



e-Currents

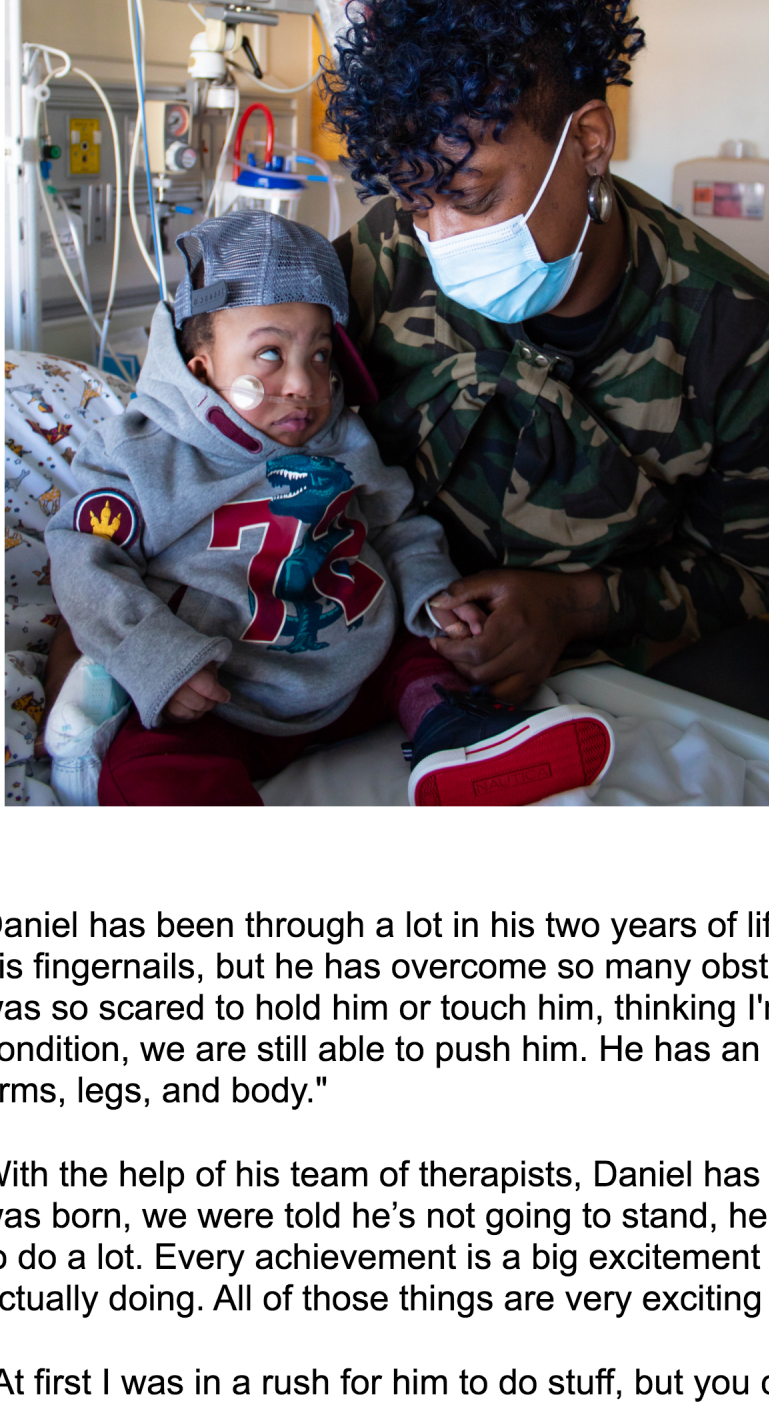
March 2021

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Meet Daniel



When Daniel was just four days old, doctors discovered that he was born with a single ventricle, a congenital heart defect that occurs when one of the two ventricles in a child's heart is too small and is unable to pump blood effectively. As a result of the single ventricle, Daniel was also diagnosed with hydrocephalus, pulmonary hypertension, and chronic lung disease.

