

## A Seat at the Table



There is so much we take for granted. Eating at a table. Going to the movies. Driving a car. These small conveniences can sometimes be inconvenient – even impossible -- for our patients, especially when they are wheelchair-bound.

This summer 6-year-old Melvin Harris' family received a tomato seat, courtesy of an anonymous foundation and La Rabida's Pass It Forward program. The seats can cost up to \$600, but the way they change family dynamics is priceless.

The tomato seat allows Melvin to sit beside his family, eat and drink safely, and engage in shared experiences during mealtimes. When they can afford it, families contribute 10 percent of the price of the seat.

"He's interacting as opposed to just sitting in his wheelchair or on the couch," says Paula, Melvin's grandmother.

Six families have received tomato seats through the Pass It Forward program since 2019.

"He's bright, he's real bossy, but even though he doesn't walk or talk he does communicate," Paula says.

When he was an infant, Melvin was malnourished. Testing later showed he had cerebral palsy.

"We realized he wasn't hitting any milestones," his grandmother recalls. A nurse, she suspected something wasn't quite right. When he was just six months old, Melvin's grandmother became his legal guardian.

"It's been a journey," she says. "You're going to make me get emotional. The therapy team here is awesome. They have worked with him since day one."

In mid-July Melvin had double hip surgery – a procedure that lasted more than seven hours. His grandmother says she was thrilled he would get to recover at La Rabida and receive intense physical therapy.

"Even though he's here I can rest at night knowing that he's going to be taken care of," Paula says. "I miss not one minute of sleep when I'm gone from here because I know that I trust this hospital, and I believe in this hospital."

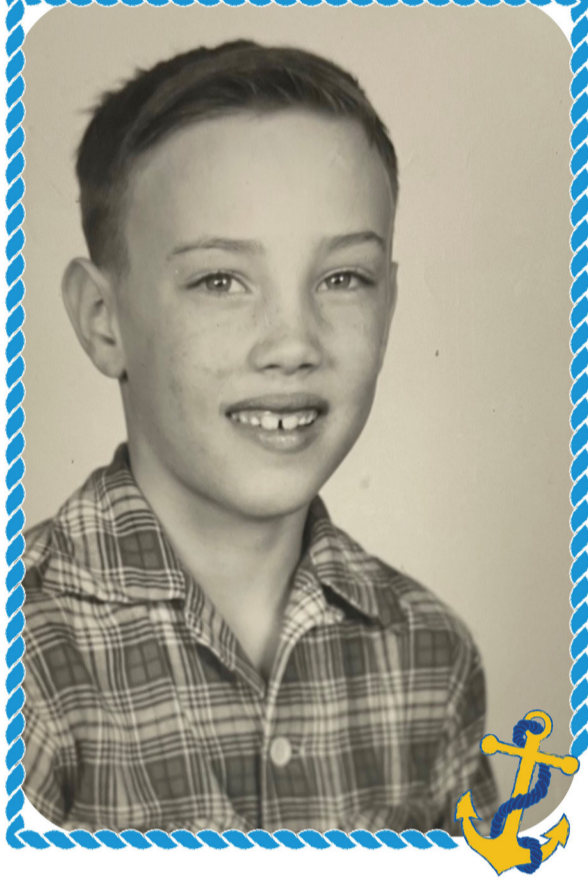
"They have a great team all the way around."

## Bon Voyage



Some of our favorite passengers got the all clear to go home before the holidays. We will certainly miss them, but were thrilled to send them off with big smiles.

## Patient Spotlight: Story of Survival



Seven children. Eleven grandchildren. A long career in medicine. And memories of La Rabida forever etched in his mind.

"If La Rabida didn't exist my children wouldn't exist," Dr. Brian Mulligan says.

In 1951, at just 4-years-old, he spent his days in a hospital room.

"It seemed like a big room to me," he says.

There were other children in the room, and a baby in the crib in the corner. He was supposed to be on strict bed rest.

"I had a heart murmur and most of the others did too," he remembers.

"We would just jump from bed to bed like toads. Back and forth back and forth, and when we made enough noises the nurses would appear and make us get back in bed. All the fun was over."

He remembers there was a window by his bed facing the harbor. It was a glimmer of life during an otherwise isolated summer.

"That's where they tied the boats up," he recalls.

He spent the summer staring out into the bay, amused. It was a polio summer, too. Outside of the hospital parents were warning their children not to swim in swimming pools, because of fear the virus was waterborne.

