

# amazingkids



A publication of The Children's Institute

WINTER 2010

**Bringing  
Davanna Back**  
From tragedy to triumph

**Can•tribute**  
Meet some very  
amazing volunteers

**Reconnecting  
Families**  
Helping families rebuild

**End of Year  
Giving**

MAKE THE HOLIDAYS  
AMAZING

# WINTER 2010

A publication of The Children's Institute

## feature stories:



### 2 BRINGING DAVANNA BACK

One night, Dave Feyrer got the call nobody wants to get. It marked the beginning of his daughter's battle for life, a rare medical mystery and a long journey through rehabilitation.



### 10 CAN•TRIBUTE

They're children with special needs, but they still make room in their days, and their hearts, to reach out to help other people in their own community — and far beyond.



### 14 RECONNECTING FAMILIES

Some families are strong enough, and fortunate enough, to withstand life's problems. For families not that fortunate, Project STAR's reunification program offers help and hope.

## and more:

8 SUCCESS STORY

19 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

24 AMAZING WISH LIST

17 WAITING CHILDREN PROFILES

20 NEWS BRIEFS

26 DID YOU KNOW

18 END OF YEAR GIVING

22 COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### On the cover

Davanna Feyrer, 11, with Physical Therapist Gina Argenziano, DPT.

Time and again, the community opens its heart to The Children's Institute, supporting us in a myriad of ways. That is, we believe, an invaluable gift — and also a wise investment by the community in its health and well-being.

Every day, we strive to provide the community with an excellent return on that investment. In this issue of *Amazing Kids*, you will see some of the forms that return can take.

You will, for example, read the story of a young accident victim who required the specialized services of our traumatic brain injury rehabilitation team. After months of treatment, this brave young girl was able to return to her life at home, at school and in her community. The excellence of our Traumatic Brain Injury Program has long been known across the country.

In fact, in this issue, you can read the dramatic story of the very first patient we treated in the program, Peter Thornburgh, the severely brain-injured young son of Dick Thornburgh and his wife, Ginny, who served on The Children's Institute's Board of Directors for many years, and continues to serve on our Associate Board today.

Also in this issue, you will learn how a particular Project STAR program helps reunite families who have come apart. Stable, intact families benefit everyone. They can raise their own children successfully, they often require fewer taxpayer-funded services and they can be productive citizens of their communities.

Finally, you will see how our wonderful students from The Day School, all of them with special needs, contribute to the community in ways that change lives for the better — close to home and across the world. We believe that learning to give back is a crucial life lesson.

Beyond all of that, we provide a return on the community's investment in additional ways, including care for children whose families cannot pay, research and teaching that advance and share best practices, opening our facilities to support other not-for-profit organizations' work, and much more.

We're proud that we're a significant asset to the community, right here in Squirrel Hill and far beyond.

Sincerely,

David K. Miles, MEd, MPM  
President and CEO



# Bringing Davanna Back



**It's the call nobody wants to get, but it came to Dave Feyrer, and it marked the beginning of a battle for life, a rare medical mystery and a long journey through rehabilitation.**

.....

The story begins on a snowy January evening in Butler County. Minnetta Bowman is driving her 10-year-old daughter, Davanna Feyrer, to dance class, when, seemingly out of nowhere, an 18 wheeler slams into their van.

Badly injured herself, Minnetta sees her daughter lying in the wreckage, bleeding from her nose, ears and mouth. Sirens scream as mother and daughter are rushed to Butler Memorial Hospital. A helicopter is summoned to transport Davanna to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, but snow grounds the flight, so Minnetta accompanies her daughter on the agonizingly long ambulance ride. Meanwhile, a family member calls Dave Feyrer, a career Army reservist on duty in Wilkes-Barre. A fellow soldier drives Dave to Pittsburgh.

At Children's Hospital, the trauma team goes to work, but Davanna's prospects seem bleak because she has suffered a major brain injury. As the team labors to save Davanna, Minnetta refuses treatment for herself until Dave can arrive to stay with their daughter.

For weeks, Davanna remains in a coma in intensive care. It becomes clear that she will survive, but not clear what kind of life she will have. Can she ever again be her smart, funny, determined self?

The answer lies a few miles away — at The Children's Institute.



Davanna's smile offers just a hint of the amazing personality and spirit that carried her through her long journey to recovery.

On the Rancho Los Amigos cognitive recovery scale, where 1 is a coma and 8 is the ability to respond purposefully and appropriately, Davanna was only a 2.

Davanna arrived at The Children's Institute in mid-February. Her eyes were open, but she was immobile and unresponsive, silent and stiff.

Dr. Ewa Brandys, board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and pediatric rehabilitation medicine, says, "Children's Hospital had saved Davanna's life, but she was still extremely ill. On the Rancho Los Amigos cognitive recovery scale, where 1 is a coma and 8 is the ability to respond purposefully and appropriately, Davanna was only a 2.

"Nonetheless," she adds, "we expected her to progress steadily because we have considerable experience with this type of injury."

The first step was a meeting of the entire treatment team, which includes the physician; neuropsychologist; nurses; physical and occupational therapists; speech/language pathologist; nutritionist; and the patient care services manager. Denise DeFelice, RN, BS, the Patient Care Services Manager who coordinated Davanna's care under the direction of Dr. Brandys, says, "When a new patient arrives, each member of the team does an evaluation. Then we meet to discuss the treatment plan and goals. The physician, admitting nurse and patient care services manager sit with the parents so we can get to know the child's history, likes and dislikes, and make the surroundings as comfortable and familiar as possible. From that point on, the team meets weekly, advancing the goals and treatment plan."