"After Daniel was born, we learned that he was going to need a series of heart surgeries in order to survive," shared Evelyn, Daniel's mom. To treat the single ventricle, three surgeries are required. The goal of these operations is to enable the single, operating ventricle to do the job of two ventricles.

As a result of these surgeries, Daniel required a variety of therapies to help him grow stronger and reach certain developmental milestones. Daniel's team of doctors at a partner hospital work on the technical aspects of his condition, including surgery, while La Rabida takes the lead in his rehabilitative and developmental therapy. "He's learning how to do so much through therapy. He's learning how to use his hands, how to bring them to his face, how to sit up. He has become so strong with his legs. La Rabida is actually making him stronger," explained Evelyn.

Daniel has been through a lot in his two years of life. "He has been holding on quite a few times by his fingernails, but he has overcome so many obstacles," said Evelyn. "At first, I was the parent that was so scared to hold him or touch him, thinking I'm going to break him. Even though he has a heart condition, we are still able to push him. He has an internal disability, but he can learn how to use his arms, legs, and body."

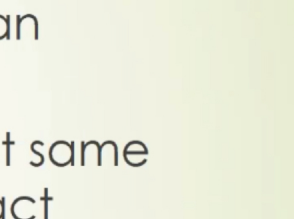
With the help of his team of therapists, Daniel has already accomplished the impossible. "When he was born, we were told he's not going to stand, he's not going to sit up, and he's not going to be able to do a lot. Every achievement is a big excitement because what some said he could not do, he's actually doing. All of those things are very exciting to me and I am so proud."

"At first I was in a rush for him to do stuff, but you cannot rush greatness and you cannot rush progress either. It takes time. I learned that if time is what he needs, then I have all the time in the world. I can only be as strong as he's been," shared Evelyn. "He's surpassed the impossible already and I am going to be there fighting for him. He has become so strong and his family here at La Rabida has been so incredible."

La Rabida's Equity Committee Addressing Stereotype Threats

What is stereotype threat?

- The fear that one will be seen in a way consistent with a negative stereo-type associated with an aspect of identity.
- Suggests that two people can be in the exact same place, at the exact same time, doing the exact same thing, but have two different experiences.
- It can have serious and significant negative effects on behavior, thinking and emotions.
- Seems to be unconscious.



La Rabida is committed to creating a more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming environment for our patients, families, and staff. We are working every day to promote inclusion and compassion throughout our halls. We are doing this by providing opportunities for education through La Rabida's Equity Committee. This month, Sylvia Williams, MSN, RN, Director of Education & Inpatient Nursing, and Gene Liebler, LCSW, Executive Director of Behavioral Health, hosted a Grand Rounds session that focused on racial equity in a healthcare setting.

Grand Rounds are a series of educational lectures led by experts from across the hospital with the goal of improving patient care, treatment practices, and further medical education. This session on racial equity focused on the implication of stereotype threats in healthcare and how our teams, both clinical and non-clinical, can work to provide a safe and open environment for all of our patients and families. "Stereotype threat is about how people experience their environment. When someone walks into an environment, what is that experience like for them and what are the things that are invisibly present the whole time that have a negative impact on that experience?" explained Gene.

La Rabida's Equity Committee is dedicated to providing equitable care throughout the hospital to help improve the experiences of our patients and families. "It was important for us as an institution to create that awareness. The role of the committee is to look at La Rabida as a whole to improve the experiences of our families and patients and to make sure that everyone is treated equally," shared Sylvia.

The committee is made up of staff from across the hospital and is representative of both clinical and non-clinical departments. "What the committee has done is allow us to look at where we have opportunities and challenges in terms of providing equitable care. Committee members can come to us and share 'this is what we've seen' and 'these are concerns that we have' to help us identify the things that would benefit the institution and caring for our families," explained Gene.

At La Rabida, we work every day to give our patients and families and happy and healthy future. In order to do that, equity must be at the center of everything that we do.

Patient's Experience at La Rabida Left Such an Impact, She Came Back to Work as a Nurse



After being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at nine years old, Bridget and her family were in search of a care team that could help support them as they navigated this new journey. That is when they landed at La Rabida Children's Hospital.

