going free
A BOY’S JOURNEY FROM BAGHDAD TO LOS ANGELES

healing play
AN OASIS OF FUN FOR KIDS OF ALL ABILITIES

exit to autism
LIVING NEAR A FREEWAY MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH AUTISM
**our mission**

We create hope and build healthier futures.

**our history**

Founded in 1901, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is one of the nation’s leading children’s hospitals and is acknowledged worldwide for its leadership in pediatric and adolescent health. Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is one of only 11 children’s hospitals in the nation, and the only one in California, ranked in all 10 pediatric specialties in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings and named to the magazine’s Honor Roll of children’s hospitals.

The Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is among the largest and most productive pediatric research facilities in the United States, with 100 investigators at work on 186 laboratory studies, clinical trials and community-based research and health services. The Saban Research Institute is ranked eighth in National Institutes of Health funding among children’s hospitals in the United States.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is a premier teaching hospital and has been affiliated with the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California since 1932.
“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.”

– Benjamin Franklin

This has been a period of transformation at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Though we’ve grown and improved during each of our past 110 years of existence, the last 12 months definitely stand out. In a relatively short amount of time, we opened Children’s Hospital Los Angeles – Arcadia, the hospital’s new outpatient facility in the San Gabriel Valley; were named to the U.S. News & World Report Honor Roll of children’s hospitals; introduced a new logo and tagline; added the long-lost apostrophe back into our name and launched our first-ever brand campaign to spread the news about the great things we do.

We’ve also been putting the finishing touches on the new hospital building, which recently was named the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion in honor of a transformative $50 million gift from the Andersons. Our staff, trustees and supporters have been working tirelessly toward the opening of this building for the last 10 years. And we’ve completed our grand opening celebration, at Turn on the Lights! Walk for Kids and Dream for Kids: the Grand Opening Gala.

Even more exciting than the celebration, though, is our actual move-in date. As of July 2011, we finally start “living in” the space that we’ve been talking about for so long. Our patients and their families, as well as the physicians, nurses, caregivers and support staff who care for them, all have the outstanding medical environment they deserve.

In this snapshot of Fiscal Year 2010, we thank our donors and share the financial indicators of the hospital’s health with our community. We also share a few stories about what makes our hospital so special. We’re proud of how far we’ve come, especially in this last year. We’re energized for what the future holds, as we continue to strive to treat kids better.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Cordova, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer
Children’s Hospital Los Angeles
# table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year Highlights</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Summary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Report</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving Lives, Offering Hope</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream for Kids</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn on the Lights!</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing Play</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going Free</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Bridges</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit to Autism</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushing Up on ASD</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blazing the Trail</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing New Nurses</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Roll of Donors</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Leadership</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jose C. Polido, DDS, MS, suggests a few simple dental tips for parents of children with autism spectrum disorder—Page 27.

Dream for Kids: the Grand Opening Gala was a huge success—Page 10.

A young patient doesn’t let scoliosis stand in the way of his dreams—Page 28.
fiscal year highlights
2009/2010

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was passed to help stimulate the U.S. economy by providing significant funding to the National Institutes of Health that in turn was awarded to research institutes throughout the country. Eight of our investigators were awarded a total of $2.8 million: Saverio Bellusci, PhD; Emil Bogenmann, PhD, EdD; Jeffrey I. Gold, PhD; Anatoly V. Grishin, PhD; Mary Kearns-Jonker, PhD; Stephen E. Lankenau, PhD; Robert C. Seeger, MD; and Lingtao Wu, MD.

In October 2009, 110 doctors from Children’s Hospital Los Angeles were named to the Best Doctors in America® list.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles introduced a new logo and tagline, and added the apostrophe back into its name. The hospital also launched its first-ever brand awareness campaign.

In October 2009, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles introduced a new logo and tagline, and added the apostrophe back into its name. The hospital also launched its first-ever brand awareness campaign.

D. Brent Polk, MD, was appointed chair of the Department of Pediatrics, vice president of Academic Affairs and director of The Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and chair of Pediatrics and vice dean for Child Health at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles – Arcadia opened in November 2010. This outpatient facility, located just off the I-210 freeway, serves the San Gabriel Valley with pediatric care in ophthalmology, gastroenterology, pulmonology, endocrinology, otolaryngology – head and neck surgery, orthopaedics and pediatric surgery, as well as laboratory and radiological services.

For the fourth year, the Nautica Malibu Triathlon, held on Sept. 12, 2010, benefited pediatric cancer research at Children’s Hospital, raising more than $1 million.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles was awarded $7 million as partner in the Los Angeles Basin Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) for accelerating medical discoveries from the lab to the clinic. Michele Kipke, PhD, director of the Community Health Outcomes and Intervention Research Program, was named CTSI associate director of Community Engagement.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles was one of only eight children’s hospitals in the U.S. good enough to be ranked “Best” on the prestigious U.S. News & World Report 2010 Honor Roll of children’s hospitals.

In January 2010, Henri Ford, MD, surgeon-in-chief and vice president of the Department of Surgery at Children’s Hospital (left), led a group from Children’s Hospital to provide medical aid in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after the devastating earthquake.

The Leapfrog Hospital Recognition Program designated Children’s Hospital Los Angeles a “Top Hospital”—one of only seven hospitals in the nation to achieve that status.

In October 2010, the keys for the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion were handed over to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Move-in is scheduled for July 2011.

Yves DeClerck, MD, was inducted as inaugural holder of the Richard Call Family Endowed Chair in Pediatric Research Innovation during the 2010 Saban Research Symposium.

In October 2009, the Nautica Malibu Triathlon, held on Sept. 12, 2010, benefited pediatric cancer research at Children’s Hospital, raising more than $1 million.

