

LEADERS IN Care

STORIES OF THE MOST
AMAZING CARE ANYWHERE

SPRING 2025

Champions of Compassionate Care

Shriners Children's
nurses are transforming
pediatric care



Shriners
Children's™



OUR MISSION

At Shriners Children's™, our three-part mission has one goal: to change and improve lives. We do this by caring for our patients, conducting research to gain knowledge and develop new treatments, and providing educational opportunities for physicians and other healthcare professionals.



WHO DO WE TREAT?

Children under age 18 may receive care and treatment when there is a reasonable possibility they could benefit from the specialized services we offer. All services are provided regardless of a family's ability to pay or insurance status.



WHAT ARE OUR PEDIATRIC SPECIALTIES?

- + Treatment for orthopedic conditions
- + Burn care
- + Spinal cord injury rehabilitation and management
- + Cleft lip and palate care



GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

We strive to discover answers that will one day improve lives. Our innovative researchers have made significant breakthroughs in all four of our service lines, improving patient care and adding to the global body of medical knowledge.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

One way we help improve the lives of children worldwide is by offering educational opportunities to medical professionals. We maintain relationships with several medical teaching facilities, and our clinicians are known for sharing their experience and knowledge with other medical communities.



THE SHRINERS FRATERNITY

Shriners International, a fraternity based on fun, fellowship and the Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, founded Shriners Children's as its official philanthropy in 1922. What began as one hospital is now a world-renowned healthcare system with locations in three countries. The fraternity, which has approximately 200 chapters in several countries and thousands of clubs around the world, continues to support this unique healthcare system. To learn more, please visit shrinersinternational.org.

Dear Readers,



I am excited to share this issue, which is largely focused on nursing.

In these pages, you will read about our

new, formal initiative to use our nurses' observations and expertise to drive continual improvement.

Shriners Children's nurses aren't just clinicians. They're educators, leaders and lifelong advocates for the children they serve. Our nurses are central in our hospitals and clinics. So, we are encouraging them to be curious about the best practices in patient care, an approach called evidence-based practice. You'll also learn about Shriners Children's new nursing practice and research council,

whose members will mentor nurses throughout our healthcare system.

I particularly enjoyed our feature article on page 11, which describes the special connections our nurses and patients form. These bonds are often forged over many years as patients return for care, sometimes over their entire childhoods. It is incredibly moving to hear time and again of our young patients who think of our Shriners Children's staff as a second family, and nurses are often front and center in these stories.

It's a special nurse who wants to do advanced medicine and chooses to care for the most precious and vulnerable among us. We're so thankful for them.

Sincerely,

Mel Bower
Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
Shriners Children's

PATIENT PERSPECTIVES

Maria, mother of 6-year-old Aksel, shared these kind words after her son came to Shriners Children's New England with an injury he sustained on the baseball field. The staff is so grateful to have cared for Aksel and to have been a support to Maria.

"I cannot put into words — but will try — the incredible care these wonderful people provided to not only my child, with his broken arm, but to me as the anxious mom. From the front desk staff, who were so helpful and welcoming, to his medical and imaging team, all of whom took exceptional care of my boy and likely saved him from having to undergo surgery. I will forever be grateful. We left with many hugs and an arm that will be just fine because of them! Thank you, thank you!"

Maria

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Thank you, thank you!"
Maria

SPRING 2025

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

ON THE COVER: Cindy Chavez, BSN, RN, at Shriners Children's Northern California comforts a young patient.

Shriners Children's Honored in 'Best Hospitals' Rankings

Four locations are recognized by U.S. News & World Report for excellence in pediatric orthopedic care

Shriners Children's has once again been ranked nationally for pediatric orthopedics in the "2024-2025 Best Children's Hospitals" rankings published by U.S. News & World Report, the global authority in hospital rankings and consumer advice. The "Best Children's Hospitals" rankings, which highlight the top 50 centers in 10 pediatric specialties, are designed to help families find the best medical care available for their children.

Shriners Children's locations received rankings together with their university affiliates.



Shriners Children's St. Louis



Shriners Children's Northern California



Shriners Children's Erie



Shriners Children's Salt Lake City



Honored in the "Best Children's Hospitals" report were:

- No. 14: Shriners Children's St. Louis
- No. 32: Shriners Children's Northern California
- No. 33: Shriners Children's Erie
- No. 39: Shriners Children's Salt Lake City

"This honor underscores Shriners Children's steadfast commitment to delivering exceptional, compassionate care to our patients," said Chief Medical Officer Frances A. Farley, M.D. "It's a testament to the expertise, dedication and culture of excellence we've built together in pediatric orthopedics. We're deeply grateful to everyone involved in this achievement and extend our congratulations to our ranked programs and their affiliates."

The hospitals were ranked in pediatric orthopedics for treatment of conditions such as scoliosis and spina bifida, and injuries such as complex fractures or other sports injuries. Success with complex fractures, surgical complications and infection prevention account for most of each Shriners Children's location's score. 🏆

"This honor underscores Shriners Children's steadfast commitment to delivering exceptional, compassionate care to our patients."

