

## e-Currents

## Inside this Issue:

- Introducing La Rabida's New & Improved Nursing Structure
- Clowns May Not Be Therapists, but They Can Provide Therapy
- Celebrating Better Speech and Hearing Month with Mateo
- Keeping Our Community Safe One Car Seat at a Time
- La Rabida's Day of Remembrance


[Donate Now](#)


### Introducing La Rabida's New & Improved Nursing Structure

Our goal at La Rabida is to create a positive, stimulating environment for both our patients and staff. This year, La Rabida implemented changes to the structure of our nursing program that will result in a higher quality of patient care and allow our nurses to work together in a more efficient manner. The nursing staff at La Rabida was previously led by a single nurse manager, and under this new structure, will now be managed by two Nurse Leaders, Julie Catarello and Monica Torres.



As a united team of Nurse Leaders, Julie and Monica are able to provide support to both our patients and their staff of nurses. The addition of these two roles will allow the nursing leadership to be more readily available for those on the unit. "Our families need to see and hear from our leaders," shares Sylvia Williams, the Director of Education and In-Patient Nursing at La Rabida. "We've found that families are more open when they are familiar with those in leadership positions." By having our Nurse Leaders work twelve-hour shifts on a regular basis, Julie and Monica are more visible to families who may not have had access to leadership prior due to their visiting schedules.

This shift in structure will give our Nurse Leaders more time on the unit, working directly with families and staff. "I love having the time to get to know our patients," says Monica. "It is then easier to spot small differences in them when something is wrong. It is so rewarding to be able to advocate for these kids and make huge differences in their little lives!"

This nursing structure is unique to La Rabida and will help streamline the department. "I think it's an exciting time for La Rabida nursing to try something new and I feel honored to be a part of it," says Julie. "I am excited to share the role with Monica, and I am confident we will make a great team and will strive to continue to make La Rabida nursing an excellent choice and La Rabida an excellent place for our patients and families."

### Clowns May Not Be Therapists, but They Can Provide Therapy

Healthy Humor is a healthcare clowning organization that is dedicated to bringing joy and comfort to children in a hospital setting. Healthy Humor's team of Red Nose Docs make their way throughout La Rabida during their weekly rounds, empowering patients, establishing connections with families, and creating playful distractions in moments of difficulty.



"Healthy Humor's goal is to help ease the stress of serious illness by reintroducing laughter, play and fun as natural parts of life," shares Karen Hoyer, also known as Dr. Dot, Chief Bonehead for Healthy Humor at La Rabida. "Using an array of circus and theatre skills, we create spontaneous, joyful encounters tailored to the needs of each hospitalized child."

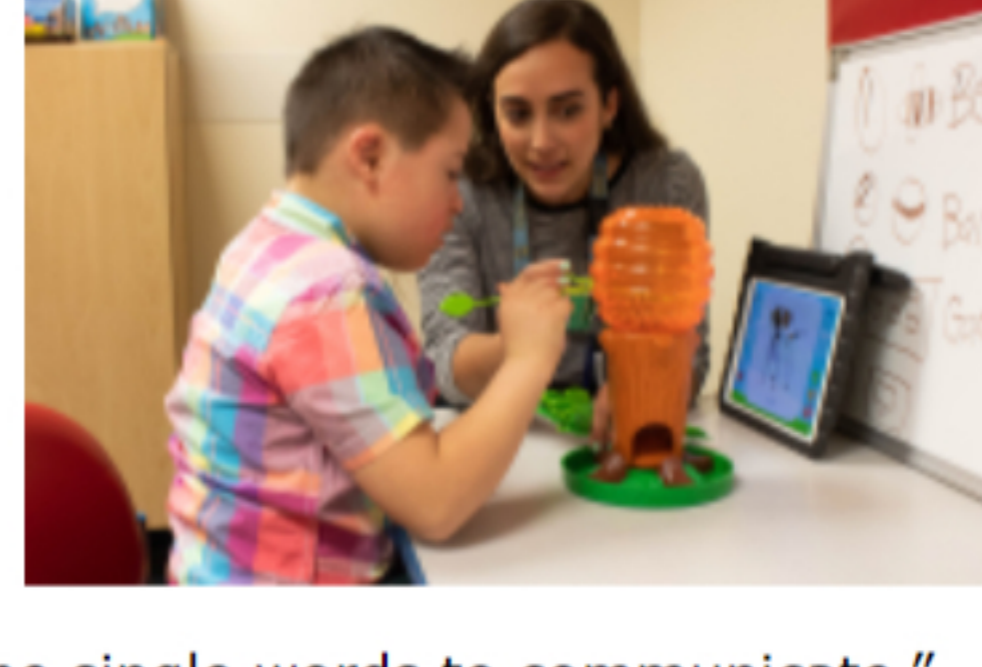
It's important that kids can feel like kids, especially within the walls of the hospital. By working closely with our Child Life department, Healthy Humor's Red Nose Docs can cater their performance to each patient to give them the best experience possible.

