



# imagine

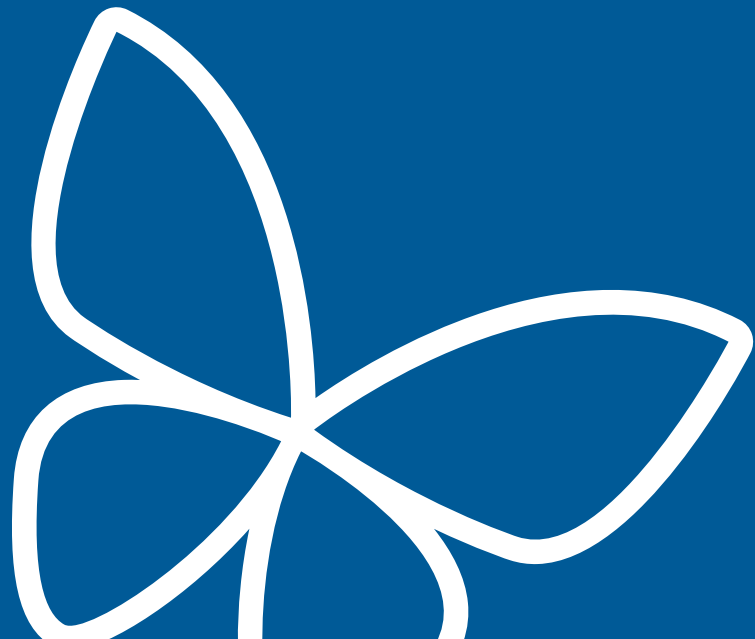
## TO DAD, WITH LOVE

Kirith Prady (right) honors her father, Bram Bernstein, MD, with an endowed chair—now held by a physician he once mentored at Children's Hospital Los Angeles: Katherine Marzan, MD (left).



# WE CREATE HOPE AND BUILD HEALTHIER FUTURES.

Founded in 1901, Children's Hospital Los Angeles is the highest-ranked pediatric hospital in California and fifth in the nation on the prestigious U.S. News & World Report Honor Roll of Best Children's Hospitals. U.S. News ranks Children's Hospital Los Angeles in all 10 specialty categories. Clinical care at the hospital is led by physicians who are faculty members of the Keck School of Medicine of USC through an affiliation dating from 1932. The hospital also operates one of the largest general pediatric residency and medical fellowship training programs in the United States. The Saban Research Institute of Children's Hospital Los Angeles, one of the most prolific pediatric research institutes in the U.S., is home to all basic, translational, clinical and community research conducted at the hospital, allowing proven discoveries to quickly reach patients. Our mission: to create hope and build healthier futures.



# SUPPORTING FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

At Children's Hospital Los Angeles, our care extends well beyond just medical treatment. When a child is ill, everyone in the family is impacted, including parents, siblings and other loved ones. In fact, the entire model of care at our institution is based on helping families through every step of a child's health journey.

All of us who work in pediatric health care know that healing from an illness requires more than just the best clinical care—it requires every family member to play an essential role. This issue of *Imagine* celebrates the importance of family, whether it be from the perspective of a hospitalization experience or from the point of view of supportive philanthropic partners.

The cover story highlights how a daughter chose to honor the legacy of her father, a pioneering physician at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Kirith Prady recalls watching her dad, Bram Bernstein, MD, CHLA's former Chief of Pediatric Rheumatology, provide compassionate care for his patients. Her admiration led her to establish and name a chair after him.

Generous philanthropists Sharon Mason and Bob Masino share how the lifesaving care their niece received at CHLA motivated them to make a generous planned gift. You can also read how the Chandrasekhar family was driven to raise funds after Will, then 15, underwent brain surgery.

We're also pleased to recognize Entravision Communications Corp.—which hosts an annual radiothon that is driven by dedicated listeners, many of whom have children or friends who have been treated at Children's Hospital Los Angeles—and The Gerber Foundation, a longtime funder of research projects that improve the lives of our youngest patients and their families.

Finally, we extend our deepest gratitude to an anonymous donor whose transformational \$25 million gift is an investment in our diverse, highly skilled nurses—who give their all to patients and their families.

We are very grateful to every one of our partners for their dedication to supporting Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Thank you for your generosity, which empowers CHLA to provide world-class, compassionate care to every child we serve.

Warmest regards,



*Paul S. Viviano*

**Paul S. Viviano**  
President and  
Chief Executive Officer



*Alex Carter*

**Alexandra Carter**  
Senior Vice President and  
Chief Development Officer



According to U.S. News & World Report, Children's Hospital Los Angeles is:

- No. 5 in the Nation
- No. 1 in California
- Ranked in All 10 Specialties
- No. 1 on the West Coast

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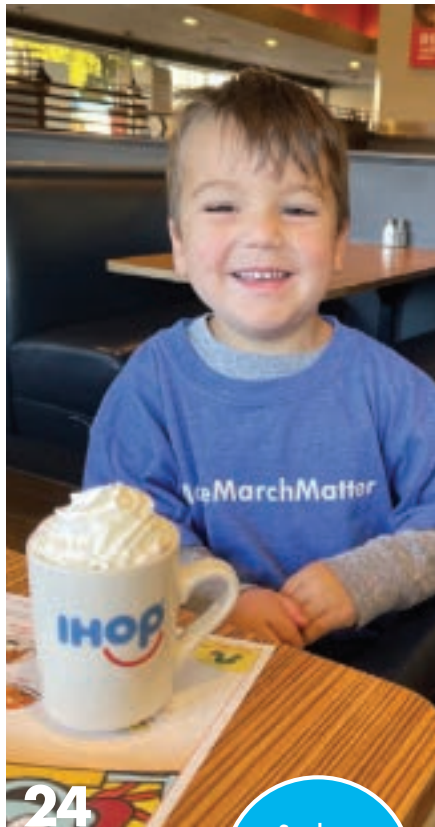
Sharon Mason and Bob Masino found just the right vehicle to honor CHLA's lifesaving care of their niece, while also producing a reliable source of income for themselves.





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## Imagine

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Make sure to visit [CHLA.org](http://CHLA.org) for more great information!



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# 5 QUESTIONS FOR THE GERBER FOUNDATION

*With a focus on infants and toddlers, The Gerber Foundation supports research that impacts the earliest years of life, including a new study led by experts at CHLA.*

By Eunice Oh



When it comes to bestowing grants, The Gerber Foundation has clear criteria: It seeks to fund initiatives that enhance the quality of life of infants and young children in nutrition, care and development. At Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the Foundation has invested in various projects to enhance treatment for newborns with complex medical conditions—a partnership that dates back to 1999.

