

New Year's Letter 2022: Shriners Children's SLC

Dear Friends,

Please stay vigilant to our enemy, the COVID virus. Keep yourselves mindful of masking, handwashing and gathering in groups. Stay 6 feet apart from anyone not in your household. Stay safe until the vaccine reaches us.

Please accept my deepest gratitude to each one of you for all that you do for each other, our incredible mission and our patients and families.

That was the conclusion from the end of year 2020 letter. I think that we all thought 2021 would bring a reprieve, a solution. With our Moderna shots, and then boosters, this all would just resolve, we thought. However, now we know that we face a much wiler and ever-changing foe in COVID 19. Omicron is so contagious...

However, 2021 threw us into a battle that was perhaps even more difficult than COVID for many of us: our transition to a clinic model at SHC-SLC.

All of you, and your courage through this incredibly difficult time, awe me. So let me tell you a story to help us all understand:

Long ago, a group of wealthy and well-meaning men, decided to help children with their funds. They created Shriners Hospitals to help the children suffering from another Pandemic: Polio. At the time, hospitals and long-term inpatient care were the norm. These wonderful and philanthropic men created a hospital network across the United States (and Canada and Mexico) with beautiful, huge buildings to care for the children crippled by Polio and other orthopedic conditions. Burn care was lacking for children, so they added those into their plan in three major centers of Boston, Cincinnati and Sacramento.

However, things change.

Although burn care often leads to inpatient care, orthopedics is now very different. Now, kids go home within 24 hours of pelvic osteotomies, spine surgery kids often leave within 3-4 days. In addition, this complex orthopedic

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care requires a backup of sub-specialists and internal resources that could never have been predicted in the 1900s.

Much like COVID, pediatric orthopedic care morphed at an astronomical speed.

Huge buildings with huge overhead, stood empty, emptying the coffers of a wonderful, well-meaning, philanthropic society with no one to care for as orthopedic inpatients.

The Shriners had to decide: to fund buildings devoid of children, or move on; and help more kids as best they can in more places.

Therefore, we transitioned. With others, like Erie, Kentucky, Pasadena, Twin Cities, Springfield, Galveston and Houston, Cincinnati, Tampa, Louisiana and Spokane who are all on their own painful, growing journeys.

There is the positive aspect: we have a partner who shares our values and is helping us care for our children: Primary Children's Hospital (PCH). Like us, they are manned by University of Utah Orthopedic faculty, residents and fellows who believe in superb clinical care, education and research. They house our kids (with all the support staff) and respect our belief that no one should find health care a financial hardship. In addition, they are only 1 mile away.

Here is the bottom line: we are lucky to work with the University of Utah, we are lucky to collaborate with PCH and we are so lucky to work within the Shriners system that still will financially support our kids, no matter what roof they are under during their care.

We did lose so many wonderful staff, and that was incredibly painful. However, please, let us look forward and all strongly support our new opportunities. Let us all be open in communication to share new ideas about how to best use our resources to help more kids--- For the next 100 years.

The Numbers: Surgery:

Before the transition (1/1/2021-8/31/2021), we did 508 cases. Remember, this was during the pandemic when we could not often operate. We cared for 80 inpatient children. We did 25 spine surgeries, 5 halo kids and 25 EDF kids. Since September 1, we have done 173 cases at PCH. This is despite PCH closing for most of November. Dr Woiczik, Hennessey and I have done over 60% of these surgeries—having dedicated faculty is good.

As of 9/1/21, we advised our families that surgery must happen at PCH: however, they are still protected from financial hardship. They are told to go to 'Pennies By The Inch' first (PCH's financial support) and then come to SHC for more support if needed. To my knowledge, this has worked--- I thank so many people who made this incredibly complex change function: Kevin Martin, UMB, Jenna Zito, Natalie Raleigh, Glory Escalera-Rivera and her team, Alan Stotts, etc... At no other Shriners location has this been done: SHC physicians getting paid their FTE during surgery at another location, and the subcontracted MDs getting paid fee for service with SHC not paying them an hourly wage for their OR

time. This is new uncharted territory, saving SHC money for subcontracted physician care and yet protecting our patients from financial hardship. Thank you to all who were so helpful in this process, and for continuing to protect our children and their families from financial hardship.

