MIRACLE CHILD

Mykayla Pineda

PLUS: IN A CLASS ALL THEIR OWN
CCISD HOSPITAL BOUND PROGRAM  PAGE 5
A Message from The Driscoll President and CEO

When I look at the cover of this magazine, I think of how this child’s smiling face is a true reflection of our mission: “Improve the health of adults and you give them back their health... Improve the health of children and you give them their life.”

Thanks to an outstanding medical staff, nursing staff and entire team including volunteers and donors who support us—we indeed manage to put smiles back on some very sick children. We get them back to their family and friends. We get them back to school and their normal activities. And we help them have a chance at a productive successful adulthood.

As we reflect on another year, the renovation of Driscoll’s Emergency Department (ED) is moving ahead smoothly, with patient services continuing uninterrupted and particularly during this year’s flu season. The renovation of the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) suite in the Radiology Department has been completed. Patients are now able to create their own world and reduce their anxiety by controlling lighting, calming visuals and sound by using a simple touch pad. And the 2014 Fiesta de los Niños funds will be allocated toward the upgrade of technology in the Cath Lab. This will allow our cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons to perform procedures as routine as they are extraordinary, by utilizing a variety of advanced imaging and interventional techniques to diagnose and treat patients who are affected by congenital heart disease.

Driscoll would not be the successful pediatric health care organization it is today without the generous support of so many individuals, groups and businesses. Through generous donations of time, talent and treasures, our facility remains a thriving, growing and caring institution, built by and for our community. We have the best individuals in place to continue creating hope and healing for the children of South Texas. That’s our mission, and it’s what we do in the very best way possible.

Steve Woerner | President and CEO
Driscoll Children’s Hospital

So please join us for Fiesta de los Niños on Saturday, February 7th and bring a friend with you as we celebrate the start of 2014. Please consider giving generously this year as we strive to improve so many young peoples’ lives that are in great need of the exceptional care offered at Driscoll Children’s Hospital.

Mary Clark | President
Driscoll Development Foundation Board President

As we begin 2014, and we transition from looking at what we’ve accomplished into where we need to go, we all become acutely aware that our jobs and volunteer efforts are never quite finished. We are always looking for new ways to make what we do and how we do it do it better and Driscoll Children’s Hospital is no exception.

The children are our mission at Driscoll, and we are always trying to enhance the care we offer them and in turn, the opportunities for them to experience long and healthy lives. To understand the difference we make for children and their families, it only requires taking a few minutes to walk the halls at Driscoll, talk to a doctor or nurse, sit down and chat with a child or their parent or engage in conversation with an employee or a volunteer. It’s all around you. There is a passion at Driscoll, an understanding and a sincere appreciation from everyone involved for what happens here; it’s something that is unmistakably extraordinary.

With that in mind let’s look at 2014: our path is exciting and the opportunities infinite. This year marks the 22nd annual Fiesta de los Niños. Funds raised are critical for so many children in so many ways. The 2014 Fiesta funds are designated to upgrade the technology in the Driscoll Catheterization Lab. In case you are not aware, more than 100 successful catheterizations were performed at Driscoll last year. An upgrade to the Catheterization Lab will allow cardiologists to have the newest developed technology at their fingertips as they care for the hearts of some of the most vulnerable children in South Texas. This year’s Fiesta de los Niños — Light up the Night will raise money to purchase a new state-of-the-art ambulance that will transport over 1,200 critically ill babies and children annually.

So please join us for Fiesta de los Niños on Saturday, February 7th and bring a friend with you as we celebrate the start of 2014. Please consider giving generously this year as we strive to improve so many young peoples’ lives that are in great need of the exceptional care offered at Driscoll Children’s Hospital.

