

# HEROES

THE MAGAZINE OF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEW ORLEANS | FALL 2022



**A commitment  
to **community****

ThriveKids advances the  
health of kids in the classroom.



The Miracle League, funded in part by Children's Hospital New Orleans, creates moments of joy and health for children of all abilities.







# Contents

## FOREWORD

An unwavering commitment to community 2  
John R. Nickens IV, President & CEO

## NEWS

Children's Hospital named among the nation's best by U.S. News & World Report 3  
Leading the way with innovative affiliations 4

## FEATURES

ThriveKids: Advancing the health of kids in the classroom 5  
Kids Join the Fight creates a hospital haven 10  
Children's Hospital leads the way in Trauma and Grief care 12  
Serving the underserved through the Greater New Orleans Immunization Network 13

## INSIDE CHILDREN'S

Trombone Shorty brings a mini music fest to Children's Hospital 14  
Second annual Pediatric Mental Health Summit sheds light on suicide prevention 15  
Steps to success 16

## PHILANTHROPY

Children's Hospital establishes Hales Fund for community benefits programs 17  
Fundraising in the community 18  
Philanthropy amplifies our impact 19  
A one-of-a-kind partnership: Chick-fil-A New Orleans 19  
The generosity of a city 20  
Children's Miracle Network successes 21  
The Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation helps create extraordinary moments 21

## ON THE HORIZON

What's just around the corner at Children's Hospital? 22

## BY THE NUMBERS

Our community benefits programs by the numbers 23



# Foreword

## HEROES

Fall 2022, Volume 4, No. 2

### Editor

Kristen Robinson

### Associate Editor

Marykay Thevis

### Photographers

Frank Aymami  
Chris Granger  
George Kuchler  
Michael Palumbo  
Justen Williams

### Contributing Writers

Kelley Adamec  
Lynnsey Belsome  
Leslie Cardé  
Katherine Fleming  
Shaina Grace  
Kristen Robinson  
Marykay Thevis

### Editorial Board

Kelley Adamec  
Development Department

Jonathan Brouk

Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer  
& Chief Strategy Officer

Lindsey Casey, RN

Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer

Robert Gassiot

Creative Director, LCMC Health

Natasha Richardson

Vice President, Academic Affiliations  
& Community Programs

Kristen Robinson

Senior Director, Marketing  
& Institutional Advancement

Marykay Thevis

Communications Manager,  
Marketing & Communications

John R. Nickens IV

President & Chief Executive Officer

Mark W. Kline, MD

Physician-in-Chief & Chief Medical Officer

200 Henry Clay Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70118  
chnola.org  
504.899.9511



**Children's Hospital**  
New Orleans  
LCMC Health

## JOHN R. NICKENS IV, PRESIDENT & CEO



# An unwavering commitment to community

Dear friends and supporters,

Community has always been part of the fabric of Children's Hospital New Orleans. Since our founding in 1955 to care for the children of Louisiana following the polio epidemic, Children's Hospital has delivered expert healthcare for all children and only children. With the recent completion of our campus transformation, we have welcomed a new chapter in our hospital's 65+ year history of caring for children across our Louisiana communities.

Our why is the most important piece of this unprecedented investment, and that is to improve health outcomes and influence the social determinants of child health, which, here in Louisiana, are among the worst in the nation. I firmly believe that the reality of being last or performing the worst in health outcomes for kids does not match the culture and passion of the people of Louisiana. It is time to make real change, and we can and must do better.

Children's Hospital is committed to leading the charge to build a healthier future for kids – and the time for change is now. We also know that change happens beyond the walls of our hospital and clinics. It happens within the communities we serve.

In the 1990s, Children's Hospital first invested in a formal community benefits program, including our Immunization Program, Parenting Center and Audrey Hepburn CARE Center – programs each designed to meet the many needs of the community. These vital community programs continue today, and have been expanded upon in recent years to include innovative programs like ThriveKids, which is bringing medical and mental health services directly to kids in the school setting, along with Louisiana's first Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center.

By bringing ThriveKids and programs like our TAG Center to the community in collaboration with partners like our school systems, city and state agencies, and academic medical partners, we are making impactful progress toward a healthier future for kids. I am incredibly hopeful about the tangible progress we are making that will impact the health and wellbeing of our children now, and I invite you to learn more in the pages that follow.

All of this is possible thanks to your unwavering support and belief in our mission to provide the very best care for kids right here in Louisiana.

With gratitude,

John R. Nickens IV  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Children's Hospital New Orleans





## Children's Hospital named among the nation's best by U.S. News & World Report

This year, for the very first time, Children's Hospital New Orleans was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a top 50 children's hospital in the nation. To be nationally ranked in a specialty, a hospital must excel in caring for the sickest, most medically complex patients. U.S. News & World Report measures excellence according to criteria including patient outcomes, mortality and infection rates, and compliance with best practices. These rankings can help patients who are looking for the best specialty care or resources on a certain condition or diagnosis. The report evaluates 15 areas of specialty care, and in 2022 the top 50 hospitals for each specialty were ranked out of the more than 5,000 hospitals that submitted data.

Children's Hospital New Orleans received outstanding results, landing two pediatric programs within the top 50 in the nation—Urology and Nephrology. Children's is also proud to be recognized among the best children's hospitals in U.S. News & World Report's Southeastern Regional Rankings, tied for 15th in the Southeast Region out of 43 children's hospitals. Upon receiving the prestigious ranking results, Children's held an internal celebration and second line. Team members and patients danced on the hospital's outdoor patio and enjoyed snoballs to mark the hospital's successful first entry into the U.S. News & World Report ranking program.

Children's Hospital's Urology program, ranking #4 in the Southeast Region, is staffed by an expert team of pediatric urologists that brings more than 35 years of experience in caring for babies, children, and teens with urinary conditions. In 2021, the hospital's urology team saw more than 8,200 patients and performed more than 1,300 surgical cases.

Similarly, Children's Nephrology program offers advanced care and treatment for children with kidney and urinary tract disorders, as well as all end-stage renal disease services like dialysis. Children's Hospital is proud to serve as Louisiana's only pediatric dialysis program, performing 6,630 dialysis treatments in 2021 alone.

Children's Hospital's Urology and Nephrology programs are affiliated with LSU Health New Orleans and Tulane University School of Medicine to continue growing the legacy of success through ongoing research and best practice pediatric medicine.

