Spring 2009

children's health

A publication for those who support the University of Minnesota Department of Pediatrics and the University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital

Honoring an inventor and humanitarian

Daughter's $50 million gift in father's honor names children's hospital

As she stood before a crowd saluting her with a loud standing ovation, Caroline Amplatz, J.D., was momentarily overcome by emotion.

University of Minnesota officials had just announced Amplatz's $50 million gift to its children's hospital in honor of her father, retired University professor and medical device pioneer Kurt Amplatz, M.D. In recognition of the gift, the hospital, which is building a new facility, will be called University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital. The gift is the second largest in the University's history.

"Thank you for joining me and honoring my father," Caroline Amplatz said at the February 10 event. "My hope is that the Amplatz Children's Hospital will follow in my father's footsteps with steadfast and unrelenting determination to improve and save lives. If it does, it will be the best in the world."

The state-of-the-art Amplatz Children's Hospital will be an eco-friendly, 96-bed, 227,000-square-foot facility that consolidates the hospital's 50 pediatric specialties in one patient- and family-centered location. It also will house some of the country's leading pediatric research programs.

Ground was broken last summer for the new facility, which is scheduled to open by mid-2011.

Photo by Tim Rummelhoff

The University's children's hospital is now named for Kurt Amplatz, M.D., who is widely known as the father of interventional radiology.

A true innovator

Called "the father of interventional radiology" by many, Kurt Amplatz is a pioneer in the use of noninvasive techniques for treating several medical conditions. His most famous invention, the Amplatzer® Septal Occluder, is a tiny device made of wire mesh and a small piece of fabric that's used to repair a congenital heart defect in

continued on page 2

University Pediatrics Foundation

Honoring Amplatz continued from cover

children and adults. The device is inserted through a catheter in the patient's groin and has replaced open-heart surgery as the treatment of choice for tens of thousands of people through-out the world.

Amplatz, a University radiology professor for four decades and holder of more than 30 patents, also invented devices such as high-resolution x-ray equipment, heparin-coated guide wires, sheathed needles for angiography, specially shaped cardiac catheters, and vascular occlusion devices.

John Bass, M.D., director of pediatric cardiology in the Department of Pediatrics, worked alongside Amplatz for many years and took part in clinical trials testing Amplatz's devices.

(From left) University President Robert Bruininks, Ph.D.; senior vice president for health sciences Frank Cerra, M.D.; Department of Pediatrics head Aaron Friedman, M.D.; Caroline Amplatz, J.D.; and Fairview Health Services president and CEO Mark Eustis.

Photo by Patrick O'Leary

"He tinkered all of the time, and he still does," Bass says of his 85-year-old colleague and friend. "He's always coming up with new ideas."

Frank Cerra, M.D., senior vice president for health sciences at the University, recalls Amplatz's seemingly endless stream of creativity. Amplatz was always designing new devices, "many times on the spot," Cerra says, and after the medical team saved a life, he would quietly move on to the next issue at hand.

He was so humble that his own children didn't even know about his many accomplishments. Caroline Amplatz recalled the day as a college student that she learned her father had written 630 academic papers—an average of one or two papers every two weeks at that point in his career. (He also has authored 75 books.)

"That's a man who has ideas every day of his life," she says.

A fitting legacy

University President Robert H. Bruininks, Ph.D., says the hospital's new name is a way for the community to honor a leader in medical research and in the state's medical device industry.

"A contemporary of Dr. C. Walton Lillehei and Earl Bakken, Kurt Amplatz is a trailblazer who continues to be committed to improving patients' lives through the development of innovative technologies," he says. "This gift is a tribute to a man who has touched many lives, but also to his daughter Caroline, her sense of history, and her vision."

The gift from Caroline Amplatz, a member of the University Pediatrics Foundation board and president of two other foundations that support children, will be paid over 12 years. It will fund in part the programs and infrastructure needed to support pediatric research and care at the Amplatz Children's Hospital.

Among the areas that will benefit is a pediatric hybrid catheterization lab designed to accommodate both a cardiac surgical team and an interventional cardiology team to treat children with damaged hearts. (Read more about this lab on page 5.)

In addition, the gift will support some of the Amplatz Children's Hospital Adopt A Rooms through a philanthropy-funded program that creates private, family-friendly, high-tech rooms that let kids control their environment during hospital stays.

Caroline Amplatz says she felt compelled to make this gift and sees the hospital's new name as a fitting way to honor her father's legacy.

"Every day he's alive, this world is a better place," she says.

To learn more about Kurt Amplatz, M.D., and plans for the new University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital facility, visit www.upf.umn.edu/.

‘A place in her heart’

For toddler Bridget Cisneros, an innovation by Kurt Amplatz, M.D., has meant the difference between a risky open-heart surgery and a relatively quick procedure.