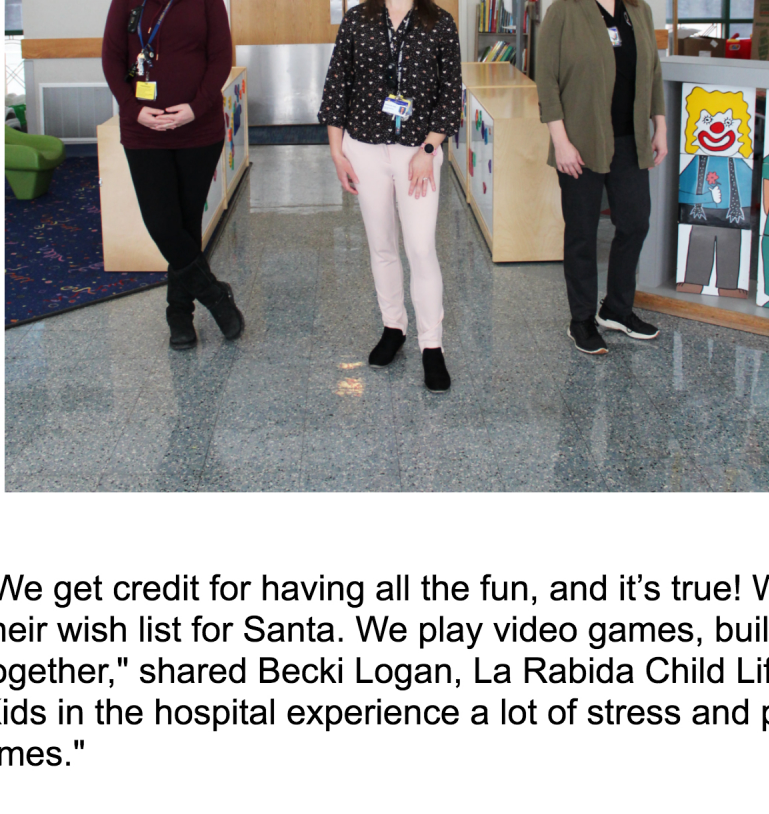
"When we switched to La Rabida, it was like a whole new ball game. For my first appointment, we were there for 3 or 4 hours because we met with so many different people and learned so much about diabetes. We quickly realized that there was a lot more out there for me. I was capable of having a much more normal life than we initially thought," explained Bridget. Under La Rabida's care, Bridget learned everything she needed to know about her condition and started using a pump and sensor to help manage her diabetes day to day.

Bridget stayed under the care of La Rabida until she was in college and developed a close bond with her care team, including Rose Briars, ND, PNP-BC, CDE. "It was always a warm welcome going to every appointment. She didn't just follow you to your appointment, she followed you in your whole life. She knew what was going on. She knew what activities you were involved in, would check in on not just the diabetes side of you, but you as a whole person," shared Bridget. "She reminded me that this is something that I have, and I have to deal with it, but it's not the only thing about me and I can still live a life that's just as full as everyone else's."

La Rabida left such a mark on Bridget that she wanted to come work aboard the S.S. La Rabida inpatient unit as an RN. "I always wanted to work with kids. Being a kid that was in the healthcare setting a lot growing up, you learn a lot. I always wanted to be someone that could relate to the kids and say 'I've been here. I've done this. You're able to move forward and keep going.'"

Bridget has been a member of the La Rabida family since she was just nine years old and now her story comes full circle. "Looking back, La Rabida provided me with every resource and all the education I could ever need to be able to be an independent adult and have a normal life that every kid wants to have. A big part of it was that they made sure I was able to handle the good days but also handle the bad days. By preparing me for those sure, they were just small bumps in the road compared to the huge hurdles they could have been had I not been prepared."

Child Life's Role in Patient Care



What does a child life specialist do?