Outpatient Clinics:

The outpatient clinics (OPC) are now our crown jewel. These clinics manifest our future and how we access patients for Shriners Children's Salt Lake City. We saw 2070 new patients and had 7391 follow up patients in over 638 clinics in 2021. Jen Noe triaged 167 fracture kids and we cared for 134 fractured children. Nearly 700 kids were waitlisted for surgery. We doubled our neuromuscular multi-specialty clinics. We saw 102 kids from Juarez through telehealth. We are arranging for Mexico patients with clinical (AOT) needs to come to SLC for 2022 and those with surgical needs to head to the Portland Hospital. Eventually, when we can return to El Paso in person, Portland staff will join us there. Over 100 children had suicide screens. Eighty six percent of our clinic children completed PROMIS questionnaires or 3,972 patients. Our social workers helped almost 6000 visits go more smoothly, and with more empathetic integration. Interpretive services helped in over 4100 encounters (that is why Genesis is employee of the year!) for over 3000 hours of assistance.

POPS:

POPS continues to crush it. We have the OK (first in the SHC system, after much begging...) to do not only our work at SHC but also molds at PCH. That means the kids get their braces after they come out of their casts and can begin PT work right away, despite where their surgery occurred. This really affects the neuromuscular kids, who cannot afford to have time off from weight bearing,

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before they begin PT in their custom-made braces. Cool. We have a drawer in OR 5 at PCH that has the colors for braces for the kids to choose.

Headquarters has invited us to serve as a telehealth pilot location (seeing kids via telehealth rather than in person) which will start in January 2022, saving time and money for our families

Wheelchair and Seating:

Wheelchair and seating have done some amazing things this year, despite losing (briefly) their ability to issue DME independently after the transition. We have had a 39% increase in our car seat program and 8% increase in our funded wheelchairs since our busiest year of 2019! We provided 215 donated and reworked wheelchairs with another 180 funded wheelchairs delivered. Halloween led to 34 costumes with 6-8 kids/day helped in a hybrid model and loads of volunteer hours.

The Ladies of the Oriental Shrine donated \$30,000 to our Unlimbited Camp of vaccinated participants.

Donor Development:

From Nathan:

2021 Fundraising Goal Accomplished:

Please join me in celebrating the Development Team and their **HARD WORK** this year! Amidst a difficult transition, we have continued managing a positive growing donor base. I am pleased to report that as of the end of November, we surpassed our \$3.75M fundraising goal for the year. Although final numbers are still pending: we have over \$4.6 million donated!! December alone donated \$566 thousand. I'm grateful we have donors that care so much about our mission, and some of these donors are you, our employees, AND members of our Board of Governors. Thank you! Please take a moment to thank the members of the Development Team for their hard work and success during such a challenging year.

COVID made media relations more complicated, but we still enjoyed 155 news stories, reaching nearly 32 million people, equivalent to an advertising value of more than \$300,000. Some of our favorite stories included:

- [\[?\] Children with limb differences have fun on the farm](#)
- [\[?\] Fracture care prevention and treatment](#)
- [\[?\] New mobility device – baby bug!](#)
- [\[?\] Adaptive bikes for patients](#)
- [\[?\] 14 year old gives back after amputation \(Walk for LOVE\)](#)
- [\[?\] Wheelchair Halloween costumes](#)
- [\[?\] Real life Tiny Tim – Dr. Carroll makes surprise visit to patient’s show](#) (picked up on 40 stations throughout the country! In addition this segment was named one of the top 10 feel good stories of the year locally.)
- [\[?\] Babies at Shriners celebrate their first Christmas](#)
Of course, we rely on our patient ambassadors to help tell our story to the news. We are proud of the fact our program is nearing its 150 milestone, with 144 ambassadors to date (onboarding 7 news ambassadors this year).

Summary:

In summary, although this year was incredibly difficult and often heart wrenching, it was also productive. 2022 should bring many exciting opportunities for growth with our partners at PCH and the University of Utah. We are blessed to be surrounded by such partners who are geographically close, and share our mission of superb patient care, education and research. We look forward with optimism to our future, always remembering our past. We will not stray from excellent care, despite a family's ability to pay, regardless of what building houses that Shriners Children's Salt Lake patient. Please support and thank those around you, and thank our Board of Governors for staying true to our mission.

Happy 2022 my friends! With love and appreciation,
Dr. Kristen