These first-ever rankings demonstrate Children's Hospital's unwavering commitment to serve as the leader in pediatric healthcare for the Gulf South region, providing the best care for every child.



## Leading the way through innovative affiliations

The mission of Children's Hospital New Orleans has always been to care for all kids and only kids, regardless of the family's ability to pay. In recent years, the hospital has expanded its main campus and presence across the State through growth of specialty and primary care clinics to best serve children and families close to home.

This summer, Children's Hospital introduced two dynamic partnerships to further fulfill this mission. The hospital announced a new collaboration with nationally recognized Cleveland Clinic to expand pediatric imaging capabilities, and a new affiliation with North Oaks Health System in Hammond to improve access to care and health outcomes for children and families in Tangipahoa Parish.

Children's Hospital's new affiliation with Cleveland Clinic's Imaging Institute aims to expand access to board-certified pediatric radiology experts for children and families of New Orleans and Louisiana. Through the partnership, a team of 16 Cleveland Clinic pediatric and neuro-radiologists supplements the existing Children's Hospital team of board-certified pediatric radiologists, so that the hospital and its satellite locations can have 24/7 access to pediatric fellowship-trained radiologists.

According to Children's Hospital Chief Operating Officer, Jonathan Brouk, this fulfills a need for around-the-clock pediatric radiology services as the hospital continues to expand. "Families will know their child's imaging is read by pediatric experts at all Children's Hospital New Orleans locations at any time of day, instead of having to rely on adult radiologists or waiting until the next day for a study to be read by a pediatric expert, as is the case at other pediatric facilities in our community," explained Brouk.



North Oaks Health System and Children's Hospital New Orleans announced in September that they are joining forces to expand healthcare services for children and families across Tangipahoa Parish and the Northshore Region, with the vision to improve pediatric health outcomes.

Children's Hospital New Orleans opened its state-of-the-art Imaging Center in April 2020 as part of the hospital's \$300 million campus expansion.

This Center, combined with imaging services offered at six offsite clinics, including Metairie and West Jefferson Emergency Departments and specialty clinics across the State, emphasize the need for

24/7 access to experts in pediatric radiology. The two organizations are planning to further expand the partnership to include additional specialists from Cleveland Clinic to read cardiac MRI images, bridging expertise between imaging and heart care while expanding cardiac imaging capabilities at Children's New Orleans.

Another exciting collaboration is a new affiliation between Children's Hospital New Orleans and North Oaks Medical Center in Hammond, announced in September 2022. This partnership will expand healthcare services for children and families across Tangipahoa Parish and the Northshore Region, building upon existing services that are provided by Children's Hospital New Orleans at North Oaks Medical Center today. These include neonatology, pediatric hospitalist coverage, and pediatric cardiology services. Over the coming months, the two hospitals will explore opportunities for Children's Hospital to provide additional pediatric services at North Oaks, bringing specialized care for children closer to home for many families.





# ThriveKids: Meeting kids where they are

ThriveKids, a novel program which integrates Children's Hospital New Orleans medical and mental health professionals into Southeast Louisiana schools was established when the pandemic began, over two and a half years now. But, prior to March 2020, when COVID-19 struck, Children's Hospital was already integrated into both schools and the community in major ways. Whether it was telepsychiatry, providing sports medicine specialists, or with entities like the community-oriented Parenting Center, which provides support to parents and grandparents, the presence of the hospital has been widely felt throughout the region. Children's had dedicated \$5.3 million to implement the support stream, in different areas of care.





When the COVID-19 virus forced lockdowns, it immediately created a situation within the school systems that could only be described as utter disarray. Schools had to be shut down, at least until safety precautions could be implemented, while the goal was to figure out how to educate, and keep everyone safe. Parallel to this panic caused by the pandemic, Children's Hospital had already been contemplating the expansion of ThriveKids, an umbrella project under which all existing school and community programs would be organized. Now, with the advent of a pandemic, almost overnight, the need for such a program had become readily apparent.

"When the Department of Education asked us for help, we knew we had to step things up," said Kimberly Kupresan, Director of the ThriveKids Student Wellness Project. "We were holding town halls on how to keep schools open with 700 participants at a time, and we realized in short order that we were not academic experts, and the schools were not health experts. It became clear that we needed to help each other. It was a marriage we

realized we had been missing out on. We quickly increased our financial commitment to \$10 million, and began the process of integrating our professionals from Children's into the schools that needed help."

Over the next two and a half years, ThriveKids would go from three employees to more than 40, while eventually supplementing medical and mental health teams servicing 50,000 students in 81 Jefferson Parish Schools, the largest and most diverse school district in the State. The team ultimately staffs school nurses and school social workers, coordinates care, and provides ongoing medical education through learning opportunities and a Medical Director. The mission was to partner with the school system to improve both academic and healthcare outcomes by getting the right resources to the right kids at the right time.

To describe the program as a tremendous undertaking in the midst of an evolving pandemic, is a massive understatement. Schools were ordered to close between March, 2020, and the end of the school year. Missing months of





school, what would come to be known as the COVID academic slide was just beginning, and kids were already in need of recovery programs so they could engage in catch-up. With no in-person learning, parents and students no longer had their usual access to teachers, school nurses, or school mental health professionals to oversee student needs that may be impacting their ability to learn. All the while, the virus continued to infect both the parents and grandparents of those studying from home, further complicating the risk of mitigation and detrimental impacts to mental health and social emotional development.

By the time schools re-opened with mask-wearing in the Fall of 2020, parents had to choose whether their children would learn virtually or go back to an in-person classroom. Thirty thousand opted for in-person learning, while twenty thousand opted to keep their children at home and attend classes via a computer.

A.J. Pethe, Chief of Schools for Jefferson Parish, remembers gearing up for that first day back in the classrooms for his district.

"I remember thinking about the psychological impact our kids had been dealing with, and were still in the midst of, when my wife and I stumbled upon a poster at our neighborhood mall," explained Pethe. "The poster showed a cat looking in the mirror at itself, and in the mirror was a reflection of a lion. It was about how you see yourself, and we decided it was an important first step in restoring the mental health of our students. We turned that image into laminated magnets for all of the kids, which were placed on their tables as they came back to school. It was an initial attempt at building self-confidence again amongst students whose lives and routines had been yanked out from underneath them."