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In October 2010, the keys for the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion were handed over to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Move-in is scheduled for July 2011.
# Balance Sheet

As of June 30, 2010 and 2009

(in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$4,281</td>
<td>$11,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable, net</td>
<td>76,485</td>
<td>74,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current assets</td>
<td>115,400</td>
<td>104,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets</td>
<td>196,166</td>
<td>190,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets limited as to use, net of current portion</strong></td>
<td>448,024</td>
<td>425,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledges receivable, net of current portion</td>
<td>31,409</td>
<td>38,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>25,506</td>
<td>23,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property, plant and equipment, net</td>
<td>798,424</td>
<td>720,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,499,529</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,398,421</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$41,118</td>
<td>$42,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current liabilities</td>
<td>78,379</td>
<td>62,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Current Liabilities</td>
<td>119,497</td>
<td>104,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term debt, net of current portion</td>
<td>490,847</td>
<td>487,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other noncurrent liabilities</td>
<td>55,598</td>
<td>48,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>665,942</td>
<td>640,418</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NET ASSETS</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>579,153</td>
<td>495,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>254,434</td>
<td>262,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets</td>
<td>833,587</td>
<td>758,003</td>
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</table>

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$1,499,529</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,398,421</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Financial Summary

## Statements of Activities

For the years ended June 30, 2010 and 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net patient service revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EXPENSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries, wages and employee benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees and purchased services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Earnings before Interest, Depreciation and Amortization</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35,793</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DEPRECIATION, AMORTIZATION AND INTEREST</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total depreciation, amortization and interest</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(7,616)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>OTHER GAINS AND (LOSSES)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses and Other Gains (Losses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition 61 and 3 – Building Construction Revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions used for purchase of property and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers and Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Increase (Decrease) in Unrestricted Net Assets</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$83,258</td>
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</table>
For the year ended June 30, 2010

**PATIENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of licensed beds</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharges</td>
<td>11,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient days</td>
<td>87,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic visits(^1)</td>
<td>326,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services visits</td>
<td>64,611</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHARITY CARE AND OTHER COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity care(^2)</td>
<td>$2.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid cost of Medi-Cal programs(^3)</td>
<td>$75.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfunded support provided for research</td>
<td>$25.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfunded support provided for training of allied health professionals, physicians and residents</td>
<td>$26.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfunded support provided for community service projects, vulnerable populations and the broader community</td>
<td>$8.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT** $139.1 MILLION

\(^1\) Includes outpatient and lab visits

\(^2\) Measured by uncollected patient care charges for care provided to those with inadequate or no health insurance

\(^3\) The Medi-Cal program partially offsets these losses through the Disproportionate Share Hospital Program, designed to support “safety net” hospitals like Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Children’s Hospital Los Angeles received $48.9 million in Disproportionate Share Hospital Funding in FY 2010.
Saving Lives, Offering Hope

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles introduces the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion
In the capstone to Living Proof: the Campaign for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees Co-chair Marion Anderson and her husband, John E. Anderson, have made an unprecedented $50 million gift to support the new hospital building at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. In recognition of their generosity, the doors to this new building will open in July as the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion.

“We are thrilled and thankful for Marion and John’s gift, the latest in a long line of generous support from these two leaders of the Los Angeles philanthropic community,” says Richard D. Cordova, FACHE, president and chief executive officer of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “Marion has been one of the key leaders of this institution for the past two decades, and the Andersons’ philanthropic support is just one aspect of how they’ve helped make us the best children’s hospital in the western United States.”

The Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles will be one of the most technologically advanced health care environments for children anywhere. The 317-bed, 460,000-square-foot facility is a model family-centered care environment. Every aspect of the building was designed with children and families in mind.

“We feel so fortunate to be able to make this gift to the children of Southern California and beyond,” says Marion. “Children’s Hospital Los Angeles saves lives and offers hope to tens of thousands of children and families each year. This gift is our way of saying thank you to everyone at the hospital. Their work is amazing and John and I can’t think of a more deserving institution.”

Marion Anderson has served on the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Board of Trustees for 22 years. As co-chair of the Living Proof Campaign, she has inspired the community to come together to raise more than $1 billion for the health and well-being of children in Southern California and beyond.

“Marion and John have been committed to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and this campaign from day one,” says John D. “Jack” Pettker, Marion’s co-chair on the hospital’s Board of Trustees and the Living Proof Campaign. “After 22 years of service, they are still showing their dedication and leadership with this most extraordinary gift. It’s been such a pleasure to partner with her and to witness the passion that she and John share for this great hospital.”
Nearly 1,500 supporters gathered at Dream for Kids: the Grand Opening Gala on May 7, 2011, in support of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and helped raise $7 million, the most ever raised at a single event in the hospital’s history. The event celebrated the completion of the hospital’s new inpatient tower, the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion, and the success of the $1 billion Living Proof Campaign. It also honored some of the hospital’s most ardent supporters.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Board of Trustees Co-chair Marion Anderson received the “Living Proof Visionary” Award. New Hospital Building Campaign Co-chairs Chris Albrecht and Trustee Mary Hart received the “Building the Dream” Award. And longtime Children’s Hospital supporters Cheryl and Haim Saban were honored with the “Bench to Bedside” Award in recognition of their incredible commitment to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and cutting-edge pediatric research.

The gala, proudly supported by AEG and presented by Starz, LLC, was held at L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles. In addition to the evening’s planned festivities, Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees and Living Proof Campaign Co-chair John D. “Jack” Pettker announced a transformative $50 million gift from Marion and John E. Anderson for the new hospital building, naming it the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion.

DREAM FOR KIDS – Proudly Supported by AEG

Gala Sponsors
• Presented by Starz, LLC
• Premier Sponsor: William H. Hurt

Benefactor Sponsors
• Mary Hart and Burt Sugarman
• Marion and John E. Anderson
• Cerner Corporation
• Phyllis and Jim Easton
• Hasbro Studios
• Pamela and Jeffrey Levy in honor of the Division of Pediatric Urology at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles
• Beth and Bob Lowe
• Mike Meldman and the Discovery Land Company
• Dayle and Ken Roath
• Rudolph and Sletten, Inc.
• Cheryl and Haim Saban
• Saban Family Foundation
• The Simms/Mann Family Foundation
• Alexandra and John Simpson
• Stanley E. Hanson Foundation
• The Walt Disney Company
• Wells Fargo
1) Presenters and honorees of the “Building the Dream” and “Living Proof Visionary” Awards (l-r): Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Mary Hart; Jack Pettker; Marion Anderson; Walt Rose; Chris Albrecht and Billy Crystal.