"Our goal is always to be in the moment with the child. Everyone else they encounter is concerned with the before or the after. Parents, doctors, nurses, therapists, their job is to consider what just happened – what accident or ailment brought them to the hospital – and also what is about to happen – what is the diagnosis, the procedure, the therapy or operation that awaits the child," says Karen. "Our training focuses on reading the room, observing what is needed in the situation, and asking permission for each encounter, empowering the child to choose to join in the play."

By bringing smiles to our patients' faces, Healthy Humor's Red Nose Docs can lift the mood of the entire hospital and bring some added positivity to a child's healthcare experience.

### Celebrating Better Speech and Hearing Month with Mateo

Mateo, born with Down syndrome, has been a patient at La Rabida since he was just three months old, receiving regular speech, occupational, and physical therapies. Now eight, Mateo has developed a strong sense of independence by learning to communicate and converse with others thanks to his treatment at La Rabida.



"When I first started working with Mateo, he had some verbal speech, but he more so relied on gestures and some single words to communicate," says Jennifer Tripoli, a Speech Language Pathologist at La Rabida. "Now Mateo is very motivated to communicate with people in his environment through use of longer phrases. Because of his improved verbal communication skills, Mateo has developed more socially as well! He loves saying 'hello' to people he sees in the hallways and is initiating interactions with others."

The routine speech therapy sessions at La Rabida have helped Mateo develop a strong set of communication skills that are consistently evolving. "Mateo has made great progress with his speech, his pronunciation has improved and we keep working to make it better each day," shares Mateo's mom, Nancy. "Undoubtedly, Mateo's achievements are attributed to La Rabida."

As we're celebrating Better Speech and Hearing Month this May, we are praising the progress of children like Mateo who have worked to improve their communication skills. "Better Hearing & Speech Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and the role Speech Language Pathologists play in life altering treatment for children and their families," shares Allison Lee, La Rabida's Section Chief of Speech Pathology. "We want parents and other medical professionals to understand the importance of early detection and advocating for their children when they have concerns about their child's communication and interaction. At La Rabida our therapists work closely with families to help their children find their words whether it's through talking, using picture communication, sign language or other assistive technology or a combination of all of the above."

With the help of the dedicated staff at La Rabida, children like Mateo are able to develop and enhance their communication skills. Join us in thanking our team of Speech Language Pathologists for helping our patients learn and grow in so many ways.

