

CURRENTS

The Chicago Sky Player of the Day: Byance

On Friday, September 17th the Chicago Sky hosted La Rabida Night to benefit the hospital and celebrate our mission. Staff were treated to complimentary tickets and a La Rabida patient, Byance, was named the **Sky's Player of the Day!**

14-year-old Byance was recently diagnosed with Sjögren's syndrome, an autoimmune disease that causes the body's immune system to attack itself. This condition can result in excessive dryness of the eyes or mouth, fatigue, chronic pain, and can harm several organs.

Byance signed a one-day contract to become a member of the 2021 playoff-bound WNBA team. The day began with a meet and greet with Sky players, followed by a **pre-game press conference** where Byance **signed her contract** and was presented with a **custom Sky jersey** by Coach James Wade.

While taking questions from reporters, she was asked what her go-to meal is before a game. Byance enthusiastically responded "chicken tenders!" Byance and her family were treated to a delicious lunch, where she ate ... chicken tenders! After hitting the court with the team during game-day practice, Byance and her family sat courtside to watch the Sky take on the Las Vegas Aces.

Thank you to our friends at the Chicago Sky and Magellan Corporation for making this day extra special for Byance, her family, and La Rabida staff!

To hear more from Byance about her experience as Player of the Day, please visit larabida.org/byance.



Meet Malik and Syncere

Sharp, sudden pain. Intense throbbing. Stabbing pains. This is what a pain crisis can feel like for a child living with sickle cell disease. Pain crises are experiences that brothers Malik and Syncere know all too well.

Those living with sickle cell disease have red blood cells that are formed in a curved, sickle shape. The sickle-shaped cells have difficulty passing through small blood vessels and can stick together to block blood flow. This can result in anemia, pain crises, and other complications. As the largest pediatric sickle cell program in Chicago, **our expert team cares for Malik and Syncere and hundreds of kids just like them to help reduce the severity and frequency of these pain crises.**



Malik and Syncere today

Malik, 16, and Syncere, 12, were each diagnosed with sickle cell mere days after they were born. “My first experience with sickle cell was after Malik was born,” explained Sharletta, Malik and Syncere’s mom. “I was terrified. I didn’t know what this meant for my baby. **I didn’t know what sickle cell was.**” Sharletta brought Malik to La Rabida just two weeks after learning of the diagnosis to get the care and guidance they needed.

“I’ve learned everything about sickle cell from La Rabida. I’ve learned a lot about pain, how to help the boys, and signs to look out for. [Their care team] has also taught them how to manage their pain themselves,” shared Sharletta. From routine clinic visits since the boys were babies to the occasional inpatient stay, Malik and Syncere have grown up in the halls of the Gem on the Lake. **“La Rabida is our second home.”**

We first talked with the boys back in 2014 during one of their visits to the clinic. Today, Malik is in the 10th grade and Syncere the 7th. The boys have their condition under control and are able to live happy, full lives.



Ammanda Turns 2

Birthdays are big milestones, and we do everything we can to help our patients celebrate their special day. With the help of her therapists, nurses, and parents, Ammanda went on a birthday parade around our hallways to celebrate. **Balloons, birthday songs,** and even a little taste of **cupcake frosting** made it a celebration to remember.



Lyric’s Wish Granted

Our friends at Make-A-Wish helped make one La Rabida patient’s dream come true! 10-year-old Lyric is living with sickle cell disease and her wish was to go on a **shopping spree!** The team at Make-A-Wish surprised Lyric with a day filled with shopping and a cake to celebrate her recent birthday. Thank you Make-A-Wish for helping make our patient’s **wishes come true!**



Hydrotherapy Returns

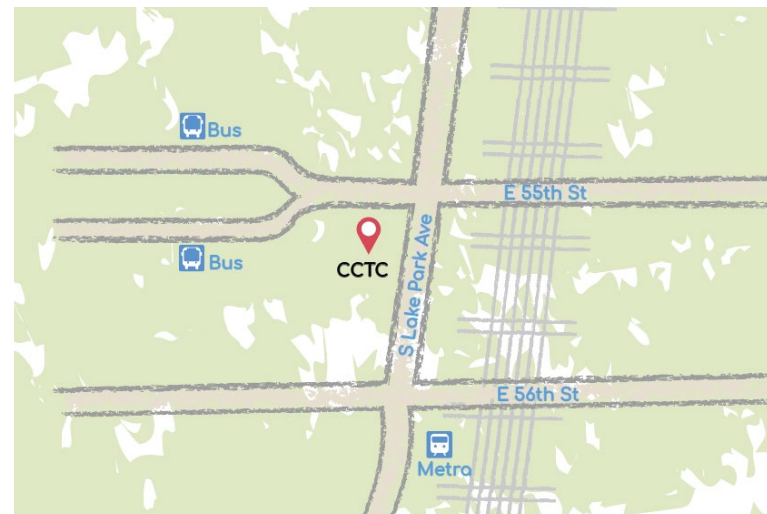
Splash splash we’re taking therapy into the pool! La Rabida’s hydrosuite is officially back open for patients. Those with cerebral palsy, sickle cell, arthritis, or children who are healing after surgery can all benefit from aquatic therapy. This can relieve pain by reducing gravity and joint stress, while also adding resistance for patients working to strengthen muscles. Plus, **it’s fun to splash your therapist!**

Treatment for trauma is not one size fits all.

La Rabida’s Chicago Child Trauma Center (CCTC) has one mission, providing expert-level mental health services to any child who has experienced trauma and loss in Chicago. “We noticed that the rates of trauma were extremely high on the South Side and there was a lack of quality services to address these experiences. **“We started our program to assure that high-quality trauma therapy services could happen for children and families,”** shared Theresa Valach, Clinical Director of the CCTC. Making sure these services are easily accessible to families is why the CCTC is expanding into a new location at 55th and Lake Park Ave.

The diverse team at the CCTC are all trained to treat children who have experienced various types of trauma. “A lot of the children we see have experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse, violence, and even medical trauma,” explained Theresa. **“We are taking a closer look at racial trauma and how that has an impact on children and their families.”**

The new location will improve access to care, allow the team to reach more children, and ensure better collaboration with



The CCTC team is unpacking and getting settled in their new home.

CCTC’s New Home in Hyde Park

other La Rabida teams. The new office is close to La Rabida’s main campus and next to a Metra stop and two bus lines, providing better access to families who do not have a car.

The CCTC will now be in the same building as La Rabida’s Child and Family Connections (CFC). Part of the Illinois Early Intervention Program, the CFC provides support for families to help children under the age of three meet developmental milestones. With both of these programs under the same roof, the teams will now be able to seamlessly work together.

The CCTC got a financial boost earlier this year from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). The federal grant, part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will help reduce community violence and expand Trauma Informed Care Programs to local residents. La Rabida was awarded \$400,000 to increase treatment options to children and families in our community who have experienced trauma, and provide community focused Trauma Informed Care training.

Volunteer With Us

La Rabida’s crew of volunteers play an integral role in helping our mission become a reality. Learn how you can become a volunteer.

Visit larabida.org/volunteer





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and their families – today and every day.
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For more information, visit www.larabida.org/gala



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