



## Meet Melanie



Melanie getting her face painted at La Rabida's Annual Back-to-School Dance. "I met Mickey Mouse and played Uno with some new friends," shares Melanie.

Melanie was born at 29 weeks with multiple complications including omphalocele, a condition that resulted in her intestines residing on the outside of her body. Melanie's intestines were placed inside her body, however they are still not located where they should be. This has an impact on her lungs specifically.

"She was in the NICU for 148 consecutive days fighting for her life. It was a really rough time to see her hooked up to so many different machines and although the staff tells you everything that is going on, sometimes I would just go blank and numb," shares Yvonne, Melanie's mom.

Diagnosed with a condition called bronchopulmonary dysplasia, a chronic lung disease, Melanie relies on a feeding tube and oxygen. Melanie also has arm hypoplasia, or the absence of half of her right arm.

After a long road, Melanie and her family arrived at La Rabida when she was six years old to receive primary care from Dr. Qamar and pulmonary services from Dr. Giles.

"Dr. Qamar and his team have been simply amazing. They are resourceful and always available and willing to listen to any questions and concerns that we may have," shares Yvonne.

"Dr. Giles has been very supportive of Melanie's extracurricular activities. She always encourages Melanie to be a 'typical' kid and do the fun things that she wants to do without letting oxygen stop or hinder her," shares Yvonne.

"I have learned to celebrate the small victories," says Yvonne. "Most of us can take some Theraflu when we feel sick and will be okay in a few days. When Melanie gets sick, it often requires lengthy hospital stays and missing school, which causes regression."

Like a typical fourth grader, Melanie loves to have fun. "She always has a smile on her face," says Yvonne. "She doesn't let her oxygen stop her from doing activities that she likes. She takes her cannula off when she wants to run around, play and just be free."



Melanie strutting down the catwalk during the 2019 Dress Event.

## Merry Christmas from La Rabida!



As Santa made his way to each room, our patients grew eager and excited. When he finally delivered the special gifts, smiles spread across the faces of our families.

Every Christmas morning, our patients and families are treated to a visit from Santa and his elves. This year was no different. Continuing the 49-year tradition, firefighters from Chicago's Fire Engine Co. 63 escorted Santa and his team of helpers to the Gem on the Lake to celebrate the holiday.

Arriving on the back of the firetruck, Santa was ready to spread some holiday cheer to the kids of La Rabida. Santa,

his team of elves, and the Chicago Fire Department made their way to our inpatient unit, where they went from room to room to deliver gifts to each of our patients and families. The gifts were generously donated through a number of toy drives hosted by donors throughout the holiday season.

Our families were also treated to a holiday brunch made up of a delicious spread of festive dishes. Joined by

trustees, staff, special guests and Santa Claus himself, patients and families enjoyed a merry and joyous morning. This annual Christmas Day celebration gives our families the opportunity to create memories and enjoy the holidays. Our staff strives to make the holidays a special time for patients who cannot be at home to celebrate.

Thank you to Santa, the CFD, and the many friends and supporters of La Rabida for spreading some holiday cheer aboard the S.S. La Rabida!



Santa spent Christmas Day aboard the S.S. La Rabida with some of our littlest patients.

## Welcoming Governor J.B. Pritzker to La Rabida



Governor J.B. Pritzker recently visited La Rabida to celebrate the holidays with our patients and their families. During his visit, the Governor transformed into Santa's helper and accompanied our staff in distributing toys to kids in our annual Elf Room. Handing out toys, books, and games, the Governor brought smiles to the faces of our patients.

Once his elf duties were completed, Governor Pritzker toured the hospital to learn more about La Rabida and our mission to provide quality healthcare to children with complex medical conditions. Governor Pritzker stopped by the rehab gym to say hello to patients during physical and occupational therapy appointments before heading to the therapy kitchen where he met with a group of kids during Snack Attack, a group therapy session that encourages positive feeding experiences.

Governor Pritzker then made his way up to the S.S. La Rabida inpatient unit, where he was able to spend some quality time with patients and their families while learning more about the care we provide.