Davanna was soon settled into a room on the traumatic brain injury unit, a self-contained, controlled-stimulation environment. Even though Davanna's condition made her unable to participate in therapy, the treatment team could still help prepare her for a return to function.

In physical therapy, the goal was to increase range of motion and to manage rigidity in Davanna's muscles. Gina Argenziano, DPT, says, "We positioned Davanna in a standing frame, which safely encourages weightbearing in the legs, helps strengthen and stretch them and even promotes healthful bowel and bladder function."

### Stretching, Casting, Splinting

Occupational therapists sometimes worked simultaneously with the physical therapists. Says Jessica Sattler, a Certified Brain Injury Specialist, "For example, while physical therapy focused on things like trunk and head control, we addressed functional movements, including range of motion in her arms, so Davanna could reach for objects. Initially, her elbows were severely flexed. We could provide some stretch, but we also used a series of casts that maintained the stretch for brief periods, with the final cast followed by splinting and ongoing stretching to maintain the range."

The speech/language pathology team worked on oral stimulation and, through testing, determined that Davanna could swallow, so they began spoon-feeding purees and thicker liquids to retrain the muscles used in eating and speaking. Most of Davanna's nutrition, however, went through a tube into her stomach.

Minnetta and Dave were constantly at Davanna's side, and family and friends visited frequently. All the elements that usually lead to progress were present.

But, mystifyingly, as the weeks went by, Davanna remained immobile and unresponsive. Once in a while, her eye movements seemed purposeful, and occasionally someone would see what seemed to be a glimmer of personality. But nobody was certain, and everybody wondered: was Davanna there?

More weeks passed, and even with the team working hard, there was still with no response and no progress. An MRI of Davanna's brain was performed, hoping it would reveal the cause of her nonresponsiveness, but it produced no answers.

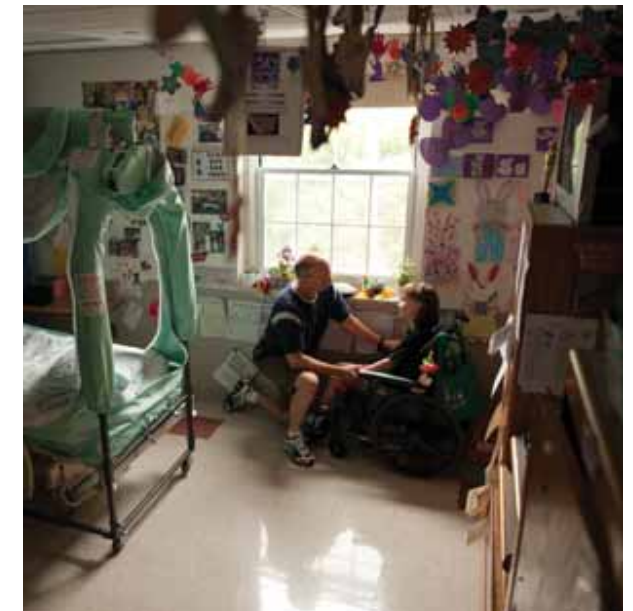
Over time, Dr. Brandys became convinced that there was an aware person behind Davanna's eyes, and



Davanna has an extensive support network. Her best friends, Jamie (left) and Tory (right) visited her every chance they could.



In physical therapy at The Hospital at The Children's Institute, a gait trainer is used to support Davanna's body while she works on strengthening her legs.



Davanna's room was the portrait of support—filled with cards, pictures, letters and gifts from her classmates, community and family all wishing her well.

believed Davanna was one of the three percent of patients with a brain injury who have what is called “akinetic mutism,” a rare syndrome in which the patient is almost frozen, unable to initiate movement or speech.

Treatment for akinetic mutism is uncertain. There is no consensus among experts. Therefore Dr. Brandys tried a series of medications in an effort to stimulate the biochemical functions of Davanna’s brain.

### “We Are Not Accustomed to Giving Up”

Nothing worked, and each brought difficult side effects, but, says Dr. Brandys, “We are not accustomed to giving up; that is not what we do here.”

Finally, as trees grew leaves and signs of spring — and hope — were everywhere, Dr. Brandys made a breakthrough. “Davanna’s situation reminded me of what is seen in Parkinson’s patients,” she recalls, “so I thought we should try a medication useful with Parkinson’s.”

Davanna began to respond almost immediately. Minnetta says, “Usually everyone spoke in terms that were so empirical and, professional, but with Davanna’s situation they kept telling us that ‘things just need to click.’ It turned out that was exactly the right word. One day, things just clicked.”

Dave smiles and adds, “And they’ve been clicking ever since.”

Davanna was still unable to speak, but she could cooperate in her treatment, and gradually, she made progress. For example, in occupational therapy, she practiced hand-eye coordination, upper body strengthening and endurance and daily living skills, like grooming and eating.

In physical therapy, the goal was helping her re-learn how to move her legs through the use of a gait trainer and a safety harness over a treadmill. She also learned to control a simple, powered wheelchair.

And in speech/language therapy, she worked hard on communication. Val Lazar, MS, CCC-SLP, says, “A first step was deliberately directing her gaze toward a particular picture, but quite soon she progressed to using a special augmentative device that spoke what she typed.”

