

**Unsung Heroes of the Formula Crisis**



Our dietitians have been working extra hard for families who have been stressed out trying to get what they need to feed their medically complex children.

"Our population needs premature formula for the additional nutrients to grow their little lungs, brains, and other vital organs," says Robyn Felten, La Rabida's Clinical Nutrition Manager. "Our population also needs elemental formulas for gastrointestinal disorders such as short gut or other issues such as severe allergies."

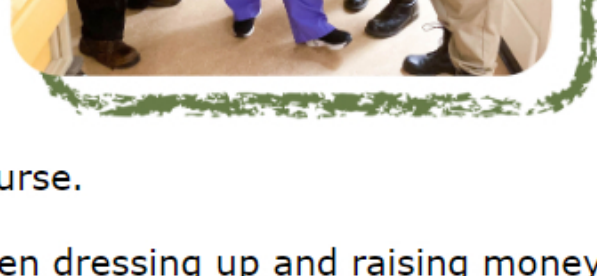
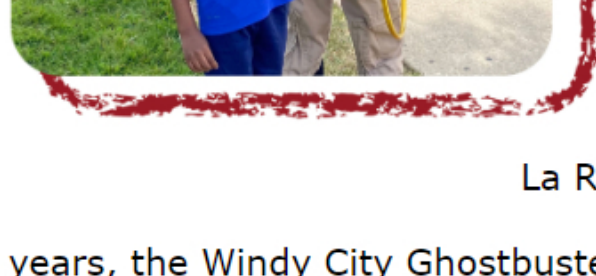
Her team of registered dietitians have gone above and beyond to troubleshoot and find substitutions – staying late, and doing a lot of math to figure out what feeding regimens will work. She says they have been working countless hours leaving formula for families to pick up at the main entrance, communicating with other hospitals to help find substitutes, making sure formula gets shipped to patient homes and finding new formulas our families have never used before.

"Parents have called us completely stressed out," says dietitian Jaelen Hull. "We try to make sure we do everything we can for them so they don't have to worry so much."

Patients even sometimes show up without appointments, desperate for formula. The nutrition team always makes time to help.

"We're their family," says Dr. Edith Chernoff. "Where do you go when you need help? You go home to family."

**Who You Gonna Call?**



La Rabida of course.

For years, the Windy City Ghostbusters have been dressing up and raising money for our patients and their families. This year, in addition to raising funds for us at local conventions, they brought their Ghostbusting crew and their Ectomobile to the Outpatient Pavilion. While they didn't find anything too spooky, they did bring a lot of smiles to a lot of faces.

The characters thrilled the children with their lifelike costumes and ghostbusting gadgets. Parents and employees also enjoyed the blast from the past. The crew will be returning closer to Halloween with Slimer in tow.

**Early Intervention Expands**

Because of a change in state law, many children who would lose access to the state's Early Intervention therapy services are now able to continue their services with La Rabida's Child and Family Connections (CFC) if they have summer birthdays. Carol Muhammad, a program administrator for CFC, says it's a big step toward increasing school readiness for kids who might need an Individualized Education Program, or an IEP.

"This change will hopefully shrink the gap when it comes to access for quality early childhood programming," she says. La Rabida was highlighted in a WBEZ radio story about the expansion earlier this month, which you can listen to [here](#).

The new state law now enables children with developmental delays or disabilities, who turn three over the summer, to continue therapy until the end of August or move to special education through their school district.

"Oftentimes if we didn't hand walk them to the school we are hearing many of the times children are coming in into kindergarten when they should have been in a 3 to 5 program," she says. "But the family may not have understood the process, been frustrated, or turned away at the door. There were too many barriers for those families."

Nearly 20% of La Rabida patients (out of roughly 1000) will likely qualify for these extended services. Once they opt-in (families have to choose this) they will be evaluated for continuing services. Parents say they are thrilled to have more support.

"They [early intervention therapists] have held my hand through the entire process," mom Shereese Bishop says. Her son Oba is receiving therapy now through CFC and thriving after being born prematurely.

"We are pushing him to speak in 3-word sentences, and use his words instead of merely pointing at objects," she says.

She says with the expansion of services she hopes CFC and La Rabida will help her navigate Oba's needs at a CPS school when he's ready to enroll.

**Employee Spotlight – "This is where I always wanted to be"**

Click [here](#) to listen to Chanda's story.

As hospitals continue to grapple with staffing shortages, La Rabida continues to be a destination workplace for some of the industry's most passionate caretakers. That's especially true for those who received care here as a child.

"It's been a big part of my life as far as I can remember," says Chanda Fluellen, a respiratory therapist.

La Rabida became an even bigger part of her life during the pandemic, when she landed her "dream job" here in September 2020.