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Driscoll Development Foundation Board President
Dilachew Adebo, MD, has joined Driscoll Children’s Hospital as a pediatric cardiologist. Dr. Adebo received his medical degree in 1999 from Gondar College of Medical Sciences in Ethiopia. He completed fellowships in pediatric cardiology at the University of Minnesota Medical Center in Minneapolis and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. He received cardiovascular magnetic resonance training at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and obtained level III certification by the Society for Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance. Dr. Adebo received additional training in pediatric cardiology in Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. Dr. Adebo is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics.

Sergio Bartakian, MD, has joined Driscoll Children’s Hospital as a pediatric cardiologist. Dr. Bartakian previously practiced pediatric interventional cardiology at Rady Children’s Hospital — San Diego. He received his medical degree in 2006 from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, completed an internship and residency at University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital in Cleveland, and received his training in pediatric cardiology at Children’s Hospital Colorado in Aurora. Dr. Bartakian is a member of the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Cardiology, Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions and the Pediatric & Congenital Intervventional Cardiology Early Career Society.

Emily M. Becker, MD, has joined Driscoll Children’s Hospital as a pediatric dermatologist. She recently completed a pediatric dermatology fellowship at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA), where she performed a dermatology residency from 2009 to 2012. Dr. Becker earned her medical degree in 2005, also at UTHSCSA. She is certified by the American Board of Dermatology and the American Board of Pediatrics.

Elizabeth Anyaegbu, MD, has joined Driscoll Children’s Hospital as a pediatric nephrologist. Dr. Anyaegbu completed a nephrology fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis, where she also received a master’s degree in clinical investigation. She performed her residency at Driscoll from 2007 to 2010. She is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Society of Pediatric Nephrology, American Society of Nephrology and the National Kidney Foundation.

Gary Butchko, MD, FAAP, FACC, has joined Driscoll Children's Hospital as a pediatric cardiologist at Driscoll Children's Medical Plaza — McAllen. Dr. Butchko was previously director of Echocardiography with Mercy Congenital Heart Disease Specialists at Mercy Children’s Hospital in Toledo, Ohio. He received his medical degree in 1996 from The Ohio State University College of Medicine in Columbus and performed his pediatric residency at Dayton Children’s Hospital and Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Butchko completed a pediatric cardiology fellowship in 2002 at James Whitcomb Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis. He is board certified in pediatrics and pediatric cardiology.

Anna Gonzalez, MD, has joined Driscoll Children’s Hospital as a maternal-fetal medicine specialist. Dr. Gonzalez received her medical degree in 2005 from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology in 2009 at Parkland Hospital in Dallas, and this year completed her fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at the University of Chicago. Dr. Gonzalez is certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She is a Fellow in the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and a member of the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine and the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine.

Ana María Páez, MD, has joined Driscoll Children’s Hospital as a maternal-fetal medicine specialist. She recently completed a maternal-fetal medicine fellowship at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA), where she performed a maternal-fetal medicine residency from 2007 to 2010. She is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Society of Pediatric Nephrology, American Society of Nephrology and the National Kidney Foundation.
In a Class All Their Own

Walking through the door of the 5th floor school, just down the hall from the nurse’s station at Driscoll Children’s Hospital, its walls covered in exotic animal photos, bins filled with wildlife footprint molds, shelves stocked full of books and art supplies, state-of-the-art computer stations and a life-sized stuffed Scooby Doo welcoming you in, definitely makes you want to sit down and be a kid again. It just looks like fun. And Marie Soza, director of Driscoll’s Education Program, wouldn’t have it any other way.

“We re-opened the school at Driscoll about six years ago,” explains Soza. “And the kids love it. In fact,” she smiles, “often when I get here at 8 a.m., there are kids waiting outside the door, waiting for me to open it. Once they get here and come to our school,” she smiles, “they don’t want to leave. In fact,” she recalls, “we had one little boy who was in the hospital for about a month. He was here every morning before me, ate lunch with us daily and at the end of the day, at about 4:30 p.m., we would take him back to his room. He never wanted to leave. Sometimes, those kids are in the hospital for quite a while. Several kids we’ve had have been here for at least a year-and-a-half. In many cases,” she shrugs, “we become their friends, their social life.”