2) Actress, children’s book author and longtime Children’s Hospital supporter Jamie Lee Curtis with Children’s Hospital patients Johnny Hoffman (left) and Eileen Garrido.

3) Children’s Hospital Trustee Alex Meneses-Simpson walking the red carpet.

4) Former Children’s Hospital Executive Director and CEO Jane Hurd, Children’s Hospital Honorary Trustee H. Russell Smith and Claudia Looney, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles’ senior vice president of Development.

5) Former Co-chair of the Living Proof Campaign, Walter B. Rose, and his wife, Children’s Hospital Trustee Kathy Luppen Rose.

6) Ken Roath and his wife, Children’s Hospital Trustee Dayle Roath, Benefactor Sponsors of Dream for Kids.

7) Children’s Hospital Trustee Cheryl Saban, PhD, accepts the “Bench to Bedside” Award.

8) “Building the Dream” Honoree, Children’s Hospital Trustee and New Hospital Building Campaign Co-chair Mary Hart.

9) Marilyn and James S. Hunt, Children’s Hospital trustee.

10) Dream for Kids Master of Ceremonies Eric Stonestreet, of the Emmy Award-winning television show “Modern Family,” talks to reporters before the event.

11) Former Children’s Hospital Los Angeles President and CEO Bill Noce and his wife, Susan, with Sally Hurt and Children’s Hospital Trustee William H. Hurt, Premier Sponsors of Dream for Kids.

12) Dancers from the Debbie Allen Dance Academy performing during the gala.

13) Actor and comedian Billy Crystal with Children’s Hospital Los Angeles patient Alex Ito.

14) GRAMMY®-winning vocalist Patsy Austin performed the gala’s grand finale with the Dream for Kids Ensemble.

15) “Living Proof Visionary” Honoree, Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees and Living Proof Campaign Co-chair Marion Anderson.

16) Children’s Hospital Trustee Cheryl Saban, PhD, and her husband, Haim, “Bench to Bedside” honorees at the gala. The Sabans established The Saban Research Institute at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles with a transformative $40 million gift to Children’s Hospital, the largest in the hospital’s history at the time.


18) Izabela Garcia, Kurt Rappaport, Jamie McCourt, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Children’s Hospital Trustee and New Hospital Building Campaign Co-chair Mary Hart, Lynn Weidner, Eleanor Randall and Lu Parker.

19) Children’s Hospital Trustee and Benefactor Sponsor of the gala Elizabeth Lowe, with Christy Lowe and Trustee Peggy Galtworth.

20) Actresses Melanie Griffith and Jamie Lee Curtis.
It began with a fun and festive health fair in Griffith Park, featuring music and performances from the main stage, as walkers prepared to travel the five kilometers through Los Feliz to the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles campus.

More than 3,000 walkers joined forces on April 30, 2011, including hospital staff, leadership, supporters and celebrities Heidi Klum, Jamie Lee Curtis and Melanie Griffith at Turn on the Lights! Walk for Kids, the kickoff event celebrating the opening of the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. The event raised more than $1 million for the hospital.

The walk culminated in a fun-filled street party with food showcasing the diverse Los Angeles culinary landscape, countless activities for children and adults, dancing, a stellar musical performance by singer-songwriter Crystal Bowersox and a dazzling lighting ceremony featuring the new 317-bed, 460,000-square-foot Anderson Pavilion.

“Everyone had so much fun today,” said Klum, who served as honorary Celebrity Ambassador for the event. “I’m thrilled to be part of the Walk for Kids and am proud to support Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. The money we raised today will certainly make a tremendous difference in the lives of the children cared for by the hospital.”

Proudly supported by AEG, Walk for Kids was sponsored by Disney, Starz, LLC, and Wells Fargo.
1) Crystal Bowersox wows the crowd during her performance at the street party.

2) Children’s Hospital President and CEO Rich Cordova, Melanie Griffith, Heidi Klum, Jamie Lee Curtis and Children’s Hospital Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer DeAnn Marshall.

3) Participants make their way along the walk route.

4) Melanie Griffith, Heidi Klum and Jamie Lee Curtis pose for photographers and “use the force” with mini-Darth, Max Page, a Children’s Hospital Los Angeles patient and viral video star.

5) Janice and Rich Cordova, president and CEO of Children’s Hospital.

6) (L-r) Juvanie Maximo, Shawn Kalantar and Shelby Russell of AEG; 102.7 KIIS FM disc jockey “Boy Toy” Jesse Lozano and Maureen Girouard.

7) The Pasadena Guild’s team prepares to Walk for Kids.

8) Young participants enjoy the evening’s performances.

9) Team Georgia (l-r): Kerry Kennedy, Brad Goldberg and Kate and Georgia Kennedy-Goldberg.

10) Hubert, Laila, Sarina and Jared Rodrigues, members of the Pathology and Laboratory Medicine walk team.

11) The crowd gathers to admire the Anderson Pavilion lighting ceremony.

At right, Thomas Harris, Jr., MHA, Children’s Hospital’s administrative director for Pediatrics, and his daughter, Bella, enjoy the street party.
Imagine whizzing by on foot or wheel underneath the bright orange Healing and Play Garden Bridge that makes sounds of waves crashing when you pass. Or what about orchestrating your own symphony with a marimba, bells, chimes, horns and drums?

That and more fun will all be possible at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles when the Simms/Mann Family Foundation Playground in The Jane Vruwink Palmer Healing and Play Garden in front of the Anderson Pavilion opens in July 2011. It’s one of the first things patients and their families will see as they enter the hospital campus from Sunset Boulevard.

And most importantly, it will provide a place for children of all abilities to play together.

(Continued)
good news, san gabriel valley!