Though The Gerber Foundation became an independent private organization in 1994, its mission is rooted in Gerber Products Company's long history of giving babies the best start in life. Cathy Obits, Program Manager for The Gerber Foundation, shares how the organization has evolved over the past seven decades, why research is a focal point in its grant-making decisions and how partnering with CHLA can build better futures for the youngest members of the community, here and around the country.

## **1** The Gerber Foundation prioritizes projects that benefit children from birth to 3 years old. Why is concentrating on this age range important to your organization?

It starts with Gerber Products Company. When you're talking about the food, it has always been about infants and toddlers. We're not part of the company anymore, but we've wanted to maintain that historical focus on this specific age group. It's when a lot of growth and development occurs, and research has shown how critical these years are to a child's overall health and what they need to become a productive citizen in society.

## **2** Your offices are in Michigan, more than 2,000 miles from Southern California. What made The Gerber Foundation choose to support CHLA?

Ever since the Foundation was established, it has been giving on a national level. Early on, any employee across the country could nominate an organization for funding through the Foundation. In 2003, research became the main focus; before that it was more program support. The Board of Directors didn't want to focus on any specific disease or location; they wanted to look for the best science, wherever that might be happening.

### 3 Why is research a worthy philanthropic investment?

It's really about finding that change that we can make, something that can improve the care infants and toddlers are receiving anywhere. Our board wants to fund ideas that are practical and can resolve day-to-day, universal issues. Research can answer questions like: What if we could be treating these infants just a little differently? What if this can change their outcomes? We have to be able to change, adapt and use technology to find new and better ways to do things.

### 4 You visited CHLA in 2017. What was most memorable about your tour of the hospital?

At the time, we were funding a young investigator, so he was the one who showed me around. What I remember most was the staff, how friendly they were and how they were doing such a good job of taking care of the patients.

### 5 The Gerber Foundation is marking its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. What does it hope to achieve in the next 70 years?

Continued innovation—in caring for infants and toddlers, getting them developmentally ready for school and education, and helping them to be the healthiest they can be. I'm very grateful that when the Foundation decided to go down the research path, there wasn't a focus on just one disease or one organ. There's a lot of variety in everything we do. 🦋



## CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL, MD, MS: I'M IMMENSELY THANKFUL FOR THE GERBER FOUNDATION

*Funding from the Foundation fueled Dr. Russell's research into bacterial tracheostomy-associated respiratory infections.*

By Eunice Oh

Each year, nearly 4,000 children undergo a tracheostomy, the surgical placement of a breathing tube, and many experience bacterial respiratory infections. Despite the frequency of infections, there are no guidelines for how to prevent, diagnose or treat patients. "It was frustrating for me as an attending physician to see these children readmitted to the hospital, but also frustrating for their families," says Christopher Russell, MD, MS, a pediatric hospitalist and Director of Research for the Division of Hospital Medicine at CHLA.

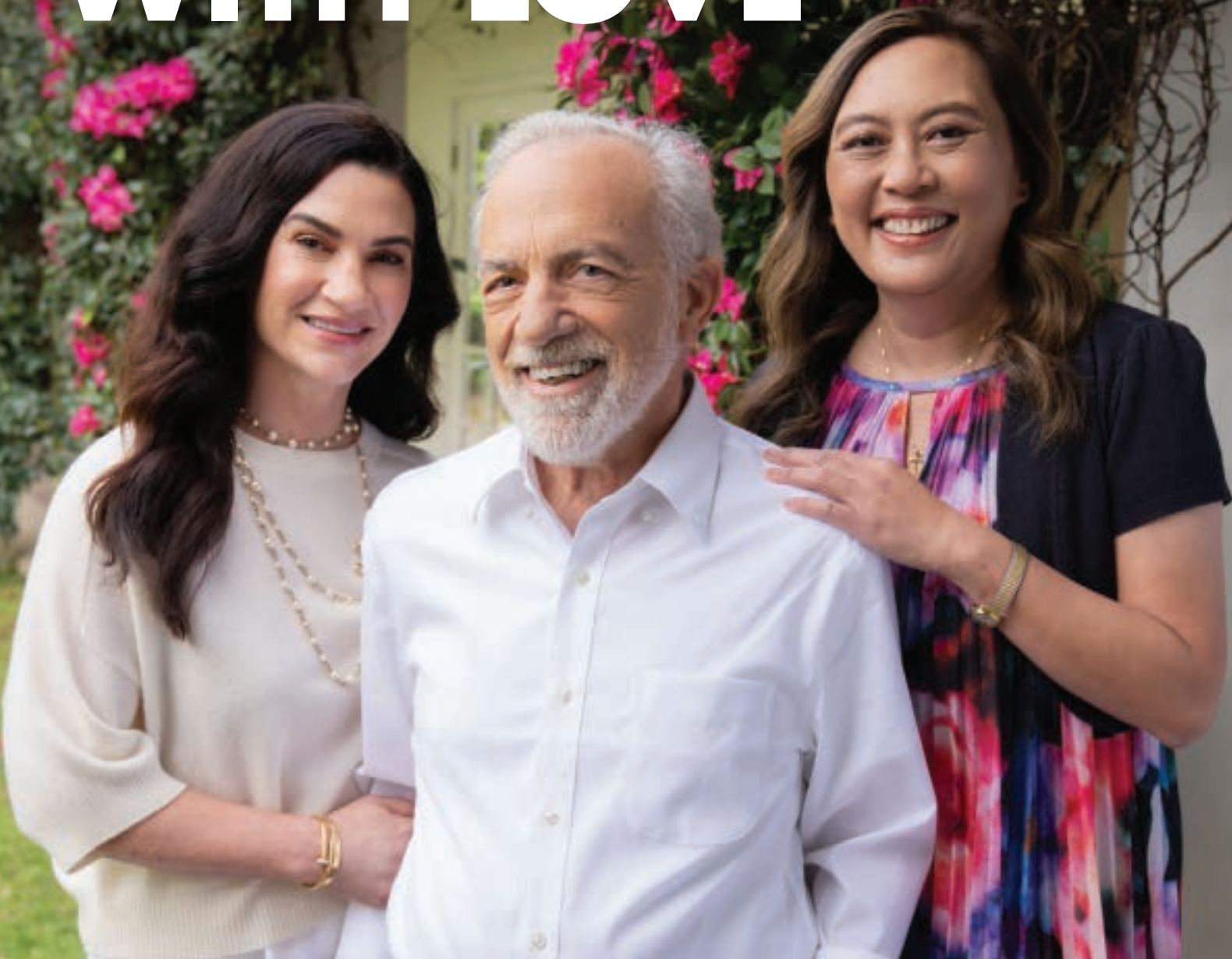
That prompted Dr. Russell to start researching bacterial tracheostomy-associated respiratory infections, but he needed support. A \$350,000 grant from The Gerber Foundation in 2019 allowed him to begin building a network of collaborators across the country to determine risk factors, identify ways to improve treatment and reduce antibiotic overuse while caring for children with these infections.

