



# Children's Health

A publication for those who support children's health research, education, and care at University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital

## A reason to celebrate

### University, Fairview embark on \$175 million campaign

The University of Minnesota and Fairview Health Services have launched a \$175 million campaign to support pediatric research, education, and care at the new home for University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital.

The campaign, led by the Minnesota Medical Foundation, already has raised \$84 million—nearly half of its goal.

More than 400 people—including kids, parents, hospital staff, and community volunteers—celebrated the public launch of the children's health campaign on September 25 with a family-friendly event. Children and adults alike decorated their own versions of the new hospital's colorful exterior and made special cards and origami paper cranes for the ill children in the hospital. Event attendees also had a chance to conduct their own science experiments and find out what it's like to be a medical student.

University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital is Minnesota's first and only academic pediatric hospital engaged in basic science, translational research, and leading-edge patient care. *continued on page 2*

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## A reason to celebrate *(continued from cover)*

“This hospital has a tradition of and a commitment to advancing medical firsts that touch the lives of millions of children,” says Frank Cerra, M.D., senior vice president of health sciences and dean of the University of Minnesota Medical School.

University of Minnesota Amplatz Children’s Hospital’s new location on the University’s Riverside campus will bring together children’s and mothers’ services, which are now divided by the Mississippi River.

Construction on the 227,000-square-foot replacement facility began in 2008 and will be completed by March.

Leaders plan to celebrate the culmination of the children’s health campaign by 2015.

“Minnesotans understand the unique role that an academic children’s hospital has for our state and our kids and will support this campaign,” says community volunteer Rich Ostlund, who chairs the University of Minnesota Amplatz Children’s Hospital Philanthropic Board. “Donors understand

that kids don’t stop getting sick even in tough economic times.”

Learn more about how you can support the campaign and view photos from the kickoff event at [www.uofmhope.org](http://www.uofmhope.org).



Photo by Willette Pictures

### Did you know?

University of Minnesota Amplatz Children’s Hospital has one of the nation’s top 15 pediatric research programs. Partnering with the University’s Medical School and Department of Pediatrics, the hospital has been a part of numerous medical breakthroughs, including:

- ▶ The first successful pediatric blood and marrow transplant to treat childhood cancer.
- ▶ The first infant heart transplant in Minnesota.
- ▶ The first cochlear ear implant surgery for a child.
- ▶ The first pediatric kidney biopsy.
- ▶ The first blood and marrow transplant to treat a lethal skin disease in children.



### Check out our new ads

University of Minnesota Amplatz Children’s Hospital’s new advertising campaign debuted this fall throughout the Twin Cities. The ads feature “Because” statements, which are meant to answer the question, “Why are we Driven to Discover?” View the full ad campaign at: [www.uofmchildrenshospital.org](http://www.uofmchildrenshospital.org).



# Favre 4 Hope Foundation adopts a room at University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital



Football legend Brett Favre and his wife, Deanna, made a surprise visit October 29 to announce their commitment of \$200,000 to University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital through the Favre 4 Hope Foundation.

The gift is directed to the Adopt A Room program, which will provide kids in the new hospital facility with a customized, private room that's designed to give kids more control of their environment and accelerate healing.

"I was inspired by the courage and faith of the families we visited," Brett Favre said in a statement. "I hope what we did today will help to make hospital stays less stressful for families and allow them to focus on their child's recovery."

The Favres started talking about ways to help charities in Minnesota just days after Brett decided to come back for a second season with the Minnesota Vikings.

Representatives from the Favre 4 Hope Foundation anonymously called several charities in Minnesota in early September for information about their programs. Weeks later, four organizations—including University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital—got the news that they'd be



receiving visits from the Favre family on October 29.

"We were in stealth mode until the decisions were made as to who would benefit," says Deanna Favre, chief executive officer of the Favre 4 Hope Foundation.

Kathie Taranto, University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital president, says her team is grateful to have worked with the Favre foundation over the last two months.

"The Favre 4 Hope Adopt A Room will provide an environment of hope and healing for children and families battling childhood illness," Taranto adds. "We are honored to be part of the foundation's legacy."

Learn more about the Favre gift or about how you or your company can adopt a room at University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital at [www.uofmhope.org](http://www.uofmhope.org).

*Top: Amari Salkey bumps fists with Vikings quarterback Brett Favre.*

*Bottom: Deanna (center) and Brett Favre present a \$200,000 check to University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital pediatrician-in-chief-elect Joseph Neglia, M.D., M.P.H. (far left); president Kathie Taranto; and vice president of facilities and operations Russ Williams.*

*Photos by Jana Noonan*

# Minnesota Vikings team up with University experts on 'fitness playbook' to prevent childhood obesity

An alarming 32 percent of children today are considered overweight. About 16 percent are considered obese, and up to 6 percent are considered extremely obese.