Thank you, Governor Pritzker, for joining us this holiday season!



## Honoring the Friends and Supporters of La Rabida



Lisa Rolfe Burik with La Rabida's President and CEO, Brenda Wolf, and girls who attended this year's Dress Event.

On Thursday, November 21, the 2019 Friends of La Rabida Awards Celebration was held at the Ritz-Carlton, Chicago. With nearly 500 guests in attendance, La Rabida's annual gala honored and celebrated the individuals who have made a lasting impact on the hospital.

This year's theme was centered on the friends who help make La Rabida's mission a reality. It is because of the commitment of La Rabida's friends that over 9,000 children receive the care they need.

The evening honored two very dedicated friends who have proven their commitment to La Rabida: Randy Markowitz and Lisa Rolfe Burik.

Randy Markowitz, Partner, FGMK, was recognized for his Lifetime of Service. Randy is a long-time La Rabida Trustee who, in addition



Randy Markowitz accepting the Lifetime of Service Award.

to his valuable work on the Board, spearheads his company's annual toy drive for the children of La Rabida.

Lisa Rolfe Burik, Owner of Frankie's on the Park, was recognized for her Community Support. For the past 13 years, Lisa has organized the popular Dress Event where Frankie's on the Park donates dresses, brightening the holidays of young girls at La Rabida. Lisa was joined on stage by some of the girls who attended this year's Dress Event while accepting her award.

Thanks to the generosity of the attendees and supporters, the event raised over \$780,000 to support the children and families of La Rabida.

A big thank you to our Host Sponsors for making this year's gala possible: Berglund Construction; The Burik Family and Frankie's on the Park; Chicago Equity Partners; The Joseph & Bessie Feinberg Foundation; Allen and Genie Kutchins, Kutchins, Robbins & Diamond, Ltd., and The Rebecca Kutchins Fund; Magellan Corporation; Randy and Hadrian Markowitz and Family, and FGMK/Netrix; and Dan and Susan Real.

## Celebrating Valentine's Day with SHE 100.3 and CD One Price Cleaners

Love is in the air! Our friends at SHE 100.3 want to make Valentine's Day extra special for the kids at La Rabida. SHE 100.3 is partnering once again with CD One Price Cleaners to collect handmade Valentine's Day cards that will be delivered to our patients.

Now through February 7th, CD One Price Cleaners will be accepting handmade cards for La Rabida Children's Hospital. Stop by any of the CD One Price Cleaners locations in the Chicagoland area and drop them in the Valentine's Day bin at the Guest Services counter. You can also mail SHE 100.3 your handmade Valentine's by sending them to:

**SHE Cards for Kids**  
WSHE  
130 East Randolph, Suite #2700  
Chicago, IL 60610





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## Plan Today for a Brighter Tomorrow

There are so many ways to make a difference to children in need. One way is to become a member of the La Rabida Legacy Society, which impacts the lives of future generations.

By leaving La Rabida in your will, you will join a dedicated group committed to the health and wellbeing of thousands of children. This thoughtful gift won't affect your lifestyle, but it will support our mission for years to come. Doing this is easier than you might think, and we are happy to answer any questions you have about this process. Being a member of the Legacy Society means you are inspiring hope for those who need it most.

If you're interested in learning more, please contact the development office at 773.753.9606.

## Become a Volunteer Today

With 2020 in full swing, it's time to start acting on those New Year's resolutions. If yours include giving back to the community or finding ways to help others, consider becoming a La Rabida volunteer. We offer a number of volunteer opportunities in a variety of departments.

If you're interested in working alongside our clinical teams and are looking to provide assistance to our patients and families during outpatient visits, you could become an Acute Care Clinic volunteer. If you're looking to have some fun with our patients by working on arts and crafts, playing games, or reading, becoming a Child Life or Literacy volunteer may be for you. Or, if you're looking to devote some extra time to La Rabida and want to help care for and nurture our littlest patients, you could become an Extra TLC volunteer.

To learn more about these volunteer opportunities among many others, visit [www.larabida.org/volunteer](http://www.larabida.org/volunteer).



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