By the time the first vaccine was available in December of that year, teachers lined up to get it right away, many staff members calling Children's Hospital for advice. As the months rolled on, and eventually vaccines were made available to high school-aged kids, Pethe remembers thinking that if he could find a way to schedule these vaccinations through Children's Hospital, it would take the time and guesswork out of the equation, giving relief to parents trying to figure out how to navigate the process and schedule their students to be immunized. He got in touch with Kimberly Kupresan of ThriveKids, and from there began a long journey of cooperation to intertwine the needs of kids in the school system, with the clinicians of the hospital, to ensure that children stayed in school and remained healthy.

Children's Hospital proposed a contract with Jefferson



Parish Schools and a partnership began. And, not a moment too soon. To add misery to madness, Hurricane Ida had Southeast Louisiana in its sights, just after most kids had gone back to in-person learning. Schools which had re-opened were once again closed as the Category 4 hurricane shuttered some schools for as long as five weeks. The behavioral and medical needs of schoolchildren were greater than ever.

Children's Hospital New Orleans had seen this all before, when Hurricane Katrina decimated the city of New Orleans. Not only were schools closed, but infrastructure had to be rebuilt, and hospitals were taking a hit.

"We are the only health system which was formed out of a disaster," said Lou Fragoso, Children's Hospital Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer. "After Katrina, Touro Infirmery was facing extreme financial difficulty, so we partnered, and that was the beginning of the formation of LCMC Health. University Medical Center, which used to be Charity Hospital, didn't survive, either. LCMC Health backstopped them both, and our mission now is to continue to lend support to the community. In 2022, Children's Hospital New Orleans has helped 66,000 more kids than they did in 2018, and that tells the whole story."

By placing hospital ambassadors inside of the schools, the professionals are now able to identify the kids in greatest need – those who are not thriving because of ongoing medical or mental health issues. The success stories are ongoing, and exemplify just how critical it is for students to be healthy and able to learn, before medical or mental health disruptors live below the radar and keep kids out of class.

For Estefany Lopez Herrera, a nine-year-old at William Hart Elementary School in Gretna, learning wasn't always easy, although she had no idea why. Her mom had noticed



that her daughter had trouble seeing the television at home, but wasn't sure about the diagnosis, or how severe her vision deficit might be. Estefany's mother, Raquel, doesn't speak English, arriving from Honduras three years ago. Therefore, conversations with the school nurse were difficult.

However, with ThriveKids in the picture, the school nurse who does regular vision and hearing screening now has the infrastructure surrounding her to suggest resources and eliminate barriers to follow-up visits to audiologists and ophthalmologists. This allows for more than a diagnosis but affords these children treatment. A visit to Children's Hospital's audiology clinic indicated that indeed Estefany was not hearing well, and a referral to the ophthalmologist confirmed that she not only couldn't see the TV, she couldn't see the blackboard at school. Learning is virtually impossible when you cannot see or hear adequately. Glasses and hearing aids were obtained for her, and Children's Hospital, along with an interpreter at the hospital, provided assistance navigating insurance coverage. The team approach that occurs when parents, schools, and hospitals come together as a village that raises children, is eminently more successful.

"I am so very happy about this program," said mom, Raquel Herrera. "I could never have taken care of this on my own, and I am very thankful to the school nurse who referred me on, and to Children's Hospital for arranging all of this."

The success stories are endless, because trained professionals who are now part of the schools are catching medical and mental health issues before they become a total hindrance to learning, and an impediment to the overall physical and mental well-being of the student.

There's the teenager who was identified on campus struggling with severe depression and suicidal ideation due to a history of sexual abuse. A social worker sought her out, consulted with the parents, and she was checked into the Behavioral Health Center on Children's uptown campus. She is now back in school, but followed closely by a nurse and social worker.

Or the elementary school boy who was walking on his toes and struggling with classroom behavior, but it wasn't until a professional made decisions to refer him to someone outside of the school for a much-needed evaluation, that things began to turn around.

"We stepped in and had him see our orthopedist," explained Kimberly Kupresan. "He had a medical issue that kept him from putting his heels on the ground, and we also identified him as a candidate for an autism evaluation. It was a chance to educate both the parents and his teachers. The mental health aspect of this is massive."

Children's Hospital has a vast history of community benefits programs and a legacy of giving back, long before ThriveKids came along. The Audrey Hepburn CARE Center and the New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center have been around for many, many years, providing forensic interviews and interventions for children of abuse. The Northshore and Greater New Orleans Miracle Leagues are both sports leagues for kids with disabilities. In fact, there are special fields on both sides of the lake which provide soft surfaces, so kids in wheelchairs can play soccer, baseball, and numerous other sports.

"Our Parenting Center has been around for decades," said Natasha Richardson, Children's Hospital's Vice President of Academic Affiliations and Community Programs. "Formerly on Calhoun Street, it's now part of our main campus, and provides a drop-in play space where parent educators are there to provide support for parents. We have classes both online and in-person, like our popular Snuggles and Struggles class for new parents."

The Greater New Orleans Immunization Network and its Immunization Bus have been around since 1998. The bus travels through communities immunizing children, with an online schedule which tells parents when the bus is in their neighborhood. And, the Ventilator Assisted Care Program has provided needed services for ventilator-dependent children for decades.

Apart from mental and physical health, ThriveKids partner organization "The 15 White Coats" serves as inspirational mentors for school kids. A group of African American Tulane Medical students and physicians founded the organization to support kids from underrepresented communities interested in medical career paths. The students are engaged with those who have already accomplished this, and are encouraged to pursue their dreams. ThriveKids and 15 White Coats are working to provide regular mentorship sessions to students in their partner schools.

A large portion of the funds for ThriveKids, coming from the school system, has been the result of an unprecedented wave of funding from the federal







Children's, no one wants to go backwards."

And, on the horizon, there are some lofty goals moving forward. Although there are boots on the ground in Jefferson Parish schools, the commitment is to provide customized support to all types of schools across Orleans Parish. ThriveKids has already been providing COVID-19 support, and other school resources to 150+ school campuses across the Greater New Orleans area. In fact, Children's Hospital contributes about \$5 million annually to the Orleans Parish school community for resources, expertise, and services that come at no cost to schools.