The same physicians providing expert care at the Children's Hospital Los Angeles main campus are now seeing patients right in your backyard. Children's Hospital Los Angeles – Arcadia opened in November 2010, providing pediatric care in ophthalmology, gastroenterology, pulmonology, endocrinology, otolaryngology – head and neck surgery, orthopaedics and pediatric surgery, as well as laboratory and radiological services. The outpatient facility is located just a block north of “Restaurant Row” in Arcadia, at the Huntington Drive exit of the I-210 Freeway. For more information, visit CHLA.org/ARCADIA or call 626-795-7177.

seen around town ... us!

You've probably been seeing a lot more of Children's Hospital Los Angeles around Southern California lately. The hospital’s first-ever brand awareness campaign launched in January of this year, featuring the new logo and brand strategy aimed at communicating that Children’s Hospital is the best hospital in Los Angeles for children. The campaign appeared in newspapers, magazines and movie theaters, on the radio, buses and billboards, in mall play spaces and on various Internet sites.

The spots and ads ran at intervals through May. In June, the hospital began promoting the opening of the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion. In addition to the new marketing campaign, Children's Hospital is the exclusive medical center provider for all AEG venues, which means it is featured prominently at Nokia Plaza, L.A. Live, the Home Depot Center and Staples Center.

(Continued from previous page)

“The work of children is play," says Mary Dee Hacker, RN, MBA, FAAN, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer at Children's Hospital. For more than a decade, she’s been one of the many people to shepherd the project through the design phase to completion.

“Each time our families look over and see that from their rooms," Hacker says, "or from other locations in and out of the hospital, we’re telling them that we’re going to do the best we can to get their child outside playing. That’s our promise.”

With unique architectural elements, the park-like setting filled with bright colors stands out from the mostly urban area surrounding the hospital. It will be visible to those both inside and outside the facility.

Along with its unique design, what makes the Simms/Mann Family Foundation Playground so special is that it’s one of only a few of its kind in the world. With a spongy fall surface throughout the grounds, the playground allows kids to steer a pilot’s wheel, peer through a periscope, sway back and forth on a wheelchair-accessible glider and prop themselves up with the help of strategically placed handlebars to count on an abacus—activities that are physically and mentally challenging and fun. The Healing and Play Garden Bridge, funded by Dayle and Ken Roath, also is wide and high enough for wheelchairs to roll underneath and enjoy an exciting sound experience.

Shane’s Inspiration, a nonprofit dedicated to developing universally-accessible play areas, designed the play structure. The organization began in 1997, when Catherine Curry-Williams and Scott Williams lost their son, Shane, to a degenerative spinal condition not long after he was born. Along with a longtime friend, Tiffany Harris, who now serves as the group’s CEO, the couple searched for a way to channel their grief.
If he had lived, Shane would have been in a wheelchair and unable to play independently at neighborhood and school playgrounds. Because of that, according to the organization, Shane would have missed out on “integrated play”—play that helps children learn to interact physically, emotionally and socially with their peers.

In 2000, “Shane’s Inspiration” opened at Griffith Park, providing more than two acres of sensory-rich and physically-challenging play for all children. It was the first of its kind in the western United States. Since then, the group has helped raise money for more than 40 universally-accessible playgrounds throughout Southern California and even in Sri Lanka. In 2010, LA Weekly named the flagship location the 2010 Best Playground for All.

The playground at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles will be visible from The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation Dining Terrace, located just off the HBO Café. The spot is meant to be a relaxing place for patients and families, but also for hospital staff, says Liz Cochran, director of Construction Design Facilities Management at the hospital.

“It’s an extension of the healing environment that we’re providing here,” Cochran says. “The playground is one of my favorite parts of the Anderson Pavilion.”

Hacker agrees. The playground is a continuation of the overall theme of healing in the new building, inclusive of light, color, space, nature and family, she says. It also is a place of learning, promoted by the Helen and Bill Close Family Resource Center, where patients and families can study their conditions. The GetWellNetwork, which extends throughout the hospital, also will give families access to vital information in digital form from their rooms.

All of these design elements together focus on family and knowledge—not to mention fun—in concert with existing facilities at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

“This campus is the future for children, families, researchers, educators and providers of care,” Hacker says. “And now, we have an opportunity to focus on how we continue our efforts to improve the health of kids.”

find us online

You know where to bring your child for the best pediatric care in LA. Do you know where Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is online? Visit CHLA.org and find information about the hospital, physicians, departments, programs and even a bit of fun for parents and kids. And be sure to check out a few of our latest digital initiatives.

find james first!

You can play the latest installment of the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles online game series, featuring LA Dodgers first baseman James Loney.

“Find James First” is the latest in a series of interactive games starring four prominent LA sports figures, including Loney; former LA Kings hockey Hall of Famer Luc Robitaille; LA Lakers forward Pau Gasol and LA Galaxy soccer player Landon Donovan.

Go to CHLA.org/JAMES and learn about Children’s Hospital as you follow James around on his adventures. Guess where he is, score points and you could win signed memorabilia, Dodgers tickets or a chance to meet James!

Visit CHLA.org/JAMES today!

rn remedies

Want to know how much formula to give your baby? Need advice on teen topics such as texting? Interested in safe diets to follow while breastfeeding? Parents can read about these and more at WeAreChildrens.org.

Written by nurses for parents, this blog feature allows our expert nurses to answer your questions. Featured bloggers Kelli Anderson, RN, Jennifer Buchannan, RN, Tere Jones, RN, and Gloria Verret, RN, along with other Children’s Hospital nurses, explore a variety of topics about children of all ages.

Don’t forget to submit your questions and topic ideas to RNRemedies@chla.usc.edu. Our nurses could turn your question into a blog post.
It’s 6:53 a.m. The little boy in tiger-print pajamas shuffles down a hall at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. He scratches at the gray wool toboggan on his head.

“Khalas, khalas,” Hashim Zareef says in Arabic, waving a small hand in the air. In English, that means “finished.”

In a few hours, doctors will complete the 10-year-old’s last major surgery, bringing the Iraqi boy’s journey from Baghdad to Los Angeles one step closer to an end. It began more than a year ago, when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded as his family drove home after dinner with a relative.
Surgeons will place a custom-made titanium plate over the hole in his skull caused by the roadside bomb. Skin stretched by saline-filled expanders placed at the front and back of his head also will help cover the scarring from the burns.