- Play games and have fun with patients
- Help patients learn about their condition
- Support patients during procedures
- All of the above

Answer - all of the above. A child life specialist does all of the above and so much more. Our child life team plays an important role on a patient's care team. Their focus is to provide social-emotional support to children while in the hospital and they are trained to decrease a patient's anxiety, stress, and pain during procedures. They accomplish this through tools and strategies like play, comfort, pain management, and utilizing distraction tools.

"We get credit for having all the fun, and it's true! We celebrate the kids' birthday and when they write their wish list for Santa. We play, video games, build towers with blocks, and dress up like princesses together," shared Becki Logan, La Rabida Child Life Specialist. "However, it's not all fun and games. Kids in the hospital experience a lot of stress and pain. It's our job to help them through those difficult times."

Pain management is a priority for our child life specialists. Tools and techniques for managing pain include comfort holds, guided imagery, and using tools like the Buzzy, a device that uses cold, vibrating sensations to block pain receptors. A child life specialist can use these tools to decrease the trauma and anxiety a patient may experience during a procedure. This helps make the child and parent more comfortable and more willing to accept future treatment. For children with chronic conditions that require repeated painful procedures, this is crucial.

La Rabida's child life team also helps kids prepare and cope with the painful procedures they go through. One way they are able to do this is through medical play. To prepare for procedures, our child life specialists will have fun with patients by playing with toys that mimic the medical equipment that will be utilized during their stay. "Medical play can help a child cope with the difficult parts of treatment, such as medicine, needles or bandage changes" shares Viktoria De Jong, La Rabida Child Life Specialist. Medical play can help give the patient's care team a chance to answer questions and reduce the anxiety that may come with those procedures.

Most importantly, our team of child life specialists are here to help empower our patients and make their hospital stay as enjoyable as possible. Stressed out kids cannot heal, and the essential work from this team helps them do that.

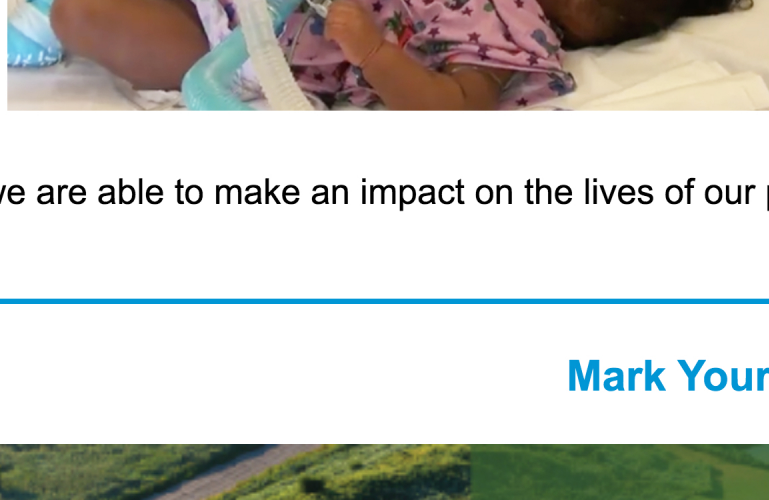
LA RA IN THE NEWS



Congratulations to our Environmental Services, Purchasing, and the entire support services team for being recognized by **Crain's Chicago Business** as one of their **2021 Notable Healthcare Heroes**. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic they have worked around the clock to keep our patients and staff safe. Thank you to our incredible team for protecting us and preventing the spread of COVID-19 at La Rabida!

Read the full list [here](#).