With the grant from The Gerber Foundation, Dr. Russell was able to demonstrate the study's importance and feasibility—and use the data to secure additional funding. In August 2021, he was awarded a \$2.4 million grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to broaden the scope of his research.

"The ultimate goal is to develop clinical guidelines for a more standardized and evidence-based approach to treating these types of infections," says Dr. Russell, who is now leading a multicenter study that also includes Seattle Children's Hospital, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Children's National Medical Center and Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital.

"If I had not received the award from The Gerber Foundation, I'm not sure that the grant application from AHRQ would have been successful," says Dr. Russell. "I'm immensely thankful for their support." 🦋

# TO DAD, WITH LOVE



*Philanthropist Kirith Prady has established an endowed chair to honor her father, Bram Bernstein, MD, and his legacy in the field of pediatric rheumatology and at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.*

By Katie Sweeney

Left to right: Kirith Prady, Bram Bernstein, MD, and Katherine Marzan, MD, who serves as the inaugural Bram Bernstein, MD, Chair in Pediatric Rheumatology



**There are the kinds of dads who read their young daughters fairy tales and “Goodnight Moon.” And then there are other fathers, like Bram Bernstein, MD, who choose different books to share: medical textbooks.**

“In the evenings, he used to read me his medical books and show me the pictures and explain everything,” remembers his daughter, Kirith Prady. “And I loved it.”

Those unconventional story times were just one of Prady’s early glimpses into her father’s world as a pediatric rheumatologist at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. A more revealing look would come at the hospital’s holiday parties—where she met many of the children he cared for.

“They would always tell me how lucky I was to have Dr. Bernstein as my father,” she says. “I remember thinking he was taking very good care of them because they liked him so much.”

Dr. Bernstein retired in 2005, but over the years, Prady began thinking about how to honor her father’s work at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. In 2020, she did so in a huge way—making a \$3 million gift to the hospital to establish the Bram Bernstein, MD, Chair in Pediatric Rheumatology.

The inaugural chairholder is a physician Dr. Bernstein recruited and mentored—Katherine (Karen) Marzan, MD, now Chief of the Division of Pediatric Rheumatology. The endowment will support Dr. Bernstein’s longtime dream: cultivating innovative research into autoimmune conditions in children.

“I am immensely grateful for this generous gift, which lays the groundwork for expanding our research program and providing better care for our patients,” says Dr. Marzan. “I am also excited that this chair is named for Dr. Bernstein, who contributed so much to our division. I can’t think of anyone more deserving of this honor.”



▲ Kirith Prady remembers always thinking that her father “was taking very good care” of his patients.

### Advancing the field

When Dr. Bernstein joined Children’s Hospital Los Angeles in 1970, little was known about rheumatologic conditions in children. Pediatric rheumatology was in its infancy, with fewer than 100 physicians in the country specializing in it.

One of those physicians—Virgil Hanson, MD—had been an early pioneer in the discipline and was leading the rheumatology efforts at CHLA. At the time, the hospital was one of just a few centers in the U.S. offering specialized care for children with these conditions, including juvenile idiopathic arthritis, pediatric lupus and many others.

“We were inundated with patients,” Dr. Bernstein recalls. “There was no place else around that offered that expertise.”

There were also no cures—and scant treatments. Steroids were the main therapy, and they often weren’t enough. Many children were not living to adulthood.

To help improve patient care, Dr. Bernstein—who led the division from 1985 to 2005—became a prolific author, publishing hundreds of journal articles on autoimmune conditions in children.

“He was instrumental in describing these disorders and their clinical course in children,” says Dr. Marzan, who keeps in touch with Dr. Bernstein to this day. “There’s no question he advanced the knowledge in the field.”

Mentoring residents and fellows was another priority for Dr. Bernstein, with many trainees going on to lead pediatric rheumatology programs around the country. Dr. Bernstein has also always been passionate about research. Under his leadership in the 1990s, CHLA was one of the nation’s first and largest enrolling sites for a clinical trial to test a therapeutic agent that led to a breakthrough drug: etanercept, the first “biologic” therapy for children with juvenile arthritis.

The drug and others like it revolutionized treatment for the condition, enabling many children who were once incapacitated to go to school, walk and run. But not all rheumatologic conditions have seen the same gains.



▲ Dr. Marzan (left) was recruited and mentored by Dr. Bernstein.

*(continued on next page)*

“To develop more effective treatments and hopefully cures, we need to better understand what causes these diseases in the first place,” Dr. Bernstein says. “I am thrilled that this chair will help foster these investigations.”

### A birthday surprise

Dr. Bernstein and Prady have a strong bond; they share a love of skiing, books and jigsaw puzzles. But he had no idea

his daughter was creating a chair in his honor. She decided to surprise him—on his birthday.

In November 2020, she invited her father and his wife to a small outdoor dinner at a Burbank golf club. After the meal, a bottle of champagne arrived at the table. Prady stood up and announced her gift—unveiling a large poster with CHLA’s logo and the chair name.

Dr. Bernstein was stunned. Then he started to cry.

“There was a lot of hugging,” Prady says. “It was a very special moment in time.”

The gift “means a huge amount to me,” Dr. Bernstein says quietly. “It was a wonderful thing for her to do.”

Prady says she hopes the legacy of her father, symbolized by the new chair, will inspire others, including her own children—daughter Stella, 22, a pre-med student considering pediatrics, and son Asher, 15.

“I feel very fortunate to be able to support Children’s Hospital Los Angeles while also honoring my father,” she says. “My dad has always been so passionate about his field and his patients. That passion is what inspired me, and what I hope will live on forever.” 🦋

*“I feel very fortunate to be able to support Children’s Hospital Los Angeles while also honoring my father. My dad has always been so passionate about his field and his patients. That passion is what inspired me, and what I hope will live on forever.”*

—Kirith Prady



▲ Dr. Bernstein and his daughter, Kirith Prady, bond over activities such as biking, skiing and doing jigsaw puzzles together.



◀ Dr. Bernstein and Prady have always been close.



# KATHERINE MARZAN, MD: 'THESE KIDS ARE MY HEROES'

*The inaugural Bram Bernstein, MD, Chair in Pediatric Rheumatology says medicine has made tremendous progress in treating children with rheumatologic conditions since the 1970s, when Dr. Bernstein began his career.*

By Katie Sweeney

Katherine Marzan, MD ►



“Dr. Bernstein used to tell me that at a summer camp dedicated to kids with arthritis, there would be rows and rows of wheelchairs because the children had such uncontrolled disease,” says Katherine Marzan, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Rheumatology at CHLA. “Now, when you go to that same camp, the kids are riding horses, hiking, doing ropes. You might see one wheelchair, or none at all.”