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

expertise
& EXCELLENCE

SPECIALTY CARE FUELED BY INNOVATION & RESEARCH

BUILDING **Strength** AND **Spirit**

*Technology and research
drive care for patients
with brittle bone disease*

*Waseem, 14, is
getting stronger
and stronger and
recently enjoyed
a family trip to
Hawai'i.*

Kids with osteogenesis imperfecta know the slightest bump can cause a break, and when they come to Shriners Children's they get to write their own stories of strength. Just ask Waseem, whose smile lights up the room as he towers over his father, Mostafa. "He is getting stronger and stronger," Mostafa beams. "He is taller than me now!" >>

Children with osteogenesis imperfecta, commonly known as OI, or brittle bone disease, face unique challenges: fragile bones that break easily, potential bone deformities and associated complications like brittle teeth, spine curvature and hearing loss. While everyday childhood activities may pose risks, Shriners Children's approach combines innovative research with compassionate, family-centered care.

Waseem, one of many Americans with this rare genetic condition, made treatment progress in 2023 when he accessed innovative DEXA Scan technology at Shriners Children's Portland. This state-of-the-art bone density scanner isn't just another machine — it's a window into precision care.

"Having a machine to measure bone density here means we can directly

monitor and treat his bones," explained orthopedic surgeon Ellen M. Raney, M.D. The scanner is also the first in the area specifically calibrated for children.

For Mostafa, this means something even more practical: all of Waseem's care — from bloodwork to X-rays and infusions — happens in one visit. "It makes a huge difference," Mostafa said.

A collaborative triumph

But perhaps no story better illustrates the triumph of spirit than Martin's remarkable journey. Born with Type I OI, the most common form of the condition, Martin faced years of immobility and countless fractures that left his legs weak. His life transformed in 2017 when he met Holly Leshikar, M.D., at a Shriners Children's Northern California outreach clinic in Mexico.



"Having a machine to measure bone density here means we can directly monitor and treat Waseem's bones."

— ELLEN M. RANEY, M.D.



A younger Martin works with his physical therapist, Laura van Houtryve (left), and his physician Dr. Holly Leshikar, who he credits with transforming his life.



Working alongside dedicated physical therapist Laura van Houtryve, they formed what Laura calls “a triangle effect” — surgical precision, guided therapy and Martin’s determination.

Dr. Leshikar, who also lives with OI Type I, brought more than surgical expertise to Martin’s case — she brought understanding. Using innovative custom implants, she performed complex surgeries to realign Martin’s femurs. Working alongside dedicated physical therapist Laura van Houtryve, PT, MPT, they formed what Laura calls “a triangle effect” — surgical precision, guided therapy and Martin’s determination.

The result? Martin walked independently for the first time in over six years. Now 18, he’s not only walking — he’s striding toward a nursing career, inspired by the care he received at Shriners Children’s.

When challenges become opportunities

Dylan is another patient whose story proves that brittle bones can lead to big dreams. Born with 32 broken bones, Dylan found hope at Shriners Children’s St. Louis. “I’ve broken nearly 100 bones throughout my life, and Shriners Children’s kept me alive during those times,” he reflected. Today, Dylan — known as “Ivar” on stage — commands attention as a sports announcer and alternative rock singer, starring in Discovery Channel’s *Big Little Brawlers*.

Despite the challenges of OI, he’s become one of the most recognizable personalities in micro wrestling entertainment. “At the time, my mom was a single mother working three jobs, so it helped us to be able to go to a hospital that gave me the best possible care regardless of our family’s ability to pay,” Dylan shared. >>



Martin poses with physical therapist Laura van Houtryve on his 18th birthday. He has celebrated the occasion at Shriners Children’s Northern California every year since he was 11.



Today, Dylan stars in Discovery Channel's *Big Little Brawlers*.

Dylan transformed his challenge into an opportunity, using his voice and personality to inspire others. “The care I received gave me the confidence I have today to do the job I have now, performing in front of thousands of people each month,” he said.

These success stories highlight what’s possible when advanced care and innovation meet compassion. Across the system, Shriners Children’s combines cutting-edge research with family-centered treatment, helping children with OI manage their physical challenges while seeing what’s possible and helping them reach for their dreams.

Harmonies of healing and hope

The spirit of possibility shone brightly at the Wishbone Day concert at Shriners Children’s Chicago last spring. Every May, people come together to celebrate Wishbone Day, an international awareness-raising day for OI. The most common surgical technique used today

“The care I received gave me the confidence I have today to do the job I have now, performing in front of thousands of people each month.” — DYLAN



Above: Celebrating Wishbone Day, a global effort to raise awareness for osteogenesis imperfecta, at Shriners Children’s Chicago in May.

to treat OI was developed at Shriners Children’s Chicago.

