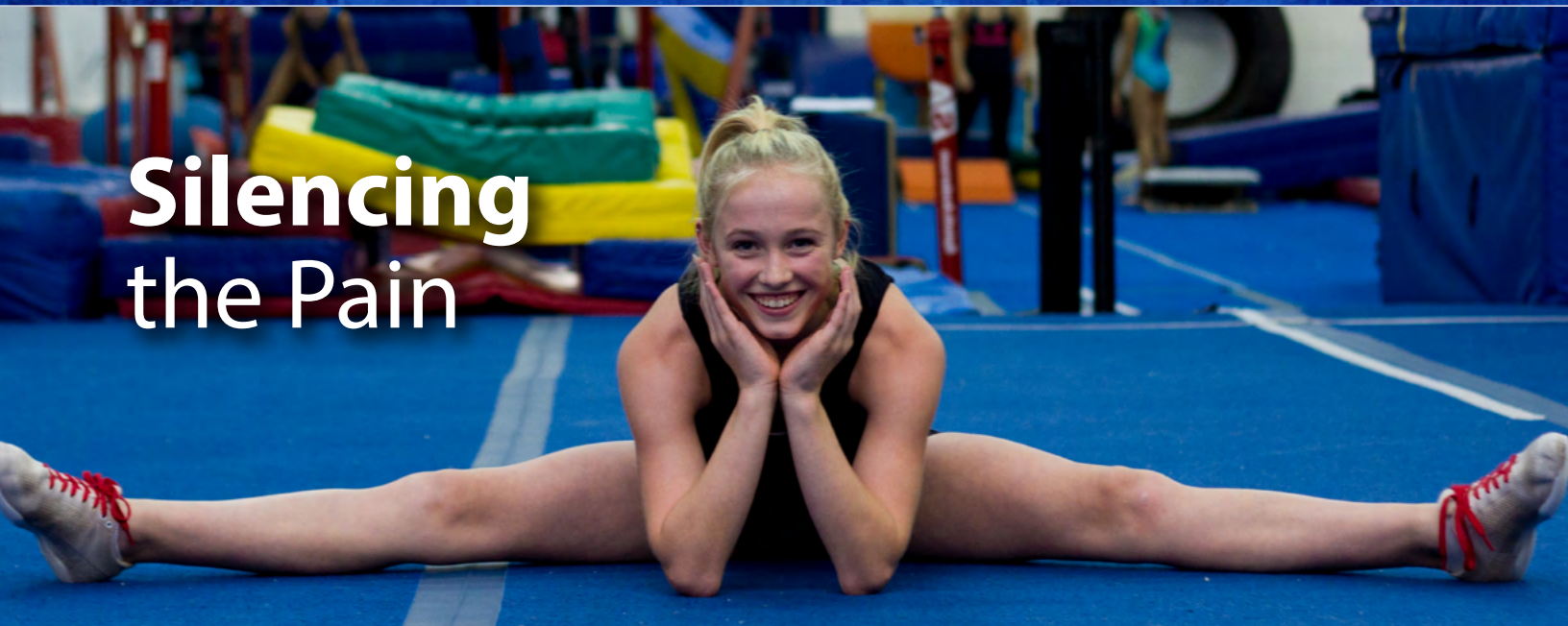


# celebrations!

You are making amazing things happen to improve children's care.



## Silencing the Pain



When Taya was diagnosed with arthritis as a toddler, **you** helped her take back her **life**.

*Just fifteen years old, Taya knows how it feels to live in crippling pain. She shares how it took a community of caring people, including you, to help her take back her life from arthritis.*

My life changed the day a violent red rash began spreading across my small, three-year-old body.

It wasn't a typical toddler rash and it came with hip pain and a skyrocketing temperature. Worried, my parents took me to our doctor in our hometown of St. Thomas to get answers.

They couldn't have expected what was to come.

Our doctor sent us straight to Children's Hospital. As a family, we would spend more than a month there as I underwent countless tests.

My health care team had to rule out cancer, heart disease

and more – I can't imagine what it was like for my parents to hear those possibilities.

As they gathered more and more evidence, it became clear that I had childhood arthritis. Medical professionals actually diagnosed me with the most serious form, called systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

One in 1,000 Canadian children and teens live with this condition.

It doesn't affect just one area of my body. It causes pain and stiffness in multiple joints. It can even impact my internal organs.

**(continued...)**



## Because of You...

- Leo has confidence and believes in his abilities
- Paige has the support to cope with cancer treatment
- Charley had a second chance at life

...and so much more!



*For the past nine years, Taya has been visiting Children's Hospital every two to four weeks to receive medication. Without it, she would experience crippling pain from her arthritis. Thank you for making the hospital a welcoming place for her, especially on her birthday!*

## Silencing the Pain (Continued)

### FIGHTING FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

Once I was diagnosed with childhood arthritis, I had to try many medications to determine what worked best for me.

