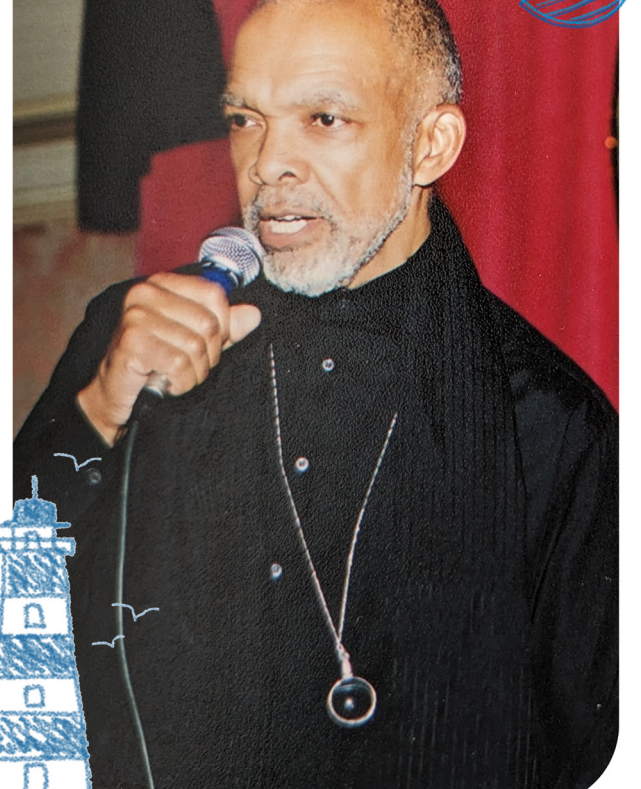


## Honoring Black History Month



In 1896 La Rabida opened its doors to ALL of Chicago's children regardless of race, color or religion. Our commitment to health equity continues more than a century later as we treat children with complex medical conditions.

## Thomas Burrell: The Do-er



The iconic advertising executive Thomas Burrell grew up on Chicago's south side, right across the park at 59th and Calumet. He would become a trailblazer in the advertising world. But long before that happened, he would find himself kicked out of the South Shore neighborhood for being black.

"I remember as a college student I had a job where I was canvassing the neighborhood for a census and was basically chased out of the neighborhood, like 'what you are doing here?' The hospital was right in the middle of that," he says.

Burrell – a longtime donor to La Rabida – agreed to talk to us for Black History Month, even though he's not a big fan of the occasion.

"I think it's pretty pathetic that we have to have a Black History Month. It just speaks to the fact that we have a problem, and sometimes those problems are being addressed in very token ways," he says. "I think we're just woefully, woefully behind."

Having worked with giants over the years at his agency, Burrell Communications (think clients like McDonald's and Coca-Cola – his work now appearing in museums for its cultural significance) he remembers having to decide what "to do" for Black History Month from a campaign point-of-view each year. He says he often wanted to ask those kids at La Rabida. They're incredible."

his behemoth clients, "But what are you doing the other 11 months of the year to lift up black people?"

It's something he ultimately ended up doing himself.

He convinced corporations that "black people are not dark-skinned white people" – which became his tagline. He worked his way up from a mail clerk in the back room of a Chicago ad agency to running his own shop in 1971. He would hire black people, be the first to target ads to black consumers and grow opportunities for black people to finally see themselves as worthy of marketing.

"We put them onscreen in a way they had never seen before," he recalls. "People got a real sense of self from that. Seeing themselves center stage and on TV – that gave them a sense of who they were, and they had never seen themselves before in that way."

He visited La Rabida for the first time when he was in his 20s, often driving by and wondering "what is that beautiful place looking over the water?"

He says the brave, ill children struck him.

"To get there and see these kids going through all the things they're going through with such courage. And of course the fact that I knew it was black and white kids together," he says.

Indeed, La Rabida was never segregated. In 1896 the women who ran the sanitarium made a pledge to keep it open to all races, and it has remained that way over the years. Burrell says that kind of commitment to equality is profound, especially when you consider that La Rabida was right smack dab in the middle of the white community.

"The irony is that up until probably the 1960s and 1970s black people were not even able to cross that line into that neighborhood," he remembers. But at La Rabida, black children would be welcomed and treated just like all of the other children.

That's one of the reasons Burrell has continued to support La Rabida over the years, because of our commitment to the most underserved populations. Today, nearly 70% of our families self-identify as black or African American.

As a black man, Burrell says he doesn't want extra credit for his annual gifts. It's just something he does.

"It's nice to be remembered for what you do, but the important thing is TO DO," he says. "Take the few seconds you have here [on Earth] and have some fun and do some good. You can't do any better than when you see those kids at La Rabida. They're incredible."

## Tracey Ladner: Living a Full Life

Tracey Ladner was a La Rabida patient back in the 1970s. She was treated for symptoms doctors initially thought were associated with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. When she was a little girl, her hands would swell up so badly she couldn't even open them, she remembers.