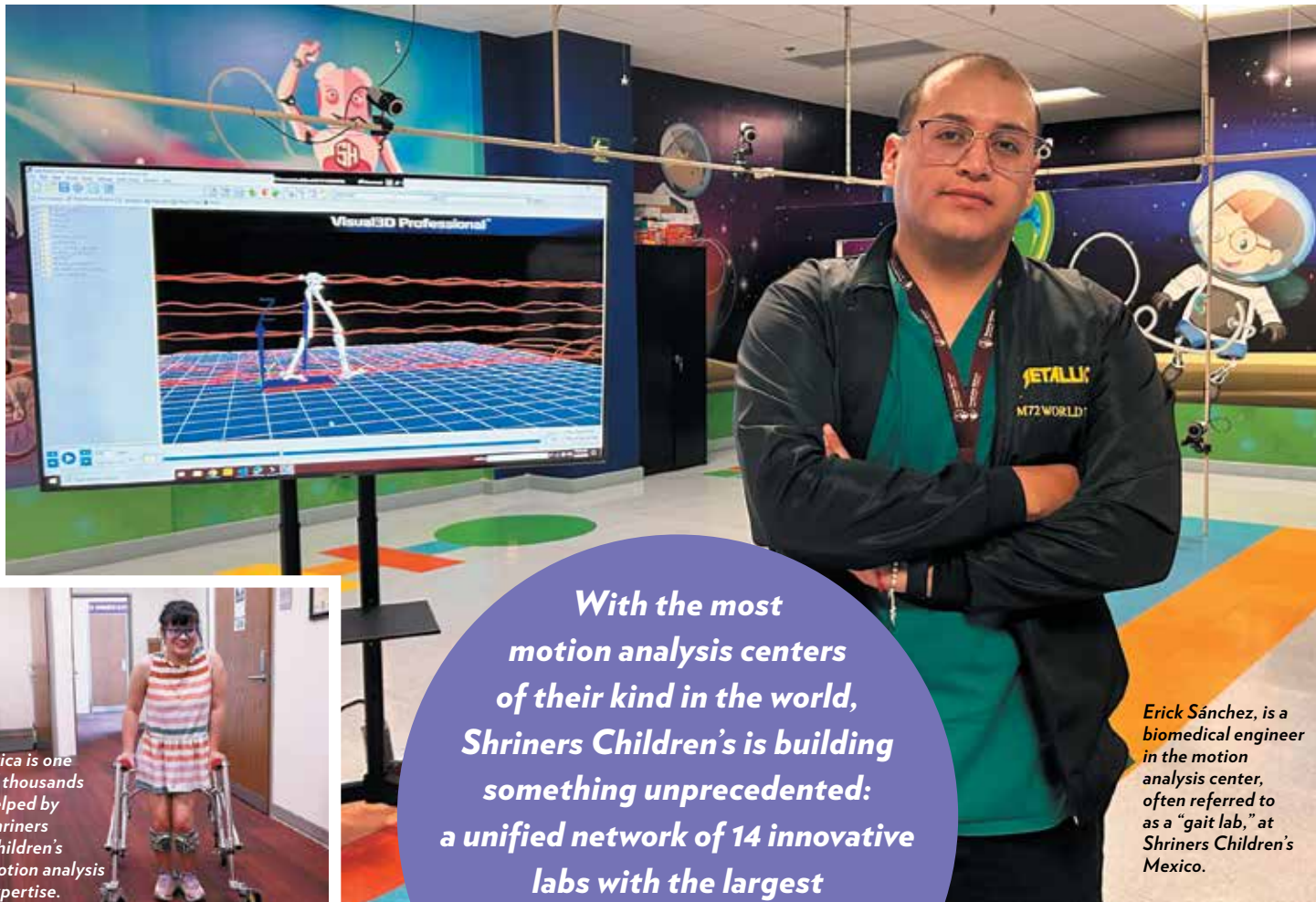
Shriners Children’s orthopedic surgeon Peter Smith, M.D., is known internationally for his expertise in treating children with OI. Dr. Smith joined 50 guests for a special celebration. Joseph, a former Shriners Children’s Chicago patient and professional opera performer, conducted a heartwarming performance of Disney tunes, leading choirs and an orchestral ensemble from two local Catholic parishes

where he works. The 30-minute concert demonstrated the same determination that patients such as Martin show. Joseph’s performance showed that with determination and the right support, those with OI can pursue their passions and inspire others.

Shriners Children’s offers more than treatment for families facing OI — it provides transformation. As Martin’s physical therapist, Laura, says, “It’s not just about healing bones. It’s about building futures, one step at a time.” 🎵

Redefining Pediatric Motion

Shriners Children's motion analysis centers set a global standard



With the most motion analysis centers of their kind in the world, Shriners Children's is building something unprecedented: a unified network of 14 innovative labs with the largest team of motion analysis specialists with this level of expertise anywhere.

Erick Sánchez, is a biomedical engineer in the motion analysis center, often referred to as a "gait lab," at Shriners Children's Mexico.

Erica is one of thousands helped by Shriners Children's motion analysis expertise.

Erica enters the motion analysis center (MAC) at Shriners Children's Lexington with a smile so wide she can't help but squint behind her royal blue glasses.

Using a walker, the bubbly 16-year-old with cerebral palsy makes her way into the MAC and readies for a gait analysis. A physical therapist affixes more than a dozen reflective markers on key points of Erica's hips, legs, knees, ankles and feet.

Cameras situated around the large room pick up these markers and create a digital figure of Erica as she walks. Before surgery, Erica's feet were turned inward and dragged as she walked, causing trips and falls. The gait analysis will tell her doctors if her surgeries were successful in helping Erica walk without falling.

Setting the standard

Erica is just one of thousands of children who benefit from Shriners Children's internationally recognized expertise in clinical motion

analysis. With the most motion analysis centers of their kind in the world, Shriners Children's is building something unprecedented: a unified network of 14 innovative labs with the largest team of motion analysis specialists with this level of expertise anywhere.

This effort has garnered national recognition and is setting benchmarks for the field of pediatric motion analysis on a global scale.

At the forefront are Shriners Children's Corporate Director of Motion Analysis Centers Ross Chafetz, Ph.D., PT, DPT, and Corporate Director of Rehabilitation and Therapy Services Kyle Watterson, Ph.D., PT, DPT, who led the charge in making the motion analysis centers' data more cohesive. "We worked with a skilled team of engineers and physical therapists from across the system who developed and implemented the standardization," said Dr. Chafetz. With uniform data collection and quality controls, Shriners Children's can treat 14 biomechanical labs as one giant lab that's operating in sync. >>



Shriners Children's motion analysis centers redefine motion analysis with innovation, collaboration and excellence.

