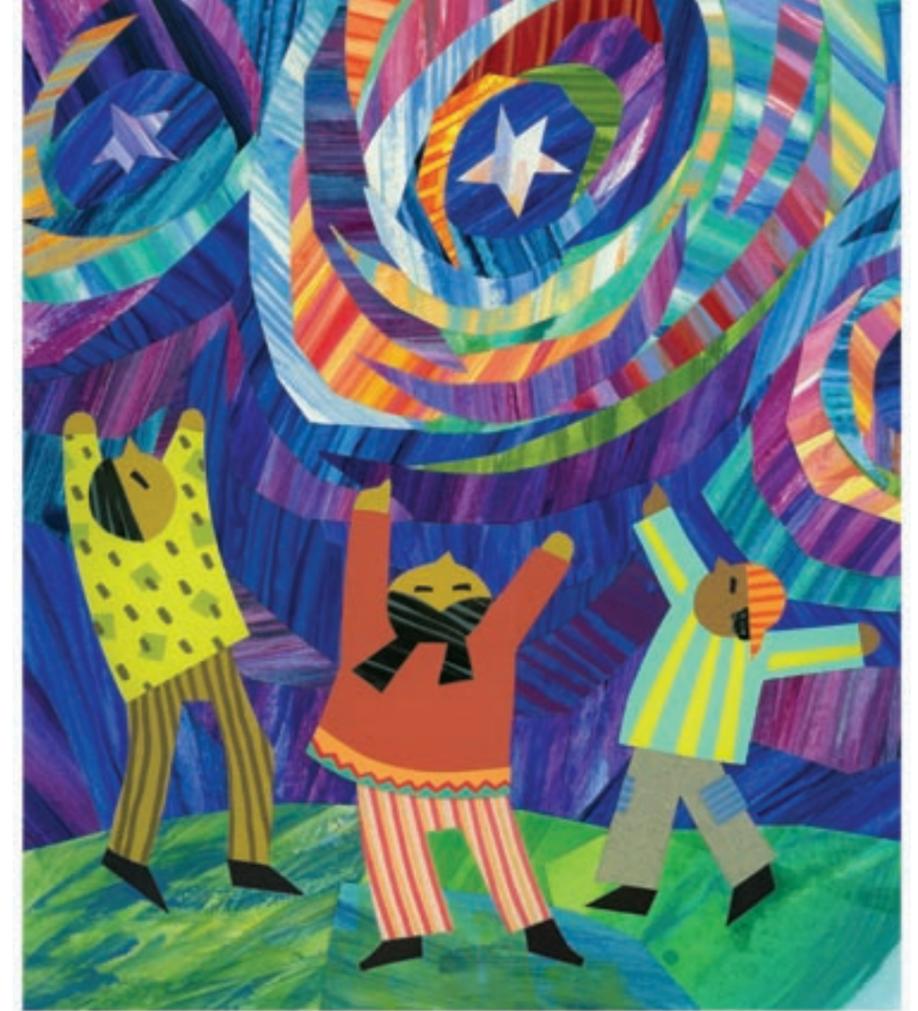




Star
light,
star
bright



*I wish I may, I wish I might, get the wish I wish tonight. Wishes.
Dreams come true. Wishes. A secret whispered in the night. Wishes.*

A simple childhood fantasy and a twinkling star take on a whole new meaning when your child is sick. Suddenly the wish is no longer a flight of fancy, but instead, a heart's deepest cry into the night.

"Please let her live through the night."

"Please just let them find the answer."

"Please let me hear him laugh again."

At Blank Children's Hospital, we know those wishes. Because they're ours too. We work tirelessly to make them come true. Every day. Every child. They are our life's work. They can be your life's legacy.

We want to make sure that there are always compassionate people to hear the wish and to dedicate their lives to granting it. We need to make sure that those people have all the tools, knowledge and support they need so they can concentrate on just fulfilling the wish. Today and into a future we cannot foresee. But we know there will be kids that need our expertise and compassion. We know there will be kids who hurt. Kids who will be counting on us.

Our Wishes Endowment Campaign is designed to do just that. With your help, we can protect what the Blank family began in 1944, when the polio epidemic ravaged the nation's young. Together, we can make sure there is always a place that is dedicated solely to the health of our children. And the whispered wishes of those who love them.

How better to change the world than to heal a child?



Wishes Endowment
Campaign

Dreams can
come true



Please let him breathe easier.

When a parent closes their eyes and dreams about their baby's future, they picture him laughing in a pile of leaves or his first day of school. It's inconceivable that they'd find a simple breath worthy of celebration. But for some of the families at Blank Children's, that quiet, easy breath seems a lifetime in coming.