“This school at Driscoll,” she smiles, “is a very special school. We are a CCSD school and we do have specific lesson plans and a daily learning schedule, but we are here for kids who have to be in the hospital so we are able to be flexible for them. They get to come here and feel normal even if it’s just for a little while. No one is looking at them. They can learn without being self-conscious. And the best part,” Marie grins, “is they can come to school in their pajamas.”

As if on cue to prove her point, 7-year-old Milagros, a young kidney transplant patient wakes up, clad in her pajamas with her mobile monitor in tow and she easily sits down at the table ready to learn her morning lesson. Milagros is the sole student in attendance this morning, as she is currently susceptible to infection and can’t be around other children. On most mornings there are multiple students, as the school can accommodate up to eight children at a time. But for Marie and her staff, that is not the only place for teaching opportunities.

“If the students can’t come to us, we go to them,” explains Marie. “We will go to their room and work with them, read to them and talk to them. We will find any way we can to teach and inspire these kids. Our goal is to get them out of their rooms and bring them down here to school. Because once we get them here, we know they will want to come back. Sometimes we just have to convince them to try it once.”

Once they do try the school, Marie, a certified teacher herself, and her team Belia De Leon, Driscoll School secretary who has worked with Marie for four years, and Mary Lou Kregel, her other certified teacher, work their magic. ‘They engage the kids in learning made fun.’

“We are not afraid to try anything,” Marie smiles and says candidly. “And we know how to work with patients with varying illnesses. We are a team and we work closely with the doctors and nurses, and we understand the needs of each child. For example, if a child has had a kidney transplant, and we know they are diabetic, they will need a snack, and if they are on dialysis, they require low sodium and no chocolate.”

“They can learn without being self-conscious. And the best part is they can come to school in their pajamas.”

“WE teach kids at the school from Pre-K through 12th grade and we run on a regular school calendar; teaching between 180 and 200 days a year and we are off in the summer,” explains Soza. “There is definitely a lot of learning going on here. But there is a lot of laughter too. ’’We do laugh a lot. And sometimes,’’ she says soberly, ’’we cry. But mostly we laugh, and help the kids learn, even if sometimes they can only stay for twenty minutes.’’

“When these children come to class, it is not only good for them, it is also good for their parents because their parents who are so worried about them and won’t leave their side, can take a break. They can go get breakfast, a cup of coffee, or take a shower and know their child is being taken care of and learning at the same time. But for these special Driscoll kids, their education doesn’t stop with the initial lesson. In addition to traditional learning, Marie and her team work with the kids on practical applications for what they are learning at Driscoll Children’s Hospital School.

“We teach them about math and measurement and then,” explains Soza, “we give them a real life application to go with it. With fractions, we do things like make cupcakes. It works very well and the kids love it. We recently made cupcakes with the kids and they sold them to the nurses on the floor. And after they sold their cupcakes, we recently pleased with her young students, “the kids decided to give all the money they raised to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.”

As she looks over at Milagros, Soza nods and says thoughtfully, “we are here for the kids, but in reality they give us so much more than we give them. They give us all great joy every single day.” And there is no doubt that the joy Marie Soza talks about is definitely mutual. Because just at that moment, Milagros comes to an end and she begins swinging her legs under her chair. Then, as if gathering herself to speak, she pauses for a moment, looks over at Marie and says thoughtfully, “we are here for the kids, can take a break. They can go get breakfast, a cup of coffee, or take a shower and know their child is being taken care of and learning at the same time.”

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Mykayla Pineda
ENGAGING IN LIFE

By Debra Young Hatch
Photography by Dick Whitliff

“There is something about Mykayla.” John Pineda says. “She has an aura about her that seems to intrigue people. People who don’t even know us, stop us to look at her or he next to her. When people first see her there is this moment when they make eye contact with her, a connection of some kind. I can’t explain it. It just is.”

