleans, took on a new look in 2020, as a daytime event at Audubon Zoo. From pumpkin-shaped trick or treat bags, to a festive family photo booth, and even a spooky haunted house, the new hours allowed for everyone to enjoy a socially distanced, family-friendly experience.

The event was dubbed, "Peek-a-Boo at the Zoo," allowing all guests, young and old, to dress in their favorite costumes and tour the animal exhibits, which were limited in years past due to the traditional nighttime hours. After a topsy-turvy year of COVID-19, Audubon Zoo and Children's Hospital were able to team up to put on the beloved fundraising event while keeping guests safe with additional signage and a unique layout of one-way traffic through the zoo.

This year's Trick-or-Treat Sponsor, Bryan Subaru, donated \$15,000 to help make the event possible. This generous donation, paired with gifts from other sponsors and incredible community turnout, helped raise nearly \$100,000 for Children's Hospital New Orleans.



Children's Hospital receives generous support from Chick-fil-A New Orleans

In January, Chick-fil-A owner/operators from across Greater New Orleans joined Children's Hospital New Orleans leaders to present a \$50,000 donation in support of the hospital, and its vital mission to provide expert healthcare for Louisiana's sickest and most vulnerable children.

Throughout the year ahead, Chick-fil-A New Orleans and Children's Hospital will collaborate on several initiatives, including highlighting special patient stories, raising funds for Children's Hospital on GiveNOLA Day, which was Tuesday, May 4, and raising awareness for the hospital's Kids Fund.

"Partnering with Children's Hospital New Orleans was a no brainer for the Chick-fil-A New Orleans market," says Lauren Nelson, Chick-fil-A Owner/Operator, Lakeside Shopping Center. "Myself and many of the other Chick-fil-A New Orleans



operators are born and raised right here in the New Orleans area, so it's important for us as a market to make sure we're caring for the communities that we serve."

Investments in the Kids Fund enable Children's Hospital to provide critical care for the sickest children and babies, conduct life-saving research projects, and remain at the forefront of pediatric healthcare. Additionally, with the support of community partners like Chick-fil-A, Children's Hospital is able to provide expert pediatric care for every child, regardless of his or her family's ability to pay.

"With the generosity of our supporters and community, in 2020 Children's Hospital was able to open a new Behavioral Health Center, Cardiac ICU, Surgery Center, and Imaging Center as a part of our \$300 million campus transformation effort," says John R. Nickens IV, President and CEO of Children's Hospital New Orleans. "Chick-fil-A New Orleans has donated \$50,000 to the hospital this year, and wow – this generous donation will have a lasting impact on our continued investments in pediatric healthcare. This is what being extraordinary together is all about."



PJ's Coffee helps Light up the Season at Children's Hospital

During the hustle and bustle of the holiday season one thing remains true, Children's Hospital never stops.

Dedicated caregivers continue their incredible work in the hospital's operating rooms, intensive care units, and specialty clinics across the state. That's why Children's loves to celebrate its patients, families, and healthcare providers in a big way each year with the annual Light up the Season campaign.

Teaming up with PJ's Coffee, customers were able to enjoy a special holiday coffee cup that was created by two Children's Hospital patients through its Child Life and Creative Therapies Program. At the register, every PJ's patron was encouraged to donate \$1, \$3, or \$5 in all 85 locations across the country through the months of November and December. Customers were also encouraged to write uplifting messages on paper light bulbs displayed in stores and shared with patients and families who spent the holidays inside the hospital.

There's nothing more meaningful than spotlighting the superhero patients during this special time of giving. This year, the stories of two patients with two different healthcare journeys were told. Jonathan, a two-year old who was born with Treacher Collins Syndrome, spread joyful holiday energy during the special holiday campus lighting ceremony. His story was shared online and at PJ's Coffee locations along with another superhero, Zachary.

Seven-year-old Zachary overcame an 11-hour brain surgery in 2019 to remove a massive tumor. Children's Hospital became his home-away-from-home during his prolonged hospital stay, where he received daily physical, occupational, and speech therapy which helped him re-learn how to walk and talk.

Overall, the Children's Hospital New Orleans 2020 Light up the Season campaign raised an incredible \$45,000 for the hospital's Kids Fund.