But while modern therapies have been game-changers for many young patients with certain rheumatologic conditions, much work remains. To treat pediatric lupus, for example, only one medication is approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

“We’ve come a long way, but there’s still a long way to go,” says Dr. Marzan, the inaugural Bram Bernstein, MD, Chair in Pediatric Rheumatology. “We need to develop better treatments and precision medicine approaches. There’s no cure for any of these conditions. And partly there’s no cure because we don’t know enough

about these diseases and why they occur. Ultimately that is the goal: to find a cure.”

The newly established endowed chair will provide critical funding to support more robust research, Dr. Marzan notes. And while that takes time, the team is already tapping into a valuable resource: the large, diverse patient population at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles.

The hospital has long been one of the nation’s largest enrollers of patients for clinical trials investigating new therapies for these disorders. But recently, CHLA joined the Childhood Arthritis and Rheumatology Research Alliance (CARRA) Registry. This prestigious collaborative collects disease and treatment data on patients across the country to help inform outcomes and new studies.

“The data from CHLA is vital because of the diversity of our patients,” says Dr. Marzan. “In the past, that diversity has been missing from the national

conversation. Our hope is that we can significantly contribute to advancing research that improves care for patients not only here, but around the world.”

Like Dr. Bernstein—who recruited her to CHLA in 2003—Dr. Marzan says her inspiration comes from the thousands of children and families that the team treats each year.

“I always say, these kids are my heroes,” she says. “They get up every day, even if they’re stiff and aching and tired. Some of them have to take 10, 12 medications. But they keep moving forward. My goal and passion is to help them live the best and healthiest lives they can.” 🦋

# A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

*Will, 15, had no idea he had a cyst in his brain until he was injured in a lacrosse game. Grateful for the lifesaving care he received at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the teen and his family are giving back.*

By Eunice Oh



**When someone starts slurring their speech and says the right side of their body is numb, what comes to mind?**

**Now, what if that person is a healthy teenager?**

For Jay Chandrasekhar, walking into his 15-year-old son's bedroom one afternoon and seeing him appear to suffer from a stroke was alarming. Then, as quickly as the symptoms had appeared, they vanished.

"It was all so strange. One minute, he was having trouble getting words out, then the next he was saying he was fine," says Jay. "I called our pediatrician who said, 'Get him to an emergency room immediately.'"

At a nearby hospital, Will underwent an MRI that revealed two surprising findings: a significant blood clot in his brain and a cyst that had likely been present since birth. Doctors were perplexed. The amount of fluid in the brain didn't match up to the normal teen in front of them.

### Seeking the best care

Unknown to Will's parents, Jay and Susan, their son had been born with an arachnoid cyst, a benign cerebrospinal fluid-filled sac that forms on a thin membrane covering the brain and spinal cord. Many people don't experience symptoms and live their entire life without knowing they have a cyst.

That was the case for Will—until a fateful incident during a high school lacrosse game in February 2020. As an offensive attackman, he had been barreling through the defense and scored two points. Then, on his third shot, just as the ball was landing in the goal, a player on the opposing team checked him in the chest. The impact caused Will to fall and hit his head.

After that trip to the ER and the brain scan, the strange symptoms started to make sense. An arachnoid cyst gets its name from



▲ Will recovered from surgery with help from CHLA's Child Life team, who brought him games, Legos and other distractions.

the spider web appearance of the network of blood vessels that stretches over the sacs.

Trauma to the head—like a sports injury—can cause a vessel to tear and bleed into the cyst, and the buildup of pressure can irritate the brain, including parts that control speech and movement.

When doctors at the local hospital mentioned the possibility of surgery, Jay called Susan. "She told me that we needed to go to Children's Hospital. I was thinking, what? No! We're already here and it's about to happen," Jay recalls.

*(continued on next page)*

*"It was all so strange. One minute, he was having trouble getting words out, then the next he was saying he was fine. I called our pediatrician who said, 'Get him to an emergency room immediately.'"*

—Jay Chandrasekhar, Will's father



▲ “I want to give back to CHLA so other kids know they can handle it too,” says Will, pictured here at the hospital in December 2021.

*“Arachnoid cysts are plastered onto the brain, so you can’t just take them out. With the holes in the walls of the cyst, the fluid can flow into the natural pathways of the brain and won’t accumulate again.”*

—Mark D. Krieger, MD



But Susan was firm on having Will transferred. She had heard from friends about Mark D. Krieger, MD, Senior Vice President and Surgeon-in-Chief at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles—a renowned pediatric neurosurgeon whose specialties include intracranial cysts like the one Will had.

### ‘Back to his life’

In the Neurological Institute at CHLA, Will was monitored overnight before being wheeled into the operating room for a four-hour surgery. Dr. Krieger and his team first opened Will’s skull to

start draining the blood and fluid that had been accumulating, then began the delicate work of creating small openings in the inner walls of the cyst.

“Arachnoid cysts are plastered onto the brain, so you can’t just take them out,” explains Dr. Krieger, the Billy and Audrey L. Wilder Chair in Neurosurgery. “With the holes in the walls of the cyst, the fluid can flow into the natural pathways of the brain and won’t accumulate again.”

Will recovered for four days at CHLA, where “every doctor, every nurse we encountered earned our trust, respect and deep gratitude,” says Susan. “Our uncertainty and worry were met with the staff’s unrivaled experience, steady confidence and deep kindness.”

The Child Life team also played a key role in Will’s health journey. It had been a few years since Will built a Lego set—something he loved doing as a kid—so when a Child Life specialist brought him a box, the distraction and familiarity of the plastic blocks helped him through some challenging moments of his recovery.

“We were beyond grateful that he was alive and seemed like himself, and with guarded optimism we began to think about how he might be going forward,” says Jay. “Will never missed a beat. He emerged from surgery his usual easygoing, happy self—ready for a big meal and to get back to his life.”

### Sharing the support

That gratitude prompted the Chandrasekhars to pledge their support for Children’s Hospital and the Neurological Institute. On Thanksgiving 2020, the family launched their first online fundraising page, raising more than \$15,000 in donations from their circle of friends and family. Will and his sisters, Ella and Janie, also joined the Junior Ambassadors program at CHLA to lead their own fundraising efforts.

“This experience was at times pretty scary. But the connections I made with the nurses and doctors put me at ease,” says Will. “I learned a lot about how to face the unexpected, and I want to give back to CHLA so other kids know they can handle it too.”