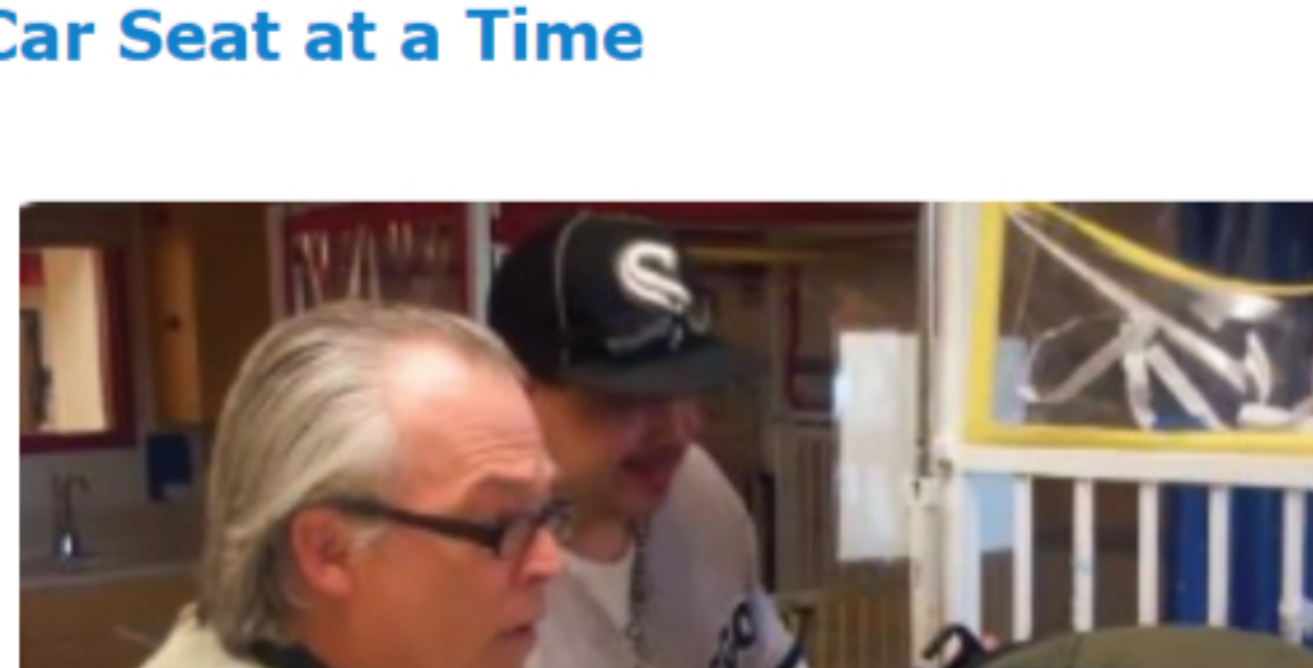
### Support La Rabida through Amazon Smile

Looking for an easy way to support La Rabida? Amazon Smile allows shoppers to support a charitable organization of their choice while shopping through Amazon at no additional cost to the shopper. By making a purchase through Amazon Smile and selecting to support La Rabida, Amazon will donate a portion of your total order amount to our hospital. To start shopping, visit [Amazon Smile here](#).

### Keeping Our Community Safe One Car Seat at a Time

At La Rabida, we work day in and day out to provide care that will keep our patients healthy and safe. Doing so includes making transportation as secure as possible.

Through our two-part child passenger safety program, we can ensure that all of our patients and their families have the appropriate car seats for their individual needs. Both sectors of the program, Child Safety Seat (CSS) and Special Needs CSS, provide tools that ensure the safety of our families during transit.



With support from Safe Kids, IL, the Child Safety Seat (CSS) program at La Rabida receives a supply of car seats, and infant seats that are available to our patients. Our team of case managers, physicians, therapists and nurses work with families to determine their needs in a car seat. When a patient in need is identified, our staff will work directly with the family to install the seat properly in the automobile and also teach parents how to position their child in the seat.

La Rabida's Special Needs CSS program provides additional car seats and safety restraints to families with children that may not be able to use conventional car seats. This program is catered towards children that may be too small for traditional car seats, require large medical seats for children with cerebral palsy and other neuromuscular diseases, or have large casts that cannot fit into traditional seats. The specialized seats ensure that patients, no matter their condition, can travel safely.

We are proud to share that these services are offered at no cost to our families. It is our mission to keep our patients safe, and providing specialized car seats is one way we do so.

### La Rabida's Day of Remembrance

On Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, La Rabida celebrated the lives of former patients during the annual Day of Remembrance ceremony. The service allowed families, friends, and staff members to pay tribute to those we've lost. Those in attendance celebrated and honored their loved ones by sharing stories and thoughtful memories.



The ceremony was made extra special thanks to Albums of Hope, an organization that gifts pocket-sized albums filled with uplifting and encouraging messages to those facing trying times. The albums were on display and shared with families throughout the service.

### Leave a Lasting Legacy

Leaving a gift to La Rabida Children's Hospital in your will or by beneficiary designation is a great way to invest in the future and make a lasting difference for our patients and families of tomorrow.