"Orleans Parish calls for a different approach, since each charter system or private school has different needs, and ThriveKids is prepared to meet schools where they are," said Lou Fragoso. "However, we will figure it out, because if you want to help change a generation, we must be everywhere in southeast Louisiana. Our philosophy is less suits, and more scrubs. So, our commitment is to be lean administratively, and invest in our clinical team. The schools love this program, and in five years we expect to have triple the staff to implement everything on our wish lists."

ThriveKids' goal for Orleans Parish is to provide comprehensive mental health and medical support by functioning as a student health department – combining experts, clinical services, and care management. And, data collection is now becoming an important tool to determine in what areas the program has been strongest, and to determine just how the marriage between hospital and schools is reaching the intended goal of keeping kids healthier, in school more often, and ultimately improving graduation rates. That commitment, on the part of Children's Hospital has now been expanded to \$14 million, and the results thus far are very encouraging.

To date, over 1,000 students have enrolled in the ThriveKids network, meaning parents have agreed to let the integrated specialists in the schools help their children by allowing them access to pertinent medical records that can go to the heart of existing health issues. There have already been more than 272 mental health diagnoses identified since the program began. This has come about as a result of mental health professionals and nurses being deployed to school campuses.

"Our job is about outreach to the community – to let people know we are here for them," said Richardson. "We have links to pediatricians within an entire region. You turn a city around one kid at a time. And, Children's Hospital is here to do the hard work."

government, designed to help schools in their time of need, during the pandemic.

In March of 2020, the Trump administration set aside \$13.2 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. As the pandemic continued to march on, in December 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act added another \$54.3 billion (ESSER II). These funds were allocated across the U.S. to help schools enact home learning, maintain safe social distancing with plastic shields between desks – even upgrading HVAC systems so that the air everyone was breathing inside the schools was as safe and filtered as possible. Then, in March 2021, President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act infused an added \$122 billion into the equation, concentrating on a much more widespread problem – helping students recover academically and emotionally.

For usually strapped school districts, the windfall relief efforts have provided the kind of funding that has allowed district supervisors to engage in programs heretofore unheard of. But, the spigot will be turned off in 2024, four years after the start of the pandemic.

"This sort of funding has allowed us the luxury of doing PCR tests for COVID, to be a part of this partnership with Children's for the betterment of our kids, and even to identify kids who have experienced trauma and grief," said A.J. Pethe. "We've already been thinking of ways to get creative with future fundraising, grants, and other revenue streams, as we must have it figured out by September 2024. Now that we are seeing how much good comes out of a partnership like this with





Eskew Dumez Ripple+

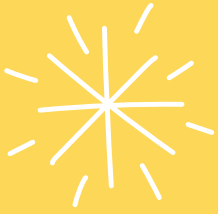
# Kids Join the Fight helps create a hospital haven

Imagine a place where kids can discover, learn, play, and just be kids – in a hospital. Together with local non-profit Kids Join the Fight co-founders Taylor and Angel Beery, Children's Hospital has dreamt up just the place.

Walker's Imaginarium was inspired by the legacy left behind by nine-year-old Walker Beery and Kids Join the Fight, the non-profit he helped to create. Walker's mission was to give sick kids, like him, moments of happiness amid their battles. The Imaginarium aims to fulfill that mission. As a first-of-its-kind program in our region, the Imaginarium will not only provide a therapeutic environment for patients and families to enjoy time together while in the hospital, but it will also provide a place for them to find joy and thrive.







The 12,000-square-foot Imaginarium will be one of the largest and most comprehensive hospital-based child enrichment spaces in the country. Plans for the space include outside areas like a parade porch with views of the Mississippi River and ground level green spaces and a walking path. On the inside, interactive exhibits, a dance floor, a radio broadcasting studio, and more will give kids the opportunity to explore and play in a medically-safe space.

On October 1, 2022, together with the Beery family, Children's Hospital formally announced the plans for Walker's Imaginarium and launched the capital campaign to raise the funds necessary to build this extraordinary space. Walker's Imaginarium will be made possible with the help of generous philanthropic support, so Children's Hospital and Kids Join the Fight are calling on their community of friends, donors, and supporters to help build something extraordinary and inspire moments of joy for many years to come. **Learn more and imagine the possibilities just around the corner at Children's Hospital at [chnola.org/imagine](https://chnola.org/imagine).**



The Beery family serves as the inspiration for this project



October 1 celebration launches a \$10M capital campaign to fund Walker's Imaginarium.





# Children's Hospital leads the way in Trauma and Grief care

Children's Hospital first opened its Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center in the fall of 2021. Since then, Executive Director Julie Kaplow, PhD, ABPP has successfully created a program that is hands on in caring for children who have been exposed to traumatic events and grief. "We have been very busy," said Dr. Kaplow. "Many of the patients we treat are referred to us for exposure to violence and grief related to homicide." Since opening, the TAG Center has hired three clinicians who are currently delivering support to children up to age 21. Apart from violence and homicide, many children are still receiving support for the loss of loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or trauma resulting from Hurricane Ida.

To ensure best practices for mental healthcare within the community, the TAG Center has partnered with Jefferson Parish Schools through the ThriveKids Student Wellness Project. The goal is to streamline training Jefferson Parish School's counselors and teachers in identifying at-risk youth and to provide trauma and grief focused treatment onsite.

Recently, the TAG Center received a grant to work with the Juvenile Justice Intervention Center (JJIC)

on a weekly basis to provide grief focused, group intervention for kids in the JJIC for Orleans Parish. Dr. Kaplow said, "We have discovered that what is often overlooked is that the majority of these children have lost a loved one, so we are finding that focusing on healing grief helps to reduce violent behavior and recidivism in children."

In addition to helping children and families in the community, the Children's Hospital New Orleans TAG Center also serves as an in-house resource to Children's Hospital nurses and staff. On a daily basis, employees working one-on-one with children and families will hear multiple stories of trauma and grief. Many nurses may experience compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma which can cause moral and emotional distress in their own personal and professional lives. The TAG clinicians can hold in-depth trainings to provide nurses with the tools to navigate through times of emotional distress due to exposure to traumatic material. During a time when our city, like much of the country, is experiencing high-crime and community violence, the TAG Center is here as a beacon of light for those who need support.





# Serving the underserved through the Greater New Orleans Immunization Network



The story of the Greater New Orleans Immunization Network (GNOIN) began in 1998, through a collaboration of Christian Health Ministries and several area hospitals to implement an immunization program for the children of the metropolitan New Orleans area. The program was started to fill the gap in accessibility that underserved communities face when it comes to receiving immunizations.

