Message from the President & CEO

Dear Supporters and Friends,

It didn’t take long to choose Beating the Odds as the title for this year’s Children’s Fund Report. This year, more than ever, the children who sought care at Boston Children’s showed us what it means to overcome health challenges that others might think impossible.

As you read their stories, you’ll meet children who set big goals and met them… children who let lifelong friendships form out of difficult struggles… children who kept on growing and thriving despite doctors fearing the worst… and more. Most of all, you’ll meet children who refused to stop believing that their best days were still ahead.

That’s the kind of spirit we see every day here at Boston Children’s Hospital, and it is these courageous, strong-willed children who inspire our entire care team to bring their very best as well. In fact, it is these children who pushed us to become the #1 ranked pediatric hospital in the nation by U.S. News & World Report this year—a recognition of the incredible doctors, nurses and entire care team that have dedicated themselves to do the very best for every child we meet.

This report celebrates just a few triumphs of the children we serve and our hospital’s commitment to their healthy futures.

Please take a moment to read about these inspiring children, and feel good knowing that your support of Boston Children’s Hospital helped them beat the odds.

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Fenwick
President and CEO

Beating the Odds because children have friendships to make

We often think of illness as divisive, something that keeps children away from friends, school and favorite activities. But sometimes, illness can bring children together—and at Boston Children’s Hospital we do everything we can to help children gain strength from one another.

Aubrey and Ayden, ages 2 and 3

Aubrey and Ayden are both toddlers and their names both start with “A.” But what bonds these two children most is their kidney transplants. The two toddlers, who did not know each other before coming to Boston Children’s, received transplants within two months of each other. They then spent the following weeks running the hospital hallways together, sitting side by side for tests and procedures, and comparing the scars on their bellies.

Even now that they are both back home in separate states, their mothers work hard to schedule coordinated return visits to Boston Children’s so that the friends can see each other.

Allie & Logan, ages 17

Seventeen years ago, as babies, Allie and Logan were roommates in BCH’s Cardiac Intensive Care Unit, fighting for their lives. They both had multiple open-heart surgeries, and during that difficult time their moms became friends, and soon, so too did Allie and Logan.

Even though they live in different states, Allie and Logan kept in touch over the years. This last February, Logan sent Allie a very special package: Inside, she found a talking teddy bear that said, “Hi Allie, it’s me Logan. It would do my heart good if you would go to prom with me in April.”

Allie agreed and the two “heart kids” danced the night away!
Beating the Odds  
because children have dreams to pursue

Every child who seeks care at Boston Children’s Hospital is unique, filled with their own hopes, dreams and goals to achieve. All of the care and comfort we provide is given with that child’s future in mind. We’re here to make sure that every child has a chance to achieve their dreams.

Lauren, age 12
Lauren was rushed to the hospital after she fell on the soccer field. Her emergency physician noticed a large tumor on her spine and had her immediately transferred to Boston Children’s. While her parents and care team focused on saving her life, Lauren had only one goal: to play soccer again.

After a 10-hour surgery to remove the tumor and reconstruct her spine, followed by six months of recovery, Lauren achieved her goal and was back on the soccer field!

“Coaches and parents who know her story are dumbfounded she can run and play at the level she does.”
— Joe, Lauren’s Dad

Marco, age 5
Kids like Marco dream of battling dragons or possessing superhero strength. They don’t imagine their biggest fight will be against cancer. But when Marco was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, he was up to the fight. Marco fought through chemotherapy, battled through a bone marrow transplant, and was a champion as he faced antibody treatment. Today, he is healthy and ready to take on any challenge that comes his way.
Beating the Odds
because great strength comes in tiny packages

No one plans for childhood illness or injury to affect their family. But when the worst happens, Boston Children’s is there. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, we are ready to respond to any child’s health needs, no matter how urgent.

Melania, age 10

When Melania turned 8, she went for her routine physical. At the appointment, Melania’s pediatrician detected glucose in Melania’s urine and diagnosed her with type 1 diabetes. “We were in complete shock,” says Melania’s mother.

Within hours of the appointment, Melania was referred to Boston Children’s, where her family spent three full days with our Diabetes Program learning how to manage Melania’s illness.

Today, Melania is as active as ever—she just has to stop sometimes to test her blood sugar, which she does like a champ!

“[It] has been a life change for us, but we’re really lucky that Melania is such a trooper. She’s one of those rare kids who’s not embarrassed about what she’s going through. She is very open about her diabetes and wants to talk about it.”

— Melandia’s mom

Payton, age 3

Born with a congenital kidney condition, Payton’s life was at risk. After a surgery at her local hospital that did not resolve her condition, the urology team at Boston Children’s thought Payton was a good candidate for minimally invasive robotic surgery. With only very small incisions, this surgery could repair Payton’s kidney.

Today, Payton is an active, healthy 3-year-old, enjoying all the things a child her age should—going to preschool, being a big sister, and even going swimming!

