



# CURRENTS



## Amiri's

## Journey Home

One of our patients, Amiri, was recently discharged from our inpatient unit, graduating to outpatient care. Born at just 24 weeks gestation, Amiri was transferred to La Rabida at 13 months old, primarily to wean her ventilator use.

**When she first arrived, Amiri was relying on her ventilator 24 hours a day. Now she can be off of it for several hours a day – a great achievement!** Additionally, because Amiri is exclusively fed through a gastrostomy tube the team had to work to regulate and balance her feeding to ensure she was getting enough nutrition without over-feeding her either.

***Amiri's story continues inside.***

## Amiri's Journey Home

Continued from front.

Amiri's care team cared for Amiri's medical needs while helping her grow, develop, and thrive, all while supporting her parents at the same time. A big part of that included preparing them for when Amiri got discharged – how to manage her tracheostomy, ventilator, and gastrostomy feeding tube at home.

**"Being able to be with Amiri was the best part of being at La Rabida," says Selena. "Seeing how the nurses and therapists were with her was really helpful."**

Amiri also received speech, physical, and occupational therapy, along with support from a respiratory therapist and infant development specialist. Her entire care team was focused on building her skills globally to move, interact, and play.

Through it all, Amiri's parents depended on her care team to help them learn about caring for Amiri on their own. They became experts at playing and engaging with their daughter while keeping her medically safe.

Amiri is still dependent on her tracheostomy, ventilator, and gastrostomy feeding tube, so she'll continue to visit our Technology Dependent Clinic in our outpatient center where she'll meet with her entire La Rabida care team all under one roof.

**"It felt so good the day we were discharged," says Selena. "I was so happy to know I was finally going to take my baby home."**



## New Year, New Faces

### Bon Voyage, Brenda

As 2023 came to a close, we said goodbye to our longtime President and CEO, Brenda J. Wolf. After 35 years of service to La Rabida, Brenda retired at the end of the year.

Brenda leaves an indelible mark on the hospital, the community, and the countless lives she touched throughout her tenure. Under her leadership, La Rabida has evolved into a beacon of hope and healing for children facing complex conditions, disabilities, chronic illnesses, and trauma. Throughout her career, she has championed the hospital's mission to provide comprehensive, compassionate care to all children, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Brenda's daily presence will be missed greatly, but her dedication and influence will affect patients, families, staff, and supporters for the foreseeable future.

**"While she will be missed, Brenda's profound impact on La Rabida Children's Hospital will continue to resonate for years to come," says Fred Berglund, La Rabida board chairman. "As her time at La Rabida comes to a close, the hospital stands poised to build upon her remarkable legacy."**



### Interim Leadership

Looking toward the future, La Rabida has appointed La Rabida Board member Dr. Kelly Guglielmi to serve as the interim CEO. A board-certified nephrologist and internist, Dr. Guglielmi has been a member of La Rabida's Board of Trustees since 2018. She has served in various medical and hospital leadership roles for more than 20 years, most recently as the Chief Medical Officer at Advocate Christ Medical Center from 2017 through 2021.

As a devoted trustee who knows our institution well, Guglielmi will guide La Rabida until our new CEO, Rolla T. Sweis, PharmD, MA, takes the helm as President and CEO in April.

## Celebrating the Holidays at La Rabida

The holidays are an extraordinary time at La Rabida. From patient surprises to staff spirit wear, we look forward to the joy that fills our halls all season long. And unless you're Santa Claus, the magic doesn't happen overnight!

### Elf Room Delivers Holiday Joy

Throughout December, our elves worked hard sorting, wrapping, and distributing gifts to patients and their siblings in our outpatient clinic. Our patients and their siblings received a bag stuffed with gifts galore when they visited our Elf Room! We're so thankful for all our donors and volunteers for investing their time, effort, and financial support to bring holiday joy to our patients.

Thank you to Kutchins, Robbins, and Diamond for bringing in the largest toy donation to our workshop again this year! And, thank you to all the volunteers, donors, and staff for helping us create some holiday magic this year!



### Governor Pritzker Visits La Rabida for the Holidays

Governor JB Pritzker stopped by La Rabida on December 6th with the First Lady MK Pritzker to visit patients and their families with gifts. While it's not every day a governor comes to visit, being able to celebrate the holidays and advocate for our patients was a treat.

**Patient Damarion poses for a photo with the governor and first lady (left). First Lady MK Pritzker offers Chaya a colorful stacking toy. How fun (right)!**



### Who Ya Gonna Call? Ghostbusters!

The Windy City Ghostbusters stopped by in an Ectomobile packed to the gills with toys for our patients and their siblings. The Ghostbusters took photos with patients while showing off their ghost-hunting equipment. Some of the Ghostbusters even picked up a shift in our Elf Room, passing out gifts to patients and their siblings.



### Santa Claus Comes to La Rabida

Santa Claus made a special visit Christmas morning to deliver gifts to patients staying at La Rabida. Giving his reindeer a break after a long night, Santa arrived on a Chicago Fire Department engine with lights and sirens to spread his holiday cheer!



## Support Comes in all Shapes and Sizes



Volunteers are needed for everything from after-school tutoring to working in our inpatient and outpatient programs, staffing special events, and so much more!

Scan the QR code below to learn more or email George Hardin at [ghardin@larabida.org](mailto:ghardin@larabida.org).



It is not too late to give!  
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