These statistics carry considerable health implications. Obese children have an

Through the Vikings Fitness Playbook, University physician-researchers hope to identify strategies that could help improve physical fitness and weight management in children and adolescents. They will employ nutrition education and counseling, behavioral management, structured

physical activity, and regular contact with participants for nine months.

They'll also teach families about factors such as unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles that contribute to children becoming overweight.

"We're addressing the overall environment that's contributing to the child's obesity," says Aaron Kelly, Ph.D., assistant professor of pediatric epidemiology and clinical research at the University. "We see this as crucial to long-term effectiveness and to increasing the chance that success will extend to the real world."

In addition to funding the program, the Vikings are providing tangible encouragement. The team will motivate participants through player appearances at exercise sessions, visits to Winter Park, and more.

"We envision a continued partnership with the Vikings and others to expand this program to the community by promoting research findings and principles to help children and families lead healthier lifestyles," says Kelly.

Through the Vikings Children's Fund, the Vikings organization has supported innovative pediatric research and community partnerships with University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital for more than three decades.



Photo by Jim Bovrin

*Minnesota Vikings players join community kids for a swim to encourage exercise as part of the Vikings Fitness Playbook program.*

increased risk of prematurely developing many serious chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Thanks to a three-year gift commitment from the Minnesota Vikings and the Vikings Children's Fund, experts at University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital are addressing this issue through what they're calling the Vikings Fitness Playbook—a weight management and physical fitness program designed to improve heart health and quality of life for children and families in Minnesota.

"We're excited to support an endeavor that has the potential to change so many young lives," says Lester Bagley, vice president of public affairs for the Vikings.

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## U researchers make headlines around the world

Physician-scientists at the University of Minnesota have for the first time demonstrated that a lethal skin disease can be successfully treated with stem cell therapy.

Medical School researchers John E. Wagner, M.D., and Jakub Tolar, M.D., Ph.D.—in collaboration with researchers in Oregon, the United Kingdom, and Japan—used stem cells from bone marrow to repair the skin of patients with a fatal disease called recessive dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa (EB).

It's the first time researchers have shown that bone marrow-derived stem cells can repair the skin and upper gastrointestinal tract and alter the natural course of the disease.

Until now, bone marrow has only been used to replace diseased or damaged marrow.

Tolar and Wagner's research, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, was featured in hundreds of local, national, and international media, including the *USA Today*, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC.

"My hope is to do something that might change the natural history of this disease

and enhance the quality of life of these kids," Wagner says.

This research is supported in part by grants from the National Institutes of Health; the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare of Japan and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan; and the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center, Epidermolysis Bullosa (Liao Family) Research Fund, Sarah Rose Mooreland EB Fund, and Children's Cancer Research Fund.

*Jakub Tolar, M.D., Ph.D., and John Wagner, M.D.*



Photo by Emily Jensen

## Joining forces against children's cancer

Children's Cancer Research Fund (CCRF) has teamed up with the Minnesota Medical Foundation (MMF) to help find a cure for pediatric cancers and other childhood diseases faster by pooling their efforts.

CCRF and MMF—which raises money for health-related research, education, and care at the University of Minnesota—have worked together publicly and privately for nearly 30 years to combat pediatric cancer. Since 1981, the grassroots efforts led by CCRF have resulted in more than \$60 million being donated to the University for its leading-

edge pediatric cancer research.

"This new partnership will improve our efficiency and increase our impact on advancing new cures," says Russ Swansen, CCRF's board chairman.

"This agreement will help to accelerate progress in two important initiatives—the completion of the [new] University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital, where 50 percent of the patient beds will serve childhood cancer patients, and our continued growth as a leading pediatric research institution," adds Becky Malkerson, MMF's president and CEO.

  
Children's Cancer  
Research Fund®



## Remembered forever

### *Fund named in son's memory supports educational opportunities for pediatric critical care fellows*

Christopher Meyer, M.D., loved her career as a pediatric critical care doctor at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. It was an intense job that required her to be on her feet all day, but she was continually amazed at the strength of the families she met.

But a childhood spine condition made it difficult and often painful for Meyer to stand for hours on end. She had several surgeries, trying to alleviate the pain, and each had a rather long recovery period when she couldn't work at all.

Meyer worried that she was burdening her colleagues at the University, with which Gillette was then affiliated. "But they never, ever made it seem that they were resentful at all," she says. "They were very compassionate and understanding."

In gratitude for that understanding, Meyer in 1999 made a gift of \$27,000 to help trainees in the University's pediatric critical care fellowship program attend

professional conferences or to support their research. Meyer completed her pediatric critical care fellowship training at the University in 1992.