“This approach has the potential to revolutionize patient care.”

— ROSS CHAFETZ, PH.D., PT, DPT

The benefits are clear. Standardization creates a data translation protocol across different sites, allowing physicians to collaborate and share focused expertise and research. This approach also serves as a best practice for an industry that is growing, with increased use of gait analysis among sports teams and outpatient clinics.

“This approach has the potential to revolutionize patient care, allowing care teams to better understand which surgeries and treatments work best for a patient with similar needs who was treated at another hospital,” said Dr. Chafetz. “Ultimately it’s about providing the best possible care and outcomes for patients.”

For Erica, this data provided critical feedback for her surgeon, Vincent Prusick, M.D. “With surgery, we were able to position her feet in a straight-forward position to decrease the interference her feet were having on each other,” he said. After her surgeries, Erica’s feet don’t drag as much, and she has less risk of falling.

Shaping the future

Shriners Children’s is also pushing the boundaries of the technology. The MACs are testing markerless motion capture systems and wearable sensors that could extend the analysis beyond clinic walls to homes, sporting events and outreach clinics.

Shriners Children’s MACs exemplify collaboration, innovation and excellence, setting a new gold standard in motion analysis. As the team continues to build this unparalleled network, it is advancing its own organization and shaping the future of pediatric care worldwide. 🌐



READ MORE about treatments and research taking place at Shriners Children’s by scanning the QR code.



The motion analysis centers at Shriners Children’s provide valuable data that helps doctors treat patients with conditions and injuries that affect their gait.

champions

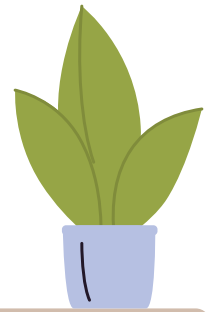
IN HEALING

EMPOWERING PATIENTS, FAMILIES & CARE TEAMS



Champions OF COMPASSIONATE CARE

**Shriners Children's
nurses are
transforming
pediatric care**



Arlene Burns, BSN, RN, CPN, starts her day like many others over the past 38 years. She walks into Shriners Children's Ohio and heads straight to the PACU — the post-anesthesia care unit — where she works as a nurse caring for young patients recovering from surgery. Arlene checks the schedule to see which patients she will meet for the first time and which are children she's known for years as they return to the hospital for care. >>



“We’re the first faces children see after surgery. It can be scary, so we make sure they know they’re safe and comfortable. It’s especially reassuring when I already know the family. They trust me to take care of them, and seeing a familiar face helps ease their anxiety.”

— ARLENE BURNS, BSN, RN, CPN

“We’re the first faces children see after surgery,” she explained. “It can be scary, so we make sure they know they’re safe and comfortable. It’s especially reassuring when I already know the family. They trust me to take care of them, and seeing a familiar face helps ease their anxiety.”

Arlene joined the Shriners Children’s Ohio team in 1986 as an ICU nurse and transport team member. Arlene logged more than 200 flights to bring children with critical burns to Shriners Children’s.

“When I would first meet the families, I could see they were afraid,” she said. “But I would tell them, ‘There is a light at the end of this tunnel. Shriners Children’s will guide you. We will get you there.’”

Decades later, Arlene said that although her nursing roles have changed over the years, her dedication to the mission has remained the same.

“It’s all about our compassionate, wrap-around care,” she said. “We have an entire team that rallies around our patients and families and works together for the best outcome possible.”

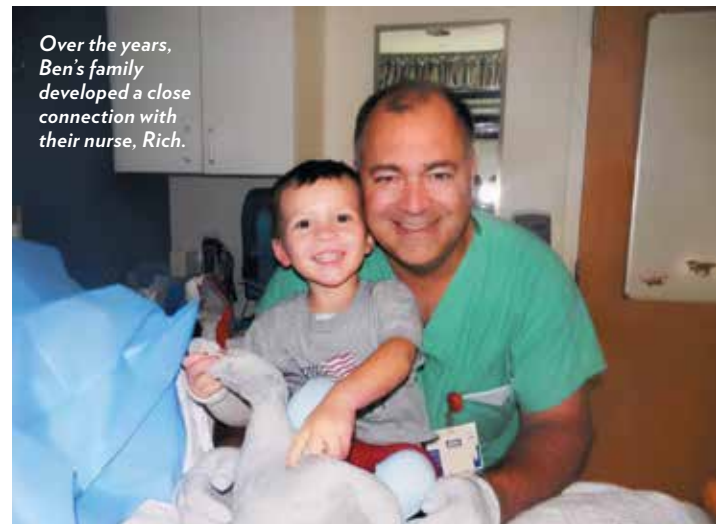
Unique nursing culture

Arlene is just one of about 650 nurses across the Shriners Children’s healthcare system. Their roles range from direct care nurses and nurse practitioners to clinical educators, infection control specialists, care managers and nurse leaders. Each nurse contributes uniquely to the organization’s mission.

Nursing is not just a job — it’s a calling. At Shriners Children’s, that means being part of a team devoted to providing the best care to children. According to a workplace survey last year, 36% of Shriners Children’s nurses have been in their roles, taking care of patients, for over 10 years. But many stay with the organization for decades.

What makes them stay?