### Sticking Her Tongue Out at Her Nurse

Davanna’s speech returned with the summer. Her first word was “hi,” and, even though her speech was difficult to understand she managed to make her wants and needs clear. Along the way, her lively personality re-emerged. She smiled, and even teased the staff a bit. When charge nurse Sandy Stritmatter, RN, BS, needed to give Davanna medication that didn’t taste good, Davanna would grin and stick her tongue out at Sandy.


As it became clear that Davanna’s inpatient stay was winding down, the staff began working with Dave and Minnetta to plan the accommodations that would be needed for Davanna at home. And the CABLE (Cognitive and Behavioral Learning Environment) staff began working with the school Davanna would attend in the fall to recommend accommodations and approaches that would encourage success.

From beginning to end, the family’s strong support system surrounded Davanna, Dave and Minnetta with love, friendship, practical assistance and constant, lively visits, including one from a two-star Army Reserve general and his entourage.

Dr. Brandys says, “All of us thought that the support was great, but, mostly, we thought that Dave and Minnetta were remarkable.” Denise adds, “They had to make an enormous adjustment, but they coped with love and faith, and no self-pity.”

In turn, Dave and Minnetta have high regard for The Children’s Institute. Says Dave, “The people are expert and compassionate, every one of them.” Minnetta adds, “They would lift us up when we were down, and they would give us hope. We are thrilled that Davanna ended up here.” ■

To learn more about the Traumatic Brain Injury Program, please contact Patrick Quirk at 412.420.2115 or pqu@the-institute.org.



For information on making a gift in support of The Hospital at The Children’s Institute, please contact Helene Conway-Long at 412.420.2201 or hcl@the-institute.org.



Supported by her parents as she has been throughout her recovery, Davanna cheerfully walks to her family’s van to go home. Davanna was an inpatient at The Hospital at The Children’s Institute for seven months.

### Heading Home

A major chapter in Davanna’s story ends on a sunny late-summer afternoon, more than seven months after the accident. Davanna rides in a wheelchair from the brain injury unit to The Children’s Institute’s front desk. The family van is parked outside. Staff members gather with the family, and there are hugs, smiles and a few tears.

But it’s the brief journey from the front desk to the door that brings the biggest smiles and the most tears. With help from Dave and Minnetta, Davanna rises from the wheelchair, and, holding on to each other, the family slowly walks out into the sunshine and heads home.

“The people are expert and compassionate, every one of them. They would lift us up when we were down, and they would give us hope.”

### Today

Today, Davanna is a sixth-grade student at Meridian Elementary School, where she attends some mainstream classes and some for children with special needs. Minnetta says, “She needs a little more time and practice to get things, but we’re working to overcome those obstacles.”

Davanna still receives liquids through a gastric tube for a few hours overnight, and, three days a week, she has outpatient therapy sessions at The Children’s Institute. Focus areas include speech (Davanna can still be difficult to understand), improved mobility (she uses a wheelchair only for long distances, but still needs a walker and bracing on her right foot) and occupational therapy (working on fine motor skills).

Back for her therapies, Davanna cheerfully works her way around The Children’s Institute, saying hello to old friends, describing school, sticking her tongue out at Sandy and showing off her new blue nail polish.

While there’s still a way to go, it’s very clear: Davanna is back.

Read more about Davanna, including a letter from her parents and a remarkable story and article about friendship, at [www.amazingkids.org/davanna](http://www.amazingkids.org/davanna).

# A Family Tragedy, the Essence of Humanity and a Wonderful Gift

The small boy smiled shyly, walking unsteadily and clutching his mother's hand as they entered the Home for Crippled Children, now The Children's Institute, a place that would change his life. Nobody could know then that the child would be the first patient in what would become a world-renowned program.

The date was January 7, 1964, and the small boy was Peter Thornburgh, just under 4 years old. As an infant, Peter had suffered severe brain injuries in an auto accident that killed his mother and injured his two older brothers.

In the intervening years, Peter had received abundant love and care at home, but no rehabilitation services until his father, Dick Thornburgh, married a 23-year-old teacher named Ginny Judson. She knew of the Home for Crippled Children, and she and Dick decided to see what it could do for their son.

That first day is one Ginny will never forget. "Helen Paytok, a program coordinator, greeted us with great warmth," she recalls, "and soon an entire team of professionals were working with Peter. He was enrolled in the pre-school, and he received occupational, physical and speech therapies. He made marvelous progress, more than Dick and I had dared to hope."

The comprehensive transdisciplinary approach that helped Peter was an extension of the method the Home had used for years to help children with severe cerebral palsy, which is essentially an injury to the brain before, during or after birth. The program for children with traumatic brain injury continued to develop over the next decade with innovative therapy and treatment.

Dr. Anna Chorazy, the pediatrician recruited to become medical director of the Home in 1975, says, "When I arrived, I saw that children I'd referred here had far exceeded my expectations, and it was clear that the comprehensive approach was the reason. It worked remarkably well with children who had trauma to their brains."

Under Dr. Chorazy, the newly formed Traumatic Brain Injury Program grew rapidly. Refinements were added constantly, such as cognitive remediation approaches developed in Israel.

As word of the program's success spread, more and more patients were referred. The organization sponsored a prestigious national head injury conference. And in 1985, a staff member, Mark Ylvisaker, PhD, director, Speech/Language Pathology, edited the first comprehensive book on pediatric head injury for the practitioner.

A London reviewer wrote, "Most of the authors work at the Rehabilitation Institute of Pittsburgh [the organization's name at the time], and their expertise and sagacity represent a tribute to the work that goes on in that institution."

## One Young Patient at a Time

Dr. Chorazy retired in 2003, but the program continued to grow, incorporating new techniques, medications and best practices. Today it is world-renowned for its excellence, but, as always, success is measured one young patient at a time.