Bridget was born with an atrial septal defect, a hole between the upper two chambers of her heart. At one hospital, her family was told that open-heart surgery was Bridget’s only viable option. But thanks to one of Amplatz’s inventions and his longtime colleague John Bass, M.D., the gap was sealed in about an hour at the Univerity by installing the Amplatzer® Septal Occluder through a catheter into Bridget’s heart.

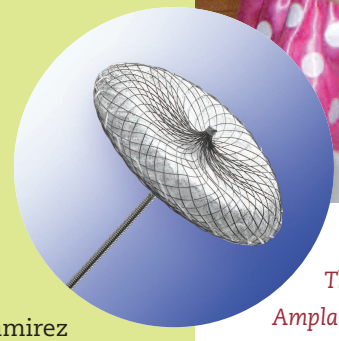
“It was just amazing that he was able to use the device to correct her heart defect without open-heart surgery,” mom Maureen Ramirez says.

And when relatives visited Bridget in the hospital later that day, Ramirez says they were stunned that she was already ready to play.

A year later, as the family celebrates Bridget’s second birthday, Ramirez can’t say enough about the difference the University’s physician-researchers have made in her daughter’s life.

“She literally has a place in her heart for the University,” Ramirez says. “It’s titanium and nickel.”

Read more about Bridget at www.upf.umn.edu/involved/kids/cisneros_bridget.cfm.



The tiny Amplatzer® Septal Occluder repaired Bridget’s heart defect.

Lucas fellowship honors a pediatric cardiology leader by helping train the leaders of tomorrow

Longtime University of Minnesota pediatric cardiologist Russell V. Lucas Jr., M.D., was a great teacher and a generous man—so generous that in the 1970s he and his wife, Pat, opened their home to five orphaned children so they wouldn’t have to be separated from each other.

So it’s not surprising that, before he died in 2001, he established a special fund for training future fellows in his profession.

“He was an educator at heart,” says his daughter Rebecca Lucas. “He loved helping people learn and inspiring people to learn, and he loved patient care. For him it was a way to leave a legacy that had meaning.”

The Russell V. Lucas Fellowship in Pediatric Cardiology supports promising physicians who seek the advanced training needed to provide specialized heart care for children and conduct research to enhance the understanding and practice of pediatric cardiology. The fellowship, in conjunction with the University’s reputation as the cradle of pediatric cardiology, has attracted top physicians since it began.

Elliot Tucker, M.D., a Lucas fellow from 2004 to 2007, is now an interventional pediatric cardiologist at Ochsner Medical Center for Children in New Orleans. “To have the experience of being some place with such a long history in pediatric cardiology was great,” Tucker says.

Longtime University benefactor Larry Bentson helped establish and contributed to the fellowship fund in honor of his close friend.

“Russ was one of the real leaders of pediatric cardiology,” Bentson says. “He was an especially effective teacher.”

Lucas was educated at the University, completing a residency in pediatrics and a fellowship in clinical cardiology and pathology here. During his 32-year tenure as leader of the Division of Pediatric Cardiology, he shaped many lives.

“Dr. Lucas was one of the strongest role models I have had,” says retired pediatric cardiologist and adjunct faculty member Blanton Bessinger, M.D., who completed a fellowship under Lucas. “He always had the children and the families at heart.”

Help us continue Dr. Lucas’s legacy. Make a gift to the Russell V. Lucas Fellowship in Pediatric Cardiology today. Learn more at www.upf.umn.edu/news/lucas/cfm.

Healing young hearts

A pioneer in open-heart surgery, the University now focuses on developing less invasive approaches to cardiac repair.

James St. Louis, M.D., leads the University's part of the Berlin Heart trial.

When you hear the words "heart trouble," you're probably more likely to think of an octogenarian than an infant. But every year some 35,000 babies in the United States are born with a heart defect that requires repair. And hundreds of other children have heart damage caused by illness. As devastating as such circumstances might be, families in the Upper Midwest can feel fortunate to have the University of Minnesota on their team. Home to the first successful open-heart surgery and starting point for the first wearable pacemaker and numerous other cardiac devices, the University continues to lead today in finding and applying new and better ways to mend ailing hearts.

Revolutionizing care

For kids whose hearts have been harmed by illness, The Heart Center at University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital is finding leading-edge solutions. Stevon Stibbons was a typical toddler until a viral infection last March caused his heart to stop functioning properly. Medications didn't fix the problem, and doctors had to put him on an artificial pump to keep his blood oxygenated and circulating. But a device like that is only a short-term solution, and Stevon had a long-term problem.