A nurse leads Hashim and his host mother, Christy Weissmann, into the surgical admitting area. Weissmann tucks a warm blanket around him, as he settles in to watch TV while waiting. She flips through the channels. Hashim points to the news. They settle on “SpongeBob SquarePants.”

“What do you want to eat after surgery?” she asks him.

“Pizza,” he says.

Around them, parents also wait with their children. Across the way, a mom kisses her boy. Another rubs a little girl’s back; one child starts to cry.

**Life or death**

Hashim arrived in Los Angeles at the end of August 2010. Treated by U.S. Air Force surgeons in the Green Zone, doctors there couldn’t close the wound in his head and stop cranial drainage.

Through a partnership between the Children of War Foundation and Mending Kids International, Hashim was brought to the U.S. for treatment at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. The International Craniofacial Children’s Fund, established to care for children from developing countries, paid for the boy’s surgical and medical care.

His parents took a 1.5-hour taxi ride across the Iraqi border and into Jordan to get him to the United States. For the first two months, Hashim’s mother, Zahiraa, stayed with him at the LA Ronald McDonald House to help with the transition. In the meantime, Mending Kids International helped place him with a host family, the Weissmanns.

By the time he arrived for treatment in California, an infection caused by a bone fragment embedded in the boy’s brain had begun to rage. Together, Mark Urata, MD, DDS, head of the Division of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery at Children’s Hospital, craniofacial surgeon Jeffrey Hammoudeh, MD, DDS, and neurosurgeon J. Gordon McComb, MD, worked out their plan.

First, they would treat the infection. Hashim was hospitalized for 28 days and given IV antibiotics, while therapists in the Rehabilitation Unit helped him regain movement and speech abilities lost from his injuries. Then surgeons would remove the bone fragment. Tissue expanders also would be placed beneath Hashim’s skin, so that scars left behind from the roadside blast could be covered. Twice a day, it would be up to the Weissmanns to fill the balloons with saline.

“The surgeons in Iraq pushed hard for him to get out,” Hammoudeh says, on his way to check on his patient after a successful five-hour surgery.

“He had an injury you can fix,” he says. “He probably would have died if he had not gotten to the U.S.”

**Making an impact**

A survivor of war himself, Hammoudeh grew up in the Palestinian city of Ramallah in the West Bank. His parents later moved his family to Chicago, working in grocery stores to give their children a better life. Looking back, Hammoudeh says it makes sense that he and his Jordanian wife, Amel Najjar, co-founded the Children of War Foundation.

It all began when the couple was contacted about a girl injured during the most recent Gaza conflict in the Middle East. She had severe burns and needed help.

Though they weren’t able to bring her to the U.S. for treatment, the two felt compelled to start an organization that focuses on children injured and displaced by war, poverty, civil conflicts and more. To get it off the ground, they poured their own money into the foundation along with donations, ultimately deciding to put off buying a home to bring their dream to fruition.

(Continued)
They also recruited four others to become members of the board.

“Now, even though we’re still getting started, we’re surrounded by good people who all volunteer their time,” he says. “We want to make an impact on the lives of children.”

That need to make a difference also is what drives Hashim’s host parents, Christy and Eric Weissmann. After arrangements with another family fell through at the last minute, the Orange County couple, a veteran host family with Mending Kids International, were told about Hashim.

After a discussion with their children, ages 14 to 19, the decision was made. And while caring for a child with a traumatic brain injury has not been easy—for example, before the plate was inserted, any sort of bump to his head could have been fatal—Weissman says she would do it again.

“When we heard his story, how do you say no to that?” Christy says. “I have four kids, and the thought that my child could be in another country all alone having surgery without me there, it would tear my heart out.

Flowing in and out of Arabic, Hammoudeh explains that the anesthesia has suppressed Hashim’s appetite. He also reminds him that he’s just been through a major surgery. While they talk, he touches Hashim’s hand.

Hammoudeh and Weissmann, who has been staying at the hospital with Hashim, then discuss the parameters of Hashim’s hospital stay. It looks like he should be out by the end of the week. Everyone knows that with time ticking away on the child’s visa, and the fragile political situation in the Middle East, the sooner he can get back to his anxious family, the better.

Before leaving, Hammoudeh loosens the bandage around Hashim’s chin. With a few snips of a pair of scissors, the relief on the 10-year-old’s face is immediately apparent.

“I’m free!” Hashim says, smiling. “I’m going free!”

Hashim enjoying free time with his host parents.

“We want to be the kind of family we would want our kids to go to.”

going home

The day after the surgery, Hammoudeh stops by to visit with Hashim. As he enters the room, the boy’s face, framed by gauze wrapped around his head, lights up.

The two speak in Arabic as Hashim fires off questions. With lunch sitting on a tray in front of him, he wants to know why he hasn’t been hungry. He’s also curious about why his jaw hurts.

“Hashim, pain,” he says in his rapidly expanding vocabulary of English.

“I’m free!” Hashim says, smiling. “I’m going free!”
Building Bridges
Visionary donors help build a bridge over Sunset Boulevard

Imagine navigating through a busy city like Los Angeles while dealing with a sick child. The complications of life in a bustling metropolis—traffic, parking and pedestrian safety, to name a few—are only exacerbated when they stand between you and the health of your child. It’s an experience most parents have to go through in some form or another.

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles leadership has long recognized the need for a safer way to cross Sunset Boulevard. In 2010, Marion Anderson and Cheryl Saban, PhD, two members of Children’s Hospital’s Board of Trustees, were moved to action. A bridge, they thought, would not only provide safe passage across Sunset Boulevard for patients and employees, but would also become a symbol—bringing together the entire campus of Children’s Hospital, including The Saban Research Building, located across the street from the main hospital on the north side of Sunset.

“I have been percolating the idea for years and apparently so was Cheryl,” says Marion.

“It is really important that The Saban Research Institute have a tangible connection to the hospital. To have the bridge bearing witness to that every day will make a big impact, not only physically, but symbolically,” adds Cheryl.