There was one that put me into remission for a short time. My condition came back with a vengeance though.

At six years old, the inflammation in my little body was so severe that I wasn't able to move from my bed. The pain was overwhelming.

I couldn't go to school. I couldn't play with my friends. My parents had to carry me to the washroom.

Fortunately, Children's Hospital was there for me. My care team jumped into action to help me feel better and find another medication that would reduce my symptoms for the long-term.

It wasn't a simple process. There were many ups and downs.

One of the areas where I get the most pain is in my left ankle. I remember there was a period when it swelled so much that we started calling it Nemo after the clown fish from the popular Disney movie.

My parents would give me warm baths in the mornings and massage me to help get me moving.

Then, my care team put me on infusions of an immunosuppressant twice a week, a process that takes about four hours each time, plus a daily dose of a corticosteroid. I've been on this medication for the last nine years and it's drastically improved my quality of life.

I still have some stiffness in the mornings and evenings but I don't let that slow me down.

The hope is one day I can be weaned off the medication. We've tried a few times. So far, it's always ended with flare ups in my condition.

### YOU MAKE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL GREAT

Spending four hours, every two weeks in hospital could seem like a burden to some. I've had a birthday there. I've missed many school days.

But, it's okay because we have the best children's hospital and YOU are a BIG part of that.



**My Child Life Specialist, whose position you generously help fund, is always there to comfort and distract me from my medical procedures.**

She draws my attention away from the IV in my arm and the cool, sterile smell of the hospital by bringing craft materials, paints or pastels or talking and laughing with me.

Even as a teenager, I can't tell you how much it means to have someone who is solely concerned with my emotional well-being.

When I needed knee surgery this summer because my arthritis weakened the cartilage, you ensured my care team had the latest training and state-of-the-art equipment to give me the best outcome.

**Above:** Taya needed knee surgery this past summer because the cartilage was weakened from arthritis.

**Right:** Taya, middle left, poses with her loving family. All of them are grateful for the support you've provided that has helped Taya overcome arthritis and build an active life for herself.

“At six years old, the inflammation in my little body was so severe that I couldn’t even get out of bed. The pain was overwhelming.”

Did you know that donors, like you, help fund 90% of Children’s Hospital’s medical equipment purchases? It’s simply amazing.

### THANK YOU!

Thank you immensely. Your support means so much to me and my family.

It’s made it possible for me to push past my arthritis to pursue my dreams. I’m a competitive cheerleader and last year I took the stage at the Cheerleading Worlds!

My mom and dad would also proudly tell you that, through all of this, I’ve kept honours in school.

The future of my arthritis is uncertain but I know that Children’s Hospital will always be family and that includes you.

**Thank you for the care and generosity you show for children and teens, like me. Please know that you are making a meaningful impact on all of our lives.**



## Why We Give

Donors like you share what inspires them to help strengthen children’s health care in our community.



*Peter and Laura met with patient ambassador Gabe and his family. At just 13 years old, Gabe underwent four brain surgeries at Children’s Hospital.*

“Having both faced serious health issues at a young age, Laura and I understand the importance of good children’s care.

“Laura was just six years old when she was stricken with polio. She spent three years in hospital before she was finally well enough to return home.

“Similarly, I needed care for the first year of my life. Medical professionals became concerned when I began rapidly losing weight. They found a tumour in my stomach and had to remove it, along with half my stomach.

“Laura needed the health care system again for her son. He was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy and, sadly, passed away at 10 years old.

“We are proud to improve care for future generations by leaving a gift of life insurance in our Will for Children’s Health Foundation.”

– Peter and Laura Sweeney, London, ON

*Leaving a Gift of Life Insurance in your Will for a registered charity allows you to make a more significant gift than you might otherwise be able to give and can help reduce the taxation of your estate.*

## FOR YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

"Our granddaughter, Payton, has received and continues to receive the best care for leukemia.

"The support for her parents has been fantastic. Everyone (doctors, nurses, support staff, volunteers) are so committed, caring and dedicated.

"As grandparents living 160 km away, it is very reassuring to know that Payton is in the best possible location with the best people surrounding and supporting her. May God bless you all!"

-Bradley Kempson, Niagara Falls, ON



*Payton (right) with Ollie the Therapeutic Clown. You help fund this important program that makes Children's Hospital a happier place for children and their families.*

## FOR YOUR NIECES AND NEPHEWS

"My niece Charley spent one and a half months at Children's Hospital as a three-month-old baby.

"The doctors and nurses provided amazing care and were so accommodating to my brother and sister-in-law during Charley's stay.

"She is now a thriving eight-year-old child that was given an extra chance at life thanks to the amazing care she received."

-Merissa Bokla, Delhi, ON



*Because of your support, more kids like Charley can grow up to be active kids.*

## FOR THE BEST POSSIBLE CARE FOR ALL CHILDREN

"We are a group of mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers who quilt together weekly.