“Shriners Children’s is somewhat unique in that patients are cared for over a long time and bonds are formed,” said Chief Nursing Officer Beverly Bokovitz, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN. “The commitment to our mission builds an inherent trust between nurse and child that you don’t often see elsewhere. It’s those stories about the connections between patients and nurses that make us special.”



Over the years, Ben’s family developed a close connection with their nurse, Rich.

Rich has forged special bonds with many families, who find comfort in his approach to patient care.

Healing connections

Take Shriners Children’s Boston patient Ben and nurse Richard Sederman, RN, CPN.

Rich has been a nurse on the inpatient unit for more than a decade. His ready smile and catalog of child-friendly jokes routinely put patients at ease. Rich has forged special bonds with many families, who find comfort in his approach to patient care.

Ben, 13, has been treated for burn injuries at Shriners Children’s Boston since he was a toddler. Over the years, his family developed a close connection with Rich, Ben’s mom Jessica explained. “In very challenging times, Rich made us smile and gave us hope that the accident would one day be a distant memory.”

Ben is a talented thespian who has played the lead in several school and community plays. Rich and his family catch Ben

in a theater production every chance they get.

“Ben’s bravery and determination have a permanent place in my heart,” Rich said. “I remember how tough he was during painful treatments. I owe him and his parents for a whole bunch of smiles and for making me a better nurse.”

Redefining nursing education

Patient relationships may be central to Shriners Children’s unique nursing culture, but that doesn’t tell the whole story. The organization’s emphasis on clinical education also sets Shriners Children’s apart. It ensures that nurses are supported, mentored and prepared for the ever-evolving challenges of today’s healthcare trends.

“Shriners Children’s is redefining nursing education through initiatives that train and support our nurses and position them to provide the best, most innovative care based on the latest evidence,” said corporate nurse scientist Marni Kellogg, Ph.D., RN, CPN, CNE. “As a parent, I would be excited to understand what this means to the care of my child, and I would also be happy knowing Shriners Children’s is making such an investment in their nurses.”

Shriners Children’s nursing strategic priorities are designed to empower nurses and foster collaboration between clinical nurses and leadership to meet patient care demands.

Mentorship drives excellence

One way Shriners Children’s attracts and retains top nursing talent in this competitive healthcare landscape is through a robust program that pairs new nurses with experienced mentors,

ensuring a smooth transition to our unique care environment.

Tammy Noble, MSN, RN, CPN, CBRN, created the training course for preceptors (experienced nurses) who serve as teachers and mentors to new nurses. The preceptor course curriculum incorporates a technique called action mapping, teaching employees the actions they need to take to succeed. Piloted at Shriners Children’s Boston, Tammy’s project stemmed from her desire to contribute meaningfully to

“To be able to work together and identify strategies for success has been the best part of this experience.”

— TAMMY NOBLE, MSN, RN, CPN, CBRN

the nursing profession and the Shriners Children’s mission.

Tammy presented the preceptor course at the Shriners Children’s Clinical Education Summit in Tampa in September 2023. In 2024, it was adopted as a systemwide best practice, and more than 150 staff members have now accessed it.

“Even though we are in different locations, we share the same challenges,” Tammy said. “To be able to work together and identify strategies



for success has been the best part of this experience.”

Megan Klevorn, BSN, RN, a nursing professional development generalist at Shriners Children’s St. Louis, attended the preceptor course, which she described as perfectly timed. The course provided valuable insight and skills as she prepared to shift from her role as a nurse in the pediatric acute care unit to becoming a nursing professional development practitioner on the systemwide clinical education team.

While working with the team at the summit, Megan participated in team-building activities. She contributed to the development of an evidence-based nursing orientation program, which is set to launch systemwide this year. The team also tested a new simulation training program, discussed the scope and responsibilities of the nursing professional development practitioner role, and reviewed systemwide clinical education programs and how they align with the mission and vision of Shriners Children’s.

Supporting nurse leaders

Supporting nursing leadership is another priority at Shriners Children’s. >>

“Shriners Children’s is redefining nursing education through initiatives that train and support our nurses and position them to provide the best, most innovative care based on the latest evidence.”

— MARNI KELLOGG, PH.D., CORPORATE NURSE SCIENTIST



Shriners Children's strives to empower nurses to thrive with world-class tools, training and mentorship.

The heart of Shriners Children's lies in its people, and nurses are at the core of our mission.

"My job as chief nursing officer is to make sure we hire the very best nurses and nurse leaders, and that they have the tools, training and mentorship they need to thrive," said Bokovitz. This ensures that leaders can support their teams effectively, creating a ripple effect of excellence across the organization and leading to excellent patient care.

One such leader is Kandace Stratton, BSN, RN, CPAN. Although she is one year into her role as nurse manager of

surgical services at Shriners Children's Lexington, she started her journey as a patient when she was a preteen.

When Kandace was 11, she came to Shriners Children's for scoliosis care. For two years, Kandace wore a brace and, at 14, had surgery to permanently correct the curve in her spine.

Just five years after recovering from spinal fusion surgery, Kandace came

to work at Shriners Children's Lexington. She began as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and then worked as an RN, helping children recover from their surgeries.

"Working at Shriners Children's feels like a full-circle moment for me," she said. "I hated that I had scoliosis as a kid, but there's a different feeling here. It's

not like any other place. The staff became like family to me and made a scary time more comfortable for me and my parents."