Both trustees had stepped forward in the past to support Children’s Hospital. In 2001, the Marion and John E. Anderson Building was named in honor of the couple’s generous and ongoing support of the hospital. And in 2003, Cheryl and her husband, Haim, joined the ranks of the hospital’s largest individual donors, naming The Saban Research Institute with a transformative $40 million gift.

“The idea of bridging the two parts of the campus together—research and hospital—really excites me,” says Marion. “Working together with the Sabans—it’s just perfect.”
The women also have enlisted their husbands’ support for the bridge. “Haim and John are wholeheartedly behind us in this quest,” says Cheryl. “They’re just as committed to it as we are.”

The hospital is working toward city approvals for the structure, which will connect the 4601 Sunset Blvd. parking building to the main hospital on the south side of Sunset, just outside the Joyce and Stanley Black and Family Healing and Meditation Garden.

“This bridge will not only be a walkway protecting our staff and families; it will be a clear statement to everyone driving down Sunset that they are literally driving through the best children’s hospital on the West Coast,” says Richard D. Cordova, FACHE, president and CEO of Children’s Hospital. “Were it not for the support of the Andersons and the Sabans, this project would not have become a reality.”

“A bridge always suggests that you’re going somewhere,” says Cheryl. “It means you’re moving forward, and suggests hope, too. All of the kids who come to Children’s Hospital need that.”

Marion Anderson, co-chair of the Children’s Hospital Board of Trustees and of Living Proof: the Campaign for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, has served on the hospital’s Board of Trustees since 1989. She guided the hospital through its most successful fundraising effort ever, helping raise more than $1 billion to support the world-class pediatric medical facility. The Andersons’ latest gift was an inspirational $50 million contribution to name the new hospital building the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion (see page 8). The couple have been community supporters for many years and continue to build the Marion and John E. Anderson Foundation into a major charitable force. John is chairman of Topa Equities, Limited, and Marion and John have raised five children.

“Marion is a force to be reckoned with,” says Cheryl. “She has led this board with such grace and such strength, and we owe her immeasurable gratitude.”

The admiration is mutual.

“I cannot tell you enough nice things about Cheryl. She’s just the most delightful and caring person,” says Marion. “She’s always stepped forward when we needed her.”

Cheryl has authored several books about self worth, community service and personal involvement. She has a doctorate in psychology and is a member of the American Psychological Association. As part of her training, she had the unique opportunity of seeing Children’s Hospital “at work” when she participated in an externship program at the Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases. She also has volunteered as a “cuddler” in the hospital’s Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit.

“Marion and I are honored to be able to do this together,” says Cheryl. “It was something we both wanted—to give this gift to the community, and to children in the community.”

Marion echoes her sentiment. “This has been a labor of love, and I’ve had such great partners on this journey.”

Marion and John E. Anderson

John E. Anderson Foundation

Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion

Bridge Features

- Covered, with interior and exterior lighting
- Will extend from the third level of the existing 4601 Sunset Blvd. building
- Includes stairs and an elevator tower
- 38 feet above the ground

Cheryl Saban, PhD, and Haim Saban
With millions of vehicles on the road in the U.S., the thought would make any parent shudder—could vehicle exhaust cause autism?

A scientist at The Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles recently conducted the first-ever study linking air pollution, specifically vehicle pollutants, to the neurodevelopmental disorder.
But autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experts at the hospital say that adhering to basic standards of prenatal care is still any mom-to-be’s best chance for having a healthy child.

“The study does not say that if you live closer to a freeway your children will get autism,” says Kathryn Smith, nurse care manager at the Boone Fetter Clinic at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. The clinic specializes in treating neurodevelopmental disorders such as ASD.

“It’s the beginning of information about possible factors that might lead to the development of autism,” she says. “Secondly, what’s most important during pregnancy is staying in good health.”

The study, penned by Heather Volk, PhD, MPH, a scientist at The Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital, found that children born to mothers living within 309 meters, or just over 1,000 feet, of a freeway appeared to be twice as likely to have autism.

Volk’s findings suggest that pollution from vehicles like cars and trucks increases the risk for autism.

“There was good biologic reasoning that this might be possible since other research points to lasting adverse health effects among children living near highways,” Volk says.

The study, which appeared online in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, supports a theory that environmental factors, in conjunction with a strong genetic risk, might be one possible explanation for the drastic increase in the disorder. Recent numbers reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show a 57 percent increase in children affected by ASD between 2002 and 2006.

While little is known about the role of environmental pollutants in autism, air pollution exposure during pregnancy has been seen to have physical and developmental effects on the fetus in other studies. Exposure to air pollution during the first months of life also has been linked to cognitive developmental delay.

Despite the stark CDC statistics, Smith says parents should stay calm. “We got a call from a grandparent who was concerned that her daughter lived somewhere close to a freeway,” Smith says. “She was wondering if her daughter should come live with her during the pregnancy.”

Smith told the worried grandmother that putting an air filter in the home could be one way to allay fears, but that ultimately, the basic rules of good health would have the biggest impact on her daughter and unborn child.

Her tips include exercising and eating healthy, along with regular prenatal care appointments and avoiding alcohol and drugs.

(Continued)
“There are lots of negative effects from living in areas with air pollution,” Smith says. “The [study shows that] this is potentially one of them.”

Autism has long been attributed to genetics. Changes in diagnostic criteria and increased awareness have been thought to contribute to the rising incidence of the disease. But many, including Volk and her fellow researchers, felt that these factors alone couldn’t explain the dramatic increase in the number of children affected.

“There was some rationale that air pollution could be associated with autism,” she says.

Researchers analyzed data from a population-based case-control study of preschool children. Volk focused on children with autism and typically developing children, who served as controls. The kids in the study were between the ages of 2 and 5 years old at the start and lived in communities around Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento.

The study examined the locations of the children’s families’ homes during the first, second and third trimesters of their mothers’ pregnancies and at the time of the babies’ birth. It then looked at the proximity of these homes to a major road or freeway.

Volk next hopes to uncover exactly when and how developmental effects occur. She’s working to pinpoint the amount of air pollution children are exposed to during all levels of pregnancy, including specific trimesters, through the first two years of life. This might help scientists understand the timing of autism, as well as identify thresholds of pollutants associated with the disorder.