John Bass, M.D., director of the Division of Pediatric Cardiology, performs catheter-guided procedures that can replace open-heart surgery for some children.

The good news? The University had been chosen as one of 11 sites in the country to participate in a clinical trial exploring an experimental device called the Berlin Heart EXCOR® Pediatric ventricular assist device, which is meant to keep kids' hearts healthy until they can get a heart transplant.

Under a compassionate use exemption from the Food and Drug Administration, associate professor of cardiothoracic surgery and codirector of The Heart Center, James St. Louis, M.D., connected the device to Stevon's heart to buy him time until a donor heart might become available.

In June, St. Louis decided to test whether the little boy's heart might have recovered on its own. The first time he tried weaning Stevon off the Berlin Heart device, things went well for almost a week, but then Stevon's heart needed help again. The second time, in September, Stevon's heart took over.

And today? "He just runs and runs and runs," mom Sheree Stibbons says. "He's my miracle baby."

St. Louis has since used the device to help three other children, including a newborn. "It's really revolutionized how we've dealt with kids with failing myocardium," he says. "We've had very good success with it."

With the Berlin Heart as an option, the hope of making it to transplant—and perhaps even making it past the need for a transplant like Stevon—is brighter than ever.

The narrow path

In the case of congenital heart defects, the quest for better care has taken a narrow path. Sometimes when the heart and major blood vessels are developing in a baby's body, a disrupted connection may remain between two parts of the heart, or a vein or artery may be too tiny to carry blood properly.

In the past, such situations have often meant not only opening the infant's chest, but also temporarily stopping the heart and blood flow to the child's developing brain—a procedure with a risk of brain damage and other side effects.

Today, however, physicians are able to do some lifesaving repairs by delivering patches or other devices through a catheter inserted into a blood vessel.

Although University doctors perform about 250 such catheter-guided procedures each year, they're not an option for every child. For children facing more complicated conditions, University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital two-and-a-half years ago opened a special hybrid pediatric catheterization lab, the only one of its kind in the Upper Midwest. In this room, surgeons and interventional cardiologists—the doctors who perform the catheter-guided procedures—can work together to solve complex problems.

"By combining pediatric cardiothoracic techniques and pediatric interventional catheterization techniques, we can do many different types of repairs and palliative treatments and reach places normal surgical techniques and normal catheterization can't reach," says Daniel Gruenstein, M.D., an assistant professor in the University's Department of Pediatrics and director of pediatric interventional cardiology.

"The fact that we are able to do very complex repairs on a beating heart actively circulating blood in a normal way, as opposed to artificially, is a huge advantage for our patients," he continues, meaning less time on a ventilator and heart drugs and less time in intensive care after surgery.

The hybrid suite now serves about 10 patients per year, but Gruenstein expects that number to grow as the concept catches on.

"It's widely recognized that this is the future," he says. "We're already years ahead."

An expanding field

These are just a few of the many new approaches to healing young hearts. Doctors at the University are developing other minimally invasive devices and applications, too. And opportunities for applying hybrid procedures will expand dramatically when the children's hospital moves into its new building—which includes a bigger, custom-designed hybrid facility—in 2011.

"It's an exciting time to be part of The Heart Center at the University of Minnesota," Gruenstein says. "This is a terrific example of the good that can come and the advantages for children in Minnesota when new ideas, techniques, and technologies and an interested public get together to try something that's positive for patients with complex diseases."

Sheree Stibbons is grateful for the device that helped heal her son Stevon's heart without a heart transplant. Today he loves to run.

35,000
babies born with a heart defect requiring repair in the United States each year

11
hospitals chosen to participate in the Berlin Heart clinical trial nationally

250
procedures performed by pediatric interventional cardiologists at the University annually

Friday, May 8

Wine Symposium: From Vineyard to Vine to Bottle
5:30 to 7 p.m.

Grand Tasting
6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 9

Special Reserve Reception
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Fine Wine Dinner
6 p.m. to Midnight

WineFest No. 14
A TOAST TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Don't miss the premier wine charity event of the year

WineFest No. 14 is a one-of-a-kind, two-day epicurean celebration to benefit the internationally renowned University of Minnesota Department of Pediatrics and University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital, where physician-researchers develop and deliver innovative treatments and cures for childhood diseases.

One of the year's most spectacular charity events, WineFest attracts more than 2,000 guests. Since 1995 it has raised more than $7 million for children's health research and care at the University.

This year's event, which will be held at the Depot in Minneapolis, features an educational wine tasting, gourmet cuisine from top Twin Cities restaurants, enticing auctions, rousing entertainment, and exclusive opportunities to clink your wine glass with luminaries from *Market Watch's* Wine Brand of the Year and our honorary winemaster, Chateau Ste. Michelle.