As a manager, Kandace plays a key role in providing that same compassionate, wrap-around care for patients and their families.

A vision for the future

"We are changing the future of care at Shriners Children's," said Bokovitz.

"Initiatives such as our nursing research and evidence-based practice program (see next page) and the preceptor program, as well as the nurse residency and orientation initiatives in development, advance the nursing profession."

The heart of Shriners Children's lies in its people, and nurses are at the core of that mission. They're not just caregivers — they're educators, leaders, mentors and lifelong advocates for the children they serve. Kellogg said, "We are creating a culture where nurses want to work here — and they stay — because they are supported with best practices and have a voice in the care of their patients."

DISCOVER MORE stories of compassionate care by scanning the QR code.



National Nurses Week, May 6-12, 2025

National Nurses Week was established in the United States in 1994 to honor the contributions nurses make to healing others and making this world a kinder, better place. Every year, Nurses Week takes place from May 6 to May 12, an ending date chosen quite consciously. May 12 is the birthdate of Florence Nightingale, who is credited as the founder of modern nursing.

We recognize and honor all the compassionate and dedicated Shriners Children's nurses who make an impact for their patients every day.



Cultivating a Culture of Inquiry

Programs at Shriners Children's tap into nurses' unique expertise



Nurses are at the heart of everything that happens in hospitals and clinics. At Shriners Children's, nurses are encouraged to investigate the best ways to care for patients. This includes everything from advanced procedures to everyday practices like changing bandages, meeting nutritional needs and managing pain.

To support this, Shriners Children's has created a formal, systemwide program that encourages nurses to ask questions about current practices to improve patient outcomes. This approach, called evidence-based practice (EBP), begins when nurses have a question or are curious about their work. They search for research to see if the latest evidence supports their practice. If the evidence supports a better way, the nurse proposes implementing the change and evaluates how it works. If no evidence exists, the next step is to design a research study to find the best solution. Evidence-based practice is common in healthcare. At Shriners Children's, the Nursing Research and EBP program allows nurses to improve their quality of care.

Evidence-based practice defined

"In many healthcare settings, including Shriners Children's, there are traditional practices, often called 'sacred cows,' that are followed simply because 'we've always done it this way,'" said Marni Kellogg, Ph.D., RN, CPN, CNE, corporate nurse scientist at Shriners Children's. "EBP challenges these traditions and ensures our care is based on evidence, not habit."

"Evidence-based practice helps nurses find research to support the best ways to do their jobs."

— MARNI KELLOGG, PH.D.,
CORPORATE NURSE SCIENTIST

Sixteen Shriners Children's nurses attended a five-day training in evidence-based practice last June. They now serve as mentors for other nurses, encouraging clinical curiosity and research.

Studies show that EBP significantly improves patient outcomes and lowers healthcare costs. "Evidence-based practice helps nurses find research to support the best ways to do their jobs," said Dr. Kellogg. "It's about ensuring we're doing what's best for the patient."

To help launch the initiative, Shriners Children's hosted a presentation live-streamed to all nurses across the healthcare system by evidence-based practice expert Bernadette Melnyk, Ph.D., APRN-CNP, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN, founder of the Helene Fuld Health Trust National Institute for Evidence-based Practice in Nursing and Healthcare at Ohio State University.

"EBP is a problem-solving approach to healthcare," said Dr. Melnyk. "It combines the best research evidence with clinical expertise while considering the patient's values and preferences."

Elevating care through curiosity

Last June, 16 Shriners Children's nurses attended a five-day training at the Fuld Institute.

They are now part of the Shriners Children's Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice Council, which provides mentorship for other nurses in EBP and encourages curiosity about clinical practices.

Engaging nurses in their practice helps connect them to their workplace. When nurses feel empowered and appreciated, they are more likely to stay and continue improving the care they provide. The benefits for Shriners Children's patients and their families are clear.

Jennifer Fabian, BSN, RN, CNOR, an EBP mentor at Shriners Children's Hawai'i, attended the training. "The children we care for and their families inspire me to integrate evidence-based practice into my work," she said. "I imagine myself in the shoes of these families and want to ensure their care is informed by the best evidence available." 🧠

In Their Own Words

Nurses share why they love working at Shriners Children's

Marni

“I have been an OR nurse for 27 years. During this time, I have watched and experienced many changes. Our focus on using evidence-based practice is important to make sure these decisions in nursing care are supported by facts and not fads. Shriners Children's has a very special population of patients and families, and they deserve for us, as healthcare workers, to stay up to date on evolving practices.”

MARNI COLE, RN, SHRINERS CHILDREN'S PORTLAND

Kelly

“I find joy in creating a connection with the children and families we serve. Seeing the trust in their eyes motivates me to ensure their experience is as comfortable as possible. The personal connections nurses develop with patients is a core part of our care philosophy.”

KELLY LE, BSN, RN,
SHRINERS CHILDREN'S
CHICAGO

Olivia

“This is a special place; it's like a family. Shriners Children's is so different from other hospitals. It means something to work here. The people I'm learning from really care, and that's what makes a good nurse.”

OLIVIA CHAMBERS, RN, SHRINERS
CHILDREN'S BOSTON (AND
FORMER PATIENT!)

Beverly

“Our nurses practice wrap-around care, combining specialized knowledge and compassion to improve outcomes for our patients and their families. The art and science of nursing at Shriners Children's are unparalleled, with many of our nurses serving for decades, creating an incredible legacy of care.”