Peter is certainly one of those successes. Today, nearing age 50, he's a contented man and a respected member of his Harrisburg community. Even though he deals with significant cognitive and physical challenges, he lives with some independence in a supervised apartment, and volunteers every day at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

Peter gives back to the community in another way: by collecting, and asking friends and family to collect, aluminum can pull-tabs, which Peter donates to a fundraising-through-recycling initiative at the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey. His family remains in touch with his most dedicated pull-tab contributor, the now-retired Helen Paytok.



Left: Peter Thornburgh celebrating his birthday with his mother, Ginny, in 1965. Right: Peter Thornburgh today.

For his volunteer work over the last few decades, Peter recently received the "Essence of Humanity" award from United Way of the Capital Region. He accepted the award in front of a cheering crowd of 400.

The Thornburgh family has strongly supported The Children's Institute. Dick Thornburgh, of course, went on to become Governor of Pennsylvania and U.S. Attorney General, and led a \$3 million fundraising campaign for the organization in 1967.

Ginny Thornburgh, a passionate advocate for children and adults with disabilities, and currently the Director of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Interfaith Initiative in Washington, D.C., was a member of the The Children's Institute's Board of Directors, and remains a member of the Associate Board.

The Thornburghs' oldest son, John, is now in his second term as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors.

## Extraordinary Gift, Fitting Tribute

Dick and Ginny, their son, John and his wife Sharon, and two other couples, Si and Marcia Keehn of Winnetka, Illinois; and Chuck and Jo Ann Queenan of Pittsburgh, have pooled their contributions, and made possible the naming of "The Peter Thornburgh Patient Care Services Suite."

That suite, with its entrance in the Squirrel Hill facility's busy main lobby, is the hub of activity for families whose children are being treated. It is the heart of service, the place where treatment teams and resources are coordinated and where each family has an advocate. The spirit of caring the Thornburghs experienced so many years ago is still evident every hour as the patient care services team works hand-in-hand with families along the continuum of care.

President and CEO David Miles says, "We are so pleased to be able to offer this very fitting tribute both to Peter Thornburgh's remarkable qualities and to the compassionate care he received at the Home. The new area will be a daily inspiration to other individuals and families we serve."

Ginny blinks back tears as she speaks about the reason for the gift. "That day so long ago was the beginning of Peter's chance for a life grounded in hope. The Home encouraged him to try, and succeed at, things we had never thought possible. I just don't know where we would be if we hadn't come here. We are so grateful." ■

*\*Throughout the years, The Children's Institute has been known as the Memorial Home for Crippled Children, The Home for Crippled Children and The Rehabilitation Institute.*

*Do you have an amazing success story to share? Please contact Greg Lightner at 412.420.2203 or gli@the-institute.org.*



# can•tribute

Most people know that students at The Day School require special services, but many people don't know that the students regularly volunteer. 📖 “The impulse to give back is one of the best aspects of human nature. Our kids are terrific human beings, so we ensure that they have opportunities to contribute to the community,” says Bill Bauer, Chief School Administrator of The Day School. 📖 This photo essay is proof positive that even young people coping with significant challenges can give from their hearts, with love and joy.

## Ten Thousand Villages: *For Children Across The World*

Early each autumn, three separate classes of six to eight high school students, accompanied by staff members, walk and wheel from The Day School at The Children's Institute.

Holding colorful cloth bags packed with brand-new school supplies, they turn from Shady Avenue onto Forbes. They continue a block to Ten Thousand Villages, a mission-driven nonprofit store selling fair trade products from around the world.

For each participating classroom, the trip culminates a special volunteer project: preparing bags of school supplies for children who don't have any, mostly refugee and displaced children in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

“We provide the bags, but it's up to participating schools to fill them,” explains Sue Schneider, a founder and volunteer at the Squirrel Hill Ten Thousand Villages store (there are others across North America).

She says, “These bags of notebooks, colored pencils, rulers, erasers and other school basics are incredibly meaningful. I saw a child in Malawi attending school under a tree, scratching letters and numbers in the dirt with a stick.”

“The students at The Day School enjoy reaching out to other kids; they like that the pencil they're holding will soon be held by a child in a distant country,” says Ellen Leger, MA, CCC/SLP, one of The Day School's 13 speech/language pathologists. She arranges the Ten Thousand Villages opportunity, and others like it, for the students.

She explains that filling the bags with supplies, purchased in bulk by The Day School, provides learning opportunities for the students. “There are opportunities for counting, labeling. ‘What's this called? What's this color?’ And learning about sharing, taking turns, sequencing and more. And,” she smiles, “it's also fun.”

Each participating classroom completes 20 bags, and then the students bring the bags to the store. They shyly greet the store's staffers, who distribute little musical instruments, and everyone makes music while Sue delights the group by doing what she calls her “happy, happy thank-you dance.”

There are laughter, smiles and good feelings all around. Soon, the bags will be sent to the Mennonite Central Committee for distribution across the world. Meanwhile, the students and staff happily return to their classrooms.



## Anathan House: Generations Together

Once a month during the school year, two classrooms of high school students from The Day School, plus accompanying staff, walk and wheel to another Squirrel Hill destination: the stately red brick Anathan House, near the corner of Forbes and Murray.

The National Council of Jewish Women's Anathan House is home to the Anathan Club, a supportive daytime program for senior citizens who may need extra structure, supervision and socialization throughout the day. The Day School students are there as volunteers, providing company and cheer for Anathan Club members.