Nicholas Bueb was the first baby born with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) after the new state law requiring mandatory testing was passed. Luckily for Nicholas, early detection is the key to successfully managing his CF.

Cystic Fibrosis affects the respiratory and digestive systems, making it difficult to breathe and digest food. A defective gene causes the body to produce an abnormally thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and leads to life-threatening lung infections. These thick secretions also obstruct the pancreas, preventing digestive enzymes from reaching the intestines to help break down and absorb food.

Nicholas' mom, Kelly, knew all too well the consequences of CF. She had researched the disease when she was in junior high school and again as she studied to become a medical assistant. So when the diagnosis was made, she was terrified of what it would mean for her newborn son.

"I was petrified," Kelly admits. "But the CF team at Blank Children's gave me the support and compassion we needed. They literally and figuratively held my hand through the entire process. And they're still doing that today."

The CF team — which consists of physicians, pharmacists, therapists, nurses and Child Life specialists — taught Kelly how to give Nicholas his daily in-home treatments. She must tap on his chest with paddles to break up the congestion in his lungs twice a day. Even still, he needs to visit Blank Children's Hospital once a month for extensive evaluations.

Now an exuberant 4-month old, Nicholas delights in making faces and is a very happy baby. He'll require daily therapy, medication, and evaluations for the rest of his life, as he continues to manage his CF.

With every quiet breath, Nicholas grants his mom's wish.



Ricardo Flores, M.D.

Pediatric Pulmonologist

Dr. Flores, a key member of Blank Children's Cystic Fibrosis team, helps families manage CF for their kids. He not only uses his vast medical knowledge, but he often relies on his secret weapon — he can make kids laugh. "There's something magical about hearing them giggle at my expense," Dr. Flores explained. "I know it's not only healing for our patients, but for their parents as well. My job isn't just to treat the Cystic Fibrosis. It's to make the whole child feel better."





Please let him laugh again.

A parent watches their son grow. They cheer at his hockey games, watching him high five his teammates. Never in a million years could they imagine wondering if they would ever see that glint in his eye or hear that belly laugh again. But for some of the families at Blank Children's, that next laugh is the hope they cling to.

Andrew Smith has always been an active, hockey-loving kid. Nothing slowed him down. So when his parents noticed that he just wasn't as full of energy as usual, they got concerned and took him to their family physician. A blood test and two days of tense waiting revealed their worst nightmare — Andrew had leukemia. He was immediately referred to Blank Children's Hospital.

Leukemia is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. Forty years ago, the survival rate was less than 10 percent. Today, because of advanced treatment programs like the one at Blank Children's, the survival rate is almost 80 percent.

"Some of the tests and treatments that Andrew had to endure those first few days were almost unbearable to watch, as his mother," Rhonda explained. "Thank God for the Child Life Specialists. They helped bring back a smile to both of our faces."

Andrew had to have a painful spinal procedure and he was very frightened. Sarah, one of the Child Life Specialists, came in and hung a sheet in the procedure room. Pretty soon, she and Andrew were making a complete mess, squirting paint out of syringes onto the sheet. His squeals of laughter could be heard out into the hallway. She turned a very scary situation into one of his favorite memories of being in the hospital.

Andrew is responding very well to his treatments and looking forward to being back on the ice as soon as possible.

With every playful grin, Andrew makes his parents' wish a reality.



Sarah Susinin, CCLS
Child Life Specialist

Sarah's job is an important one. Make the hospital and the medical procedures less scary. Even when they are scary. To do that for patients, she uses soft but honest language to earn their trust. "I want to validate that whatever they are feeling, it's okay. They have a right to be scared, mad or sad," Sarah said. "But then, helping them discover ways to cope with those feelings ultimately builds their confidence so they know they have the ability to deal with what's happening. They learn to trust in themselves, which is wonderful to watch develop."





Please let us find the answer.

There is nothing more horrifying to a parent than to not be able to help their child. They're the grown up. They're supposed to have all the answers. Be able to protect and care for their baby. But for some of the families at Blank Children's, the answer may be learning how to cope with not having an answer.

Estafania Landeros Rosales started her life just fine. She was a happy, healthy baby. All that changed at 6-months of age when she began running high fevers, struggled with her breathing and vomited violently. Her situation grew even more grave as the weeks progressed when she started having seizures and the physicians at Blank Children's ended up putting in a feeding tube.

