

CURRENTS

Everett's Spirit Shines Through

From the moment he was born, Everett was a mystery.

"We celebrate each day we have," his mom Kristine says.

Even though he was a full-term baby, doctors said his lungs looked like they hadn't developed much past 24 weeks.

Every time doctors thought they knew what was wrong, Everett wouldn't respond to typical treatment. His fragile lungs kept failing him. One night, when he was just a couple of weeks old, he had to be transferred to a new hospital for more critical treatment. They weren't sure he would even survive the trip.

Everett's story continues inside.





Everett's Spirit Shines Through

Continued from front.

"We just sat in the hospital parking lot until we knew he was safe there, and he made it," she remembers. "He's such a trooper."

Genetic testing didn't reveal any abnormalities. Nothing showed up on ultrasounds. A lung transplant wasn't an option because there were too many risk factors.

"They would tell us 'we don't know how much time he has so enjoy the time you have with him.'"

His family would sit in the waiting room, praying for a miracle – not knowing what to expect. The chaplain would come. They'd hold their breaths. And their little boy would somehow pull through.

"I'd just take this moment," his mom says. "And tell myself he made it today."

"They can't tell me what's wrong with him, so you really can't tell me what he's capable of, either," his mom says. "Everything he does is something they say he wouldn't do."

When he was ten months old he was finally well enough to come to La Rabida.

"We were researching where to send him and it was a no-brainer. La Rabida is amazing," Kristine says. She says the family was looking for a place for Everett to improve close to home, which had a reputation for going above and beyond.

"Nurses helped us get through the toughest days," his mom remembers. "Renee {Fife} did a lot of our classes and she's amazing. She gave us so much confidence."

The family did 12-hour shifts at the hospital, learning how to care for Everett with the goal of going home as soon as possible. Nurses say his family was extremely engaged and eager to learn.

"It takes a very special parent to be able to take a child on a ventilator home. It takes a lot of training, practice at the bedside and confidence in their own skills," says pediatric nurse practitioner Renee Fife.

"You still have a lot of learning once you get home," his mom says. "But we definitely felt prepared."

While Everett had been home since February, meeting and exceeding milestones, all that preparation paid off when his mom had to spring into action recently during an emergency. "Our little miracle had multiple strokes but is awake, signing with his right side and has his sense of humor back," his mom says.

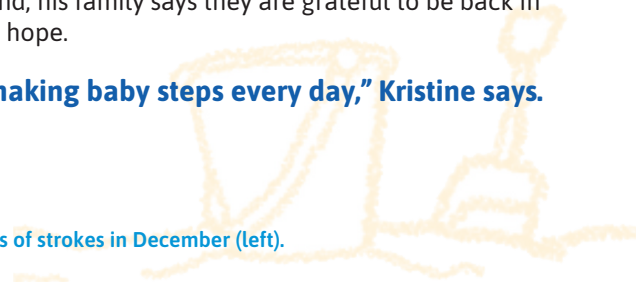
In December he came back to La Rabida for rehab, working to recover movement on his left side. He still loves music and doing the chicken dance, and he's started doing sign language again with both hands. Despite all he's been through, his family says he has an amazing sense of humor.

While the last month has been a whirlwind, his family says they are grateful to be back in a place that brings so much comfort and hope.

"With the help of La Rabida, he is making baby steps every day," Kristine says.



Pictured: Everett is making funny faces again after a series of strokes in December (left).





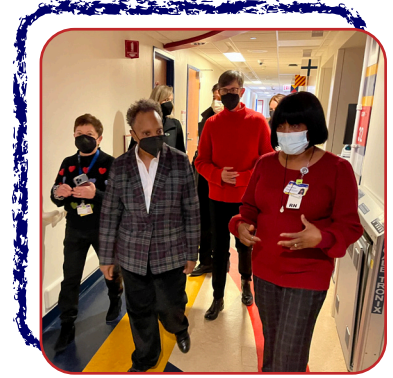
A Day of Beauty and Pampering

La Rabida welcomed the holidays with a little glitz, glam, and fashion with help from **Lincoln Park's favorite dress boutique, Frankie's on the Park**. At this annual event, patients get to take home their favorite dress, get manicures and put on a mini fashion show.



Comm. Bill Lowry Spreads Cheer

This holiday season is about making memories... and toys! **Cook County Commissioner Bill Lowry helped patients and families celebrate. Me and My Bears Mobile helped patients build toys. Mulan & Co. donated lots of toys to give away.** Thank you Commissioner Lowry for spreading cheer to our patients.



Mayor Lightfoot Visits S.S. La Rabida

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and First Lady Amy Eshleman stopped by to deliver some holiday cheer to the passengers aboard the S.S. La Rabida. During her visit, Mayor Lightfoot **visited the inpatient unit for the first time and was impressed by the beauty of the Gem on the Lake**. She was serenaded by a patient playing Joy to the World on the violin and bonded with patients.



Christmas Came Early to La Rabida

Santa had a lot of stops to make in one night. Good thing La Rabida's Child Life Team was here to help him out.

La Rabida's annual Elf Room opened Dec. 12 and our little elves were hard at work giving away toys to our patients. **We make sure patients and their siblings get age-appropriate and ability-appropriate gifts to take home.**

All of the toys come from generous donors who load their sleighs and drop the toys off throughout the holiday season. **We gave out 4,225 toys this year in the Elf Room!**

On Christmas Day, Santa also came to visit all of our inpatients - a holiday tradition that's continued for 52 years.



La Rabida in the News



10-Year-Old Violinist Brings Joy Through Music

NBC CHICAGO
Scan the QR code
to read the story!



Patients Treated to Holiday Toys

ABC 7 CHICAGO
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Beyond Bullets: How Violence Impacts Child Mental Health

CHICAGO HEALTH
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After an extensive search, Brian Fredericks joins the La Rabida family as the CFO and Vice President of Administration. Brian comes to La Rabida with more than 20 years of experience working in finance, healthcare and operations. He most recently served as the Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Finance for Medical Home Network (MHN), a health care innovations organization.



We did it, Miracle Makers! With your help we were able to raise \$18,970.28 for La Rabida with our "Believe in Miracles. Believe in La Rabida" social media campaign. Miracles happen every day at La Rabida and we wanted to celebrate both our miracle patients and miracle workers. Read their stories at larabida.org/news/miracles

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