2020 by the numbers



103,272
SPECIALTY
CARE VISITS



Pediatric Primary
Care visits **108,546**

SURGICAL
CASES

7,960



311

Helicopter transports

TOTAL
TRANSPORTS

489

AVERAGE
DAILY
CENSUS



131



AVERAGE INPATIENTS
PER DAY



33,670

TOTAL EMERGENCY DEPT. VISITS



1,851

FULL TIME EMPLOYEES



24,912

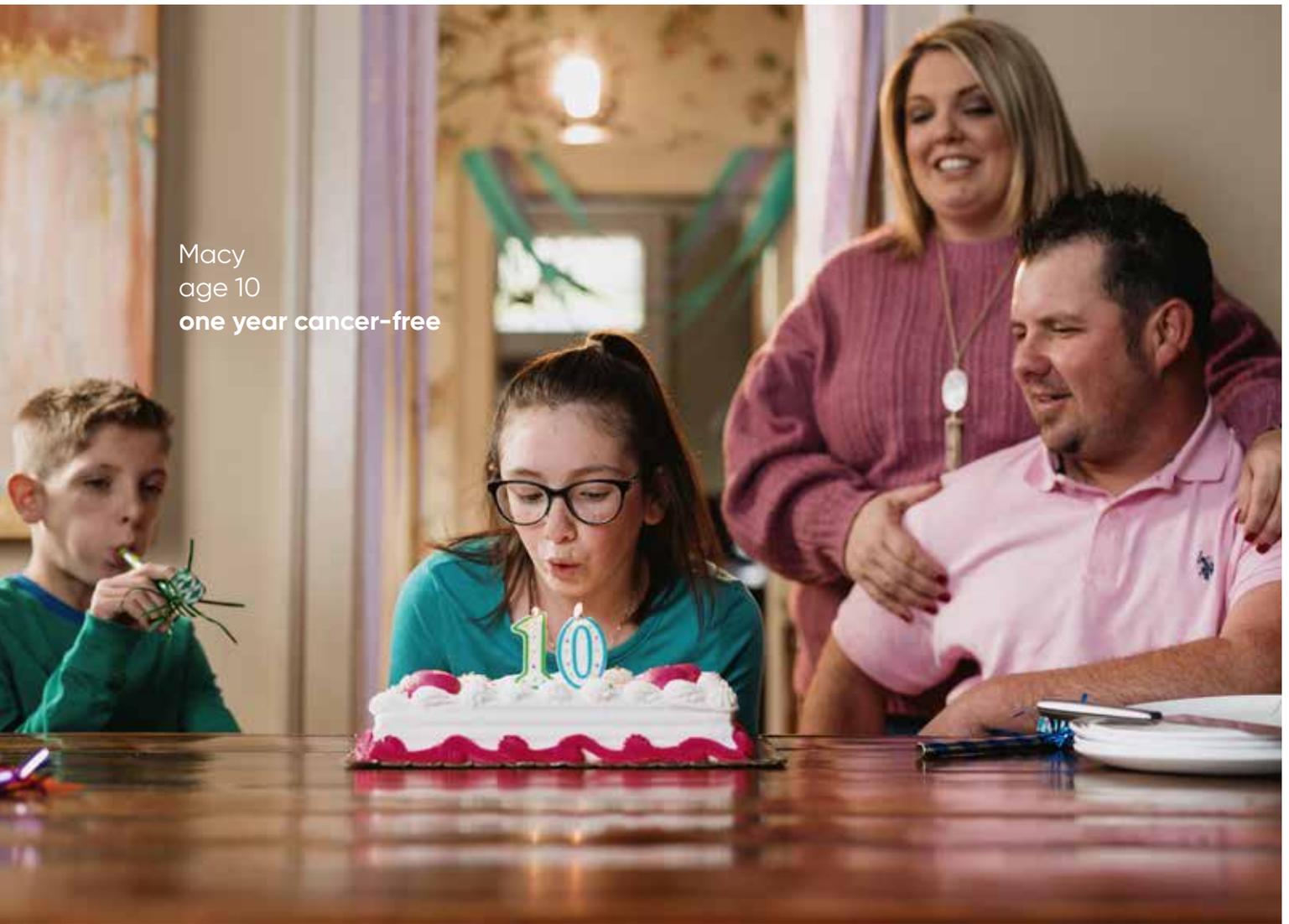
VIRTUAL VISITS

Serving patients from all
64 parishes
in Louisiana



Pediatrics clinics

Macy
age 10
one year cancer-free



For birthday wishes past and present, they are depending on us.
And we are depending on you.



Children's Hospital
New Orleans
LCMC Health

Extraordinary Together.

The Campaign for
Louisiana's Children.



Children's Hospital
New Orleans
LCMC Health

Aidia,
Children's Hospital patient
age 9