The program's primary objective was to increase immunization rates for children under the age of two through an immunization registry and a mobile immunization unit, also known affectionately as the Immunization Bus. The registry provides a confidential, computerized record of immunizations, enrolling the child in the state immunization registry. As families move in and out of public and private healthcare systems, registries serve as a powerful tool to ensure that children receive timely and proper immunizations.

For many children and families in the Greater New Orleans area, healthcare is not easily accessible or affordable. The Immunization Bus uses a systematic method to locate and immunize children in their communities, providing for those who do not have a pediatrician nearby or access to transportation. The GNOIN provides free vaccines to eligible children covered by Medicaid or if the child does not have insurance that covers vaccinations. Today, the Immunization Bus travels four days per week in the afternoons, and runs until 6 pm to accommodate the schedule of working parents and children in school.

The GNOIN is dedicated to protecting all children from vaccine-preventable diseases by raising awareness among parents of the importance of timely immunizations. The program prioritizes convenience for parents, bringing the Immunization Bus to underserved areas and making their services readily available to all.





# Inside Children's



## Trombone Shorty brings a mini music fest to Children's Hospital

It's not every day that a world-renowned, Grammy-nominated musician plays a private concert for the patients and staff at Children's Hospital, but that's exactly what happened in May when Troy Andrews, popularly known as Trombone Shorty, stopped by with students from his music academy. The musician and several members of the Trombone Shorty Academy performed for a crowd of enthusiastic onlookers on the outdoor patio of the hospital on a beautiful spring evening.

Patients and their families gathered around with hospital team members to hear the students play a bevy of New Orleans brass band favorites. The students, armed with trombones, saxophones, trumpets, and tubas, impressed the spectators with their musical talent. The Trombone



Shorty Academy at the New

Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation educates musically gifted students through performance-based curriculum designed by Trombone Shorty and the foundation's Executive Director, Bill Taylor.

The students played several songs before being joined onstage by Trombone Shorty himself to help them close out the concert on a joyful note. After the performance, patients were invited to stay for a meet and greet, and each child was given an autographed book penned by the musician. Patients could choose from either of his children's books, "Trombone Shorty" or "The 5 O'clock Band." Both are inspirational stories that encourage kids to follow their dreams.





## Pediatric Mental Health Summit sheds light on suicide prevention

This August, Children's Hospital New Orleans and the LSU Health Foundation held the 2nd annual "Let's Talk About It" Pediatric Mental Health Summit. The event brought together more than 100 professionals in the education and behavioral health fields to discuss mental health issues affecting our youth, with a special focus on trauma and teen suicide.

"Young people and their families are battling a mental health crisis that's widened and deepened over the past two years. Mental disorders are an enemy that's very good at hiding in plain sight," said John R. Nickens IV, President and Chief Executive Officer at Children's New Orleans. "Through our High5 Challenge, we encourage kids to open up and talk about what's going on. We hope the summit provided attendees with tools they can now bring back to their communities to encourage our youth to engage in real conversations about their mental health."

The summit featured prominent speakers including Dr. Mark Kline, Children's Hospital Physician-in-Chief and Chief Medical Officer, who discussed the current state of child mental health in our country. Following the keynote address, attendees participated in a series of breakout sessions on topics including The Realities of Social Media and Child Mental Health, How to Have Conversations with Kids about Mental Wellbeing, Understanding Trauma in Young Children, and School Communities and Mental Health in a Post-COVID World.

A highlight of the Pediatric Mental Health Summit was the screening of *My Ascension*. The documentary film focuses on the story of 16-year-old Dutchtown High School varsity cheerleader Emma Benoit, who was paralyzed by a suicide attempt. Her attempt to end her life propelled her on a mission to use her painful experience to help others find hope and inspiration.

The film screening was followed by an engaging discussion on youth suicide prevention and mental wellness with Emma and a group of mental health experts, including the producer of *My Ascension*, Greg Dicharry; VIALINK's Sherrard Crespo, MSW, LMSW; U.S. military veteran, Tonja Miles who is a recovery coach and suicide attempt survivor; Children's Hospital and LSU Health New Orleans Psychiatrist, Megan Campbell, DO; Emergency Medicine Chief, Toni Gross, MD; Mark Ranatza, RN, Senior Director of Emergency and Behavioral Health Services; and Monique Soignet, Director of Family and Social Services for Jefferson Parish Schools.



Experts participate in a Q&A panel during the summit.

## INSIDE CHILDREN'S

### Steps to success

Global performance running lifestyle brand, Saucony, launched its Run For Good Children's Program, the brand's philanthropic platform, in nationwide efforts to combat childhood obesity and ensure that children in the U.S. can grow up healthy and fit. This extraordinary design initiative engaged young hospital patients across the country to create limited-edition footwear collections that expressed their personal stories, all while raising money for their respective hospitals.

In the summer of 2020, Saucony selected Children's Hospital New Orleans as one of four hospitals across the U.S. to launch their philanthropic program. The Child Life Specialists at Children's Hospital had the honor of nominating patients for this project.



The patients who were selected, Zachary, AnNour, Kaalas, Brenna, and Colt, have all endured the toughest medical battles, but had the most resilient spirits.

The kids and teens worked with Saucony designers to create their own original footwear based on their personal journeys. 20 percent of each sale from these collections will be donated to Children's Hospital New Orleans with a minimum total donation of \$20,000 from Saucony.

After waiting with anticipation for more than a year to see their designs, the five Children's Hospital patients finally saw their creations come to life at a shoe reveal event in April. This special moment honored the patients and gave the world a sneak peek of the shoes, launching for sale this fall. Through the Run For Good program, these children are making a difference for Children's Hospital one shoe at a time.

The Saucony Shoe project isn't the only way a pair of shoes is making a big difference at Children's Hospital. The hospital's Support Services team members are known as the hospital's "Backstage Magic." With 280 members, they are the backbone of the hospital. Every day, these team members make magic happen behind the scenes to ensure that patient-facing clinical areas can continue to provide extraordinary care to patients each day.

In just one shift, Support Services team members may walk over 20,000 steps throughout the hospital. From sterilizing patient rooms to protecting the safety of the hospital campus, these team members make magic happen every day.