These days, you can find Will, 17, a budding filmmaker following in his dad’s footsteps, working on animation, hitting the golf course, volunteering as a math tutor, or at the Hollywood Bowl, where he works part-time as an usher. Giving up lacrosse after surgery was tough, but Will chooses to focus on the positives.



▲ Giving back to CHLA is a family affair for the Chandrasekhars. From left to right: Janie, Jay, Ella, Susan and Will.



Will and his father, Jay

“It’s strange to say but if it hadn’t been for the incident during the lacrosse game, we wouldn’t have found the cyst and met Dr. Krieger. The cyst would have just continued to grow and cause much worse problems,” he says. “It’s interesting that such a low point in my life would turn out to be a blessing in disguise.”

### ‘Team CHLA’

At Will’s one-year follow-up, an MRI scan showed his brain had recovered and there was no new bleeding. Although arachnoid cysts can’t be removed completely, the brain typically forms around the residual tissue, and all signs

*“This experience was at times pretty scary. But the connections I made with the nurses and doctors put me at ease.”*

—Will Chandrasekhar

point to Will being able to lead a normal life, according to Dr. Krieger.

“We will always be grateful to Mark, his team and the hospital,” says Susan. “Being at a child-centered hospital made all the difference.”

Looking ahead, the Chandrasekhars say they will continue raising funds for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “It’s a way to give back for all that we’ve been given,” Susan says. “We’re Team CHLA and plan to be involved with the hospital forever.” 🌈

# BROADCASTING HOPE AND INSPIRING GENEROSITY

*During its annual “Un Millón Para Los Niños” radiothon, Entravision Communications Corp. broadcasts stories of hope and healing on stations across the country—all to benefit pediatric health care.*

By Sara Jones



▲ Andrea Prado, National Operations Director at Entravision

Headquartered in Los Angeles, global media company Entravision Communications Corp. manages 46 primarily Spanish-language radio stations—and once a year they devote 72 hours of airtime to the “Un Millón Para Los Niños” radiothon to support pediatric hospitals.

Entravision’s philanthropic partnership with Children’s Hospital Los Angeles began when it broadcast its first radiothon in 2008. Funds raised during the event are distributed to pediatric hospitals across the U.S. through Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, and CHLA is one of the largest beneficiaries. All donations from listeners in the Los Angeles region—more than \$5 million in the past 14 years—have gone to CHLA to improve access to care for children in the community.

“Los Angeles County has the largest Hispanic population of any county in the U.S.,” says Andrea Prado, National Operations Director at Entravision, “so Children’s Hospital Los Angeles has always been at the forefront of our

radiothon. When we were first getting started, the fact that CHLA cares for children regardless of their family’s status really struck a chord with us and with our audience.”

In the years before the pandemic, the first day of the radiothon was broadcast live from the lobby of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. When patients and families spotted the broadcast setup, they would often make a beeline through the lobby, take up the microphone and volunteer to share their personal experiences of receiving care at CHLA. All day long, listeners would show up at the hospital to empty their pockets and catch a glimpse of their favorite radio personality. While some DJs broadcast their shows in-person from CHLA, others would promote the radiothon from the studio.

In recent years, the radiothon has been broadcast entirely from Entravision’s studio. Stories of gratitude from CHLA patients and families are still a highlight of the event.

*“Los Angeles County has the largest Hispanic population of any county in the U.S., so Children’s Hospital Los Angeles has always been at the forefront of our radiothon.”*

—Andrea Prado, National Operations Director at Entravision

For Entravision, helping to raise money for children’s hospitals feels like the most important way to make a positive impact on local communities.

“Every one of our markets has a children’s hospital or clinic,” says Prado, “and our Hispanic community has predispositions to conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. For parents to know they have access to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles or their local clinic if their little one becomes sick, that’s really important.” 🦋



# Q&A

## WITH ENTRAVISION DJ OSWALDO DIAZ

*The popular radio personality shares how he inspires fans to support health care for kids.*

By Sara Jones



During the annual radiothon, Entravision’s nationally recognized on-air talent drives listener donations. Oswaldo Diaz is one of the most popular Spanish-language DJs in Southern California, and his syndicated program broadcasts on more than 60 stations in major metro markets across the country. Diaz—credited by Prado with generating 60%-75% of total radiothon donations to date—voices three characters in his comedic program, “Erazno y La Chokolata.” He hilariously banter with himself as Erazno (a modern-day Dennis the Menace who loves soccer), Chokolata (diva extraordinaire and the real “boss” of the show) and El Doggy (an outspoken bachelor). In public, Diaz often wears a Mexican wrestling mask, a nod to his lifelong love of lucha libre.



▲ Oswaldo Diaz in studio for his show, “Erazno y La Chokolata”

We asked the man behind the mask how he inspires fans to support pediatric health care.

### You’ve participated in the radiothon for 14 years. What does it mean to you?

I was born in a community in Mexico where there was no hospital or clinic. Later my family moved to California, and when I was in high school, I worked in the fields during vacation. I remember I would put some of the money I made in those envelopes—so you can send your donation to the kids you see on TV. Ever since then I’ve wanted to help. So, when they came to me with this [radiothon] opportunity I thought, let’s do it! And if we’re going to do it, I want to do it the best. When people are calling to make donations, I don’t want to see other DJs getting more donations than myself! Maybe it helps that I am very competitive. But the main thing is to help the kids.

### Do you have a personal connection to CHLA?

I don’t think we have to have somebody in our family experience something to react. When you see a need, you can help. The first time I visited Children’s Hospital, I was there for maybe 45 minutes, but there are families who are there all the time, for years and years. When I was there, I felt that every kid was mine. As I said, it’s a

feeling that’s been with me since I was in high school, and sometimes I don’t want to feel this way because it hits me hard. But in the end, I feel blessed that I have a radio show and can help.

### Why do you think “Erazno y La Chokolata” motivates so many people to donate?

I think of it like this: When you go to a comedy show, your brain is expecting to see something funny. Even if the comedian says something not really funny, you laugh. So, when my audience hears Erazno, listens to Chokolata, they are prepared for their funny personalities. Then we say, “Wait! There’s something else going on you need to know about. Take one moment to do this important thing for someone in need.” Yes, we are funny, but at the end of the day we have a heart. I think people react more to that.