The painting "Abundance" by Susan Anderson will be a highlight of Saturday's live auction.

WineFest No. 14 benefits research, education, and service in the world-renowned Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School. For event details, tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and auction updates, visit thewinefest.com.

Smith visits Amplatz Children's Hospital

Superstar Will Smith delighted patients and parents alike during a December 12 visit to University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital. In town for the Twin Cities' premiere of his movie *Seven Pounds*, Smith handed out gifts, posed for pictures, and signed autographs.

Will Smith poses for a photo with Owen Heintz.

Up to the challenge

Nearly 6,400 children in Minnesota have a rheumatic disease such as lupus, systemic scleroderma, or juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

Specialized treatment for these children is vital. Pediatric rheumatologists have the expertise to properly diagnose the illness and provide prompt treatment to prevent lifelong problems, which can include severe pain and disability. But there is a serious shortage of specialists in the country—fewer than 200 practicing pediatric rheumatologists to treat more than 300,000 patients.

The Minneapolis-based Wasie Foundation hopes to improve that ratio by helping to establish a pediatric rheumatology fellowship program at the University of Minnesota. The Wasie Foundation has offered to provide a matching gift of $500,000 if the University can raise $500,000 by June 30, 2009, for the $1 million needed to jump-start the program.

With your help, the program—led by University pediatric rheumatologists Richard Vehe, M.D., and Bryce Binstadt, M.D., Ph.D.—could begin as early as this summer.

To learn more or to make a gift, visit www.upf.umn.edu/news/wasie.cfm or contact Joslyn Biever at 612-273-8591 or j.biever@mmf.umn.edu.

Photo by Scott Streble

Pediatric rheumatologist Bryce Binstadt, M.D., Ph.D., examines patient Lucy Meyer's wrist.

University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital Champions for Children Golf Classic

Monday, June 8, 2009
Windsong Farm Golf Club
Independence, Minnesota
www.wsfarm.com
This first-time tournament will raise funds for children's health at the University of Minnesota. For more information, contact Stephanie Borchardt at 612-273-8643 or s.borchardt@mmf.umn.edu.

Ben's Buddies Charity Golf Tournament

Sunday, September 13, 2009
Majestic Oaks Golf Club, Ham Lake, Minnesota
This tournament benefits the Division of Neonatology. For more information, visit www.bensbuddies.org.

Adopt A Room Golf and Celebrity Culinary Event

Monday, September 28, 2009
TPC Twin Cities, Blaine, Minnesota
Watch for more information at www.adoptaroom.org.

Party in the Park raises $40,000 for pediatrics

Hundreds of fun-lovers flocked to the Mall of America on November 9 for Party in the Park, an exclusive bash at Nickelodeon Universe to benefit the University Pediatrics Foundation.

This year's event—which featured WCCO-TV's Frank Vascellaro and Amelia Santaniello (*right*, with their children), popular Nickelodeon characters, live entertainment, rides, and a silent auction—raised more than $40,000 to support the University's internationally renowned Department of Pediatrics and University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital.

Photo by Mike Feltault

What would you like to see in *Children's Health?*

Send us an e-mail at upf@mmf.umn.edu with "Newsletter idea" in the subject line and let us know!

University of Minnesota

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On My Mind

What an incredible gift we have received. You've probably heard in the news that an extremely generous benefactor, Caroline Amplatz, J.D., has donated $50 million to our children's hospital in honor of her father, pioneering inventor and former professor Kurt Amplatz, M.D.

That in itself is truly amazing. But let me tell you why I think this gift and the new name of our hospital—University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital—are so extraordinary and so reflective of what we do.

As you've read in our cover story, Dr. Amplatz was full of ideas, and his ideas have made a huge difference in many families' lives. His most famous invention, the Amplatzer® Septal Occluder, today allows physicians around the world to repair children's heart defects with a small device inserted through a catheter—when many of these children would otherwise have needed open-heart surgery.

What's special is that this children's hospital now bears the name of someone who knows what we at the University have accomplished in the past and what we do now, someone who was inventive and wanted to learn, someone who took his tinkering, as he called it, to the bedside to help children.

That is who we are. Every day our physicians not only provide leading-edge care to children in our hospital and clinics, but they also take their knowledge back into the laboratory to search for even better ways to treat childhood illnesses and to discover that next innovation.

It's a true honor for us to have our children's hospital named for Dr. Amplatz. And it is humbling that his daughter has given our work this proud vote of confidence.

This gift is a great responsibility. We look forward to proving to you, Ms. Amplatz, and the world that our hospital is deserving of its new name.

Sincerely,
Aaron Friedman, M.D.
Head, Department of Pediatrics
Ruben-Bentson Chair in Pediatric Community Health

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