

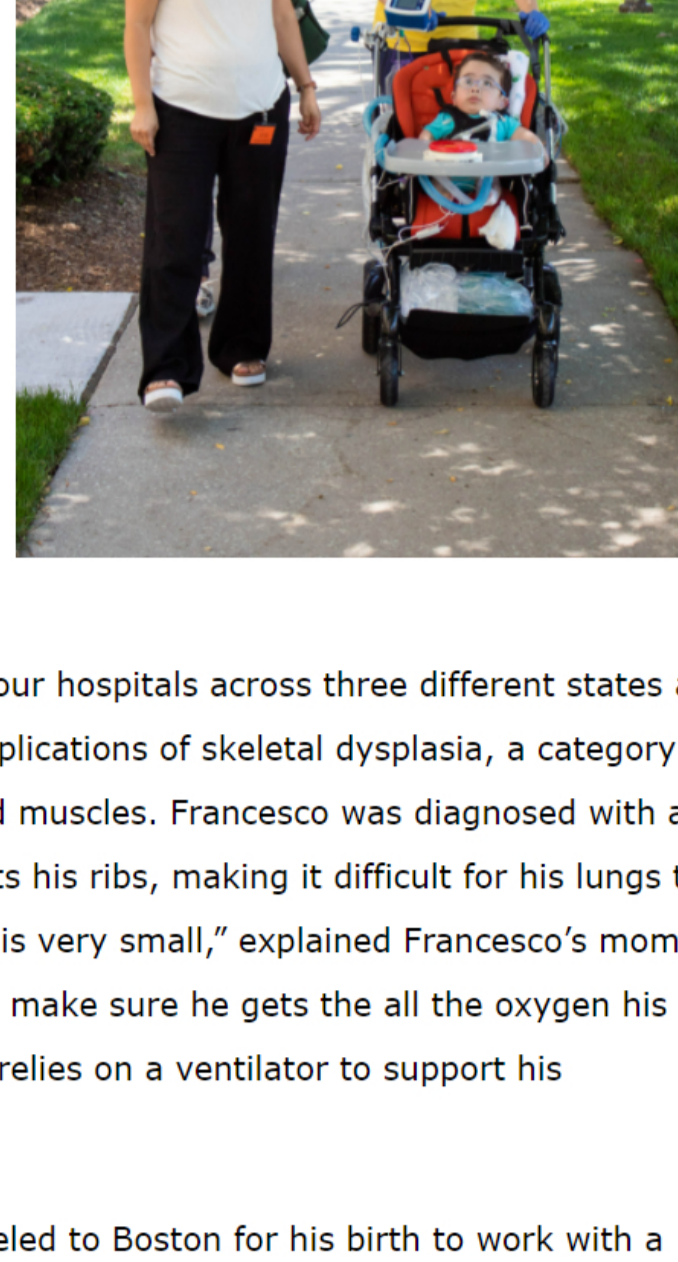
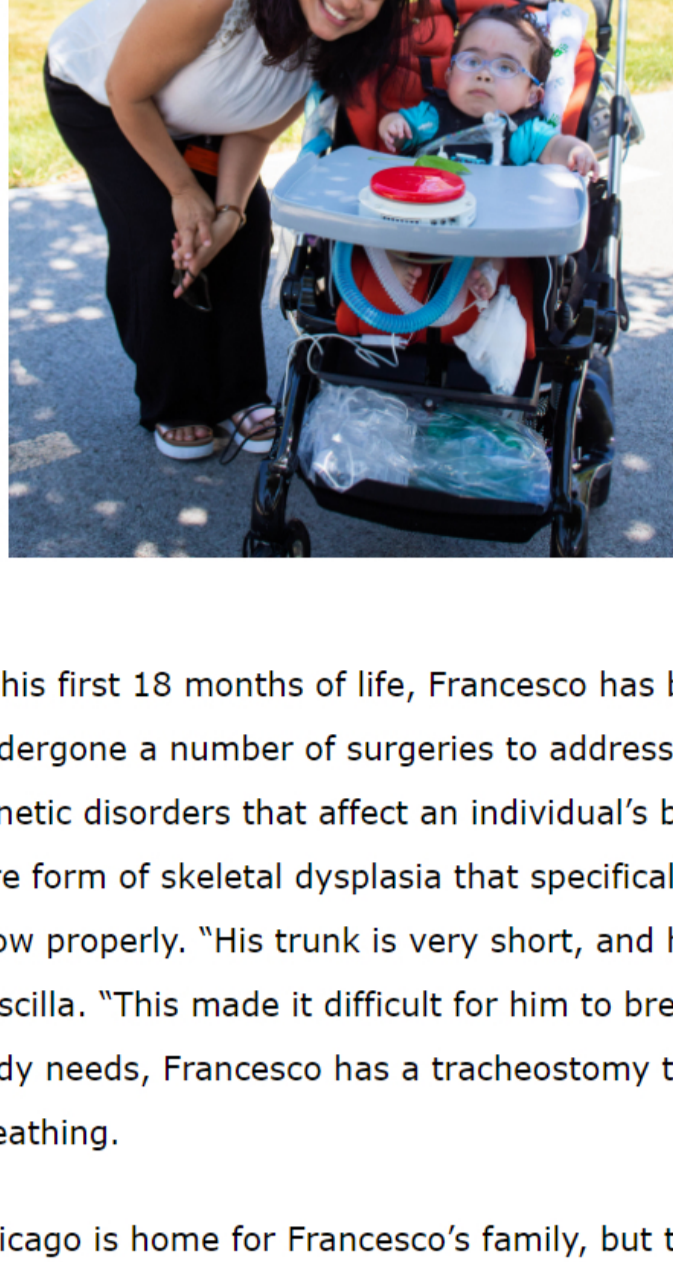