### What would you like to say to your generous listeners?

This interview is focusing on me, but they are the ones who put their money out there. We are just a bridge to bring the listeners and kids together. The people who have less [money] are often the ones who donate more, and I just want to thank them from the bottom of my heart. I want to let them know that by giving to the children, good will be returned to them. 🦋

# MAKING A TRANSFORMATIONAL INVESTMENT IN NURSES



*An anonymous \$25 million gift supports professional development, training and research for nurses at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.*

By Marla Lehner and Owen Lei

**Nurses are the cornerstone of care at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Representing approximately 30% of CHLA's workforce, they touch every aspect of the hospital's work, delivering exceptional patient care, participating in research and training, and providing boundless compassion to every child at CHLA.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CHLA's nurses have shown remarkable resilience and unwavering dedication to the children and families in their care. They have also endured unprecedented stress—with many feeling that their careers have been placed on hold due to the unpredictable nature of the global crisis.

In recognition of the vital importance of the hospital's nursing workforce, an anonymous donor has given a landmark \$25 million gift to support professional development, training and research for CHLA's nurses.

"This gift is a true testament to the priority that this generous donor, CHLA and the philanthropic community as a whole have made to supporting our nurses, especially during the challenges of the pandemic," says Paul S. Viviano, CHLA President and CEO.

One of the largest charitable investments in a nursing program at a pediatric institution, this donation supports the hospital's commitment to provide a breadth

of educational and training options for nurses. It will also bolster programming within the hospital's Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research, which is dedicated to nurse-led research projects and education.

"The impressive achievements of CHLA's nursing team members, combined with the challenges of a pandemic, inspired a wonderful benefactor to make this remarkable gift," says Alexandra Carter, Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer at CHLA. "This gift will help strengthen the professional development of our nurses who have dedicated themselves to our patients—and sustain recruitment and retention of our diverse and highly skilled clinical workforce."

#### **Investing in opportunities**

Nursing is a rigorous profession that requires specialized and ongoing training. Thanks to this gift, CHLA can expand current programs and invest in new opportunities for nurses to further their education, gain specialized certifications, support one another through mentorship and engage in research that improves clinical care for patients.

Supporting professional development for nursing staff also aligns with CHLA's mission to create hope and build healthier futures. Many studies show that a nursing workforce with more chances to grow

professionally correlates with better engagement levels and higher nurse retention rates. In pediatrics, where retention rates have historically been challenging, having this additional support will make a world of difference.

"This transformative gift will allow us to empower and invest in nurses at every phase of their careers," says Nancy Lee, MSN, RN, Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Clinical Officer at CHLA, "whether they are new nursing graduates, mid-career RNs looking to transition to pediatric care, or experienced clinical workers who bring an incomparable wealth of knowledge and capacity for mentorship to the table."

*"This transformative gift will allow us to empower and invest in nurses at every phase of their careers."*



—Nancy Lee, MSN, RN,  
Senior Vice President,  
Chief Nursing Officer and  
Chief Clinical Officer, CHLA

*(continued on next page)*



**The anonymous gift will support:**

- Expansion of CHLA’s RN Residency Program, which builds a pipeline of highly trained nurses. Nearly 90% of nurses who complete the program are still working at CHLA five years after graduating.
- Growth of the Transition Fellowship Nurse Training Program, which prepares early- and mid-career nurses for pediatric specialty care.
- New research funding for the hospital’s Postdoctoral Nursing Fellowship Program, allowing nurses to engage in specialized postdoctoral research at CHLA.
- Specialized certification training to help nurses acquire unique skills—such as trauma, nephrology and neonatal nursing—to serve the most vulnerable children.
- Wisdom workers—veteran nurses with decades of experience who have retired or are close to retirement and may wish to work in a different capacity to address gaps in staffing and oversee clinical care efforts on a limited or temporary basis.
- Early career development through the RN III Mentorship Program and other opportunities designed to help nurses move up the professional ladder and further their careers.
- Funding for nursing-led research and education overseen by the Institute for Nursing and Interprofessional Research at CHLA.

# CHLA NURSES: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

As of calendar year 2021

**23-YEAR** HISTORY OF  
PREPARING NURSES THROUGH  
THE RN RESIDENCY PROGRAM



**2,027** NURSES  
EMPLOYED AT CHLA



**1,799** RN RESIDENCY  
GRADUATES OVER  
23 YEARS



**91%** PERCENTAGE OF NURSE  
LEADERS WITH NATIONAL  
BOARD CERTIFICATION



*“CHLA owes a remarkable debt of gratitude to the anonymous donor for this act of visionary leadership.”*

—Paul S. Viviano, President and CEO of Children's Hospital Los Angeles

## Fostering a lifelong nursing career

Nurses at CHLA are recognized as among the very best in their profession. The American Nurses Credentialing Center recently redesignated CHLA as a Magnet® hospital, one of the highest recognitions a medical institution can receive for nursing and an honor given to only 10% of hospitals nationwide.

“CHLA is committed to creating a supportive environment for nurses—one that prioritizes their professional goals and passion for providing lifesaving care to patients and their families,” says Lee.

These new investments in nurses—who are a key component of the hospital's family-centered care—are being made based on direct feedback from nurses looking for more opportunities to learn and grow.

“CHLA owes a remarkable debt of gratitude to the anonymous donor for this act of visionary leadership,” says Viviano. “With this \$25 million gift, the hospital will be able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our nurses and, in turn, the hundreds of thousands of children entrusted to their care every year.” 🌈

# A PLANNED GIFT DOES DOUBLE DUTY

*Sharon Mason and Bob Masino found just the right vehicle to honor CHLA's lifesaving care of their niece, while also producing a reliable source of income for themselves.*

By Jeff Weinstock

**“We thought we would do a twofer,” Bob Masino says.**

A twofer, Merriam-Webster explains, is something that satisfies two criteria or needs simultaneously.

That's precisely what Bob and his wife, Sharon Mason, were looking for in a planned gift, and why they decided on opening a charitable remainder trust, or CRT, in appreciation of the work Children's Hospital Los Angeles did to save the life of their niece, Grace.

Both attorneys, Bob and Sharon owned and managed a pair of San Fernando Valley apartment buildings for several years, but the properties had grown too burdensome to maintain. They saw an opportunity to sell the buildings and put the profits from the sale into a CRT, which would provide the couple with a regular stream of income. At the end of their lifetimes, any funds that remained in the trust would go to CHLA, which Bob and Sharon named as the beneficiary. An additional benefit of the CRT: The donor receives an immediate income-tax charitable deduction when the trust is funded.

“We would get rid of the buildings,” Bob says, “but do it in a tax-deferred way and also benefit Children's Hospital.” And there you have your twofer.

## Seven pages of gratitude

The harrowing episode that inspired the planned gift traces back to early 2015. After initially showing signs of flu and strep throat, Bob and Sharon's niece, Grace, began vomiting, became disoriented and didn't recognize her mother.

