

# CHILDREN'S HEROES

NEWS AND STORIES *about YOUR IMPACT on our kids!*



Niko's dad credits friends like you for the advanced care that saved his baby's life.

## A New Heart for Niko

*How you helped save a baby's life*

**C**hris thought his infant son, Niko, had acid reflux.

"We thought his doctor would give us an antacid and send us home," he says.

What the doctor said next shook Chris to the core. Niko was in heart failure.

"This isn't real," Chris thought. His 4-month-old baby needed lifesaving surgery, and ultimately, a new heart. Niko also needed support from friends like you.

Niko spent the next four months at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, waiting for a

heart and fighting to live. Thanks to you and your donations, he had everything he needed, from world-class pediatric care, to fun toys to play with, to music therapy.

While most babies experience their first milestones at home with family, Niko and his parents experienced them with the hospital staff, whom Chris says became like family.

Finally, a heart was available, and Niko underwent transplant surgery. Niko proved to be strong and recovered beautifully.

Today, Chris is forever grateful for the

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**INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE**

IN HER OWN WORDS:  
How You Helped Delanee Beat Cancer



# New Look, Same Mission!

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation is now UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation.

Although things look a little different, our mission remains the same: to be the catalyst that unites communities and contributors to create healthier futures for all children through life-changing care and cutting-edge research.



IS NOW



As the sole fundraising arm of UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, we support their vision of being a world leader in pediatric health care, education, and discovery.

As always, you're a critical part of this lifesaving work. Thank you for supporting the research and world-class care that save children's lives.



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## A New Heart for Niko

advanced and innovative care you make possible at UPMC Children's.

"Ten years ago, he would have died," Chris says. "I would have lost my son."

**"The research and care here saved my son's life."**

He knows how lifesaving your donations are. "Anything you can, please give," he says. "The research and care here saved my son's life."

YOU helped save Niko's life. Thank you.



When cancer struck, you helped Delanee heal and get her life back on track.

## In Her Own Words:

# How You Helped Delanee Beat Cancer

In August 2020, I moved into my freshman dorm, ready to take on college. Little did I know I'd be moving out just a semester later to battle cancer.

As a 19-year-old facing cancer during a pandemic, I felt emotional and physical pain like never before. Everything about treatment was hard. I was hospitalized twice and had two blood-product transfusions.

The emotional impact hit me hardest. It was hard not to feel lonely, especially while being isolated because of the pandemic. But the doctors and staff at UPMC Children's were the light in my cancer journey that I didn't see coming.

I have so much love and admiration for everyone who played even the smallest role in my journey. There were long days when I could not even keep my eyes open and there were also celebratory days. Everyone made me feel loved and cheered me on through it all.

I am thrilled to say that today, I am cancer-free and have returned to campus full time! I plan to earn a degree in the health sciences and I'm working on starting a cancer survivors club at school. I am here today because of the support and love from everyone that played a role in my cancer journey. That includes YOU!

Thank you for donating to UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation and helping patients like me.



Thank you for powering the expert care Kendra can't get anywhere else.

## You Were Kendra's Beacon of Hope

**K**endra and her family moved from Puerto Rico to Pittsburgh just to be near the world-class care you make possible.

"The only place that was able to treat her condition was this hospital," says her dad, Roger. "The only survivors of her condition are treated here."

Kendra was 6 months old when they moved, and sick with a severe disorder affecting the muscles that line her bladder and intestines. Kendra then waited nearly 10 years to be able to receive a transplant of the liver, pancreas, stomach, small bowel, and colon. Along the way, she had to be hospitalized multiple times.

"She's a trooper," Roger says. He knows Kendra can do anything she puts her mind to. Her ambition has already made her a star at Dream Big Studio,

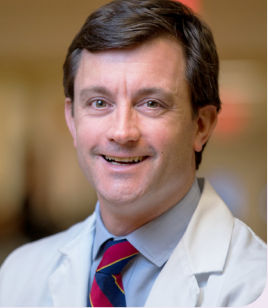
the independent TV and radio studio for kids located right inside UPMC Children's!

Kendra co-hosts the hospital's morning show. One morning, she needed a procedure. "She was

**"The only survivors of her condition are treated here."**

under anesthesia and missed the show," Roger explains. "She was upset! She slept from the anesthesia until noon. At 12:40, she woke up and said, 'I'm going to do the next show at 1:00.' And she did!"

Be sure to keep an eye out for this rising star! Her future is bright, thanks to you!



## You Make Futures Bright

Dr. Brian Martin

Dear Friend,

Thank you for reading the enclosed stories. Because of you, Niko, Kendra, and Delanee have happier summers ahead of them, filled with the promise of sunny days and fun with their families.

But so many children are facing a summer filled with tests and treatment. They're hoping for new cures that will help get them out of bed and back outside.

You can help make their futures bright. Please make your next gift now to power the research and breakthroughs kids need. You can bring hope and healing to another child.

Thank you!

Gratefully,

Brian Martin, DMD, MHCDS  
Vice President, Medical Affairs  
UPMC Children's Hospital  
of Pittsburgh

## Breakthroughs in Pediatric Research:

# How You Help Advance Sickle Cell Disease Care

**S**ickle cell disease (SCD) is a painful genetic condition that affects millions of people around the world, and about 100,000 children and adults in the United States. But much is unknown about *how* this illness wreaks havoc in the body. Many patients can be cured through a bone marrow transplant, but finding a donor match is rare, even among family members.

That's why your continued support is crucial. Your generosity helps power the groundbreaking research that leads to new breakthroughs, like the work physician-researchers Cheryl A. Hillery, MD, professor of pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and Deirdre Nolfi-Donagan, MD, are doing.

With Dr. Hillery's mentorship, Dr. Nolfi-Donagan is studying the differences between SCD blood clotting and healthy blood clotting in hopes of developing and improving therapeutic

strategies available to patients with SCD.

There's still a lot of work to do, but Dr. Hillery and Dr. Nolfi-Donagan are hoping that further research will prompt a better understanding of how to treat this disease. Soon, they hope to provide improved therapies, targeted medications, and longer lifespans for patients with SCD.



Your gifts help lead the way toward new treatments and lifesaving cures, like the work Dr. Hillery and Dr. Nolfi-Donagan are doing.

Thank you for giving to provide hope, care, and cures, and to help children live the healthiest and most fulfilling lives possible.

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## My Gift to Help Sick and Injured Kids

Please accept my gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to provide lifesaving care for critically ill and injured children.

I have enclosed a check (payable to UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation).

Please contact me about naming UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation in my will, trust, or long-term financial plans.

Please charge my credit card.

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