"Some of the leaders in the international community have trained here," says fellowship program director Marie Steiner, M.D.

"There's a long history of training the movers and the shakers—in terms of research, education, and service."

Though Meyer's back problems forced her to retire early, in 2003, she firmly believes in the power of research and education.

Then four years ago, her middle son, Erik Nichols, died suddenly at age 23. In his honor, Meyer recently renamed the fund she had created the Erik David Nichols Memorial Pediatric Critical Care Fellows Fund. She also has added to the fund, which now contains more than \$37,000, and she made it an endowment so it could be a funding source for fellows in perpetuity.

"That way [Erik] could be remembered forever," Meyer says.

The support her funds provide to fellows will have a lasting impact as well. The fund allows them to attend professional meetings and educational conferences that they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford on their trainees' salaries, Steiner says.

For instance, if a fellow is chosen to present at a professional meeting, he or she will attend that conference, although it may not be the most beneficial educationally, Steiner says. But the Erik David Nichols Memorial Pediatric Critical Care Fellows Fund allows fellows, today and in the future, additional opportunities for professional development.

"It's so selfless," Steiner says.

*For more information on supporting fellowship funds, contact Courtney Billing at 612-626-1931 or [c.billing@mmf.umn.edu](mailto:c.billing@mmf.umn.edu).*



*Erik Nichols*

## Gifts in action

### Donors accelerate autism research

Philanthropy makes a real difference in the lives of children with debilitating diseases and disorders.

Because of Alfred and Ingrid Lenz Harrison's \$1 million challenge gift to the University of Minnesota's Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Initiative in 2007, for example, researchers here are digging deeper into the causes and possible therapies for autism and related conditions.

Some of the research initiatives made possible by the Harrisons and the generous group of donors who contributed to the challenge fund include efforts focused on:

- Improving attention among people with ASDs
- Identifying infants at risk for ASDs
- Understanding speech and voice processing in the autistic brain
- Using stem cell infusions in treating autistic children with gastrointestinal inflammation, a common effect of autism
- Determining whether congenital cytomegalovirus is linked to autism
- Uncovering the roles of serotonin signals in early forebrain development
- Obtaining metabolomic profiles of people who have ASDs

To make a gift in support of autism research at the University of Minnesota, contact Lauren Moore at 612-626-7946 or [l.moore@mmf.umn.edu](mailto:l.moore@mmf.umn.edu).

## Department of Pediatrics leadership changes hands

Professor Joseph Neglia, M.D., M.P.H., will become chair of the University of Minnesota Medical School's Department of Pediatrics and pediatrician-in-chief of University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital beginning January 3.

The change comes as current chair Aaron Friedman, M.D., takes over as Medical School dean and vice president of health sciences.

Frank Cerra, M.D., who currently serves as the University's senior vice president for health sciences and Medical School dean, is stepping down December 31.



*Joseph Neglia, M.D., M.P.H.*

Neglia has been a part of the University community since 1984, when he started his fellowship training here. He joined the faculty in 1987. His research is focused on the long-term effects of childhood cancer and its treatment.

Neglia also is an experienced and respected leader in the department. Besides serving as section chief of hematology/oncology, he was interim department head from July 2007 until Friedman's arrival in March 2008.

## Go bowling for a great cause

Join us February 18 and 19 at Brunswick Zone XL in Brooklyn Park for Dave Lee's Gutter Bowl, presented by WCCO radio. This will be the second consecutive year that University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital has been the beneficiary of the event.

For more information, contact Sara Ferden at 612-626-8429 or [s.ferden@mmf.umn.edu](mailto:s.ferden@mmf.umn.edu).



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## Saying good-bye ... and hello

It's an exciting time for us at University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital as we prepare to move into our new, state-of-the-art facility on the University's Riverside campus this spring.

But first, we must say good-bye to our current home. Our patients and families know the University's current hospital and clinics well because we treat so many children who have serious or complex medical conditions requiring several follow-up visits.

While the location of our hospital is changing, the people who care for our children aren't. Patients still will see the same doctors, nurses, and other clinic staff—just in a new place.

We're not leaving behind our current facility completely, however. We'll be taking some parts of the hospital, such as familiar artwork

and pieces of our signature tile wall, with us. We're also asking patients, families, and staff what else they think should make the move.

We're so excited to get settled into our beautiful new facility. But let's not forget to celebrate all of the great strides toward better care and cures for kids that we've made at our longtime home—and all of the children who are living proof of those advances. Cheers!

### Aaron Friedman, M.D.

Head, Department of Pediatrics  
Ruben-Bentson Chair in Pediatric Community Health

### Kathie Taranto

President, University of Minnesota  
Amplatz Children's Hospital

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