His diagnosis was acute rheumatic fever, with heart murmurs, and valvular incompetence (now a doctor in his own right, Dr. Mulligan explains this was caused from strep throat). Since his valves were leaking, and his heart was enlarged, he was treated with twice daily penicillin shots.

"So every morning and afternoon nurses came with a tray," he says. "They held us down and gave us a shot. And that's how I lived for many months.

It saved my life because they knew what was wrong with me and they gave me a proper treatment," he says. "It wasn't my time to die. Without a place like that I could have done very badly."

Now 74-years-old and living in Lisle, Illinois, the retired radiologist tells the story to his grandchildren.

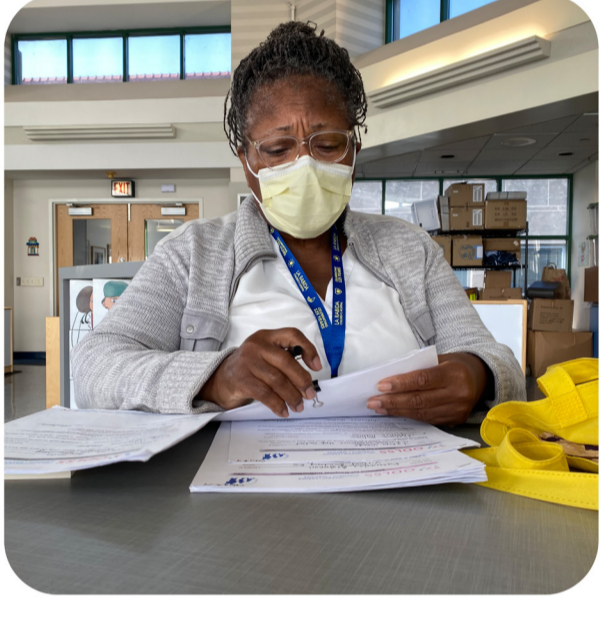
While the hospital is a much different place than it was in 1951, he's proud it still offers the highest quality care to children.

Because of that care, he says he doesn't think about the pain or the fear, or being a small, sick boy in a hospital.

He remembers surviving.

"La Rabida saved me," he says.

## Welcome Ms. Leola



Ms. Leola has joined the S. S. La Rabida this year as a teacher for Chicago Public Schools. She makes sure our patients are enrolled in class and develops individual curriculums for each student. "I become a partner to the parent, sometimes the whole family. I'm here to educate, but also to advocate," she says. She has been a teacher in local hospitals for 21 years

## Walking with Purpose



We are so proud to have staff who represent La Rabida's mission both inside and outside of the hospital! Members of our La Rabida team support our partnerships by participating in community events to raise awareness for the diseases and conditions that affect our patients. Let's give a big shout out to all who participated in the Sickle Cell Awareness Walk, Tour de Cure for Diabetes, and JDRF Chicago One Walk!

## La Rabida in the News



**'It's really a miracle': Child who spent his first 1,000 days of life in a hospital goes home**

CBS Chicago - Check out this kid's smile! Who could blame the boy for being so happy? He's going home from the hospital for the first time ever! And he got quite the send-off Tuesday, after spending the 1,000 days .....  
<https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/its-really-a-miracle-child-who-spent-his-first-1000-days-of-life-in-a-hospital-goes-home/>



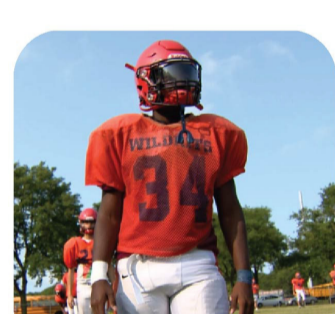
**A mother describes what the last year has been like after the premature birth of her twins at 25 weeks and 5 days**

Adelante Chicago - <https://www.facebook.com/AdelanteChicago/videos/1189681518559346/>



**Bringing Joy to Kids with Medical Challenges**

Chicago Tribune – An Eagle Scout project is pretty much left up to the individual scout's imagination. The only requirement is that the project be helpful to any religious institution, school, or community. For Eagle Scout prospect Adam Lung of St. John.....  
<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/ct-ptb-eagle-scout-project-st-1017-20221016-b2xzer5anzbi7kqne5engpyk5y-story.html>



**Evanston teen born with his intestines outside of his stomach now a star high school football player**

WGN TV - <https://wgntv.com/news/cover-story/evanston-teen-born-with-his-intestines-outside-of-his-stomach-now-a-star-high-school-football-player/?bblinkid=263946635&bbemailid=430521568&bbejrid=1814192081>

## 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

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2022

Reception 6 p.m. | Dinner 7 p.m.  
The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago

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