Honoring our Physicians This National Doctor's Day

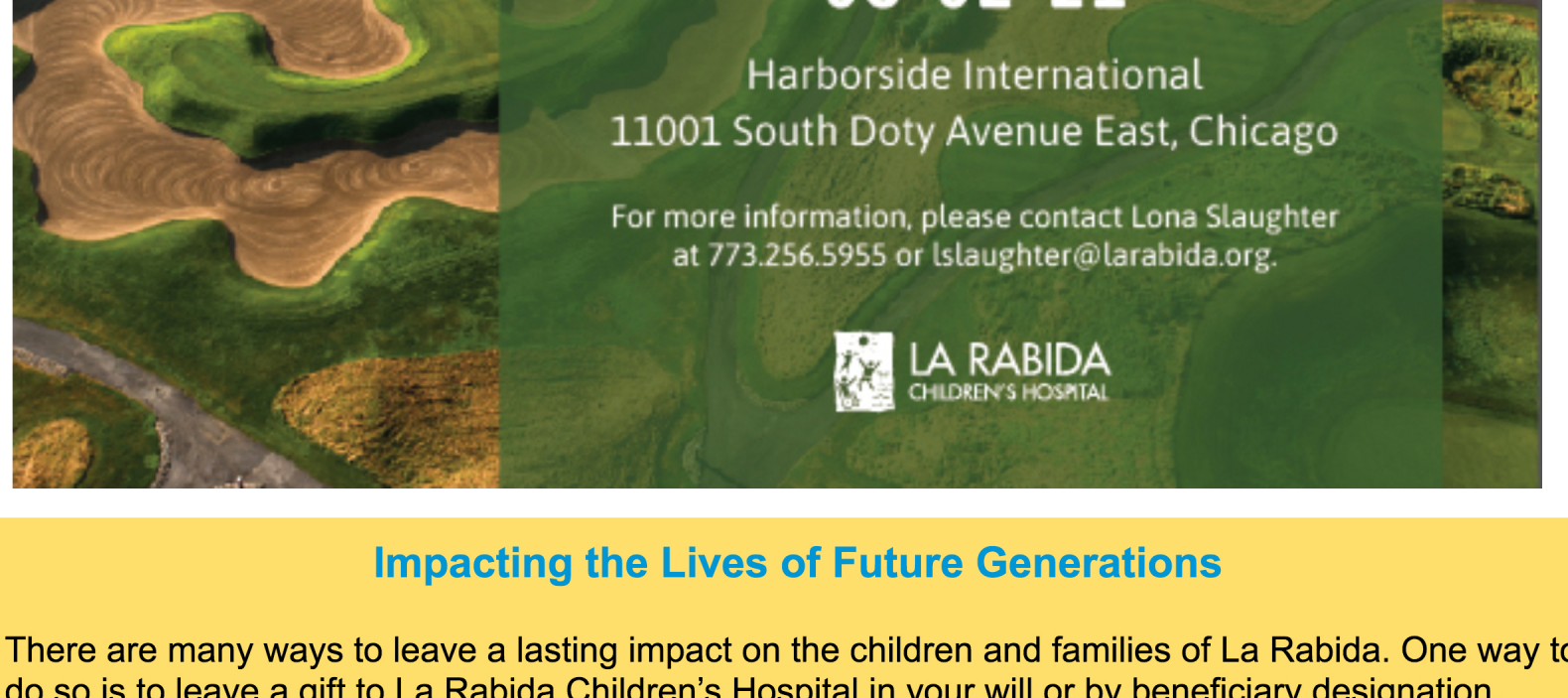


Join us in celebrating La Rabida's talented team of physicians this National Doctor's Day, March 30th, 2021.

This year we have seen the medical community step up in ways like never before. That includes our team of doctors here at La Rabida. Our physicians have done an incredible job ensuring that our patients continued to receive the care they depended on - even amidst a global pandemic.

On behalf of the children, their families, and staff at La Rabida, thank you for all that you do. It is because of their dedication and hard work that we are able to make an impact on the lives of our patients and families not just today, but every day.

Mark Your Calendars



Impacting the Lives of Future Generations

There are many ways to leave a lasting impact on the children and families of La Rabida. One way to do so is to leave a gift to La Rabida Children's Hospital in your will or by beneficiary designation. Doing so will positively impact the lives of future generations. This thoughtful gift won't affect your lifestyle, but it will support our mission for years to come. In doing so, you will be remembered as someone who made a lasting impact on our patients and their families.

If you're interested in learning more, please contact Anne Wilson at 773-256-5718 or awilson@larabida.org for more information.