And in looking around the room, John Pineda is absolutely correct, because everyone is completely mesmerized with this young girl who misses absolutely nothing that is happening around her.

“Mykayla was a gift from the beginning; she was born at 30 weeks and she weighed 1 lb. and 11 ounces,” recalls her mom, Monique Pineda.

“We were prepared to take Mykayla wherever we needed to go. And we only needed to come right here to Driscoll.”

Looking down at his hand, John recalls shaking his head incredulously, “Her whole body fit into the palm of my hand, and her legs came to my wrist. We knew before she was born that she had a unilateral cleft lip and palate. And they had told us there are a multitude of problems that could accompany that condition. Monique was having weekly testing and ultrasounds to rule out any other potential issues. We were preparing ourselves for all of the issues that might occur when she arrived. But we were not prepared for her to arrive so early.”

At 30 weeks, it was discovered that Mykayla’s oxygen levels in her blood were not as good as they had been, there seemed to be some heart rate issues and in two weeks she had not grown at all in size or weight. There was definitely a problem.

The doctors decided it was time, and Mykayla was born on June 14th at the Spohn Hospital South and then transferred to the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) at Driscoll Children’s Hospital.

“From the moment she arrived, Mykayla has been a fighter,” John recalls as he smiles down at his daughter who has just offered him a pink Fruit Loop, and then easily pops a green one in her own mouth.

“They told us when we arrived at the NICU at Driscoll that they never had to intubate Mykayla. From the beginning she breathed on her own. No oxygen. And,” he smiles, as Mykayla squirms to get down on the floor, “even as tiny as she was she always found a way to work herself out of her swaddling. She was feisty and that’s what her nickname was in the NICU,” he laughs. “Feisty.”

“She definitely lived up to that name, because every time they said she might not be able to do this or that, she did it.” She always passed the bars they set for her. She has never fit into the normal category,” Monique candidly. “I wanted to see her and I wanted her to see me. And as she recalls those first months, her eyes filling, “Mykayla who we felt like would care for the baby. But even though there was concern, at 4 weeks the nurses gave her a bottle. “I knew she could do it,” says John. “I knew it, and once she got a hold of that bottle and she started sucking on it, she didn’t want to let go. And it was like that for her in everything. She exceeded every milestone well in advance of all predictions.”

Mykayla Pineda spent 90 days in the Driscoll NICU; the expected time frame had been four to five months. She wasn’t supposed to move from an isolette to a crib until she weighed 4 lbs., and not only did she move earlier, she went home in three months on August 8, weighing 3 lbs. 13 oz. In no time, she started feeding completely from her bottle, definitely great news.

But for Mykayla, this was only the beginning. The next hurdles were the surgeries to repair the cleft lip and palate.

This is not a one, two or three surgery experience. It is more like a ten, eleven or twelve surgery process. Mykayla’s first surgery was on January 11th at seven-and-a-half months. She weighed 9 lbs. They constructed her lip and her nostril, and the surgery took two-and-a-half hours.

“We wanted someone to operate on Mykayla who we felt like would care for her, had a passion about their work, and I wanted her to see me.” Monique candidly. “I wanted to see her and I wanted her to see me. And as she recalls those first months, her eyes filling, “She had to know I was there. We were always there. We lived at the NICU at Driscoll.”

With her cleft lip and palate, Mykayla had to be tube fed, as the cleft in the palate causes some issues with normal sucking ability and it becomes exhausting for the baby. But even though there was concern, at 4 weeks the nurses gave her a bottle.

“...and the itsy, bitsy spider went up the spout again… She just loves that.” Her dad, John Pineda, smiles, obviously so proud of his pint-sized 18-month old who seems almost magically to draw even the most casual observer into her circle.