The physicians know that she has a form of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), which is a motor neuron disease. The motor neurons affect the voluntary muscles that are used for activities such as crawling, walking, head and neck control, and swallowing. But they've yet to be able to pinpoint a more specific diagnosis. To do so, an invasive procedure would be necessary, but that would also put Estafania at considerable risk.

"We know the doctors and staff at Blank Children's are doing everything they can to help us find answers," commented Estafania's dad, Salvador. "It's frustrating not to know how to help your child, but we are so grateful that we're not in this alone. Everyone at the hospital has been so wonderful. We believe in miracles and we will find the answer."

Her parents credit Estafania for their continued strength. Her never wavering smile and delight in simple pleasures helps keep them going.

Estafania continues to grow, develop and is always cheerful, despite her struggles. The staff at Blank Children's helped arrange for a full-time nurse, so she could stay at home with her parents. The Rosales know that there's an answer out there and they're determined to keep working with the physicians and specialists at Blank Children's to find it.

With every sweet smile, Estafania reminds her parents that joy can be found even while you wait for your wish to come true.

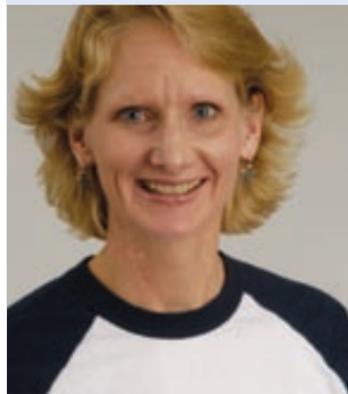


Lisa Menzies, M.D.

Pediatrician

One of the things that makes Dr. Menzies such a gifted doctor is that she refuses to stay stuck. Working with patients with special needs means that there is no one size fits all solutions. And the right answers don't always come easy. "Patients and their families count on me to keep pushing," Dr. Menzies commented. "I owe them that level of dedication. One of the most healing gifts I can give them is the comfort of knowing we are never going to be done looking for a better way. Who knows what we might discover around the very next corner?"





Kim Williams, P.T.

Pediatric Physical Therapist

Understanding how to motivate a 3-year old to view therapy as fun is part of Kim Williams' gift. She takes physically and mentally challenging activities and turns them into play. "Our patients have to work very hard. We're constantly pushing them to reach beyond where they are comfortable," Kim concluded. "With an adult patient, therapists can use logic and information to keep moving forward. But with kids, I have to inspire their hearts and their spirits first."

Please let their bodies move as fast as their minds.

Twins. Just the word conjures up a knowing smile. A lifelong sibling bond of sharing and discovering the world around them. Who would ever think that they would share health challenges and therapy sessions? But for some of the families at Blank Children's, discovering what is possible becomes the focus.

Evan and Yale Richardson have minds and mouths that are too quick to follow. The 3-year old boys, fraternal twins of Kelly and Jonathan Richardson, were born 13 weeks early. Evan weighed 1 pound, 12 ounces. His brother was a more hefty 2 pounds, 2 ounces. Their extremely low birth weights resulted in a three-month stay in the Variety Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery at Blank Children's and numerous health complications including cerebral palsy.

Twice a week, you'll see them in their walkers making their way to the Pediatric Therapy Department. There, a team of therapists — physical, occupational and speech — integrate treatments according to therapy programs developed specifically for each boy and his unique health needs. "Their approach is very systematic and holistic. They understand the physical perspective, as well as its relationship with the mental and emotional challenges facing children," says Jonathan. "And, it's been a very effective approach for us."

Cerebral palsy, a group of chronic conditions affecting body movement and muscle coordination, is caused by damage to one or more specific areas of the brain before, during, or shortly after birth, or during infancy.

But Kelly and Jonathan feel blessed that their sons are capable of doing so much, even with their limitations. "I believe the doctors, therapists and staff at Blank Children's have a genuine concern for Evan and Yale. We are included, as parents, in every decision, in every process," states Kelly. "I think that's what makes the treatment we receive at Blank Children's comparable to that found in much bigger cities."

Both boys are developing rapidly and enjoying the same kinds of things boys their age enjoy — playing and discovering their possibilities are truly endless.





Please let her wake up.

When a child has on-going health challenges, parents learn to steel themselves for the battle. They know what's coming and they need to be ready for it. But how do you ever prepare yourself for the reality that she might never wake up? For some of the families at Blank Children's, they just want to be able to look into their daughter's eyes again.

Hannah Kroska didn't feel well. But she was used to that. She'd been dealing with some chronic health issues for years. Somehow, this was different. After running some tests, the physicians at Blank Children's discovered that Hannah's small intestine had perforated and was polluting her body with toxins.

