

e-Currents

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Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month

March is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month. Affecting nearly 500,000 children every year, cerebral palsy is the most common motor disability in children. At La Rabida, we specialize in treating patients with cerebral palsy through physical, occupational, and speech therapies. We're taking some time this month to highlight a few of our cerebral palsy patients and the improvements they've made since coming to La Rabida.

Sebastien, an eight-year-old La Rabida patient living with cerebral palsy, has made progress in nearly every aspect of his life due to routine physical, occupational, and feeding/speech therapies. These treatments have resulted in a new found sense of independence for Sebastien. His mother shared that Sebastien used to require assistance with just about everything. Because of the treatment received at La Rabida, Sebastien is now able to walk around the house on his own, feed himself, and use the washroom alone. Sebastien's mom shares that it has been liberating for both of them, stating "I don't have to have my eyes on him at every second anymore, and he gets a sense of independence."



At just five years old, **Dontae** came aboard the S.S. La Rabida while recovering from a surgery related to his cerebral palsy. He participated in both individual and group physical therapy sessions to help improve and strengthen his mobility. "Dontae always enjoyed the group therapy sessions," his mom shared. "He loved interacting and working with the other kids. It made recovery fun for him." The specialized treatment catered to Dontae made a positive impact on his rehabilitation. Dontae, now fourteen years old, continues to visit La Rabida for primary care and behavioral health treatment. When asked how his doctors and physical therapists at La Rabida have impacted his life, Dontae said "they've given me hope."



Now Offering: A Walk-In Clinic

We are excited to now be offering walk-in clinic services for families with children who are established patients at La Rabida that may be suffering from symptoms of an earache, fever, or stomach bug. La Rabida's walk-in clinic allows already established primary care patients to be seen by our nurse practitioner without the hassle of scheduling an appointment.



The clinic will be open Monday through Friday from 1pm to 5pm. If you have any questions about the clinic, please call 773-256-5700, Option 2.



La Rabida in the News

This month, Chicago Health Magazine published a piece about sickle cell, discussing the importance of early diagnosis and the stigma that is often associated with the condition. The article shares the story of a La Rabida family, the Strongs.

Learn more about sickle cell and the Strong family's journey [here](#).

Child Life Specialists Turn La Rabida into a Place for Fun & Recovery



Our Child Life department helps provide patients with emotional and psychosocial support during their stay aboard the S.S. La Rabida. During March, National Child Life Month, we are taking time to share our appreciation for the child life specialists who make the hospital a fun, positive place for patients.

Our child life specialists are here to advocate for patients throughout every step of their stay. They work closely with the medical staff to get an understanding of the patient's condition, and find ways to help patients cope with challenges they may be struggling with. To get patients comfortable with procedures they may need, our child life specialists will play with toys that mimic medical equipment to give the child an opportunity to work through their anxieties and prepare them for the procedure. "If a child is getting an I.V. or a blood draw, we like to offer them the opportunity to become familiar with the equipment the nurse or the doctor will use," says Viktoria, a child life specialist at La Rabida. "By talking about and using play to act out what will happen, we help ensure the child is familiar with what will be occurring during their procedure."

The child life specialists do everything they can to cultivate an environment that will allow kids to be kids. By coordinating celebrations around birthdays and milestones and hosting events like pet therapy, music time, and holiday parties, they are able to help patients create positive memories about their time spent in the hospital.

The goal of our child life specialists is to improve the overall hospital experience for patients. They work hard to take away the scary, unknown aspects of a child's stay and give them opportunities to have fun and feel like a kid. The time and commitment our child life specialists give make a lasting impact on our patients. We thank you for the constant support you give to the children we serve.

Happy National Doctor's Day!



March 30th is National Doctor's Day, and La Rabida is honoring the doctors who have dedicated their careers to improving the lives of children. Our doctors are the backbone of the hospital, and their ongoing commitment and dedication to La Rabida allows our patients to reach their full potential.

We are celebrating Doctor's Day later this month with a celebration including refreshments and giveaways as a thank you for their hard work and devotion to the hospital.

Thank you to the doctors who work day in and day out to improve the lives of our patients and their families!

Leave a Lasting Legacy

Creating an enduring legacy of hope is easier than you think!



La Rabida is a place unlike any other. We understand the needs of families with children who are living with the most serious or complicated of conditions. With teams of the best healthcare providers in Chicago, we give continuous, comprehensive care, education and support, helping families face their unique obstacles head on.

A smart way to help is by leaving a legacy at La Rabida in your will. To learn more, contact us at 773-753-9606.

Join the La Rabida Community



Looking to get involved with La Rabida? Now is the time! Our Summer Volunteer Program is available for high school students (ages 16 and older), college students, and adults. Volunteers are required to commit to a minimum of four hours per week for 10 weeks between the months of June and August.

The deadline for applications is **April 14th**.



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6501 South Promontory Drive, Chicago, IL 60649