BEVERLY BOKOVITZ, DNP, RN,
NEA-BC, FAAN, CHIEF NURSING
OFFICER

Vanessa

“When we offer a listening ear and respond with kindness and empathy, we have the power to alleviate concerns and make a difference in our patients' lives.”

VANESSA D'AQUILA, BSCN,
MSC(A)N, SHRINERS HOSPITALS
FOR CHILDREN CANADA

Hannah

“Evidence-based nursing practice isn't a program; it's a methodology we're using at Shriners Children's that makes us lifelong learners and researchers who continually improve our practices, clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction.”

HANNAH KAYUHA, RN, SHRINERS CHILDREN'S HAWAII

Colleen

“In the 40-plus years I have been a nurse at Shriners Children's, we have stayed true to the mission by providing the highest quality care to our kids in a compassionate, family-centered environment. The kids are the reason working here is so special and wonderful. I love working at Shriners Children's because of the beautiful, loving, happy, strong children we get to help get better every day.”

COLLEEN HOGLAND, RN, SHRINERS CHILDREN'S ST. LOUIS

Rich

“The comradery among our nurses is one of my favorite things about my career. Like firefighters and police officers, nurses are their own family of brothers and sisters. Teamwork formed around the patients can never be topped! As a nurse manager, I see excellence every day. To see nurses grow right before my eyes is extremely inspiring and rewarding. I could never ask for a better place to work, a better group to work with, or a career I could be more proud of.”

RICH GRADY, RN, BSN, SHRINERS
CHILDREN'S BOSTON

systemwide STRENGTH

DEDICATED TO CARING FOR MORE KIDS IN MORE PLACES


Shriners Children's clinicians recognize the essential role parents and guardians play in their child's care.

Supporting Families, Empowering Caregivers

Shriners Children's helps families navigate complex medical journeys

For parents with children facing complex medical needs, care doesn't only happen in the hospital — a great deal happens at home, as well. Family caregivers manage medications, change dressings and coach their kids through rehabilitation exercises — all while coping with the day-to-day challenges of parenting. The responsibility can be overwhelming.

At Shriners Children's, nurses and other clinicians are tuned in to the demands this places on family caregivers. Caregivers are not just seen as parents — they are vital partners in the care process. Our nurses and clinicians recognize the immense physical, emotional and mental toll of caregiving and work to support families every step of the way. >>



“Being a caregiver to a child with long-term healthcare needs is difficult and particularly demanding because you are raising the child also.”

— ARGERIE TSIMICALIS,
PH.D., RN, SHRINERS HOSPITALS
FOR CHILDREN CANADA

By addressing the unique challenges of family caregivers, Shriners Children’s ensures they feel equipped, supported and valued — a vital component of our collaborative approach to pediatric care.

“Being a caregiver to a child with long-term healthcare needs is difficult and particularly demanding because you are raising the child also,” said Argerie Tsimicalis, Ph.D., RN, a nursing researcher with Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada. “It’s a complex role.”

Dr. Tsimicalis said Shriners Children’s providers are particularly good at recognizing that they are partners with the family and that family caregivers are vital healthcare team members.

“Everybody talks about the Shriners Children’s magic, and it really is a magical place. We try hard to support the families,” Tsimicalis added.

A family’s journey: Meagan and Connor

When Meagan’s son Connor was born with proximal femoral focal deficiency, a condition affecting the length and structure of his femur, she and her husband opted for leg-lengthening procedures instead of amputation and a lifetime of using prosthetic devices. But there was no way she could foresee that this path would require 13 surgeries over the years, countless physical therapy sessions and an unwavering commitment to Connor’s well-being.

Meagan had to quit her job to focus on Connor’s care, including multiple trips per week to Shriners Children’s St. Louis for therapy. Shriners Children’s nurses became her trusted partners, guiding her through tasks like cleaning surgical wounds, managing dressings and learning to adjust Connor’s leg-lengthening device.

Nurses as partners, not just providers

Tara Newman, RN, the inpatient nurse manager at Shriners Children’s Spokane, said that while nurses and other caregivers want to give as much information and advice as possible, they are also careful not to overstep their bounds. Parents have been caring for their children more closely than anyone, and they know what works.

However, they are also careful not to make assumptions about how much moms and dads know about caring for their kids.

“Typically, when families come in with children who have complex medical needs, they are the experts,” she said. “Our nurses learn from family caregivers when it comes to physical care and

the best approach for their children. The part that we play is identifying needs that haven’t been addressed already.”

Nurses instruct and guide parents who help with therapy exercises, change dressings or use equipment. However, Merlene Jose, RN, manager of care management at Shriners Children’s Hawai’i in Honolulu, said that often, what family caregivers need most is support and resources for themselves.

“It can be very physically, emotionally and spiritually draining, because caregivers don’t get a break,” Jose said.

Supporting the whole family

Jose also highlighted the wrap-around care nurses provide to support families. “Caring for children means caring for their families, too,” she said. “Caregivers don’t get many breaks.” Shriners Children’s nurses often go above and beyond to alleviate some of this load, finding small ways to provide relief.

One simple way nurses help parents recharge is by encouraging them to rest while their child is asleep or take short breaks by offering to play with the kids or take them for a walk. “Sometimes, it’s just about giving the parent a moment to breathe or reconnect with other family members,” Jose explained.

A commitment to compassion

Shriners Children’s nurses and clinicians aim to ease the caregiving journey and ultimately achieve the best outcomes for patients, including Connor, through hands-on education, emotional support and small acts of kindness.