"My mother told me that I told the nurse when I was a kid that one day I was going to work here," she remembers.

She came to the hospital on and off her entire childhood. The 6-year-old didn't know it at the time, but her mother's cigarette smoke was triggering her asthma attacks.

"That kept me here a lot," she says.

She would stay for days at a time on the gem on the lake while her breathing stabilized. It's here where she decided she would pursue a career in healthcare. She would return decades later and make good on that promise.

Her favorite part of the hospital, known as the commons, has since been converted into a rehabilitation gym.

"They had like everything a kid could want in there," she says. "There was a big TV, we'd watch movies, eat popcorn. It was, you know, home away from home. I felt absolutely safe here."

She now makes sure her own patients feel safe.

"It's really babies, for me. Working with children was always my goal. Giving back what was given to me."

After stints at a handful of other major area hospitals, she says she found her home again at La Rabida. "This is where I always wanted to be," she says.

She says while a lot has changed since she was a patient, the standard of care has not. She relishes the 1-on-1 time she has to spend with each patient, playing with them and really getting to know their routines so she can provide tailored care. But the best part, she says, is watching them grow.

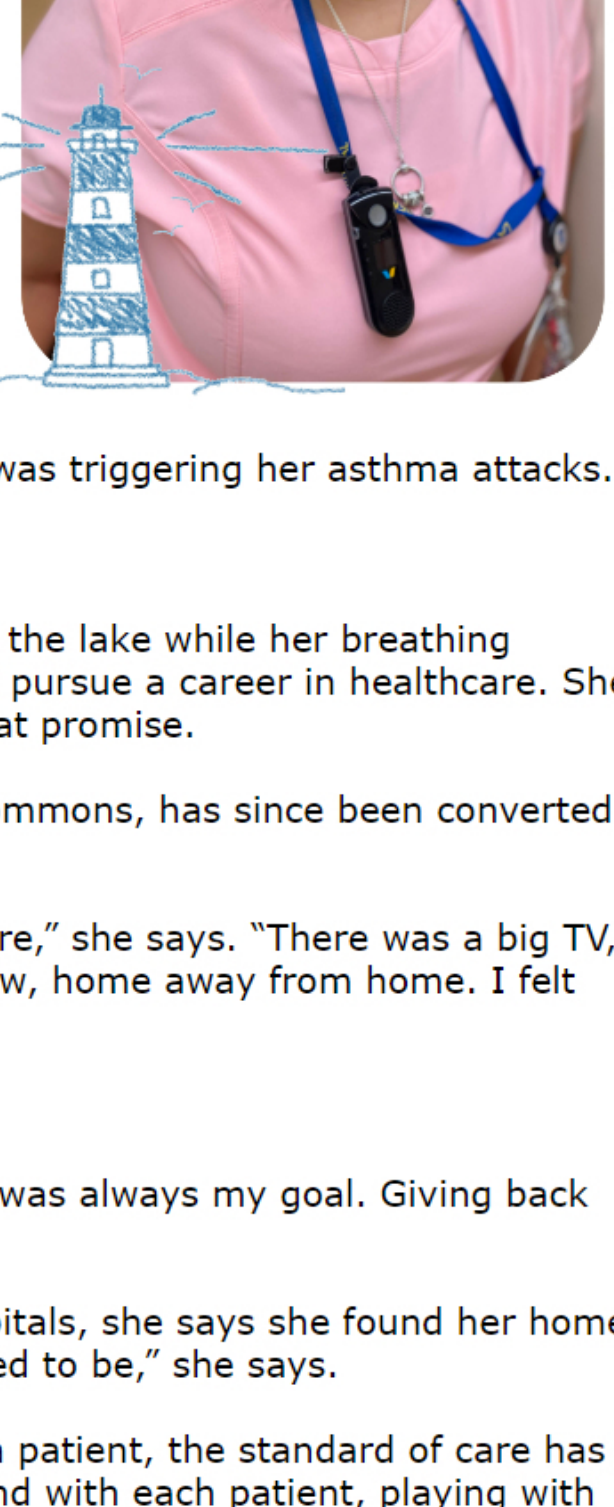
"When they first get here a lot of times they're very sick," she says.

"Then over time you see them start getting liberated from the ventilator and doing things that other babies can do."

Because our patients at La Rabida are often hospitalized for a long time, they really bond with their caretakers.

"Once patients get here they're with rehab, PT, OT, speech therapy, respiratory; everybody working as a team to help them get to where they need to be," Fluellen says.

"They wouldn't get that anywhere else."