For each visit, typically ten to 15 seniors and six to eight students, plus the staff of both organizations, gather in the large and comfortable living room.

"Everyone's a little shy for the first visit or two of the school year," says Anathan Club Manager, Zehava Waltzer, "but that wears off quickly, and then it's just the warmth of friends enjoying each other's company."

Planned activities provide enjoyment and make the time fly by. Recent projects have included planting flowers, making posters and sing-alongs. "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" is a favorite of both generations. Sometimes, both the students and the seniors use conversation cards that carry "icebreaker" questions, such as "How many brothers and sisters do you have?"

Ellen says, "The visits are wonderful opportunities for our students to practice social skills, making eye contact, introducing themselves, sometimes using augmentative communications devices, and, if possible, shaking hands."

"As with the Ten Thousand Villages opportunity, this is a real-world experience. The kids learn first-hand how important it is, for instance, to clarify their speech as much as possible and to listen when others are speaking. We always look for opportunities for our students to generalize their communication and other skills into the broader community. That's where so much of life happens."

Ms. Waltzer adds, "Intergenerational programs like this enrich the lives of everyone who participates. For the seniors, it's like having a roomful of grandchildren. And for the students, it's like having a roomful of 'bubbies' and 'zadies'! Everyone wins."

When the students return to The Day School after each Anathan Club visit, they talk about that day's experience, and the staff includes news of the visit in a note that goes to each child's family every day. Ellen says, "Parents tell us they are proud to be able to say in conversations with their friends, 'My child volunteers at the senior center!'"

To learn more about The Day School, please contact Bill Bauer at 412.420.2300 or [bba@the-institute.org](mailto:bba@the-institute.org).



For information on making a gift in support of The Day School at The Children's Institute, please contact Helene Conway-Long at 412.420.2201 or [hcl@the-institute.org](mailto:hcl@the-institute.org).



# reconnecting families

From everyday support to real-life detective work, Project STAR does what it takes to help families get back together and move forward.

Some families are strong enough, and fortunate enough, that, when troubles come, they can either cope by themselves or access resources to help them.

Other families are more fragile and less fortunate. Those families are the focus of Project STAR's Intensive Family Support Program, serving Allegheny, Beaver and Westmoreland Counties.

The program's primary focus is family preservation — supporting families that are still intact, helping them access resources they need to stay together and providing a healthy, safe environment for their children.

But sometimes Project STAR is called in by children's protective services agencies to work with families whose children have been removed from the home and placed in foster care. In those cases, the goal is family reunification.

Ruth McLean, manager, Intensive Family Support Program, says, "Drug and alcohol abuse are among the issues these families face, and they often lead to problems with housing, transportation and even nutrition. Undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues are also often factors. The upshot can be extreme poverty and an environment that's unsafe for children."

The hard work toward reunification is multi-faceted. "If substance abuse is an issue, detox and treatment are the first steps," says Ruth. "If mental health issues are present, we link the parents with appropriate services. And then we work on other basics; for example, helping the family find decent, safe housing."

Services are tailored to the particular needs of each family, including, for instance, assistance with transportation, job training programs and coaching with activities like budgeting and healthy food choices.

In most cases, parenting education is a priority. "Many of the parents we see haven't been parented well themselves, so they need to learn," says Ruth. Much of the parenting education is hands on during supervised visits with the children.

Sometimes Project STAR is called in to work with families whose children have been removed from the home and placed in foster care. In those cases, the goal is family reunification.

Ruth says, "Most parents are willing to work hard to get their kids back. And, whatever the problems, most kids want to be back with their parents. Our job is to make sure that's best for the child."

When that's not the case, children may be made available for adoption.

And, when reunification happens, the support continues and even intensifies, to ensure that the newly reunited family thrives.

Happily, most of the time reunification efforts work.

The Project STAR success rate is an excellent 93%. "We're proud of that," Ruth smiles.

Children shine brightest in families. Whether the goal is adoption or reunification with birth families, Project STAR does everything possible to place children with safe, nurturing, forever families. These children are just a few of the many who are waiting for homes to call their own.



**A FAMILY FOR GEORGE**

On his own since age 8, George lived in multiple foster homes. As he approached age 18, and eligibility to leave foster care, Project STAR decided to try to find George's family. Bethany Leas, Project STAR's Supervisor, Statewide Adoption Network services, says, "We wanted to find people who might be able to guide him as he moves into young adulthood."

So Bethany became a detective, searching the Internet and placing calls across the country. Finally, a woman in Ohio called back, saying "You found me!" It was George's aunt, who had tried for years to locate her lost nephew.

Recently, George and his family reconnected in a reunion marked by both joy and reticence. For now, George remains with his foster dad as he works with Project STAR to decide what comes next, but for the first time George has a family to help him with life's important decisions. ■



**THE BABY RETURNS HOME**

At just 18, Ericka has three children, ages 5 years, 3 years and 6 months. But circumstances, including her youth, an on-and-off relationship with her own mother and an abusive relationship with the children's father, led to the two younger children being placed in foster care (her mother raises the oldest child).

Project STAR has supported Ericka in many ways, including parenting education, housing, access to medical insurance, food stamps, counseling and more. She is working toward her GED and connecting with community resources.

And it's helping. Baby Bari was recently returned to Ericka. While she's proud of what she's achieved, Ericka still longs to be reunited with her two daughters. She knows it will take time and work, but, she says, "I'm going to make it happen."