The local hospital saw that it didn't have the expertise to handle the case and had Grace transported to Children's Hospital Los Angeles, where doctors soon discovered that what began as strep throat had traveled downward and settled in Grace's stomach. The diagnosis was a life-threatening infection called group A Streptococcus peritonitis.

“They found sheets of infection all through her abdomen,” her father, Gary Masino, says.

Receiving two months of treatment as an inpatient at CHLA, Grace, then 14, was able to overcome the illness and return to life as a middle schooler. She is now 21 and a thriving college student. In gratitude, Gary wrote a seven-page, 3,700-word thank-you letter to the hospital. He devoted individual paragraphs to each member of the medical team who contributed to Grace's care and recovery, including administrators, doctors, nurses and therapists, calling all out by name.

“It was cathartic,” he says of the letter writing. “We were so blessed by the care there. I mean, she was there two months. And we just felt obligated because these people were incredible. They really were.”

## A human connection

Bob and Sharon say likewise—it was gratitude that motivated their planned gift giving.

“It became clear to us very early on that Gracie probably would not have survived this but for the efforts of the people at Children's Hospital,” Bob says. “When



▲ Left to right: Sharon Mason, Grace and Bob Masino

we visited her, we became aware of the professionalism and the care that she was given. Usually in a hospital setting, they focus only on the patient, and their approach is very technical. They want to cure the body. But in this case, they connected with the family, and they connected with Gracie as a human being.”

Though Bob and Sharon had made charitable gifts before, none were as significant as the planned gift to CHLA. They gave some consideration to other organizations, but the others couldn't match the impression that the hospital left on the couple.

“Children's Hospital was always first on the list,” Sharon says. “The medical staff, the support staff, the volunteers, people who show up with the therapy dogs—they touch all the bases with their care. It was all-encompassing.”

The planned gift sets up a legacy of support for children in the future to get the same kind of world-class care that Grace received.

“When something extraordinary like that happens,” Bob says, “you remember it, and that's why we ultimately chose Children's Hospital Los Angeles.” 🌈

# CREATE A LASTING LEGACY OF CARE



**You can create hope and build healthier futures for our children.**

When you leave a gift to Children's Hospital Los Angeles in your will or trust, or name the hospital as beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy, you create a legacy that ensures future generations can benefit from CHLA's lifesaving clinical care, innovative research and education. For your gift, you will be recognized as a legacy donor in the Emma Phillips Society. We invite you to become a member of the Children's Hospital Los Angeles family of supporters.

To learn more about including CHLA in your estate plans, please contact Peggy Gala, Assistant Vice President of Planned Giving, at **323-361-1716** or visit **[CHLA.org/PlannedGiving](https://www.chla.org/PlannedGiving)**.





From raising funds for Children’s Hospital Los Angeles to spending time with patients, philanthropic partners show their dedication to our institution in numerous ways. We are grateful to every supporter who shares CHLA’s mission to create hope and build healthier futures. Here are just a few happenings that took place over the past several months.

### Humanism Awards ▼

Every year, CHLA team members nominate colleagues who go beyond their daily job expectations in demonstrating kindness and thoughtfulness with patients, visitors and each other. On Oct. 12, 2021, honorees were celebrated during the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Morris and Mary Press Humanism Awards held at The Saban Research Building auditorium. The ceremony, which was livestreamed, recognized team members in five categories, such as nursing, non-patient care and work department. Being nominated for a Humanism Award—a program created by the Press family more than four decades ago—is considered the top honor for team members at CHLA.



Clinical Dietitian Hope Wills, MA, RD, CSP, IBCLC, CNSC, with Paul S. Viviano, President and CEO of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles



▲ Members of the Monitoring and Screening Unit, shown here with Paul S. Viviano, were recognized for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.



### ◀ Spider-Man Cast Visit

On Dec. 10, 2021, stars of “Spider-Man: No Way Home” made a virtual visit to Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, brightening the day of patients who were eager to ask questions about the movie.

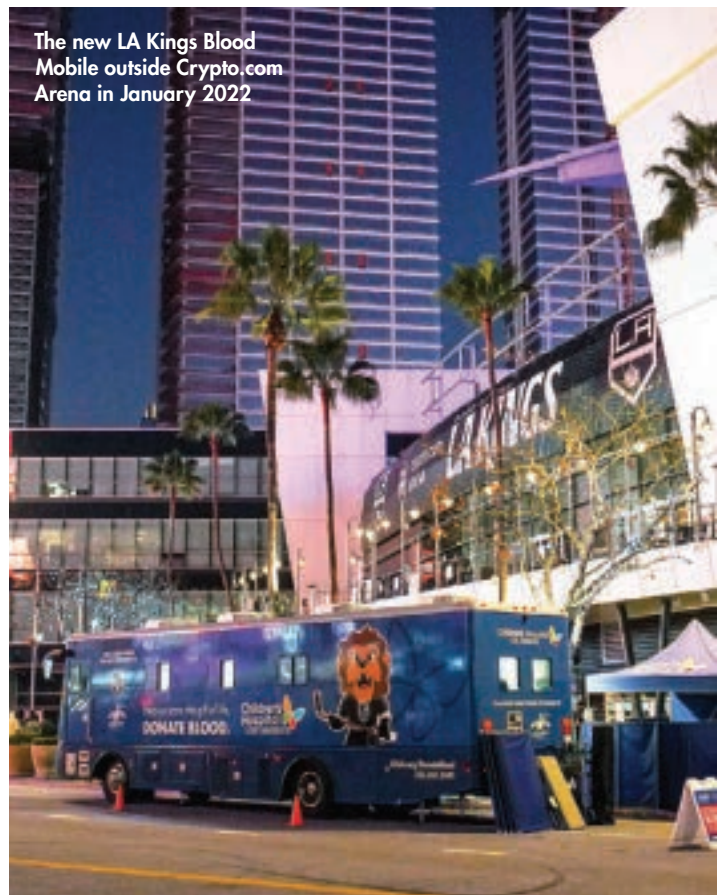
Cast members Zendaya, Tom Holland and Jacob Batalon took time to chat with patients like Adrian, pictured here.



**LA Kings Blood Drives ▶**

In recognition of National Blood Donor Month, the LA Kings hosted three blood drives in partnership with CHLA in January 2022. The events, all held outside Crypto.com Arena in downtown Los Angeles, helped raise awareness about the need for lifesaving blood and platelet donations. We are grateful for the LA Kings and Kings Care Foundation’s longstanding support of CHLA’s Blood Donor Center.