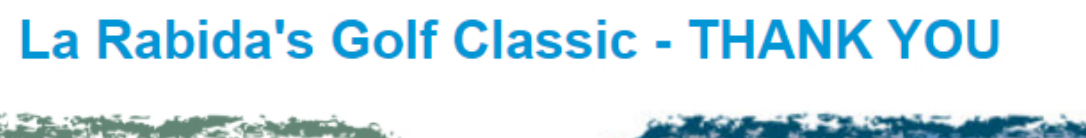


**Interested in After School Tutoring?**

La Rabida is resuming in-person tutoring sessions this fall and we're looking for tutors! We provide one-on-one help with school work to an assigned child during weekly sessions. Tutors should have a desire to improve the educational experience while serving as a role model and mentor for the children in the tutoring program.

Volunteers may choose between two session times:  
**4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. or 6 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday evenings.**

If you are interested please contact George Hardin, Manager of Volunteer Services  
Email: [ghardin@larabida.org](mailto:ghardin@larabida.org) Phone: 773.256.5985

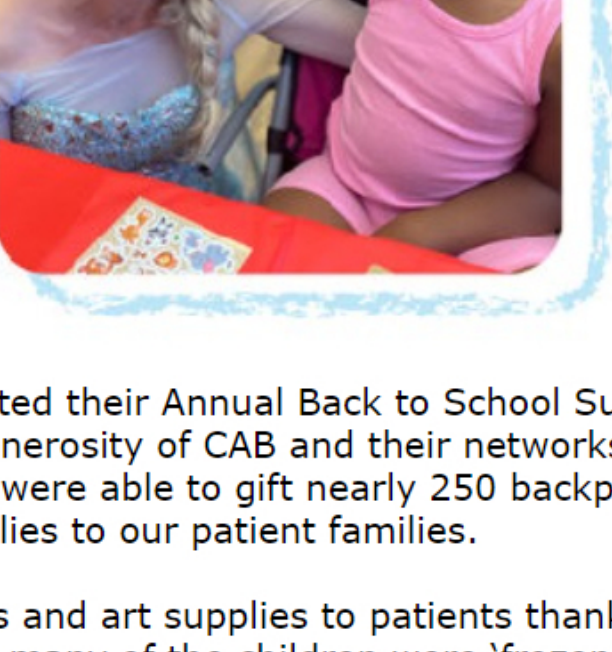
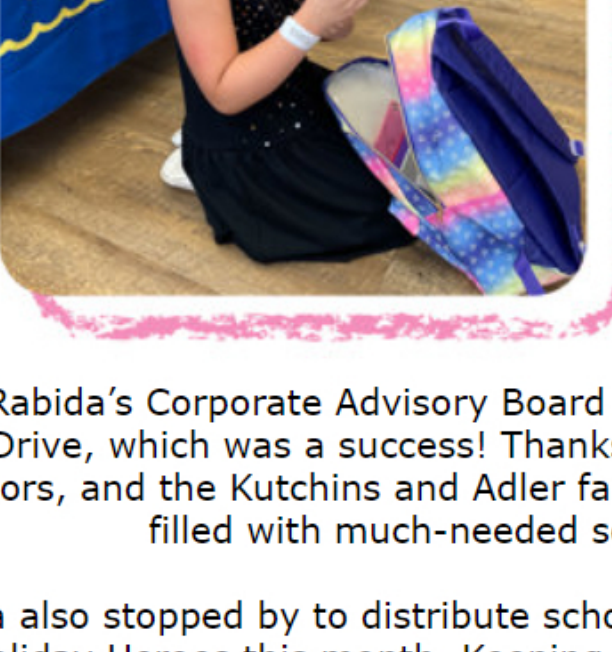


**La Rabida's Golf Classic - THANK YOU**



La Rabida's 33rd Annual Golf Classic was one to remember! We raised nearly \$240,000 thanks to our generous supporters and we couldn't have had more beautiful weather. Fred Berglund of Berglund Construction received a special MVP Award for all he's done for the golf event over the years. We are also especially grateful for our sponsors, donors, participants, planning committee, and volunteers. We hope to see you on the course again next year!

**Back to School in Style**



La Rabida's Corporate Advisory Board (CAB) hosted their Annual Back to School Supply Drive, which was a success! Thanks to the generosity of CAB and their networks, donors, and the Kutchins and Adler families, we were able to gift nearly 250 backpacks filled with much-needed school supplies to our patient families.

Elsa also stopped by to distribute school supplies and art supplies to patients thanks to Holiday Heroes this month. Keeping on theme, many of the children were 'frozen' in amazement when she started singing... just like she does in the movies.

**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>

**DONATE TODAY**

**FRIENDS OF LA RABIDA AWARDS CELEBRATION**  
November 17, 2022  
The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago  
Honoring Peggy & William Gann • Grainger  
Please visit [larabida.org/gala](https://larabida.org/gala) to RSVP