"There have been seminal points in my life that have shaped my outlook on life and La Rabida was one of the first ones," she says.

"What I learned from La Rabida is that just because you're sick, just because there's something wrong with you, doesn't mean that you can't live a full life."

And that's exactly what Tracey did.

After graduating from Lindbloom High School, she would go on to attend the University of Illinois. She'd become an officer in the U.S. Navy and after graduating from law school, she'd become a Judge Advocate General's Corp (JAG) prosecutor.

"I can't tell you how many times in my life I've been the only black, the only woman, the only black woman in the room," she says. "The key thing is, whatever's going on around you, you can't let it affect you, your career and your decisions."

As the Director of Human Resources for the Chicago Police Department she was instrumental in the way the city enforced the Shakman decree, which banned political considerations in hiring and firing.

"It's very fulfilling to see something that's wrong, and being able to change it," she says.

In her retirement now, she says she chooses to give her time and resources strategically. La Rabida is at the top her of list.

"It's not like I give a ton of money, but I think it's important that you reach back and help those who helped you."

She says she appreciates how the institution has pivoted over the years to meet the needs of the surrounding community and families, who she says, have not been treated as well as they should have been because of their race or economic circumstances.

"Back then South Shore was a white neighborhood. It was not a black neighborhood, and it was not friendly," she says.

At one of her stays at La Rabida she says one of her roommates only spoke Spanish, and would cry when she wasn't understood.

"I'd tell the nurse 'She wants milk! She wants milk!' so her parents were convinced I knew Spanish, but I only knew like five words." She had learned the words watching Sesame Street.

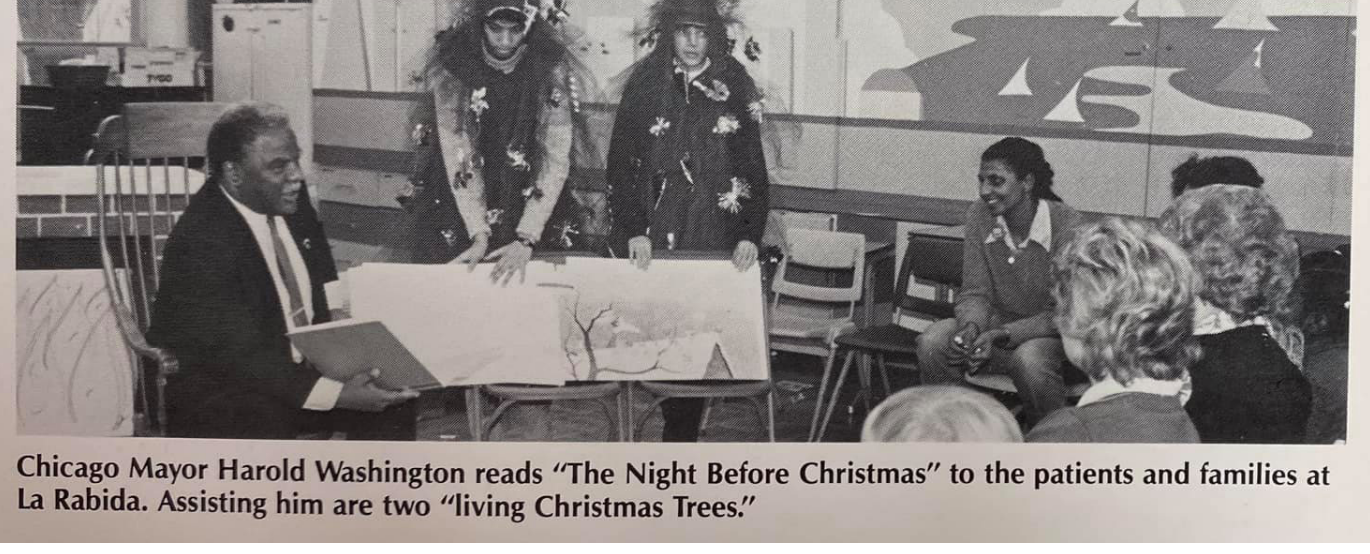
That kind of integration in the same room, though, was rare. But there was no disparity of care at La Rabida. It's something Tracey still appreciates to this day.

"It's one thing to give to the American Cancer Society or the American Lung Association. Whether I give to them or not they're going to keep going," she says.

"But smaller organizations that have very specific needs are the ones that I choose to support, like La Rabida. I've always respected the fact that La Rabida never untied anybody away."



## Mayor Harold Washington: Creating a Legacy



Chicago Mayor Harold Washington reads "The Night Before Christmas" to the patients and families at La Rabida. Assisting him are two "living Christmas Trees"

Harold Washington became the first African American to be elected as the city of Chicago's mayor in 1983. Born in Chicago and raised on the south side in the Bronzeville neighborhood he was a trailblazer who challenged the status quo and courageously demanded equity and justice for communities that had been underserved for generations.