“Autism is a debilitating disorder,” Volk says. “By understanding environmental risks that work with genetics, we can understand more of what causes autism.”

Adhering to basic standards of prenatal care is still any mom-to-be’s best chance for having a healthy child.
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can present challenges for children and their families that make it difficult to practice good oral health care. Though brushing is very important in maintaining healthy teeth, children with autism often have difficulty handling a toothbrush, visiting the dentist or developing a regular toothbrushing routine.

Jose C. Polido, DDS, MS, head of the Division of Dentistry and Orthodontics at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, suggests a few simple steps to help.

**Routine is key**
Regular toothbrushing is important for all children. For parents, this means learning how to brush a child’s teeth effectively, creating a daily routine and eventually encouraging a child to do it on his or her own.

Stand behind your children when helping them to brush their teeth, not in front. This will help you see and reach the teeth better while showing them the brushing motion in the mirror. Daily routines are important for children with autism, so try to build toothbrushing into daily activities as early as possible.

**Reduce sugar**
The main cause of cavities in children is a sugary diet. It is very important to limit not only how much sugar your child eats but how often. Also, therapists and teachers sometimes give children candy or sweet snacks as a reward for doing well. If this is the case for your child, ask for treats that have less sugar, such as popcorn or carrot sticks. Limiting the frequency of sugar will go a long way toward preventing cavities.

**Be calm**
Visiting the dentist can be upsetting for any child. For those with autism, the bright lights, strange noises and busy environment of a dentist’s office can be frightening and cause anxiety. Sometimes children can pick up on their parent’s anxiety or nervousness as well. Reminding yourself to be calm can go a long way in ensuring a successful appointment.
The Children’s Orthopaedic Center at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is leading the way in developing new and innovative surgeries to correct scoliosis and other spinal conditions.
Only one thing stood in the way of Brett Armstrong’s dream to join the Park City Mountain Resort Ski Patrol: his scoliosis.

The Park City, Utah, honors student had a 50-degree curve in his spine, and was unable to pull toboggans, a requirement of joining the ski patrol. But that was just the start. Even simple activities like running were painful, and he had to quit his high school baseball team. Despite wearing a restrictive brace, the abnormal curve of his spine—and the pain—were worsening.

“My back hurt every day, all day,” says Brett, 16. “It was horrible.”

Although the family lives in Utah, Brett’s parents, Beth and Roger Armstrong, decided to bring their son to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles to see David L. Skaggs, MD. A nationally recognized expert in pediatric spinal deformity, Skaggs is chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Children’s Orthopaedic Center at Children’s Hospital.

“Everyone we talked to raved about Dr. Skaggs,” Beth says. “The whole team at Children’s Hospital was fantastic. It clearly was the best place to go.”

The Scoliosis and Spine Disorders Program at the Children’s Orthopaedic Center is one of the largest in the country and the only one of its kind in Los Angeles County devoted exclusively to children and teens.

The program performs more than 400 spine surgeries a year. What’s more, it’s leading the way in developing innovative methods to correct spinal conditions, including scoliosis.

“Patients and surgeons from all around the world come to Children’s Hospital to benefit from the techniques we’ve developed,” says Skaggs, Endowed Chair of Pediatric Spinal Disorders at Children’s Hospital and professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California.

fixing fatal curves

Five years ago, Skaggs and his team developed an innovative new method for treating adolescents with severe scoliosis curves of 100 degrees or more. These extreme curves can damage the lungs and heart and even be fatal.

Traditionally, patients spent weeks in “halo traction” before undergoing a spinal fusion surgery. Halo traction involves screwing a metal ring into the child’s head (leaving permanent facial scars) and “stretching” the spine with a weight and pulley system.

Instead of using traction, surgeons at Children’s Hospital now insert temporary stainless steel, titanium or cobalt chrome rods in the patient’s back to gradually stretch the spine. About a week or two later, a spinal fusion surgery is done to further correct the curve. This involves inserting permanent rods into the back and then “fusing” them in place with bone grafts.
“Inserting the temporary rods first often allows us to make the spine straighter in a gradual, safe fashion,” Skaggs explains. “And it means no facial scars and no long hospital stays.”

The Children’s Orthopaedic Center also is one of the leading centers in the world for treating early-onset scoliosis. Scoliosis typically occurs in adolescence, but it can sometimes strike kids as young as 2. If it continues to progress, there’s no room for the lungs to develop, and the condition can threaten the child’s life.

One challenge in treating such young children is that their spines still need to grow for several years. To deal with this challenge, Children’s Hospital recently developed a new, minimally invasive surgical technique that’s now being adopted by major centers around the world.

Aloha,

My name is Sara Ke’alohilani Mie Watanabe. I am a ninth grade student at ‘Iolani High School in Hawaii. I enjoy playing volleyball, soccer, softball, surfing, dancing (hula, hip hop, jazz), and singing in the choir. When I was 13, I had a lot of back, knee, and heel pain. I was told I had a bulging disc in my spine and was going through a growth spurt. I continued to play competitive sports until I began to have difficulty sleeping because of the pain. My doctor did a routine examination of my spine and referred me for X-rays, and an MRI. The bad news ... I had an S-shaped curve in my spine called “Scoliosis.” The good news ... the condition was correctable. Although both boys and girls can have scoliosis, it seems to happen more often in girls. Sometimes there is a known reason for the spine to curve. I had “adolescent idiopathic scoliosis” ... we didn’t know why my spine started to curve. As I grew taller, the curve got larger and more painful.

There are many fine surgeons in the USA. I’m grateful my family found Dr. David Skaggs at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. I had surgery on December 9, 2009. Although I was nervous, I had total confidence in Dr. Skaggs and his team. I also had many friends and family members praying for my recovery. Everyone at Children’s Hospital was so nice to me. I left the hospital with two long titanium rods and heavy-duty screws to keep my spine straight. Two weeks later I flew home to Hawaii. I was worried that I would set off the security alarm at the airport ... it didn’t happen.