To learn more about the Intensive Family Support Program, please contact Rachel Marx at 412.244.3051 or [rma@the-institute.org](mailto:rma@the-institute.org).



For information on making a gift in support of Project STAR at The Children's Institute, please contact Helene Conway-Long at 412.420.2201 or [hcl@the-institute.org](mailto:hcl@the-institute.org).

Fred is a courteous 16 year old who is sometimes shy, but warms up quickly to friendly people. He has a wide range of interests, including computers, sports and playing pool with his friends. He hopes to attend college. One of his dreams is to find a father who is mechanically inclined and who might restore an old car with him. But, mostly, he's just excited about being adopted by people who will care about him.

*Fred is legally free for adoption. All families will be considered.*

**Fred**

15 years old



Interested in computers, sports and playing pool  
Would love to work on cars with a father figure

**Andrew**

15 years old



Likes to be indoors  
Is an avid reader  
Enjoys computers, TV and playing video games

Andrew is a 15 year old with a pleasant personality and a fine mind. He is in his school's gifted program. When he considers his future, he thinks he may want to attend Pittsburgh Technical Institute. He's looking forward to adoption, but wants his adoptive family to know that he'd like to maintain contact with his current foster family.

*Andrew is legally free for adoption. All families will be considered.*

For more information about Fred and Andrew, visit [www.amazingkids.org](http://www.amazingkids.org). Click on Project STAR, then on Family Placement Services; scroll to Kids Waiting and click. You also may contact Carlena Jenkins, permanency specialist, at 412.244.3083 or [caj@the-institute.org](mailto:caj@the-institute.org).

**Save the Date!**

**Growing Families Through Adoption**  
A Matching and Adoption Awareness Event

For more information, please contact Bethany Leas at 412.224.3075 or [ble@the-institute.org](mailto:ble@the-institute.org).  
\* Training credit available to those who attend.

Thursday, April 8, 2010  
6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Guest Speaker\*  
Manny Howard  
7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Matching Event



The Children's Institute  
1405 Shady Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Growing Families Through Adoption  
Project STAR at The Children's Institute

**IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE EXTRA ROOM IN YOUR HEART THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, GIVE AN AMAZING GIFT.**

For many people, this is a happy season: celebrating holidays, families and the new year. But for many families, this is a season of stress. Just one action on your part can turn worry into relief, and even joy!



**GIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN WHOSE FAMILIES CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY**

For most children's hospitals, uncompensated care, care that is unreimbursed, represents about 4.7% of their budgets. For The Children's Institute, that figure is expected to reach 14% this year.

One reason: even though children are usually well insured, coverage limitations are often reached by the time children enter the rehabilitation process.

At The Children's Institute, we regard uncompensated care as part of our mission, and we rely on individual gifts and grants to make that care possible.

During this busy season, please take a moment to think of the children who need our services, but don't have adequate, or any, insurance coverage. Imagine what this time of year is like for their parents. And then consider helping us help them.


**GIVE HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR FAMILIES DURING PROJECT STAR'S ANNUAL GIFT DRIVE**

Many of the families served by Project STAR have few resources, and their children would go without holiday gifts if it weren't for Project STAR's annual gift drive.

The gifts given through Project STAR are never extravagant. They are modest toys and clothing for the children, and sometimes a grocery store gift card or even vital household basics. But the joy they bring is limitless, to the children who receive the gifts, and to the parents who do not have to face disappointing the children they love.

It's not too late! The last few weeks before the holidays, the most useful items are gift cards and money. Project STAR will use both to buy items on the children's "wish lists" collected by caseworkers.

*If you have questions, please contact Rachel Marx at 412.244.3051 or [rma@the-institute.org](mailto:rma@the-institute.org).*

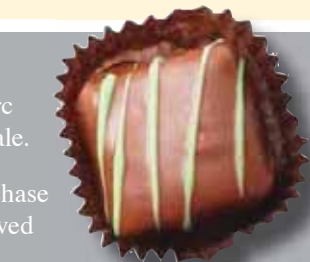
 To give an amazing gift, please visit [www.amazingkids.org/donate](http://www.amazingkids.org/donate) or send your contribution to The Children's Institute, Office of Institutional Advancement, 1405 Shady Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15217.

**GIVE A LAST-MINUTE GIFT**

Here's a great idea: delicious chocolates. And, if you buy them online from Edward Marc Chocolatier ([www.edwardmarc.com](http://www.edwardmarc.com)), The Children's Institute will receive 20% of the sale.

Based in Pittsburgh's South Side, Edward Marc is a premier confectioner, and your purchase of a gift from the company is also a wonderful gift to the amazing kids and families served by The Children's Institute.

All you have to do is enter promotional code **CI09** when finalizing your purchase. Order by December 14 to ensure holiday delivery.



*Edward Marc*



Front row, left to right: John K. Thornburgh, vice chair; Maureen B. Cohon, secretary; Joseph E. Imbriglia, MD, chair; Susan Baker Shipley, treasurer; Michael J. Hannon, vice chair; Back row, left to right: F. Brooks Robinson Jr.; Merrill P. Stabile; Ellen P. Kessler; Nita Wadhvani; N. John Cooper, DPhil; B. Gordon Nelson III; David K. Miles, president and chief executive officer; Anne V. Lewis; Allan MacDougall III; Cynthia D. Sharpira; Ann M. McGuinn; James W. Marczak; Absent from photo: Patricia Suzanne Chesko; John R. Denny; Carolyn D. Duronio; J. Keefe Ellis Jr.; Lisa C. Fagan; Pamela W. Golden; Pradeep K. Khosla, PhD; Michele M. McKenney; Morgan K. O'Brien.