Hospital leaders recognized the opportunity to do a little something extra for this group of employees who work incredibly hard to support the hospital every day. To celebrate and thank the "Backstage Magic" team for their dedication,



Children's Hospital purchased "Shoes for Crews" and gifted each team member a new pair of shoes of their choice to wear during their shifts. The hospital plans to make the shoe giveaway a regular occurrence to continue to support the soles of the people who are the soul of the hospital.



# Philanthropy

## Children's Hospital establishes Hales Fund for Community Benefits Programs

This year, Children's Hospital celebrated the rebirth of the historic Hales Cottage, which opened earlier this summer following a gift from Nancy and Dr. Stephen Hales that helped allow for its restoration and current use as a coffee shop and place of respite for staff and families. Coinciding with the opening of the cottage, Children's Hospital also proudly launched the Hales Fund in support of the hospital's community benefits programs.

"Dr. Hales has served the greater New Orleans community as a beloved pediatrician for more than 40 years and has



served on the Board of Trustees for Children's Hospital since 1981," said Children's Hospital New Orleans President and CEO John R. Nickens IV. "It is because of his leadership in the 1990s that Children's Hospital first invested in community benefits programs to best serve the needs of our community – a mission that continues today."

Currently, Children's Hospital New Orleans invests more than \$15 million annually into its community programs to ensure the hospital can best meet the needs of the community with services essential for the wellbeing of children and families. Some of these programs include the Audrey Hepburn CARE Center, The Parenting Center, Immunization Program, and the recently developed ThriveKids Student Wellness Project. The hospital also provides financial support to important community partners such as the Miracle League and The 15 White Coats, which provides scholarships to minority students applying to medical school.

The Hales Fund for community benefit programs will continue the legacy of service to the community and help ensure that all children, including the vulnerable and the underserved, have access to the care and services they need to thrive. When guests enjoy coffee at the Hales Cottage, they have the opportunity to give in support of the Hales Fund at the register, in addition to larger scale fundraising for the fund which will be ongoing.

Learn more at [chnola.org/giving](https://chnola.org/giving).



## PHILANTHROPY

# Community support for Children's Hospital New Orleans

Countless people in New Orleans and in the larger Louisiana community have a special connection to Children's Hospital. Whether someone was treated at the hospital as a child, had a friend or neighbor receive care in the hospital, or even had their own child cared for at Children's, so many people feel inspired to give back. One way that individuals and larger corporate partners choose to support Children's Hospital is through grassroots fundraising efforts. So far this year, community fundraisers have accounted for more than \$220,000 donated to the hospital, and that number continues to grow.

The Italian American Fishing Rodeo, spearheaded by Allen Catoire, is an annual Fishing Rodeo held in Venice, LA that benefits Children's Hospital New Orleans. In June, the 15th annual Italian American Fishing Rodeo raised more than \$34,000. Throughout the Fishing Rodeo's 15-year history, its sponsors and participants have raised more than \$236,000 for the hospital.

This year, the AI Copeland Foundation (ACF) held a fundraising campaign to benefit the cancer program at Children's Hospital New Orleans. The ACF's SuperDucks campaign kicked off on September 1, the first day of Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month, on the Children's Hospital campus. The ACF's campaign was marked by a number of events, including a Jeep Meet in September and the Vicari Classic Car Auction in Biloxi, MS in October. Through the SuperDucks



events, the AI Copeland Foundation raised vital funds for Children's Hospital New Orleans' pediatric cancer program.

It isn't just individuals in the community who are passionate about giving back to Children's Hospital, the hospital is fortunate to have the support of corporate partners,

as well. Fat Boy's Pizza held a special "Be a Sidekick" fundraising campaign this summer for Children's Hospital. For six weeks, all five Fat Boy's Pizza locations in Louisiana raised money by encouraging customers to make a donation with their order, and even sold a special coloring sheet for kids who dined inside the restaurants. At the end of the campaign, Fat Boy's donated more than \$13,000 to Children's Hospital New Orleans. Fat

Boy's is planning another six-week fundraising campaign over the holidays to help light up the season at Children's Hospital.

Children's Hospital is grateful for the support of community members and corporate partners who give of their time, talents, and resources to raise funds for the hospital. It is with this support that Children's is able to provide lifesaving care for the children of Louisiana and the Gulf South. If you are interested in hosting a community fundraiser, head to [chnola.org/CommunityFundraising](http://chnola.org/CommunityFundraising).





## Philanthropy amplifies our impact

**Philanthropist Gary Solomon** has made a generous commitment of \$150,000 to help support expansion of services for the Autism Center at Children’s Hospital New Orleans. The Autism Center provides comprehensive diagnostic evaluations and evidence-based treatment for children with suspected or confirmed autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a specialized service that is under-resourced in our community. Mr. Solomon’s generous gift helped fund an additional Autism Center provider, which will increase the Center’s capacity to care for more children.



**The Perkin Fund** also made a generous \$100,000 gift this summer to help fund a dedicated Child Life Specialist for Children’s Hospital’s Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. The Child Life and Creative Therapies team focuses on evidence-based practices and research to offer the most supportive care possible to patients and families. They use play, recreation, and music to provide opportunities for patients that encourage coping skills. With the ability to now staff a dedicated Child Life Specialist in the Cardiac ICU, this vital service will be provided five days a week for the nearly 20 families receiving critical care or recovery from surgery for congenital heart defects each month at the hospital.

## A one-of-a-kind partnership: Chick-fil-A New Orleans

In July, Chick-fil-A owners and operators from across Greater New Orleans presented their second \$50,000 donation in support of Children’s Hospital New Orleans.

With this renewed partnership, Chick-fil-A New Orleans and Children’s Hospital will continue to collaborate on several initiatives, including presenting a quarterly story of healing and hope from one of Children’s Hospital’s patients, raising funds on GiveNOLA Day, and raising awareness for the hospital’s Kids Fund during the hospital’s Light Up The Season campaign.

Earlier this year, Chick-fil-A also helped bring awareness to the hospital’s superhero patients, fighting some of the toughest health battles, and encouraged their patrons at all Chick-fil-A locations across the area to donate and become “sidekicks.”



