



## Meet Lairion



*Lairion dressed in his best Christmas pajamas this holiday season.*

After an eight week stay aboard the S.S. La Rabida inpatient unit, 5-month-old Lairion was finally discharged and went home to be with his family for the very first time. Lairion was born premature and required a trach to assist with breathing and a g-tube to ensure he was getting all the necessary nutrients. To adjust to life with these medical technologies, Lairion was transferred to La Rabida.

"I learned a lot from the team at La Rabida," shared Karen, Lairion's mom. "For example, I walked in on them working with Lairion on tummy time and exercises on the floor. I jumped in and they were showing

me how to help him without over exhausting him. They helped both of us a lot."

As Lairion was preparing for discharge, our rehab team wanted to make sure he had access to the tools he needed once he arrived home. Through the Pass It Forward program, Lairion's care team provided him with an infant floor mat that will allow him to continue the progress made while at La Rabida. "Tools like the floor mat create a safe, warm, and inviting space for play, movement, and exploration," explained Zakiya Gilliam, Infant Development Specialist. "Tummy time was one of Lairion's big goals

while he was an inpatient. We wanted to set the family up for success so they could continue working on this at home."

The transitional care provided by La Rabida helps ensure families have everything they need when they get home, especially when it's for the very first time like Lairion. Our team works one on one with caregivers to ensure they know how to confidently care for their child while always providing support along the way. "I am so blessed. Lairion's care team was really able to help him get stronger," said Karen. "They were there for us every step of the way and were so great during his transition home."



*While at La Rabida, Lairion worked closely with our Child Life and Rehab teams.*



## La Rabida's Holiday Happenings



### CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATIONS

Merry Christmas from the Gem on the Lake! While St. Nick couldn't make his annual trip to the hospital due to COVID-19, we still found a way for our kids to celebrate with Santa. With the help of La Rabida's elves, Santa virtually visited our patients via Zoom. Each child was surprised with an array of gifts to open on Christmas. Families also enjoyed holiday meals prepared by La Rabida's Food Services team that were delivered to each patient room.

Thank you to Santa, our team of elves, and the many supporters of La Rabida for helping make this Christmas one to remember for patients aboard the S.S. La Rabida!

### THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

With the help of the friends of La Rabida, we are able to spread cheer to our patients and their families over the holidays. Friends like Kutchins, Robbins, and Diamond; ComEd; and Share the Magic hosted toy drives with our patients in mind. This year was challenging for many and because of the generous donations from supporters far and wide, we were able to make sure that our kids had gifts to open on Christmas Day.

Thank you to KRD, ComEd, Share the Magic, and all of our thoughtful friends for donating toys for our patients to enjoy this holiday season.



### DRIVE-THRU ELF ROOM

In the two weeks leading up to Christmas, La Rabida transforms a portion of the hospital into the annual Elf Room where staff become Santa's elves and hand out holiday gifts to kids. As patients visit our outpatient clinic for their appointments, they are invited to visit the Elf Room to receive a gift bag full of toys, books, and games curated especially for them.

This year also included a socially distant drive thru option for patients who normally would visit our clinic in person but have moved to telehealth appointments. More than 100 La Rabida staff members have volunteered hundreds of hours to sort, package, and distribute over 5,000 toys to patients and their siblings.

### DRESSED TO THE NINES

Every year, our friends at Frankie's on the Park host a Dress Event that gives our patients an opportunity to pick out an outfit and accessories to wear during their holiday celebrations. While we couldn't celebrate with the annual fashion show this year, Frankie's on the Park still wanted to make sure our girls felt special.

Lisa Rolfe Burik, owner of the luxury tween boutique, and the team at Frankie's donated a number of clothing items to La Rabida families. Patients picked out an outfit of their own as they came to the hospital for their appointments. Thank you, Frankie's on the Park, for helping make sure our patients feel extra special for the holidays!

## The COVID-19 Vaccine has Arrived



Angela Boomsma beaming with excitement as she receives the first COVID-19 vaccine on her birthday.

On December 17th, La Rabida received the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Within a few short hours, we began putting them into the arms of our caregivers and frontline staff across the hospital.

This historic day was made extra special for one of our nurse practitioners, Angela Boomsma, who happened to be celebrating a birthday on the day the vaccines arrived. This year, she celebrated her big day by being the first member of the La Rabida team to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

"I squealed and jumped for joy when they said I would be the first one. I could not think of a better way to celebrate my birthday. This is the greatest gift that I could ever receive today. I'm thrilled and my heart is full. I have a sense of relief," shared Angela. "It has been a really tough year and I'm just so excited."

Staff sang 'Happy Birthday' to Angela while her vaccine was being administered.

## Cook County Presents La Rabida with COVID-19 Proclamation

The Cook County Board recently recognized La Rabida by honoring our team and their dedication to providing safe, high-quality care to our patients and families during the fight against COVID-19. Bill Lowry, Cook County Commissioner of the 3rd District, presented a Proclamation to our President & CEO Brenda Wolf in December that celebrates our team's commitment to serving the community amidst these challenging times.

In May, Commissioner Lowry along with President Toni Preckwinkle, Commissioner Dennis Deer, and Alderman Leslie Hairston hand delivered meals from Peach's Restaurant to our frontline workers.

Thank you to the Cook County Board for supporting our mission to help children reach their fullest potential.



Commissioner Lowry presenting La Rabida President and CEO, Brenda Wolf, with COVID-19 Proclamation.

## Mayor Lori Lightfoot Visits La Rabida

Mayor Lori Lightfoot stopped by the Gem on the Lake this holiday season to thank our frontline workers for their commitment to serving families in the community. Accompanied by First Lady Amy Eshleman, Mayor Lightfoot hand-delivered gifts to La Rabida that were given to patients on Christmas Day.

Mayor Lightfoot also continued a longstanding tradition of reading to our patients *The Night Before Christmas*. This holiday event has been carried out by numerous Chicago mayors over the years. To maintain our COVID-19 safety measures, Mayor Lightfoot recorded their story time and the video played throughout the hospital for patients to enjoy.

Thank you to Mayor Lori Lightfoot and First Lady Eshleman for thinking of La Rabida this holiday season!



Mayor Lori Lightfoot and First Lady Amy Eshleman on the steps of La Rabida with our dedicated frontline workers.





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## Welcoming La Rabida's Newest Board Members

### Kristin Miller

La Rabida welcomes Kristin Miller, CEO of GEA Farm Technologies, to the Board of Trustees. GEA is a technology supplier within the food, beverage, and pharmaceutical sectors, focusing on sustainable solutions for production. We are delighted to have Ms. Miller join our Board of Trustees.



## Leave a Lasting Legacy

La Rabida is a place unlike any other. We understand the needs of families with children battling the most serious and complicated conditions. With teams of the best healthcare providers in Chicago, we provide comprehensive care, education, and support to help children and families face their unique obstacles head-on.

An estate gift helps ensure we can continue to serve children as we have done for over 100 years. To learn more about leaving a gift to La Rabida in your will, please contact Anne Wilson, Individual Giving Manager at [awilson@larabida.org](mailto:awilson@larabida.org) or (773) 256-5817.



### Valerie King

Valerie King, Senior Vice President of Investor Relations at Ariel Investments, also joins La Rabida's Board of Trustees. With a motto of "slow and steady wins the race," Ariel Investments is focused on long-term investments and serves both individual and institutional investors. We are thrilled to welcome Ms. King as a Trustee.



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