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### Meet Francesco



In his first 18 months of life, Francesco has been to four hospitals across three different states and undergone a number of surgeries to address the complications of skeletal dysplasia, a category of genetic disorders that affect an individual's bones and muscles. Francesco was diagnosed with a rare form of skeletal dysplasia that specifically impacts his ribs, making it difficult for his lungs to grow properly. "His trunk is very short, and his chest is very small," explained Francesco's mom, Priscilla. "This made it difficult for him to breathe." To make sure he gets the all the oxygen his body needs, Francesco has a tracheostomy tube and relies on a ventilator to support his breathing.

Chicago is home for Francesco's family, but they traveled to Boston for his birth to work with a team of specialists who were familiar with Francesco's condition. He was later transferred to a hospital in Philadelphia to undergo a series of surgeries. "For the first two surgeries, they needed to break his ribs and reattach them using a titanium rod. This helped to create more space for his lungs to grow," explained Priscilla. "This surgery works in two phases. They did the right side first, let him heal for three months, then did the left side." Now, Francesco will need to get that rod adjusted and expanded every six months as he gets bigger.

When it was time to look for rehabilitative care, Francesco and his family arrived at La Rabida. "I really liked that La Rabida cared for children with special conditions. The fact that they specialized in kids like Francesco made me feel so comfortable," said Priscilla.

While at La Rabida, Francesco has been receiving a variety of rehabilitative and developmental care, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and he works closely with our infant development and child life teams. "I have to say, I have seen a lot of progress here. He is moving around and grabbing things more. They really helped him learn how to sit and be upright," explained Priscilla.

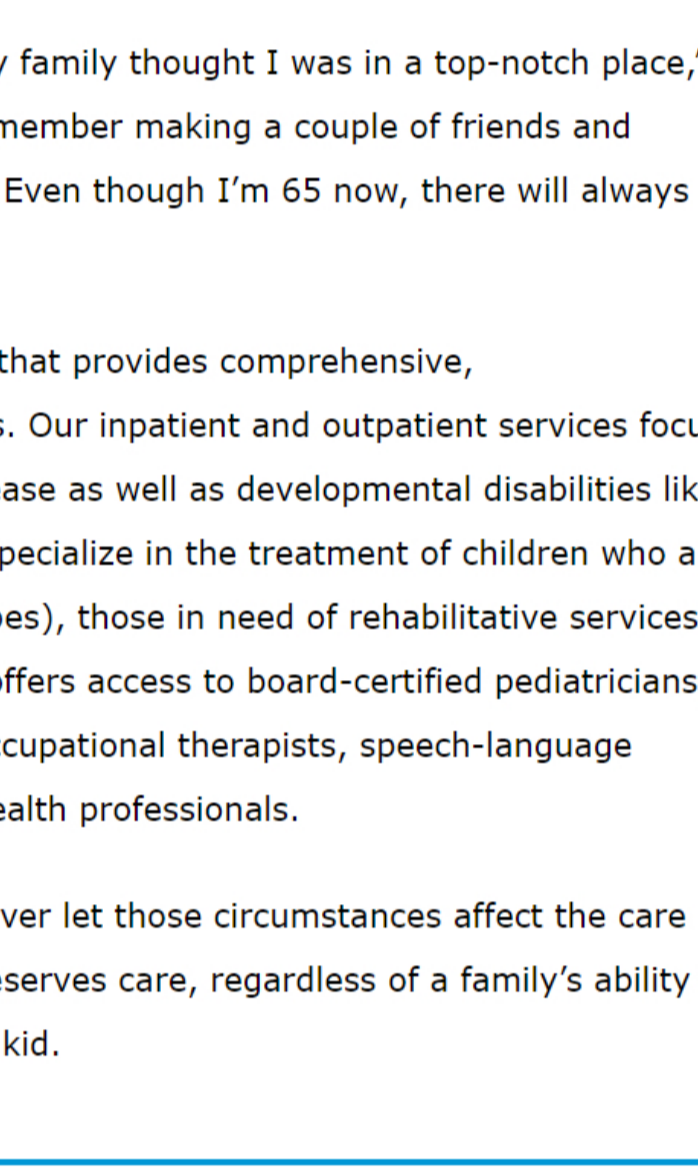
Learning how to do this allowed for the making of a very special moment – Francesco's very first stroll outside. With the help of Priscilla and his therapists, Francesco was able to go outside and enjoy the summer sunshine. "That was the first walk here and it was a big deal. I got so emotional. He was so calm and happy. He wouldn't be able to sit up like that without their help. He was so in awe of everything," shared Priscilla.