“As a rooted member of the New Orleans metro community, I love partnering with Children’s Hospital. When I was younger, my cousin’s life was saved by the doctors there. He would not have been able to be treated close by without them,” shared local Chick-fil-A owner/operator, Chris Salomone. “Now, I am a parent and Children’s Hospital has treated two of my children in the last five years with that same level of care. I am

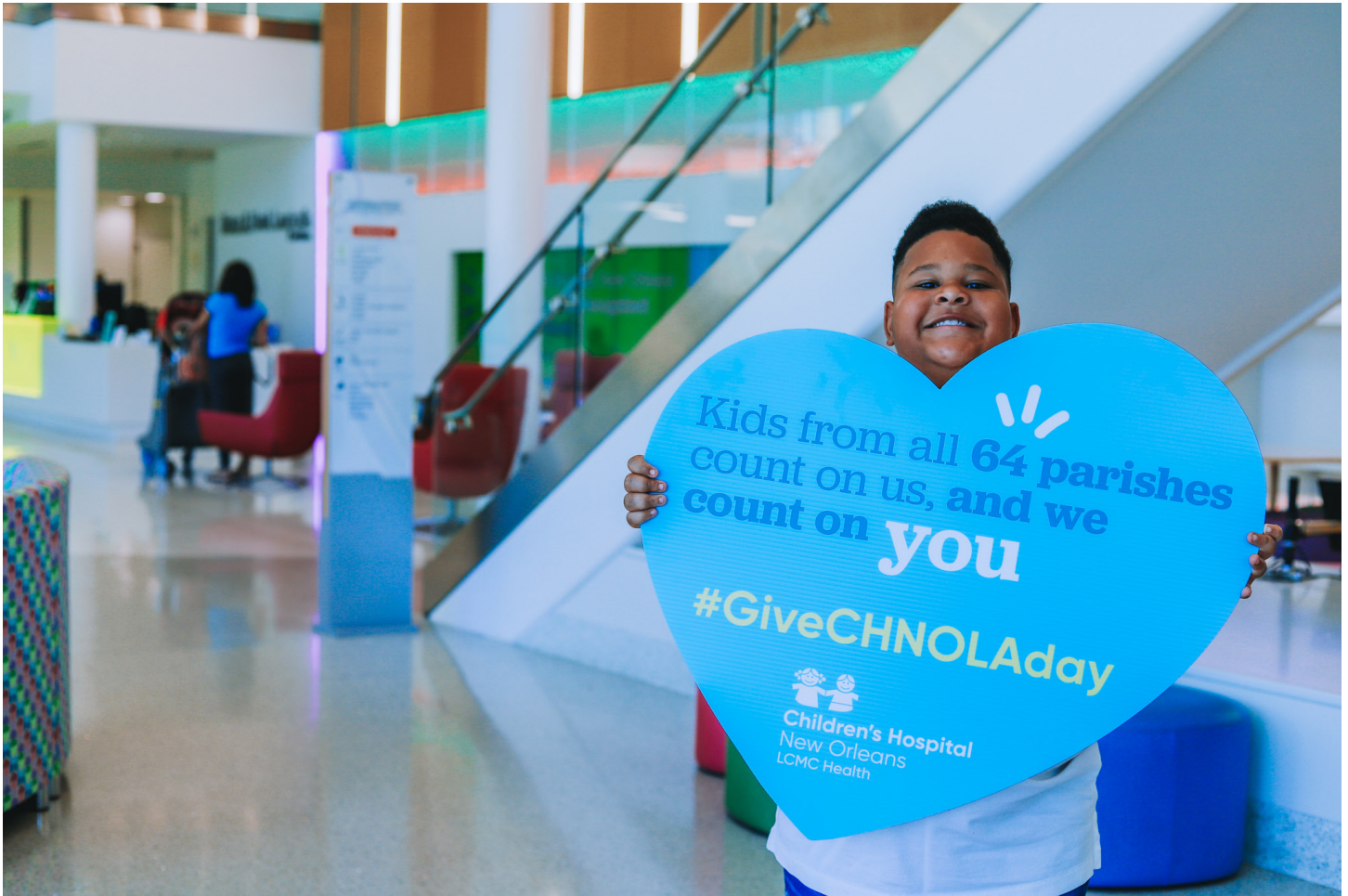


proud to partner with them,” Salomone said.

Chick-fil-A’s investment in the Kids Fund enables Children’s Hospital to provide critical care for the sickest children and babies, conduct lifesaving research projects, and remain at the forefront of pediatric healthcare. Additionally, with the support of corporate partners like Chick-fil-A, Children’s Hospital is able to provide expert pediatric care for every child, regardless of his or her family’s ability to pay.

“As we set out to care for our guests and our team, it’s an equally important part of our DNA to care for our community,” said local owner/operator, Ben McLeish. “Our founder, Truett Cathy, had a fond place in his heart for kids. It’s truly a pleasure to partner with great institutions like Children’s Hospital to continue Truett’s legacy of care and be a part of their countless stories of care of kids in vulnerable situations.”





## The generosity of a city

As a city, New Orleans is known for its southern hospitality and friendly personalities, but one trait that isn't always discussed is the generosity of its people. This humble generosity is shown quietly to neighbors and strangers each day, but is loud and proud on the city's annual day of giving, known as GiveNOLA Day – or as the Children's Hospital family affectionately calls it, GiveCHNOLA Day!

During this 24-hour day of giving, hosted by the Greater New Orleans Foundation, people across the community and country donate generously to non-profit organizations in the New Orleans area in hopes of creating a thriving community for all.

This GiveNOLA Day, Children's Hospital New Orleans raised over \$126,000 through online donations and offline



sponsorships. Nearly 1,300 people donated from 27 states, securing Children's Hospital the #2 spot for most unique donors on GiveNOLA Day, and winning the hospital an additional \$5,000 in grants from the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

These extraordinary donations help make a difference in the care Children's Hospital provides for the children of Louisiana and the Gulf South. Children's Hospital cares for children from all 64 parishes in the State. Those children count on Children's Hospital every day, and Children's counts on the generosity of the community to continue to provide expert care for each child.

Thank you to the hospital's generous supporters for an extraordinary day of giving and for supporting the health of the next generation.



## CMN successes

Children's Hospital New Orleans is proud to be part of Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals, a non-profit organization that raises funds and awareness for its 170 member children's hospitals across the U.S. and Canada. Through CMN and the corporate partnerships the organization cultivates, more than \$521,450 has been raised so far this year locally for Children's Hospital New Orleans. Check out some of our extraordinary CMN partners and the totals they raised this year for local kids at Children's Hospital.