Bryan, age 16

Bryan was happily celebrating his eighth-grade graduation when he started to complain of a headache. Soon, he began rocking back and forth in pain and passed out.

ER doctors at South Shore Hospital discovered a tangle of blood vessels in his brain that were abnormally connected. Knowing Bryan needed specialized care, the ER team called Boston Children’s Hospital. When Bryan arrived, he was in critical condition and unconscious. After months in the hospital, he regained his strength enough to have lifesaving surgery to remove the mass of blood vessels in his brain.

It’s two years later and Bryan is doing well. He has been left with some weakness on his left side and his vision is partially restricted, but he isn’t letting anything hold him back. He’s back to school full time and has his sights set on attending Stanford University someday.
Beating the Odds
because tragedy can strike any child

If your baby needs lifesaving care, you want her to be in the best hands. At Boston Children’s Hospital, they are. Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit cared for 650 struggling infants last year—many of whom weighed barely a pound. But what these babies lacked in size and age, they made up for in strength—beating the odds time and time again!

Sara and Emily, age 11

Born weighing less than 5 pounds combined, preemie twins Sara and Emily faced life-threatening complications and the possibility they would never walk or talk. Emily suffered two brain hemorrhages and Sara had underdeveloped lungs and struggled to breathe.

The expert doctors at Boston Children’s stopped Emily’s brain bleeds and kept Sara’s fragile airways from collapsing. The girls gained weight and strength and Sara started to breathe on her own.

Now 11, the girls are thriving and regularly give back to Boston Children’s to help other families.

The girls’ mother, Molly, remembers seeing other parents at Boston Children's. “You see them coming in and it breaks your heart. Then you see them leaving and it gives you hope.”

Mason, age 5

Mason is the youngest of four boys. When he was born a month premature, his mother was ready for the challenge—she figured she had already seen it all. But Mason’s challenges were severe. He couldn’t tolerate lying flat without coughing and choking. Some said it was reflux, but Mason’s mom had a feeling it was something more.

She sought a second opinion from Boston Children’s and doctors here discovered that Mason had multiple challenges, including a laryngeal cleft that was allowing food and liquid to pass through the larynx into the lungs, and a rare immune deficiency that caused him to be sick frequently.

Now 5 years old, Mason sees specialists in immunology, cardiology, nephrology, pulmonary, neurology and gastroenterology—all right here at Boston Children’s Hospital.

“When we started getting differing opinions about what to do and how to do it, we decided it was time to get a strong second opinion from Boston Children’s Hospital. I knew the specialists and sub-specialists would sit down in a room and come up with a game plan.”

– Nicole, Mason’s mom
Beating the Odds because people like you care!

Boston Children’s Hospital depends on the generosity of people like you who directly support our Children’s Fund.

The Children’s Fund allows the hospital to fund programs and people when other resources are not available. This can mean anything from an innovation that makes recovery from surgery less painful, to research that has the potential to save children’s lives, to “extras” like clowns, art, and music that lift spirits and speed recoveries.

Tina and Luke, age 7

Tina Medina was a freshman in college in 1992 when she became the 22nd heart-transplant patient at Boston Children’s Hospital. She had been diagnosed with restrictive cardiomyopathy, a rare condition that causes the heart muscle to become stiff.

Twenty-four years later, Tina, now married and a mom, still has the heart from her first and only transplant. But what she didn’t know at the time of her transplant was that her condition had a genetic component. At age 7, her son Luke was diagnosed with the same heart condition as Tina.

Luke is receiving care at Boston Children’s and will likely be listed for a transplant in the next year or two. Tina will be with him every step of the way—and so will his care team at Boston Children’s Hospital.

Ashon, age 9

Before Ashon was born, his doctors at his home in Fitchburg, MA, discovered that his intestines had formed outside of his stomach. Still, they believed that a single surgery after birth would correct the problem. Unfortunately, Ashon’s complications were more severe. He was born without a colon and the little intestine he did have was damaged by amniotic fluid. Not knowing how to give Ashon the specialized care he needed to survive, his local hospital transferred him to Boston Children’s. He was 3 months old at the time.

Now 9 and in the fourth grade, Ashon has had more than 30 surgeries to correct his intestinal tract. It has been difficult, but he is doing great. This year, he was proud to give back to the hospital at our annual fundraising walk. “He went from a child who struggled to walk and talk to a boy who walked two miles to help kids like him,” says his mom, Julissa.

Tyler, age 10

Diagnosed with spina bifida and Chiari malformations, which are structural defects in the brain, Tyler has had 21 surgeries in his 10 years. Despite his health challenges, Tyler is a vibrant child who loves to dance and participate in any sport he can—such as sled hockey. His primary goal is to walk with braces instead of using a wheelchair. Here at Boston Children’s Hospital, we are doing everything in our power to make that possible.

Every gift is used to its fullest and has the potential to change the future, one child at a time.

Thank you for being part of our special family of care and support. You make everything we do possible.
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giving.childrenshospital.org

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