Francesco is working on getting stronger and stronger each day. "Our team is working with Francesco to come down on the amount of breathing support that he requires. It's a long but steady process. That's what so special about La Rabida – that we're here for the long-term care and are able to apply incremental changes that will make a big difference," explained La Rabida's Dr. Robert Sanchez.

"I just want to say thank you so much for the care and the love for Francesco," shared Priscilla. "It is hard for a mother to separate constantly, but I do feel peace of mind here. He feels pretty comfortable at La Rabida. I can tell the difference when we're at other hospitals. I can tell that he is happy here and more at home."

### La Rabida Turns 125!

La Rabida has a long history of serving the children and families of Chicago. This year, we are celebrating the Gem on the Lake's 125th birthday. Over the last 125 years, we have touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of children. In that time, we have expanded our services to meet the needs of the community and have grown in ways we never thought possible.



Our story begins in 1896 when the Spanish government constructed an exhibition hall during the Chicago World's Fair. The building was a replica of Spain's La Rabida Monastery. After the fair, the Spanish Consulate donated the building, located on Lake Michigan at Jackson Harbor, to the City of Chicago to use as a fresh air sanitarium for sick children – then called "La Rabida Jackson Park Sanitarium". A group of volunteer women led the effort to equip and staff the facility, raising money for operations and recruiting volunteer physicians. In our early years, we focused on treating children with conditions like typhoid, diphtheria, and scarlet fever.

As medicine improved and these diseases faded away, La Rabida physicians turned their attention to rheumatic fever which claimed the lives of many young children through the 1950s. La Rabida became the first and only sanitarium in the Midwest that could treat rheumatic fever in children. "I was a patient at La Rabida in 1965 when I had rheumatic fever at eight years old," shared Janet O'Melia, former La Rabida patient. "I was placed on bed rest. I remember being scared at first, but I ended up having a wonderful experience. I was treated well and taken very good care of. I didn't want to leave!" The hospital gained international recognition for research that led to the eradication of that disease. In the 1960s, when the threat of rheumatic fever ended, we made a formal commitment to treat the chronic illnesses of childhood.

"I remember the people – the staff was incredible. My family thought I was in a top-notch place," recalls Marian Steele, former La Rabida patient. "I remember making a couple of friends and having fun there. In my heart, I'm La Rabida alumni. Even though I'm 65 now, there will always be a soft spot in my heart for La Rabida."

Today, La Rabida is a not-for-profit specialty hospital that provides comprehensive, interdisciplinary services to children and their families. Our inpatient and outpatient services focus on chronic conditions like diabetes and sickle cell disease as well as developmental disabilities like cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. In addition, we specialize in the treatment of children who are dependent on technology (ventilators and feeding tubes), those in need of rehabilitative services, and those who have experienced trauma. La Rabida offers access to board-certified pediatricians, specialists, advanced practice nurses, physical and occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, dietitians, social workers, and mental health professionals.

Children don't choose their circumstances, and we never let those circumstances affect the care children receive. We firmly believe that every child deserves care, regardless of a family's ability to pay. The only thing a child should focus on is being a kid.

### La Rabida Children's Hospital Launches Trauma Informed Care Community Training Program



This month, we celebrated Health Equity Action Day on Friday, June 18th. We've joined hospitals and health systems across the state to redouble our commitment to reducing disparities and increasing access to care. One way we are doing this is by introducing the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) Community Training Program that will help health care providers, mental health organizations and community focused non-profits adopt TIC systems focused on child and family trauma. Trauma Informed Care acknowledges that organizations need to see the full picture of a patient's life history, and promote an environment of safety, empowerment and healing. The program will be offered at no charge to eligible organizations.