The Children's Institute is supported, inspired and instructed in many different ways by volunteer leaders who donate their time, expertise and personal resources.

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### THE STARS COME OUT TO PLAY AT THE CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

Sometimes being a celebrity doesn't go to one's head. In some cases, it goes to their hearts. That was the case of three celebrities who recently did some amazing things to support our children.

#### ERIC GODARD

Pittsburgh Penguins' Eric Godard took a few hours after practice on October 6 to visit The Children's Institute. Eric loves these visits. He doesn't do it for attention, or to soften his tough-guy image. For him, it's all about the kids, and his visit showed a true bond between Eric and our amazing kids.



#### HINES WARD

As long-time supporters of The Children's Institute, the sisters of Duquesne University's Gamma Phi Beta, an international sorority with a strong service emphasis, helped organize a benefit.

On September 17, Pittsburgh Steelers' Hines Ward was a guest bartender at his restaurant, Southside 86, collecting tips and donations to benefit The Children's Institute. Teammate Jeff Reed and staff from The Children's Institute like Helene Conway-Long and Jane Keim (below) were also on hand to lend support.



#### KEB' MO'

Three-time Grammy Award-winning artist Keb' Mo' took time out of his extensive national tour to visit the patients and students of The Children's Institute on October 30.

Keb' Mo' generously lent his song "I'm Amazing" to the video supporting *The Campaign for an Amazing Future*. After visiting The Children's Institute, he said his song has taken on a new meaning for him. Now, he will remember our amazing kids whenever he performs it.

### BEFORE SLEIGH RIDES, HAYRIDES

It's now time for sleigh rides, but not long ago, it was time for hayrides. And hayriding is exactly what family and friends did at Project STAR's Twelfth Annual Fall Harvest Day on October 17, despite the unseasonably cold weather.

But amid the beautiful fall scenery of Hartwood Acres, hayrides were just one of the attractions. As Project STAR adoptive and foster families, families who provide respite care, and staff members and their families chatted and mingled, adults and children alike enjoyed decorating pumpkins, learning to square dance, making puppets, playing games and having their faces painted. Favorite costumed film and TV characters enchanted the youngest attendees. A delicious barbecue lunch was a highlight of the day-long event.

The very special event, always offered at no cost to the families, is an opportunity for more than fun; it's a time when families who have much in common, but who otherwise might not meet, can connect and form new friendships.



### PROUD TO BE NEIGHBORS

The Children's Institute proudly sponsored the Mister Rogers' Neighborhood of Make-Believe Tour on Saturday, November 7 and Sunday, November 8. This was the first time in eight years that the Neighborhood of Make-Believe set was assembled.

On Friday, November 6, staff, families and neighbors of The Children's Institute had an opportunity to attend a private tour of the set. Visitors pointed, beamed and giggled as they met familiar characters and recognized landmarks from the TV show. The tree where X the Owl lives and King Friday XIII's castle were clear favorites.

Prior to the private tour, WQED celebrated the renaming of Studio A, where Mister Rogers' Neighborhood was filmed, to the Fred Rogers Studio. Speakers at the dedication included David K. Miles, President and CEO of The Children's Institute; Deborah Acklin, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of WQED; and William Isler, CEO of Family Communications, Inc. Each remembered Mr. Rogers and how his compassion and mission touched everyone.

More than 4,000 fans visited WQED over the weekend to see the set and pay tribute to the beloved children's television host.

# community calendar

## December

Wednesday, December 9

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration/ Refreshments  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Speaker

**Grand Rounds “Life after High School for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders”**

Presented by Carolyn Komich Hare, Director, AHEAD (Achieving in Higher Education with Autism/Developmental Disabilities). Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits available. No registration required.

For more information, call 412.420.2270.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

December 24—January 1

Winter Break—NO SCHOOL for The Day School

Friday, December 25

Staff Holiday—NO OUTPATIENT THERAPY

## January

Friday, January 1

Staff Holiday—NO OUTPATIENT THERAPY

Wednesday, January 13

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration/ Refreshments  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Speaker

**Grand Rounds “An Overview of Autism: Strategies used to teach and reduce problem behaviors”**

Presented by Kristin Robson, MS Ed, BCBA, Behavior Analyst and Site Consultant for PA Verbal Behavior Project/Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11. Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits available. No registration required. For more information, call 412.420.2270.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

Monday, January 18

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday  
—NO SCHOOL for The Day School

## February

Wednesday, February 10

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration/ Refreshments  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Speaker

**Grand Rounds “EPSDT: A Critical Benefit for Children with Complex Medical Needs”**

Presented by Joseph Romano, Esquire. Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits available. No registration required. For more information, call 412.420.2270.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

Monday, February 15

President's Day—NO SCHOOL for The Day School

## March

Wednesday, March 10

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration/ Refreshments  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Speaker

**Grand Rounds “Cochlear Implants”**

Presented by Deborah L. Johnston, AuD, CCC-A, Coordinator of Audiology at DePaul School for Hearing and Speech, and David H. Chi, MD, Staff Otolaryngologist and Director of Hearing Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits available. No registration required.