Mykayla Pineda alternately puts her petite thumbs and baby fingers together with amazing coordination and grins as her dad holds her and sings softly, “...and the itsy, bitsy spider went up the spout again… She just loves that.” Her dad, John Pineda, smiles, obviously so proud of his pint-sized 18-month old who seems almost magically to draw even the most casual observer into her circle.
Dr. Kevin Hopkins and Mykayla Pineda

We see and operate on about 200 patients annually. The first surgery for the child usually takes place according to the ‘10 Rule’. The child is usually 10 months old, weighs 10 lbs. and their hemoglobin is 10. However, with preemies like Mykayla, all bets are off. But in Mykayla's case we actually pushed everything forward a little; she was ready. And during the first surgery we repaired her lip and nostril.

"I hear people say they are going to Dallas for these surgeries, and I ask them why. We have a great doctor right here." 

"The surgery went well, but following the surgery was not quite so easy," recalls Monique. "Mykayla could not drink from a bottle for 10 weeks because of the pressure it would cause on the healing tissue and the stitches. And you can imagine how that went," she says shaking her head and smiling as she glances down at Mykayla.

And then, it was time for the second surgery. For Mykayla, her second surgery was at 10 months, on April 19th, to close the palate. That surgery took an hour-and-a-half and again it took about 10 weeks to heal. At four years old, she will have another major surgery and a bone graft, and then have a least two successive surgeries, one at 12 or 13 and one more at 15.

"When you have a child with cleft issues, there is a whole team that comes into play to work with the child in learning how to swallow, eat, drink and speak, as well as dentists, nutritionists and social workers. The list is extensive. We all work together to have the best outcome for the child. Mykayla and her family are wonderful. In fact they have started a foundation called Mykayla's Gift, designed to inform people on cleft lips and palates and how and where they can get help," says Dr. Hopkins.

And there is no doubt, the Pinedas believe completely in Dr. Hopkins. "Dr. Hopkins is a Godsend," John Pineda shares candidly. "He is the right doctor for us." Yes. He is very humble, kind and skilled. What he does, he does with his heart. I hear people say they are going to Dallas for these surgeries, and I ask them why. We have a great doctor right here."

Monique and John say, holding Mykayla as she shares kisses with them and everyone else standing within reach. "people ask us, if we could do this all over and not have a child with these issues, would we do that? The answer is no. It's because of Mykayla that we have connected with so many people again. We have connected with Dr. Hopkins and Driscoll, and found out what a wonderful place Driscoll really is."

"Mykayla, and who she is, has changed us, our son and our whole lives forever." They nod in agreement as Mykayla offers that engaging grin she shares so easily, "we are most grateful, and even if we could, we wouldn't change one thing."

For the Kids’ Sake

Corpus Christi Community Goes All In for the Kids to Support Driscoll Children’s Hospital

We want to thank the sponsors, participants and volunteers for making the Singer Songwriter Showcase and the Driscoll Children's Hospital Golf Tournament a huge success. Together both events brought in more than $200,000. We are already ready for next year!

The proceeds raised by both the golf tournament and Singer Songwriter event will help ensure that Driscoll Children’s Hospitals continue to provide care to critically ill children, regardless of a family’s ability to pay for such care.

The Singer Songwriter Showcase event was a sold-out event. Songwriters Marv Green, Tim Nichols and Jason Sellers took center stage at the beautiful Corpus Christi Country Club on a dazzling starlight, guitar-picking evening.

The following day, the annual Driscoll Children’s Hospital Golf Tournament took place at the Corpus Christi Country Club golf course. Corporate groups and foursomes enjoyed a beautiful golf outing followed by an awards reception.

Singer Songwriter Showcase

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**South Texas Cattlemen’s RoundUp**  
**Another Successful Year**  

Thank you for making our 26th annual fundraiser a huge success!

We are so grateful for all the support from Lyssy and Eckel Feed and Seed, the many local 4-H clubs, FFA Chapters, County Extension agents, farmers and ranchers, local companies and communities that made this event possible. Combined with seven cattle auction barns, the Roundup raised close to $200,000.