"We are all so thankful to have healthy families, but also are aware of how things can change.

"Having your facility so close to home makes us realize we can help in our own small way to assist those who are not as fortunate.

"God bless all of your staff, and may He keep his healing hand on all of your little ones!"

-Twin Elm Quilters, Strathroy, ON



*The Twin Elm Quilters working on a lovely quilt. Much like you, they give back to support the hospital that kids in our region rely on each day.*

# Banishing Leo's Loneliness

When Leo felt different from his peers, when he was lonely and upset, YOU made sure he received the support he needed to love himself.

Have you ever felt that you didn't fit in? Like you were different and no one, not even your own family, could understand you.

You felt lonely. You felt sad. And you spent many nights wishing for change.

When Leo was 10, these were the very thoughts that weighed on him.

Leo was born with a condition called congenital myopathy, which affects all the muscles in his body, including his heart. His muscles have low tone, reduced strength and fatigue very quickly.

As a result, he struggles to do basic movements, from climbing the stairs to running or jumping.

"He looks like a regular kid," says his mom, Kim. "But when he starts moving, you can tell rather quickly that he experiences some physical challenges.

"When he got old enough to realize there was something different about him, he began to feel like he didn't fit in.

"It was a dark period for our family. Leo was so sad about his life. He started to hate everything about it."

Kim took him to counseling. It didn't help.

"They're regular people," Leo would say exasperated. "They're not experiencing what I am."



*Thank you for helping build Leo's confidence when he was struggling with feeling different because of his physical disabilities.*

Next, she turned to Thames Valley Children's Centre (TVCC).

The staff quickly matched Leo with a university student who had grown up with similar physical challenges. He mentored him, lifting Leo up and helping him feel good about himself.

TVCC's support didn't stop there. They also connected Leo to activities and programs where he could shine. He particularly loves TVCC's Adapted Fitness Centre, which generous donors like you make possible. The centre teaches him exercises that are right for his condition.

**"Leo has seen great gains and his confidence has really improved," says Kim. "I don't know where Leo would be right now without TVCC and support from caring donors."**

It's simple.

**A gift in your Will can create a better future for sick children.**

Anyone can make a gift in their Will, and arranging your gift is a simple process. It's just a matter of taking the first step.

**Start planning your legacy today!**

Contact Vicki Hayter, Associate Director, Philanthropy, for more information:  
519-432-8062 x75291 | [vhayter@childhealth.ca](mailto:vhayter@childhealth.ca) | [www.childhealth.ca/legacy](http://www.childhealth.ca/legacy)



# Lives **You've** Touched



## **Dominic, age 1**

**Hometown:** Woodstock, ON

**Condition:** Born prematurely

**Likes:** Dominic loves to be scared. In the words of his mom, Stephanie, "He thinks it's the funniest thing ever! The more he jumps, the more he laughs."

**His Journey:** A pregnancy complication put Stephanie and Dominic's lives in danger. Medical professionals had to perform an emergency c-section to protect them both. Dominic came into the world about two and a half months early, weighing two pounds, 13 ounces. He wasn't breathing, he wasn't crying and his heart was in distress. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit stepped in to save his life. After 58 days of care, he was healthy and strong enough to go home with his parents for the first time. Dominic is currently one year old and progressing very well. He is a happy and active little boy.

**How You Helped:** You made sure Dominic's caregivers had the equipment he needed during the greatest fight of his life.



## **Paige, age 6**

**Hometown:** London, ON

**Condition:** Acute lymphoblastic leukemia

**Likes:** Paige loves being around her family, drawing and painting, baking in the kitchen and eating jelly doughnuts from Tim Hortons, home of Smile Cookies.

**Her Journey:** Paige's health care journey started when her parents noticed that the bruises she got from playing weren't healing. They sought answers from medical professionals and learned Paige had leukemia. She was four years old. The first seven months of treatment were difficult. She wasn't feeling well for most of it and lost all her hair. Today, she is in the final stages of her treatment. Her family hopes that in the near future they will be able to say she is cancer free.

**How You Helped:** You make sure Paige has a Child Life Specialist to look after her emotional well-being while in hospital. She prepares her mentally for procedures and provides distraction to help her cope with pain and anxiety.



## Community Events

April 28 - Bowling for Miracles

April 28 - Forest City Road Races

June 5 - Siskinds Golf Play Day

September 16-22 - Tim Horton's Smile Cookie Week

December 6 - Children's Magical Winter Ball

More details at [childhealth.ca/events](http://childhealth.ca/events)



**Children's  
Miracle Network**

### **Lowe's Campaign**

Local Lowes and Rona locations  
March 24 - April 30

### **May is For Miracles Campaigns**

Local Costco locations - April 29 - June 2  
Local Walmart locations - May 16 - June 7

### **Miracle Treat Day**

Local DQ locations - August 8

### **Extra Life - Game Day**

November 2