At Akron Children’s Hospital, we treat every child as if they were our own.

Akron Children’s Hospital
Showers Family Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders
One Perkins Square
Akron, OH 44308
330-543-8580

Akron Children’s Hospital Mahoning Valley
Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders
Beeghly Campus
6505 Market Street, Building A
Boardman, OH 44512
330-746-9522

To make a referral, call the numbers above.
For more information, call 330-543-8580 or visit akronchildrens.org/cancercenter.
From the Director

The year 2015 was a big year at Akron Children’s Hospital, as we commemorated 50 years of providing hematology-oncology services. On April 22, 1965, Dr. Carl Krill, Jr. was appointed as the hospital’s first pediatric hematologist-oncologist, which was the start of what is now the Showers Family Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders. This is quite remarkable since the American Board of Medical Specialties did not approve the subspecialty of pediatric hematology-oncology until 8 years later.

This noteworthy anniversary gave us the opportunity to look back at 50 years of accomplishments, with the greatest being the number of families who trusted us to care for nearly 2,500 children with cancer and many thousands of others battling serious blood disorders. During the first 5 decades, 96 children underwent bone marrow/stem cell transplantation at Akron Children’s and more than 1,100 were enrolled into Children’s Oncology Group protocols.

One constant throughout our history and a top priority for our team has been to provide the highest quality, family-centered care to the children of our region. I remain very proud of our services and the recognition we’ve received for the quality of our work. For example, U.S. News & World Report ranked our cancer program as one of the nation’s best for the 4th consecutive year and 4 of our pediatric hematologists-oncologists were listed as “2015 Best Doctors” in northeast Ohio. In 2015, we also added a new staff member who functions as a patient navigator ensuring all patients and families can access the necessary services for optimal care and outcomes.

The Showers Center staff is continuously involved in quality improvements. Some major projects in 2015 included our center’s lead role in a national collaborative to reduce central line infections, efforts to shorten the time before patients with fever receive intravenous antibiotics, and ways we can improve chemotherapy safety. Details of our quality improvement efforts can be found in this report.

In 2015, we served a near-record number of patients with more than 8,900 clinic visits at 3 locations – the Akron campus, Beeghly campus in Boardman, and Millersburg satellite clinic. Our team provided care to hospitalized patients through more than 4,200 inpatient encounters. During the year, 91 children were diagnosed and treated for cancer, and 10 children received hematopoietic stem cell transplants.

As our programs and patient volumes grow, so do the needs of our families. We are only able to meet these needs and improve our programs through the generosity of numerous individuals, groups and foundations throughout the region. In 2015, we received more than $765,000 in donations, and these funds were primarily used to support patients and families, and to conduct research. In this report we highlight the Kent State University Flash-A-Thon, a great example of young men and women learning the importance of community service and making a real difference in the lives of our patients.

I encourage you to read this report to discover the many aspects of the Showers Center and how our team continually works to improve services. I hope you enjoy learning more about our comprehensive center, and are inspired by the stories of our patients and staff.

With much gratitude to our friends,

Jeffrey D. Hord, MD
Director, Showers Family Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders
In 2015, Akron Children’s Hospital’s division of Hematology-Oncology treated 91 new cancer patients, the 3rd highest number on record in a single year. Of these patients, 48 were female and 43 were male. More than half were age 10 or under.

The 2 most frequent diagnoses were leukemia, and brain and central nervous system cancers.

Akron Children’s draws patients from a multi-county area, with 74% of our new cancer patients coming from Summit, Stark, Mahoning, Trumbull and Wayne counties in northeast Ohio.

Clinical activity remained strong with 8,918 visits to our outpatient clinics, infusion centers and outpatient observation units. There were 4,237 inpatient days, representing 452 oncology admissions and 125 hematology admissions.

Other 2015 clinical activities included:

- 172 patients with sickle cell disease were treated on an ongoing basis
- 426 bleeding/clotting disorder patients were followed
- 10 bone marrow transplants were performed including 7 autologous and 3 allogenic transplants
- 42 therapeutic apheresis procedures were performed
- 4,213,501 units of factor were dispensed by our 340B Factor Program, the highest amount in a single year

### 2015 Statistics

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<td>Stem Cell Transplant</td>
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<td>Oncology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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NEW CANCER PATIENTS

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE
NUMBER OF CASES – 91

ASHLAND - 1
COLUMBIANA - 1
COSHOCTON - 2
CRAWFORD - 1
ERIE - 1
JEFFERSON - 1
HOLMES - 1
HURON - 1
LUCAS - 2
MAHONING - 10
MEDINA - 2
OTTAWA - 1
NOBLE - 1
PORTAGE - 3
RICHLAND - 1
STARK - 15
SUMMIT - 25
TRUMBULL - 9
TUSCARAWAS - 3
WAYNE - 8
OUT OF STATE - 2

GENDER

43 MALE
48 FEMALE

AGE DISTRIBUTION

33 CASES
AGE 0-5
23 CASES
AGE 6-10
21 CASES
AGE 11-15
12 CASES
AGE 16-20
2 CASES
AGE 21-25
Sarcomas in Children, Adolescents and Young Adults
Nicholas McGregor, MD and Daniel Pettee, DO

Overview/Epidemiology
Soft tissue sarcomas (STS) are a heterogeneous and challenging group of cancers to treat in pediatric oncology. They can be broadly divided into rhabdomyosarcomas (RMS) and non-rhabdomyosarcoma soft tissue sarcomas (NRST). Together, STS make up about 1% of all cancers in the general population but are more common in children, representing 7% of cancers in patients under 20 years old. Rhabdomyosarcomas make up nearly half of all STS in children, and the annual incidence is approximately 4.3 per million individuals under 20 years, or about 350 new cases per year in the United States.

