



CURRENTS

Maggie's

Big Moves

Maggie was born premature, arriving four weeks earlier than her family had expected. After she was delivered through an emergency C-section, Maggie was airlifted to an area NICU. **"It was really hard. I didn't get to hold her for the first time until she was three days old,"** explained Christy, Maggie's mom. Maggie stayed in the NICU for about a week and then was discharged to go home with her family. A few months later, it was recommended that Maggie enroll in Early Intervention services.

Maggie's story continues inside.



Maggie's Big Moves

Continued from front.

Through La Rabida's Child and Family Connections (CFC), children and families can enter the Illinois Early Intervention program. Early Intervention (EI) is a statewide program that provides support and services for families to help children under the age of three to help them meet developmental milestones. "I picked La Rabida because it was local and they have a good reputation," shared Christy. Maggie and her family were connected to Aylin Benitez, service coordinator at La Rabida's CFC, and Laurie Webb, Maggie's physical therapist.

As a result of being born premature, Maggie experienced some developmental delays. "She is 17 months old, but is at an 8 month level. Cognitively she is fine, but she is not verbal or walking. That is what we are working really hard on." Maggie works with her care team on a weekly basis to grow stronger and stronger. **"Maggie has significantly improved. She is making huge strides towards improving her fine and gross motors skills."**

Maggie and her family had to take a break from therapy earlier this year, but the CFC team continued to keep in touch. "We took a little bit of a break, but Aylin stayed connected to us," explained Christy. "The fact that the team stayed in touch even when we weren't visiting was incredible. That level of care is amazing. I realize they have a lot of cases and the fact that they thought of us even when we weren't on their roster made us feel supported and that they were champions of Maggie's success." Maggie and Christy have since returned to weekly care and are seeing improvements in Maggie. "It's been a great support system. **I feel more empowered to help my daughter.**"

In honor of Giving Tuesday, Christy hosted a fundraiser benefitting La Rabida. "I really appreciate all of the support and services that we got from La Rabida and I wanted to support their work."



Spreading Holiday Cheer



Illinois Governor JB Pritzker kicked off the holiday season at La Rabida! The governor and First Lady MK Pritzker met with members of La Rabida's care team and handed out Christmas presents to our patients and their families as they were headed to their appointments.



Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot dropped by La Rabida to celebrate the holidays with our patients and families. Mayor Lightfoot and First Lady Amy Eshleman joined our team of hardworking elves by passing out gifts to kids visiting the hospital.

Santa Comes Aboard the S.S. La Rabida



Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas from the halls of La Rabida! After a socially distanced celebration in 2020, we welcomed Santa Claus back to the hospital this year. With proper mitigation steps in place to ensure everyone's safety, Saint Nick was able to celebrate with our patients and families in person yet again.

Santa arrived at the Gem on the lake bright and early Christmas morning. With his bag of gifts in tow, Santa made his way from room to room to spread holiday cheer to our patients, families, and staff.

Our annual Christmas Day festivities allow our patients and their families to celebrate the holiday and create lasting memories while in the hospital. This year's celebration would not have been possible without the friends of La Rabida who donated toys, books, and gifts to La Rabida.

Thank you to Santa, La Rabida staff, and all the generous individuals and organizations who helped ensure that every patient received a gift this holiday season.



La Rabida's Annual Elf Room

La Rabida's team of helpers were hard at work in our annual Elf Room last month! Leading up to Christmas, staff transformed into Santa's elves and volunteered to **hand out gifts to patients** as they visited the hospital for their appointments. Patients and their siblings got to bring home a bag filled with toys donated by generous friends of La Rabida.



Frankie's on the Park Treats Patients to Holiday Dresses

La Rabida was transformed into a clothing boutique thanks to our friends from Frankie's on the Park! Every year the team at Frankie's donates a number of dresses to La Rabida and invites our patients to pick out **their favorite outfit that they can wear during their holiday celebrations.** Thank you Lisa Rolfe Burik and the entire Frankie's team for making sure our kids feel special this holiday season!



Former Patient Hosts Card Drive

When Jessi was in 3rd grade, she visited La Rabida weekly for treatment of an autoimmune disease. La Rabida left such a mark on Jessi, who is now a high school biology teacher, that she has tasked her students with making holiday cards for patients. **"I wanted to find a way to give back and I immediately thought about La Rabida,"** shared Jessi. "I just hope that these cards can help brighten the day of La Rabida's patients."



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Thank You for Supporting our Mission

At La Rabida Children's Hospital, we treat patients regardless of their family's financial circumstances. We are able to do this because of the support of individuals like you.

If you'd like to donate, please visit larabida.org/donate or scan this QR code.



Set Sail towards Volunteering

Looking for a way to get involved in the La Rabida community? Our crew of volunteers is growing! We are looking for volunteers to join our outpatient, rehab, physical therapy, and behavioral health teams.

To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.larabida.org/volunteer.

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