Connor’s two legs are now even in length, and all his surgeries should be behind him, his mom Meagan said. Connor enjoys riding his mountain bike and plays the trumpet in his school’s marching band. It seems now that all the effort was absolutely worth it, she added.

“I can’t say enough about Shriners Children’s,” Meagan said. “They really changed our lives.”

By addressing the unique challenges of family caregivers, Shriners Children’s ensures that family caregivers, such as Meagan, feel equipped, supported and valued — transforming the care experience for children and families alike. 🌟

CARING WITH HEART AND EXCELLENCE

NAME: JENNA**ROLE:**
REGISTERED NURSE**LOCATION:**
SHRINERS CHILDREN'S
LEXINGTON

“The most rewarding part of the job is being able to put a smile on the faces of children and their families in high-stress situations.” — Jenna

Although 22-year-old Jenna Fugazzi, RN, is early in her career as a registered nurse, providing life-changing care at Shriners Children’s has long been in her heart.

“My grandfather has been on the Board of Governors at Shriners Children’s Lexington for more than 30 years. I was at every Shriners Children’s event, and participating in activities,” she said. “Shriners Children’s is a place of love, compassion and respect for children and their families. Being part of such a wonderful organization has always been my dream.”

“The most rewarding part of the job is being able to put a smile on the faces of children and their families in high-stress situations. Having diverse responsibilities and gaining parents’ trust to take care of their children is very heart-warming,” Jenna said. “I look forward to coming to work every day to provide the best care possible for our kids.”

Jenna joined the team at Shriners Children’s Lexington, and it didn’t take long for her to make an impression. She received three nominations for The DAISY Award, an annual recognition given to extraordinary nurses who provide excellent care with compassion that changes lives. Jenna was awarded this prestigious honor last October.

“Jenna took care of our daughter before and after her ACL reconstruction. She was everything a nurse should be — patient, kind and knowledgeable,” one mom wrote. “Thank you, Jenna! You are amazing!”

“I can’t thank my patients and their families and my coworkers enough for trusting and believing in me,” Jenna said. “I’ve only been part of this wonderful organization for a short amount of time, but I can already tell Shriners Children’s is my forever home.”



SHC-027

Resilience in Action

*Shriners Children's patient ambassador shares life lessons
with young journalist Emmy Eaton*

"In life, you kind of have two choices — you can roll into a ball and cry your eyes out, or you can raise up your sleeves and face life's challenges."

That's what Shriners Children's patient Kaleb, 16, told Emmy Eaton, 11, during her popular interview segment, "7 Questions with Emmy." In an inspiring conversation, the two remarkable young people discussed inspiration, challenges and life advice from Kaleb's mother.

Emmy's weekly interviews reach hundreds of thousands through EastIdahoNews.com, YouTube and Facebook, making her one of the most engaging young journalists today. She has interviewed nearly 250 notable figures, including actors Matthew McConaughey, Carol Burnett and Henry Winkler, and is a regular contributor on the *Drew Barrymore Show*. In her conversation with Kaleb, Emmy brought her characteristic charm and thoughtful questions.

Unyielding optimism

Kaleb, a beloved Shriners Children's patient ambassador, was born with osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bone disease) and has



faced challenges, including frequent fractures, multiple surgeries and physical therapy. His journey with Shriners Hospitals for Children Canada began when he was just seven days old, and the healthcare system has become like family to him.

The inquisitive young reporter prompted Kaleb to share candid insights about his life. "I always told myself that I would live life to the fullest no matter what," he explained.

Through challenges many could never imagine, Kaleb maintains an impressively positive outlook. He enjoys reading, gaming and playing *Magic: The Gathering*, a collectible trading card game. When asked about his future, Kaleb told Emmy he

hopes to pursue communications and media arts.

The interview highlighted Kaleb's resilience and the strong community at Shriners Children's, where he continues to receive treatment every four months. "My care team is like family," Kaleb said. "It's a reunion every time we go to see them."

WATCH NOW

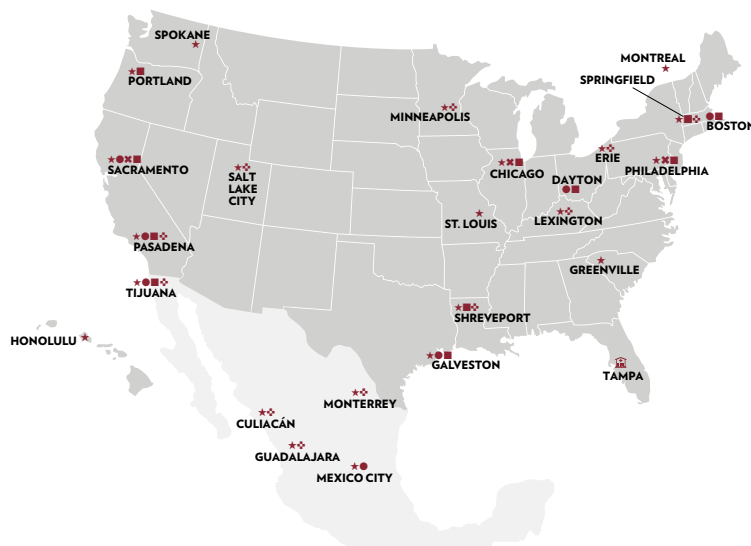
Kaleb's incredible story:



The full interview with
Kaleb and Emmy:



LOCATIONS



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