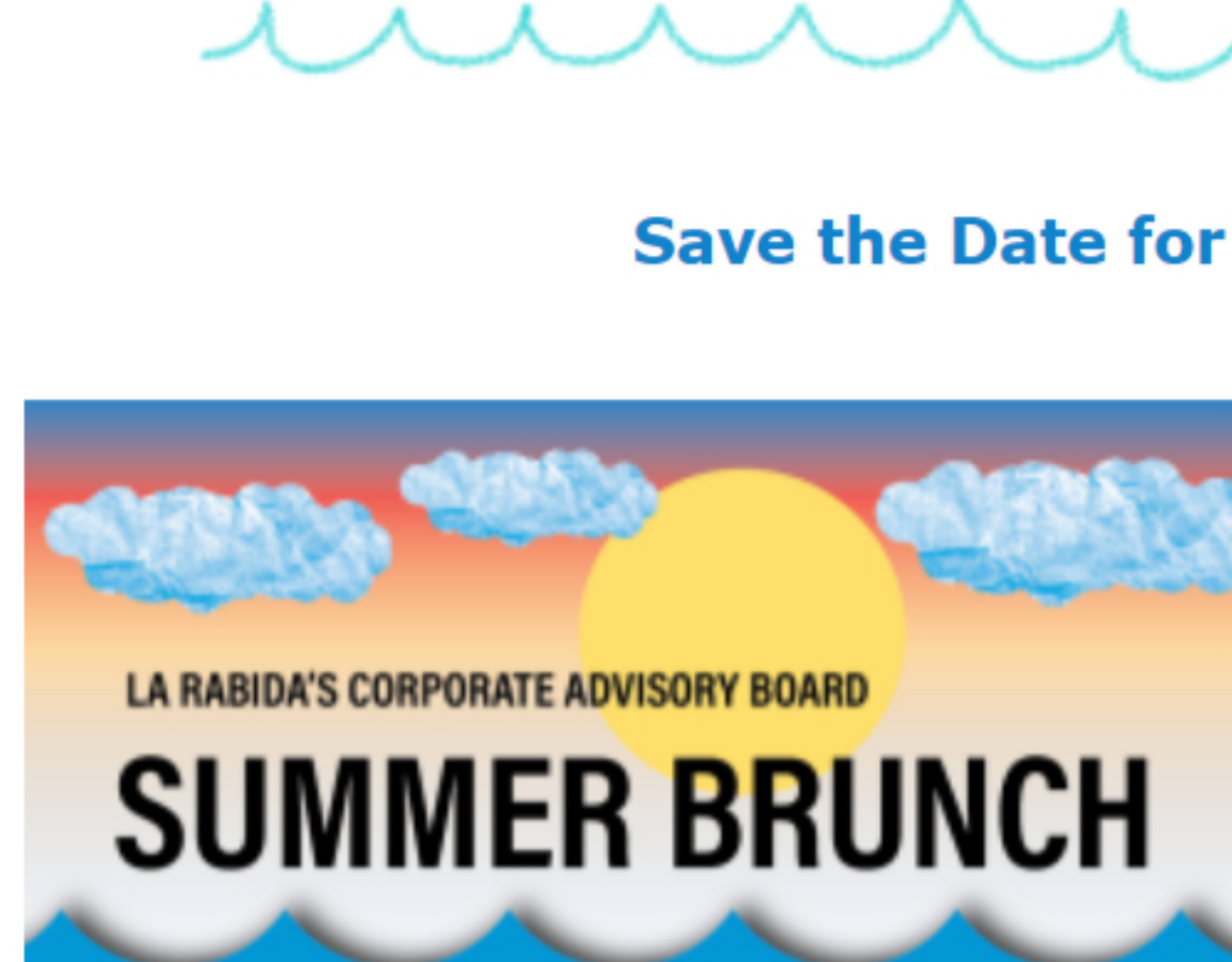


How you benefit:

- You decide how much to give—no gift is too small.
- Your gift costs you nothing now.
- You retain control of your assets during your lifetime and, if your circumstances change, you can modify the gift.
- You may choose to keep your gift anonymous.
- You can leave a gift in honor or memory of someone who inspired your commitment to healthcare.
- You will be remembered as someone who made the lives of patients and their families better today and for future generations.

Contact the development office at 773-753-9606 to learn more.

### Save the Date for our Summer Brunch



Mark your calendars! Join La Rabida's Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) on Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10:30am – 1:30pm for a summer brunch and cocktails at The Adler's in Evanston, IL. The event will allow attendees to learn more about La Rabida and our mission while networking with fellow young professionals.

To RSVP to the event, visit [larabida.org/summer-brunch](#) or contact Lona Slaughter at 773.256.5355 or [lslaughter@larabida.org](mailto:lslaughter@larabida.org).