Three months after surgery I began to dance hula. Five months after surgery, I began to play volleyball again. Gaining my strength and coordination back wasn’t easy. In July, I was selected to represent the Aloha Region on the Girl’s Youth International Team. We competed at the USA Volleyball High Performance Volleyball Championships in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. It was so exciting to play against Peru, and a USA National High Performance Team. Someday, I’d like to represent my country at the Olympics. I’m 15 years old now, and it’s been months since the surgery. I feel great!

My advice for anyone who’s considering having the surgery ... Go for it!

-Sara

Using just two small incisions, surgeons insert special “hybrid growing rods” into the back to gradually stretch the spine. The rods are kept in place with tiny hooks that attach to the ribs instead of the spine. By attaching only to the ribs, the spine is free to grow.

Another procedure, in which the spinal implants are extended through a one-inch incision to promote the child’s growth, is performed every nine months until a final corrective spinal fusion surgery can be done at age 10 or 11.

Brett Armstrong on the slopes of Park City
back on the slopes
Brett Armstrong needed only one surgery to correct his scoliosis. Still, Skaggs specially tailored the spinal fusion surgery, using shorter metal rods so Brett would be flexible enough to ski—and pull toboggans.

Six months after his June 2010 surgery, Brett was back on the slopes and “bombing down” the most advanced trails. Earlier this year, he became the youngest member of the Park City Mountain Resort Ski Patrol and rejoined the baseball team. The high school sophomore now has another goal—to join the Air Force and become a doctor.

“Going through surgery was tough, but it also inspired me,” he says. “Learning about medicine has become my passion.” He’s even hoping to get the chance to shadow his doctor for a week this summer at Children’s Hospital.

“That,” says Brett, “would be awesome.”
Only a few hours after having open-heart surgery, the toddler was agitated, twisting and turning in his bed in the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit (CTICU). Repeatedly, the 18-month-old’s blood pressure spiked, then crashed.

The expert crew in the CTICU—the first dedicated, separately staffed pediatric unit of its kind on the West Coast—shifted into high gear, administering fluids and medications to protect the boy from damaging his newly repaired heart.

“A patient can go from stable to a crisis very quickly in the CTICU,” notes Edgar Ordonez, RN, who joined the unit as a new nurse in 2008 after graduating from the hospital’s innovative Versant™ RN Residency in Pediatrics.

Founded by Children’s Hospital in 1999, the Versant RN Residency immerses its participants in a 22-week education program that pairs them with experienced nurse mentors and bedside preceptors. The program also provides classroom and skills labs taught by nursing staff—all to help residents learn the intricacies of a complex, acute care pediatric environment. The ultimate goal: to build a committed, skilled workforce while improving patient outcomes.

“The pediatric hospital environment becomes more complicated by the day,” explains Mary Dee Hacker, RN, MBA, FAAN, vice president of Patient Care Services and chief nursing officer. “Children’s Hospital Los Angeles has created a professional nursing environment to establish a culture of continuous learning. The Versant RN Residency is the first step of this professional responsibility.”

Since its debut, 778 nurses have graduated at Children’s Hospital—with more than 73 percent still employed at the hospital. The program has since been adopted at more than 80 other hospitals nationwide through Versant Holdings, LLC, formed by Children’s Hospital in 2004 to bring the program to other medical institutions.

The program has gained key philanthropic support, including gifts from The Beal Foundation, the Milo W. Bekins Foundation, the Confidence Foundation, the Fletcher Jones Foundation and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

For Ordonez, the Versant RN Residency provided the perfect foundation for the medical career he dreamed of having. He found the support from veteran nurses invaluable in helping him grow in self-reliance and hands-on skills.

With the opening of the Marion and John E. Anderson Pavilion at Children’s Hospital, the CTICU is growing from 15 beds to 24, reflecting the need for its specialized services.

Nurturing New Nurses
“While in college, I realized that nursing felt like who I am and what I wanted to do,” he says. “[At Children’s Hospital] the preceptors were so willing to lend their knowledge and help, and other nurses continually gave us feedback and follow-up.”

He also enjoyed the regular debriefing sessions attended by nursing residents from throughout the hospital, which enabled them to share experiences and challenges.

“The Versant RN Residency nurtures clinical growth, leadership development and individual confidence, providing the tools to be successful in the critical care environment,” says Beth Zemetra, RN, BSN, CTICU education manager. “Edgar is a perfect example of the positive impact the program has made in the CTICU.”

Even with that expert preparation, Ordonez had “butterflies” in his stomach for a few months after graduating, despite previously working in the unit as an aide. After all, its staff is responsible for the medical management of patients with complex congenital heart defects and lung conditions, both before and after surgery. The unit admits some 900 patients annually.

Many of the CTICU’s nurses are trained in the use of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a heart-lung bypass system that takes over circulatory and respiratory functions in fragile infants. Children’s Hospital maintains one of California’s largest ECMO programs.

Ordonez, who plans to take ECMO training this spring, also has helped care for three children who were given a Berlin Heart. The mechanical heart, approved for investigational use in pediatric patients in the United States, acts as a bridge for children in heart failure who are awaiting transplant.

The 18-month-old toddler who spent a few agitated hours after heart surgery soon had a restful night and recovery, thanks to the combined efforts of the CTICU’s experienced staff. Ordonez appreciates that abiding sense of teamwork. “We’re all here for the patients and families,” he says, “helping to get them through this critical period in their lives.”

Edgar Ordonez, RN
Through expert clinical care, research and medical education, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles has transformed the lives of innumerable children, adolescents and families throughout our community and beyond. These transformations were made possible by the extraordinary generosity of so many in our community. The patients, families, staff and Board of Trustees of Children’s Hospital are grateful to everyone who has helped build and sustain our world-class institution.

We are honored to recognize individuals, organizations, corporations and foundations for their generosity during the 2010 calendar year. This Honor Roll lists donors who contributed $1,000 or more in cash gifts, pledges or pledge payments. We also are proud to recognize those who have contributed gifts of $150 to $999 on the Red Wagon Society Honor Roll of Donors, available at CHLA.org/HONORROLL.

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