For more information, call 412.420.2270.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

Monday, March 22

In-Service day—NO SCHOOL  
for students of The Day School



## April

Friday, April 2 – Friday, April 9

Spring Break—NO SCHOOL for The Day School

Thursday, April 8

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

4th Annual Growing Families Through Adoption Matching and Adoption Awareness Event  
For more information, please contact Bethany Leas at 412.224.3075 or ble@the-institute.org.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

Wednesday, April 14

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration/ Refreshments  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Speaker

**Grand Rounds TBA**

Presented by TBA. Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits available. No registration required. For more information, call 412.420.2270.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

## May

Wednesday, May 12

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. – Registration/ Refreshments  
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Speaker

**Grand Rounds TBA**

Presented by TBA. Continuing Medical Education (CME) Credits available. No registration required. For more information, call 412.420.2270.

Location: The Children's Institute, 1405 Shady Avenue.

## making wishes come true

You can have an amazing effect on the lives of children with special needs by helping to purchase vital equipment. The Children's Institute's Amazing Wish List includes small to moderate requests that can be fulfilled with a single gift ranging from \$100 to \$5,000. Your donation will go toward the Amazing Wish List item of your choice, and as a donor, you will be listed in our annual report with the wish you fulfilled.\*



### Foreign Language and Multicultural Communication Resource Kit

For The Hospital, communicating important information to patients' families is critical, but can be challenging when English is not their first language. Resources designed to help overcome language barriers include "point and say" cards, pictorial checklists, forms and symptom lists for patients and clinicians. This wish also will include foreign language medical translation tools, patient education kits and pictorial dictionaries. *Cost of wish: \$500; quantity needed: 1*



### Wooden Rocking Chairs

What can be more comforting to an infant than being rocked gently to sleep? For The Hospital, this wish will provide enough rocking chairs to accommodate our tiniest patients without a wait. *Cost of wish: \$100; quantity needed: 3*



### Therapeutic Listening CDs, Headphones and CD Player

Children who have sensory difficulties often need extra support, such as therapeutic listening therapy. Once fulfilled for The Hospital's Green Tree Satellite, this wish will provide necessary materials for those families who cannot afford to purchase the headphones and CD player for themselves. *Cost of wish: \$1,000; quantity needed: 1*



Learn more about additional wishes. Visit [www.amazingkids.org/wishlist](http://www.amazingkids.org/wishlist).



### Video Camcorder

One of Project STAR's major objectives is to match waiting children with resource families who can provide safe, loving homes. This is done through virtual introductions and presentations. A video camcorder would give staff the ability to create dynamic video presentations of children and families to share at various matching events. *Cost of wish: \$400; quantity needed: 1*



### AS 2600 Therapy Bike


Physical therapy is hard work at The Day School, but with the right tools it can be enjoyable. This specially equipped bicycle with custom frame, molded footplates and high-backed seat, provides exercise, range of motion and alternate mobility to make group fitness classes and individual and group therapies fun. Granting this wish will provide a therapy bike with a higher weight threshold for older students. *Cost of wish: \$5,000; quantity needed: 1*



### Printing Costs for The Day School Scoop

*The Scoop* is a student-run periodical that features articles and interviews by our amazing kids. Teachers love this tool for inquiry-based learning. Students love sharing what they discover at school and in the community. Each issue is delivered to hundreds of families and friends. *Cost of wish: \$2,050 per issue*

\* If the final cost of an item is less than the amount contributed, any remaining funds will be dedicated to complementary needs or, if not possible, released into the general fund.

 For more information about donating funds for the purchase of an item(s) from the Amazing Wish List, please contact Michele Mehal at 412.420.2204 or [mgi@the-institute.org](mailto:mgi@the-institute.org).

## MISSION

The Children's Institute is an independent, licensed nonprofit organization located in the Squirrel Hill section of Pittsburgh that is dedicated to promoting the well-being of children, young people and their families and to providing services that meet their special needs.

The Children's Institute was designed specifically as a rehabilitation facility, and its administration and staff are committed to increasing accessibility for all persons. If you have accessibility concerns, please call The Children's Institute at 412.420.2485.

## SERVICE

The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh does not exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, nation of origin, religious creed, disability, ancestry, sex, age or sexual orientation in employment or in admission to, participation in or receipt of the services and benefits of any of its programs and activities, whether carried out by The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh directly or through a contractor or any other entity whom The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh arranges to carry out its programs and activities.

This policy statement is in accordance with the provision of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Regulations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued pursuant to the acts, Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 80, 84, 91 and other applicable Federal, State, and Local Laws and Regulations.

For more information about this policy, please contact Administration at 412.420.2400. For more information about The Children's Institute, please call 412.420.2400 or log on to [www.amazingkids.org](http://www.amazingkids.org). For TDD use, contact us through the Pennsylvania Relay Service. Voice: 1.800.654.5988 TDD: 1.800.654.5984.

The official registration and financial information of The Children's Institute may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

The Children's Institute is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, contributions to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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# The Children's Institute

Amazing Kids. Amazing Place.

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## didyouknow?

### *We're Always on the Leading Edge*

Staff members of The Children's Institute not only attend conferences to stay on the leading edge of treatments, trends and technology, but, as experts in their fields, they also present at local, regional and national conferences and meetings. This fall, The Children's Institute took this commitment even further by hosting two conferences. The first was "Integrated Interventions - Behavioral, Sensory and Pre-Linguistic Strategies for Success with Children with Autism," followed by "Reflex Neurovascular Dystrophy (RND) - Breaking the Cycle of Chronic Pain in Children." Conferences like these are an excellent way to highlight some of the amazing work done every day by The Children's Institute.

**WE'RE GROWING** Our outpatient satellite office in Green Tree has outgrown its current location. So, at the end of January, we're moving. Our new location is 1370 Washington Pike, 5th floor in Bridgeville. Look for our official move date to be announced soon.