She needed immediate surgery that quickly turned into multiple surgeries. The damage was so extensive that the doctors literally had to do the surgery in stages, over several weeks. During that time, they had to leave Hannah's abdominal incision open. To prevent her from doing accidental harm, Hannah was put into a medically induced coma.

"I don't have the words to describe what it's like to look at your 11-year old daughter lying in a coma," Hannah's mom, Susan, began. "It was a nightmare that we thought would never end. But the surgeons, specialists and nurses in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit were nothing short of amazing. They saved us all with their compassion, humor and honesty."

After many weeks in the hospital, Hannah had to endure months of physical therapy to re-build her strength and wear an ileostomy bag so her intestine had a chance to heal. After six months, she had an additional surgery, to repair this precious internal organ.

Today Hannah is back in school, going to school dances and just enjoying being a regular teenager.

With each twinkle of her eyes, Hannah reminds her parents of their answered wish.



Micheal Irish, M.D.

Pediatric Surgeon

Holding a patient's hand as they drift to sleep from anesthesia may not be something they teach in medical school, but for Dr. Irish, it is an important part of the care for children who undergo surgery. He understands that earning his patient's confidence helps him do his job better. "It's my first responsibility to earn their trust," Dr. Irish explained. "An 11-year old can't assess my skills as a surgeon, but she can tell if I genuinely care. And all kids are smart enough to understand that matters as much, if not more, than my technical skills."





Please let us be a family again.

No one wants to put their children at risk. But that doesn't mean it doesn't happen. People make choices that bear heavy consequences. Consequences that can pull a family apart. For some of the Blank Children's families, a second chance is all they dare hope for.

Xander Van Winkle was born with drugs in his system. He was referred to the Regional Child Protection Center (RCPC) for an extensive examination. His mom, Julie, had been abusing drugs during her pregnancy. Because of that, Xander was removed from his mom and custody was given to a family member.

But the goal of the RCPC is to reunite families. Julie had to undergo intensive therapy and other intervention measures. The program not only delves into the substance abuse, but it also teaches parenting techniques, good decision-making and other core life skills.

"The Regional Child Protection Center made it possible for Xander and me to be together again. They helped me kick my habit, but even more important, they taught me how to prevent drugs from ruining our lives again," Julie acknowledged. "They taught me how to be a good mom and get back on my feet so I can create a life for us together."

At first, she was just allowed supervised visits. But recently, Julie was given full custody of her son and will be moving into her own home soon.

Xander still suffers some of the affects of being born drug-affected. He's undergoing ongoing therapy to further develop his motor skills and will continue to be evaluated into the foreseeable future.

But overall, he's a healthy little boy who loves being back with his mom and his new baby sisters, who were born without a trace of drugs in their systems.

Each time he takes her hand, Xander shows his mom the power of a second chance.



Rizwan Shah, M.D.

Pediatrician

Dr. Shah's relentless commitment to help children and families who are fighting the affects of drug abuse and addiction literally makes Blank Children's Regional Child Protection Center possible. "It is impossible to accurately describe or measure the complete impact of drug abuse on a family," Dr. Shah noted. "But, we can intervene and many times, change the course of what would have been a total tragedy. Each success fuels our efforts to keep advocating on behalf of children."





Where will the endowment go?

We've created five diverse areas in which endowment funds can be directed. Each area is a key element to the work we do every day at Blank Children's. We invite you to explore each area and decide for yourself where you would like to make a difference in our children's future.

Patient Care — Making Children's Lives Healthier

Helping children with skilled and compassionate care is our priority at Blank Children's Hospital. One of those children might be at one of our clinics with a sore throat, in our Emergency Room with a broken leg, receiving intensive treatment in our Pediatric Intensive Care Unit or a premature baby fighting for its life in our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Each year more than 75,000 children receive medical treatments, therapy or services that help them live a healthier, happier life.

The endowment will secure and expand the future of patient care at Blank Children's while helping to attract the top physicians and staff in the nation. It will give us the opportunity to develop new programs and expand existing programs that are essential to caring for Iowa's children.

An important part of quality patient care is incorporating new medical knowledge and advances in technology. Each year, improved equipment and new treatments make it possible to perform therapies and surgeries that had never before been imagined. Blank Children's has been a national leader in minimally invasive pediatric surgery, child protection programs and family-centered hospital design. The Endowment will provide the solid foundation needed to expand Blank Children's reputation as an innovator and leader in children's healthcare.