The TIC Community Training Program will help clinicians and community service providers learn to use a new lens of awareness when thinking about trauma and work to ensure all providers realize the widespread impact of trauma, recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and respond in a manner that prevents re-traumatization. The program also recognizes that trauma affects children and adults in very different ways and will adapt the seven elements of trauma-informed care - safety (physical and psychological), relationships and trust, empowerment, and structural inequity – to meet the audience served by each organization receiving training.

"Generations of systemic racism, economic disadvantages, segregation and implicit biases are some of the things that have contributed to worse health outcomes and shorter lifespans among Black, Latinx, and other people of color in Chicago," according to Theresa Valach, Clinical Director of the La Rabida Children's Hospital Child Trauma Center. "By creating a program that directly trains community support organizations to approach conversations from a place of acceptance, safety, and positivity, we can reduce the chances for re-traumatization and create a path for healing and growth across our community."

The TIC Community Training Program focuses on addressing the history of systemic bias and racism in Chicago, how that has - and continues to - impact communities of color, especially when seeking medical care. The training acknowledges that all behavior has meaning and explains how adverse childhood experiences can impact social and emotional development into adulthood and how to create a collaborative environment that builds trust and share strategies for long term healing.

If you are an organization interested in learning more about integrating Trauma Informed Care practices, please contact Theresa Valach at [Tvalach@larabida.org](mailto:Tvalach@larabida.org).

### Dare2Tri Makes Bike Riding Accessible for Patients with Special Needs



Summer is here and Dare2Tri is making it one to remember for our kids by bringing adaptive bikes to the Gem on the Lake! Dare2Tri is a local non-profit with a mission to enhance the lives of individuals living with the disabilities by making a Road2Ride Bike Day for La Rabida patients that allowed our kids to ride adaptive bicycles up and down the lakefront.

"The primary goal of On the Road2Ride is to provide youth and adults with the ability to cycle and remove the barrier of high-priced equipment and transportation," explained Ryan Quilty, Logistics & Program Manager at Dare2Tri. "We have had a consistent partnership with La Rabida through previous camps and events, and wanted to continue working with the kids at the hospital so they are able to experience the joy of riding an adaptive cycle."

While fun, riding these adaptive bikes also helps with a child's physical therapy treatment. "Peddling a bike is a great strength and endurance activity and can help kids with motor impairments learn about reciprocal motion in their body that can carry over to other activities, such as walking," explained Jenny Analuisa, Physical Therapist at La Rabida Children's Hospital. "It is a way to get moving and have fun at the same time. Riding a bike is such a normal activity for any child in the summer, and this helps to get children participating in an age-appropriate activity with peers." Dare2Tri's fleet of bikes includes handcycles, recumbent trikes, and upright bikes.



"Some families don't realize that adaptive trikes exist and just think that bike riding is an activity that isn't available to their child with special needs," explained Jenny. "When I called to check on interest in the bikes, one parent told me that her child was in a wheelchair and that she couldn't ride a bike. Many of our kids in wheelchairs do great on the trikes. This program really helps our patients experience riding an adaptive trike in a familiar environment with familiar people present."

Dare2Tri also works one-on-one with other organizations that have the ability donate adaptive trikes to our patients and families. Events like Road2Ride give kids an opportunity to try the bikes, and if they enjoy it, the Dare2Tri team helps their families get one for themselves.

Thank you, Dare2Tri, for bringing this experience to our patients!

### Invest in the Future of La Rabida

At La Rabida, we understand the needs of children who are living with a variety of complex medical conditions. With a team comprised of the best healthcare providers in Chicago, we provide ongoing, comprehensive care, education and support, and support to families as they face their challenging circumstances head on. One way to provide everlasting support to our hospital and its mission is to leave a gift in your will. Your contribution is an investment in the future of our families and will leave a lasting impact on La Rabida.

If you're interested in learning more, please contact Anne Wilson at [awilson@larabida.org](mailto:awilson@larabida.org).

### Join us for La Rabida's 32nd Annual Golf Classic



La Rabida's 32nd Annual Golf Classic is around the corner! Still looking for a way to get involved? Take advantage of our sponsor specials before they're gone and register today! We have brought back two of our popular sponsor levels for this year's event - the Helicopter Ball Drop and Cocktail Hour. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, visit [larabida.org/golf-classic](http://larabida.org/golf-classic). Can't wait to see you out on the links August 2nd!