

Tom's Tale: Former Patient Shares His La Rabida Experience



Here at La Rabida, we strive to impact people forever. Not just our kids, but their entire families. The goal? Let them *be* kids -- and help them get home, as soon as medically possible. Such was the case for former patient Tom Klingberg.

In 1952, Tom was a kindergartener when doctors diagnosed him with rheumatic fever. His family physician broke the news to his parents. Their son was very ill, and would need to be hospitalized immediately. And so they set out for La Rabida. The hospital, known back then for its successful treatment of children with rheumatic fever, was some 35 miles away from their West Chicago home. "Unfortunately, my father worked long hours for the railroad so he couldn't visit much," Tom recalls. "However, my favorite aunt, Aunt Madeline, and my Uncle would visit me every Wednesday."

Tom says being away from home was hard -- really hard. "I remember having to sit through a lot of painful blood draws," Tom says. "But once a very kind janitor came in to hold my hand as I was being stuck. He was a large man, with hands like hams, but his kindness is what has always remained with me."

Luckily, Tom recovered without any complications and got to go home. He says he credits the medical staff at La Rabida for his speedy recovery. 70 years later he still thinks about his time on the lake. The U.S. Army veteran-turned long-distance runner says "thanks" just doesn't seem like enough.

"I probably didn't tell you when I was sent home at 5 years old, so I'll tell you now," he says. "Thank you so very much for all of the wonderful care you gave me and all of the other children."

Now 74 years old, Tom wants to encourage kids and families who are patients with the hospital today.

"I know how hard it is to be sick and be away from home -- I was there," he says. "Try hard to do everything the doctors and nurses tell you to do so you can get well and be back home soon!"

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Slots are filling up fast for La Rabida's 33rd Annual Golf Classic, but there's still time to register! Come spend a day outside on the links with us and enjoy 18 holes of golf, giveaways, auctions, contests, prizes, lunch, cocktails, and more. Visit larabida.org/golf-classic to learn more and register today! See you on the course August 1st at Harborside!

This Month on Social

Fresh Food Farmacy



La Rabida has teamed up with Just Roots Chicago to offer a Fresh Food Farmacy program to members of our outpatient clinic. Families can sign up to receive 10 fresh produce items at no cost to them every other week during the summer. Selections include swiss chard, spinach, turnips, radishes, greens, and more! They also host cooking demonstrations where families can learn new recipes featuring some of the produce available at the farm stand.

NCQA Recognition



The National Committee for Quality Assurance is recognizing La Rabida for putting our patients at the forefront of care. We have once again received recognition for our Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) for Children with Special Healthcare Needs. This is the fifth time since 2011 the hospital has received this prestigious seal for its commitment to providing expert-level care to our children and families.

Friends of La Rabida



We are so grateful for our village of supporters! A special SHOUT OUT today goes to Board Chairman Fred Berglund, Senator Robert Peters, Alderman Leslie Hairston, Commander Roderick Watson and the Chicago Police Department, Chicago Parks District COO Patrick Levar and the Chicago Park District, and Courtney Nottage. Thanks for all you do for our patients and families.

Healthcare Heroes: Coloring to Calm



It's not just kids who like to color. It's a good stress reliever for anyone, even adults -- and, as it turns out, especially hospital staff. In La Rabida's Rehabilitation Department, the results have been re-marker-able.

Keir Mitchell, Director of Developmental and Rehabilitative Services here at La Rabida, introduced the stress management technique back in April as a way to encourage staff to take a break from their busy days and re-center.

"It's been a tough couple of years everywhere but particularly in healthcare," Keir says. "I'm always looking for ways to help staff with resiliency, and putting up a coloring poster and markers seemed like a good way to take a brief break."

The rehab staff took to it quickly, coloring an entire 4-foot poster in about a month. Each day, little by little, everyone takes a turn.

"The poster is relaxing when things are a bit hectic," says Melody McDonald, the scheduler and accounts coordinator for Rehab Services.

The coloring posters have become the new "water cooler," a central gathering place for staff to build morale and support each other.

They say they realize they need to recharge their own batteries so they can give the best care to their patients. "The poster is an awesome stress management technique that also helps support occupational performance," La Rabida Occupational Therapist Maggie Sladick says. "It's been a nice way to find pockets of my day to decompress and self-regulate whenever I need a minute or two."

Help Us Help Our Kids

At La Rabida Children's Hospital, our mission is simple: we're dedicated to improving the quality of life for each of our patients who live with complex conditions, disabilities, and chronic illnesses. Children don't choose their circumstances, and we never let those circumstances impact the care children receive. We treat patients regardless of their family's financial circumstances. We are able to do this because of the support of individuals like you. Help support our mission today: by visiting <https://larabida.org/donate>

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