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**Light Up The Night** project will help provide a brand new specialized Pediatric Ambulance to transport children from all over South Texas to Driscoll Children’s Hospital. Over 1,200 children are transported into the hospital each year and hundreds of thousands of miles covered in the specialized ambulances.

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**John Corbett’s self-titled debut album, released in 2006, climbed to No. 42 on Billboard’s Country Albums chart; surprising even the guy who rose to fame as Cicely, Alaska’s resident radio deejay on the “Northern Exposure” TV series (and made women swoon in “Sex and the City” and “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”).**

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**Wishes Come True:**  
**Valero Donates $27,000 for Sports Medicine Equipment**  

Representatives from the Driscoll Children’s Hospital Ortho/Rehab department and the Development Foundation accepted a check for $27,000 from the 2013 Valero Charity Selection Committee members.

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**Driscoll’s ER renovation project to benefit from Halliburton’s $50,000 donation**  

Representatives from Halliburton presented a check for $50,000 to Driscoll Children’s Hospital on November 12th, to go toward the redesign and expansion of Driscoll’s Emergency Room. The donation was made possible by funds raised at the 20th annual Halliburton Charity Golf Tournament, held this past October in Houston.

Approximately 35,000 children visit Driscoll’s ER annually. The renovation and expansion of the ER began in July and is scheduled to last 16 to 18 months. The $12 million project will increase the size of the ER and lobby by approximately 5,000 square feet. It will result in a state-of-the-art ER and significantly enhance overall patient care at Driscoll.

“Halliburton has been a dedicated supporter of children’s health,” said Martha Avery, Driscoll vice president of Development. “We are very fortunate to have such a great partner here in our region. We are extremely grateful to Halliburton for their generous support.”
Six Points Kiwanis Send Kids to Camp

All children like having fun. That’s why, at Driscoll Children’s Hospital, we’ve created overnight summer camp experiences for our patients with cancer, diabetes, heart conditions and asthma. It’s an opportunity for children to develop new skills, form lasting friendships and build their self-esteem, all while having a great time. Perhaps the greatest benefit of camp is the opportunity for children to connect with others who are facing similar challenges. Driscoll extends our deepest appreciation to the Six Points Kiwanis Club and the hundreds of individuals who purchased cases of apples.

Exxon Mobil Foundation gives $5,000 to Driscoll Children’s Hospital

The Exxon Mobil Foundation presented a check for $5,000 on August 27 to Driscoll Children’s Hospital. The funds will be used by Driscoll’s Child Abuse Resource & Evaluation Team to purchase specially designed dietary plates and educational materials that will be used to educate parents on healthy food and nutrition choices for their children.

The Vishal Raju Bhagat Foundation Continues the Fight Against Juvenile Diabetes

The Vishal Bhagat Memorial Golf Tournament was formed to raise funds to fight against juvenile diabetes. Funds raised from this event have allowed for grants to various charities such as Driscoll Children’s Hospital in the amount of $10,000.

Matching Gift Program

What is a matching gift?

A company makes a matching gift when an employee has made a donation to a non-profit organization and applies for their company to match their gift to that same organization. Most companies match charitable contributions at an equal amount and sometimes greater. A matching gift is a great way for a donor to increase their contribution to support the children and families of Driscoll Children’s Hospital. As a current employee, employee spouse, or retiree, please check with your company’s Human Resources Department to see if a matching program for employee donations exists. If your employer does have a Matching Gift Program, request a matching gift form from your employer, and send it completed and signed with your gift to:

Driscoll Children’s Hospital Development Foundation
3533 S. Alameda
Corpus Christi, Texas 78411-1783
361-694-6401
Save the Date

Fiesta de los Niños

CORPUS CHRISTI
Featured Entertainer: John Corbett
February 7, 2014
American Bank Center

Children’s Miracle Network K99 Radiothon

March 7, 2014
Half Pint Library
Driscoll Children’s Hospital

For more information, please call the Driscoll Children’s Hospital Development Foundation at 361.694.6401