### Costco

Costco New Orleans associates and members helped raise **\$55,696** this year during their annual month-long fundraising campaign to support Children's Hospital.



### Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores

Love's Travels Stops' annual Miracle Balloon Campaign was a huge success this year, raising more than **\$42,000** – a 43% increase from last year's campaign!



### Walmart

Through the Walmart Community Grant program, Children's Hospital received **\$34,000** this year in grants.



### Hispanic Radiothon

The 9th annual Radiotón Milagros para los Niños presented by Ideal Market and Lakeside Toyota, which was broadcast for two days on Tropical 105.7, Latino Mix, 97.5, and Telemundo, raised **\$49,000**.



## The Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation helps create extraordinary moments

Everyone was silent as Jessica Brandt, CEO of Ray Brandt Auto Group, drew the winning ticket for the Luxury Car Raffle that raised \$100,000 for Children's Hospital in May.

"And the winner of a brand-new Mercedes A220 is... Courtney Burch," exclaimed John Nickens, President and CEO of Children's Hospital. Colorful confetti and roars followed from patients and staff watching the moment live.

This special moment was made possible by the generosity of Ray Brandt Auto Group and The Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation. This is not the first extraordinary moment Jessica Brandt has helped create at Children's Hospital.

As the returning presenting sponsor of the annual Light Up The Season Radiothon, supporter of Sugarplum Ball, and advocate for the hospital's 100 Days of Nursing campaign, the Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation has made many extraordinary moments possible. Whether helping to purchase new lifesaving equipment or premie diapers for the NICU, Mrs. Brandt's support has impacted the most pressing needs of patients, families, and frontline caregivers at Children's Hospital.

The foundation has also generously supported the Patient-Family Assistance Fund, which provides critical assistance to families in moments of financial crisis while their child receives care at Children's Hospital. Requests range from helping pay for utility bills, food, and travel to assistance purchasing lifesaving compounded prescription medication, not covered by insurance.

Mrs. Brandt also serves as a member of Children's Hospital's Board of Trustees and has been an advisor to the hospital's leadership team and champion of Children's Hospital's mission. "We continue to be inspired by the generosity of the Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation and Ray Brandt Auto Group," said John Nickens. "Jessica is passionate about serving the children of our region and her continued support has helped ensure that Children's Hospital can continue to provide the highest level of care for the children and families of the Gulf South who depend on us."



# On the horizon



## December

### 3rd Annual Light up the Season Celebration

Thursday, December 1


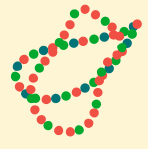
5:30 pm


Children's Hospital New Orleans

Patients will flip the switch to illuminate the holiday lights throughout Children's Hospital's main campus. In addition to the festive lights and trees, several animal lanterns and a candy cane tunnel will be on display in the hospital's greenspace. To help celebrate the lighting moment, local first responders will be onsite to turn on their unit lights to usher in the holiday spirit. Child Life will host a viewing party for the patients inside the hospital and with the floor to ceiling windows in the new Child Life Center, our most important attendees will have the perfect vantage point to see the lights in all their glory. The annual lighting ceremony coincides with the hospital's end of year giving campaign that encourages the community to support Children's Hospital and its mission during the holiday season.

[Learn more at chnola.org/lights](http://chnola.org/lights)

# 1

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 	2	3 

4	5	6	7	8 	9	10
---	---	---	---	--	---	----

### 2nd Annual Light up the Season Radiothon

Presented by the Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation

Thursday, December 8 and Friday, December 9

Audacy New Orleans Stations WWL Radio,

Magic 101.9, Bayou 95.7, and B97

Tune in to our 2nd annual Light up the Season Radiothon presented by The Ray & Jessica Brandt Family Foundation on December 8 and 9 to hear inspirational stories from Children's Hospital New Orleans. The radiothon will run from 6 am–4 pm on WWL Radio on Thursday, December 8 and from 6 am–6 pm on Magic 101.9, Bayou 95.7, and B97 on Friday, December 9. Patient families, physicians, nurses, and supporters of Children's will be among those sharing their stories during the two-day event to raise funds and awareness for work being done every day at the hospital.

[Learn more at chnola.org/radiothon](http://chnola.org/radiothon)

### Children's Hospital New Orleans Holiday Parade with Kern Studios

Saturday, December 3

3–5 pm

Downtown Parade Route

The inaugural Children's Hospital New Orleans Holiday Parade will roll down the traditional downtown parade route, beginning in the French Quarter, to ring in the holiday season in New Orleans. The Kern Studios custom built holiday floats will depict holiday favorites including gingerbread houses, Santa's workshop, winter characters, and Santa on his sleigh with his reindeer. Sponsorships for the parade are available and proceeds will benefit Children's Hospital.

[Learn more at nolaholidayparade.com](http://nolaholidayparade.com)

# 3



# Community Benefits Programs

14



COMMUNITY  
BENEFITS PROGRAMS  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
SUPPORTS/OWNS

42

years

Children's Hospital has had  
community benefits programs



10,461

kids vaccinated through  
the immunization program



37

THRIVEKIDS SCHOOL  
PARTNERS

30

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
NURSES AND SOCIAL  
WORKERS DEPLOYED  
IN SCHOOLS



293

MIRACLE LEAGUE GNO & NORTSHORE ATHLETES IN 2022



343

Parenting Center  
classes offered this year



457 families

stayed in the Hogs for the Cause  
Family Center this year



MORE THAN  
**\$15 million invested**  
in community programs annually

833

MEDICAL VISITS  
TO THE AUDREY HEPBURN  
CARE CENTER THIS YEAR

# Walker's Imaginarium

Kids Join the Fight







## Imagine a place where kids can discover, learn, play, and just be kids — in a hospital.



Children's Hospital New Orleans and Kids Join the Fight did — with plans to build a visionary, 12,000 square foot enrichment center located on Children's Hospital's main campus. The center, named Walker's Imaginarium, will provide a therapeutic space for patients and families to thrive, find joy, and enjoy time together while in the hospital. The project, which is a first-of-its-kind space in the region, will be made possible through the generosity of donors and supporters.

Learn more at [chnola.org/imagine](https://chnola.org/imagine)



**Children's Hospital**  
New Orleans  
LCMC Health





**Children's Hospital**  
New Orleans  
LCMC Health

In proud partnership with our medical schools