During his time as mayor, Washington created the Ethics Committee, opened government with a Freedom of Information executive order, opened the city's budget process to the public, and launched a cultural plan for the city that led to additional neighborhood festivals and events, among other achievements.

During his leadership, he became a friend to La Rabida. Washington visited La Rabida regularly and made it a point to come at the holidays and read "Twas the Night Before Christmas" to our patients. He recognized that our kids couldn't be home with their families for the holidays and wanted them to feel remembered. This treasured annual tradition has continued with every Mayor who has preceded him.

"I hope someday to be remembered by history as the Mayor who cared about the people who was, above all, fair." – Harold Washington, First Inaugural Address, April 29, 1983.

His legacy of bold, compassionate, and courageous leadership lives on and continues to inspire.

## Spreading the Love



Hundreds of La Rabida patients and families felt the love again this year creating the SHE 100.3 Annual Cards for Kids drive. The handmade cards from the listeners at WSHE were so creative! Thanks again to SHE 100.3 FM for helping us spread the love and give our families a special Valentine's Day boost.

## Annual Report



# WE ARE FAMILY

2022 Annual Report

**Dear Friends,**

Throughout the decade, the care La Rabida provides has evolved. We have pivoted to meet the needs of our patient population and the communities we serve. We have always been dedicated to transforming the lives of children: uplifting, empowering and ensuring they can meet every single challenge and opportunity presented to them. This is how we raise possibilities.



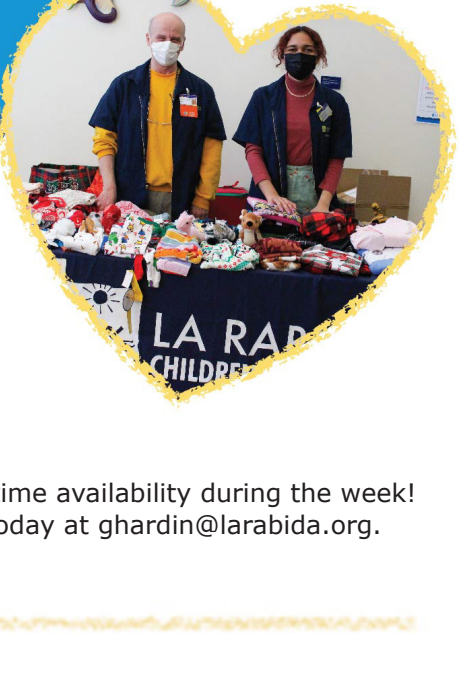






We are pleased to share La Rabida's 2022 annual report. Our annual report highlights La Rabida's notable milestones that took place over the past year. We are grateful for your continuous support and look forward to a happy and healthy 2023!

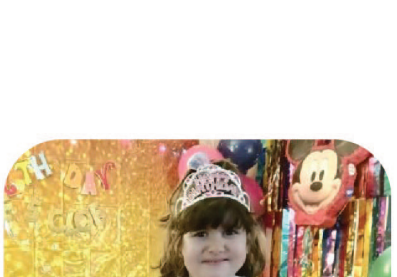
## Volunteer with Heart!



La Rabida is looking for volunteers who have morning and daytime availability during the week! Please contact Volunteer Manager George Hardin to apply today at ghardin@larabida.org.

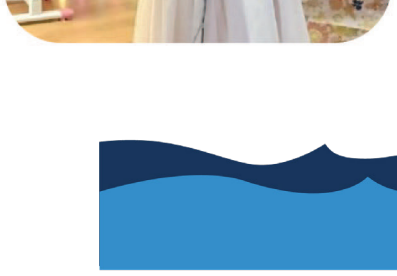
## La Rabida in the News

### Young Moms Form Special Friendship While Daughters are Hospitalized



NBC Chicago  
For any parent, a stroll outside with their babies may be a walk in the park. But for Ashianna Moon and Deshayla Gray, it's a different story. Both of their daughters, Riley and Laiyah, have special needs and rely on ventilators to breathe. "I really feel understood because we are kind of going through similar things," Gray said. "If I say something, she doesn't think I'm just being overly dramatic or blowing things out of proportion. She understands..."  
<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/young-moms-form-special-friendship-while-daughters-are-hospitalized/3032043/>

### Girl Told She Would Not Live Longer Than a Year Celebrates 5th Birthday



WGN Chicago  
Five years ago, Auodia went into early labor and delivered a very sick baby girl - Alice, her first child. Alice was diagnosed with a rare condition that doesn't allow her to breathe on her own. Doctors delivered the heart-wrenching news to the new parents that their baby would likely not make it to her first birthday...  
<https://wgnv.com/news/chicago-news/girl-who-was-told-she-would-not-live-longer-than-a-year-celebrates-5th-birthday/>