Family Services — Fostering Hope and Help for Families

When a child is sick or injured the whole family is affected and needs not only support, but the opportunity to play a central role in their child's recovery. Family-centered care is a fundamental part of the mission at Blank Children's Hospital, whether it is a well-stocked play area for patients and their siblings to expend some energy or having ample private family spaces for conferences with physicians or to celebrate a special occasion while hospitalized. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Blank Children's was the first in the world to feature private rooms for these littlest of patients and their families. What better way to establish yourself as a leader than to make your mission a visible testimonial to the care provided within the walls?

One of the cornerstones of Blank Children's is the Child Life Program. Child Life specialists are remarkable professionals who use age appropriate, interactive play to provide children with a sense of control over their illness. Child Life also provides parental support services helping to make the child, siblings and parents our partners in the healing process.

In addition to our Child Life program, the Endowment will enable us to expand family services, our schoolroom, the family resource center, pastoral care and support groups. All these programs empower, nurture and inspire our children and families during their most trying moments, and help them face the future with confidence.

Advocacy & Outreach — Supporting Children Beyond Our Walls

Every day the Center for Advocacy and Outreach goes beyond the walls of Blank Children's Hospital to improve the lives of children and families across Iowa. We offer a number of community outreach and medical education programs to schools and communities to promote a healthy, safe and nurturing environment. Safety initiatives target child passenger, bicycle and fire safety. The Medical Education Outreach program ensures that healthcare professionals across all of Iowa know the latest pediatric lifesaving skills. Once local staff is trained, the Just for Kids Care Cart provides pediatric specific life saving equipment and supplies for rural hospitals and emergency services in smaller communities, ensuring all children get the highest level of care when they need it most.

The Center for Advocacy and Outreach speaks on behalf of children and is the leader on children's health issues among advocacy groups in Iowa. Because children are not given the chance to vote, speak before their legislators or get involved in the political process, we step in to advocate on behalf of children.

A major commitment of protecting our children is the Regional Child Protection Center which enables a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to work together in the investigation, treatment and prosecution of child abuse cases, provide services to drug exposed infants and children, and provide education on preventing sexual abuse.

Endowment funds will strengthen our current efforts and allow us to create new avenues of protecting our most precious resource — our children.

Education — Training the New Generation of Care Givers & Keeping our Staff on Top

For more than 50 years, Blank Children's Hospital has been dedicated to training many of the region's pediatricians, surgeons and family physicians, and they continue to rely on Blank Children's to keep up-to-date in the field. We believe it is a priority to enable the nation's future physicians to train at facilities that truly prepare them to lead the way for caring for the next generation's children.

Not only does education include training future doctors, but also continuing to train clinical staff — pharmacists, nurses, therapists, Child Life specialists — to keep them updated on the latest techniques. In this rapidly changing world, it is essential to have access and instruction in the latest procedures and techniques affecting children's health. We must always be ready. Our children cannot afford for us to be a step behind.

The Endowment will make it possible to continue to respond to the ever-evolving world of medicine and keep all of our personnel prepared to deliver the best care available.

Innovation — Responding to the Changing Needs of Children

One of the most remarkable realities of pediatric medicine is that we cannot begin to fathom what breakthroughs, innovations and medical miracles are just around the corner. Fifty or even twenty years ago, who would have dreamed of some of the technologies and treatments that we take for granted today? Even though we cannot anticipate what the future will bring, we do know that there will be priorities and needs in children's healthcare that have not even been conceived.

That is both an exciting and daunting realization. While we cannot imagine what they might be, we must be ready to invest in whatever future technologies and programming lead the way in helping and healing our children.

This portion of the Endowment funds will be literally invested in the future, for whatever that might bring.





Each family that walks into Blank Children's Hospital has a wish in their heart. A wish so simple and yet so profound. A wish that changes a life. You can be a part of the magic that is born from making that wish a reality. You can make a difference that will live on for generations.

The Wishes Endowment Campaign seeks to raise a minimum of \$50 million through cash, pledges, and planned gifts to invest in our children — a level of philanthropic support that is unprecedented in Blank Children's history. Private support has been the cornerstone of Blank Children's since the beginning. This continued support from our friends and donors is key to the hospital's secure future.

Endowment funds are the lifeline of an institution and are the next natural step for Blank Children's Hospital. With the generous support of donors in the past we have built a new facility and have brought together world-class physicians. Now it is time to develop an endowment that will generate a dependable, flexible source of income that is critical to long-term strength and stability.

Today, we ask our donors to help us answer the quietly whispered wishes of parents for generations to come.



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