**LA Kings mascot Bailey with CHLA team members at a Manhattan Beach blood drive in August 2021 ▼**



**The new LA Kings Blood Mobile outside Crypto.com Arena in January 2022**



**◀ Valentine’s Day Card Campaign**

Feb. 14, 2022, was extra special for patients at CHLA, thanks to those who participated in our annual Valentine’s Day Card Campaign and submitted nearly 40,000 cards through our website. We are also grateful to Postmates for partnering with us on this year’s campaign and donating \$20,000 to support the hospital’s clinical care and research.



**▲ CHLA patients Nicholas (above) and Jaela show off the colorful cards they received.**



Every spring, businesses and the community come together on behalf of Children's Hospital Los Angeles to achieve our goal of raising \$1 million during the month of March. Here are a few of the events that took place across Southern California during this year's Make March Matter campaign.



▲ Actors and CHLA supporters Jamie Lee Curtis and Matt LeBlanc helped kick off this year's campaign during an event at the hospital on March 1. Left to right: Alexandra Carter, CHLA Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer; Jamie Lee Curtis; Paul S. Viviano, CHLA President and CEO; Dawn Wilcox, Associate Senior Vice President, Development and Corporate Partnerships at CHLA; Matt LeBlanc.

To celebrate National Pancake Day on March 1, IHOP restaurants across Greater Los Angeles offered guests a short stack of buttermilk pancakes and accepted donations for CHLA. IHOP, which has been a Children's Miracle Network Hospitals partner for 16 years, has raised more than \$2.3 million for the hospital and has participated in Make March Matter since the campaign's launch in 2016. ►

All month long, Panda Express—a longtime CHLA supporter and top fundraiser for the campaign—and its associates (far right) donated a portion of their paychecks and collected donations at the register. ►

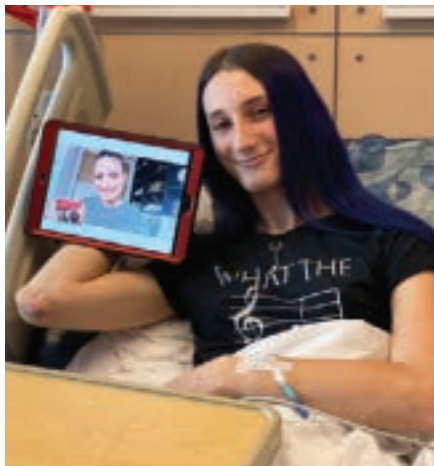


On March 22, CHLA's Literally Healing Program hosted Parent Night with help from actor Wilmer Valderrama and his fiancée, Amanda Pacheco. Parents were treated to games and goodie bags to help them laugh and decompress. ▼



▲ On March 26, the LA Kings hosted several CHLA patients and their families at the special "Superhero Night" game against the Seattle Kraken. Pictured here: Matthew with his mom, Yadira, sister Madison and the Kings mascot, Bailey.

The Curtis Peeps, a group of young CHLA supporters, sold macarons, dog treats, bracelets and raffle tickets for a set with DJ Blake Meidel as part of their Junior Ambassador Action Day fundraiser on March 13 at the Palisades Village in Pacific Palisades. Also available for purchase were books that two of the Junior Ambassadors wrote and published. ▼



A percentage of sales from a limited-edition CHLA cookie sold at Porto's Bakery & Cafe locations helped support the campaign.



Throughout the month, Alfred Coffee donated \$1 for every lavender latte sold across all locations. ▼



▲ Demi Lovato helped us Make March Matter by surprising CHLA patients Tal and Kimora during a virtual visit on March 17. The singer and actor spent time chatting about a variety of topics, from bright hair and music to shoes and aliens, and also wished Kimora a belated happy birthday.





◀ Art Workshop With Nikkolas Smith

On Feb. 16, 2022, artist Nikkolas Smith held a virtual art workshop in honor of Black History Month and to highlight the importance of self-love. Patients, including Kumarah (pictured on the left) and Micahya, were asked to draw the mightiest versions of themselves: as superheroes. Smith has supported CHLA through his time and work, including donating his “King Chad” mural of the late actor Chadwick Boseman doing the “Wakanda Forever” salute with a cancer patient, which is featured on a wall at the hospital.



Los Angeles Marathon ▶

Children’s Hospital Los Angeles was proud to once again be a featured charity partner of the Los Angeles Marathon presented by ASICS. For the 2022 race, which was held on March 20, nearly \$40,000 was raised in support of CHLA.



▲ CHLA team member Scott Busiel, Senior Associate Director of Donor Relations and Stewardship in the Foundation Department, powers through the 26.2-mile course.



Kate Berman, a Program Manager in CHLA’s Innovation Studio, shows off her medal after completing the race.

# UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2022

*There are so many ways to support Children's Hospital Los Angeles.*

*We hope you'll participate in one of these upcoming events that benefit the hospital's world-class care.*

## June 25



### Walk & Play L.A.

Bring the whole family for a day of fun and entertainment at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum to support Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

*Sign up to fundraise at [WalkandPlayLA.org](http://WalkandPlayLA.org).*

## September 17-18

### 2XU Malibu Triathlon

Swim, bike and run (or make a donation in honor of those who do) to support pediatric cancer research at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

*To fundraise for CHLA, register for the corporate challenge at [MalibuTri.com](http://MalibuTri.com).*

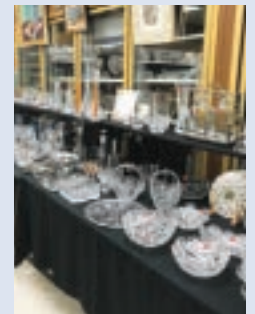


## October 28-30

### Treasures & Trivia

Don't miss the Pasadena Guild's annual rummage sale offering gently used and vintage finds, from home goods to fine arts—all to benefit Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

*To learn more and buy tickets, visit [Pasadenaguild.org/treasures-trivia](http://Pasadenaguild.org/treasures-trivia).*



## October 8

### The Children's Hospital Los Angeles Gala

Save the date for the hospital's biennial event that celebrates our courageous patients and the exceptional physicians, researchers and caregivers dedicated to giving them brighter futures.

*For more information, visit [CHLAGala.org](http://CHLAGala.org).*

# 2022 GALA



## November 29

### Giving Tuesday

Support the hospital on the day dedicated to giving and tune in to KOST 103.5 to hear radio host Ellen K share stories from team members and families impacted by Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

*To support the hospital, visit [CHLA.org/give](http://CHLA.org/give).*



CHLA is committed to maintaining a healthy, safe environment and prioritizes the well-being of our community. At the time of printing, the events listed here were scheduled to proceed. However, event dates and formats are subject to change in accordance with state and local guidance related to COVID-19.

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Join us for a day of fun and entertainment creating hope and building healthier futures for our young patients at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Sign up to fundraise at [WalkandPlayLA.org](https://WalkandPlayLA.org).