There is a difference in age predilection with 2/3 of RMS cases occurring in children under 6 years, whereas cases of NRSTs account for 75% of STS in children ages 15 to 19. While the vast majority of STS cases are sporadic, there is a slight association with RMS and familial cancer syndromes, most notably Neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1), Li-Fraumeni syndrome and Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome. For NRSTS, the associations are sometimes more pronounced. For example, malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumors (MPNST) occur in 7-13% of patients with NF1, and up to 28% of patients with familial adenomatous polyposis develop desmoid tumors.

Molecular Biology/Genetics
Rhabdomyosarcoma can be classified into 2 major histologic subgroups called alveolar and embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma. Each type has characteristic genetic alterations that are presumed to play a role in their pathogenesis. Alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma is distinguished by a genetic translocation resulting in a fusion transcription factor PAX-FOXO1A that contributes to the development of the cancer phenotype. Embryonal rhabdomyosarcoma is thought to arise at least in part from a genetic alteration known as imprinting, whereby only the paternal genetic material is expressed at particular allele, in this case the IGF-2 gene, which codes for a growth factor involved in the pathogenesis of RMS.

The 3 most common histologic subtypes of NRSTS are MPNST, synovial sarcoma and undifferentiated soft tissue sarcoma. NRSTS comprise approximately 50% of all STS and have considerable variability in biology, prognosis and treatment. However, like rhabdomyosarcoma, many NRSTS tumors have characteristic cytogenetic abnormalities that are not only important in establishing the diagnosis but also influence...
prognosis. For example, 90% of synovial sarcomas contain a translocation involving the SSX1 or SSX2 gene on the X chromosome, with SSX1-containing tumors having higher rates of proliferation and metastatic disease, as well as shortened survival compared to SSX2 tumors.

**Prognosis/Treatment**

Patients with pediatric STS require the care of a specialized, multidisciplinary team with experience treating these tumors, including pediatric oncology, pediatric surgery and radiation oncology. The outcomes for many patients with RMS are good, however certain subgroups, including those with alveolar histology or with metastatic disease, have much lower rates of long-term cure. Disease stage and risk stratification are ultimate prognostic indicators for RMS. They were developed over time by successive clinical trials performed by the Intergroup Rhabdomyosarcoma Study Group, a clinical cooperative.

Clinical staging takes into account location, size and invasiveness of the primary tumor, lymph node involvement and the presence of metastatic disease. Treatments are assigned based on their risk for failure, which hinges on both the disease stage at diagnosis and the extent of remaining disease following surgical resection of the primary tumor. Various factors are associated with good outcomes, including small tumor size, non-parameningeal head and neck primary sites, complete surgical resection and embryonal histology. The standard chemotherapy regimen for RMS has been vincristine, dactinomycin and cyclophosphamide. Prognostic factors for NRSTS include patient age, tumor size and extent of primary resection, as well as tumor histologic subtype and grade. Due to the generally poor response rate of NRSTS to systemic chemotherapy as a whole, complete surgical resection remains the key mode of therapy for these cancers. When chemotherapy is pursued for cases of incomplete resection or metastatic disease, most regimens use a doxorubicin and ifosfamide backbone.

**Future Direction: Targeted Therapy**

As our knowledge increases regarding the specific molecular pathways involved in the development of cancer, we have applied these insights into the development of new treatment strategies. Targeting these pathways with newer classes of medications including mTOR inhibitors and tyrosine kinase inhibitors has generated new promise for improved outcomes for all types of cancer, including RMS and NRSTS. Akron Children’s continues to be at the forefront of this technology with its recently developed Shannon E. Wilkes Targeted Therapy Program. Through this program, we can identify specific pathways in individual cancers, so they may be targeted for treatment with new therapies. We can also bank these tumors for future research.
In June 2012, 10-year-old Gino Altieri of Stow, Ohio, lost a hard-fought battle to alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma, a soft tissue cancer. After his passing, his mom Gina wanted to stay connected with the staff at Akron Children’s who cared for him.

“I loved the team at Akron Children’s and knew I wanted to do something to stay involved, such as volunteer,” said Gina.

In 2015, Dr. Jeffrey Hord, who had been Gino’s pediatric hematologist-oncologist, told her about a new patient navigator program the Showers Center was implementing. It was the ideal opportunity for Gina, and in April she was hired.

She is now helping families address any barriers to care or issues they are experiencing. She directs families to resources to overcome barriers ranging from transportation problems to helping their other children adjust to having a sibling with a serious illness. She works with all patient families in the Showers Center, not just those with a cancer diagnoses.

“Through the Patient Navigator Program, Gina Altieri helps patients overcome barriers to care.”

“'I have a non-medical background but serve as a liaison between families and their medical team,’ she said. ‘I work closely with staff from child life, social work and psychology.'”

The patient navigator concept is a relatively new model of supportive care, especially in pediatrics. In outlining Gina's role, Dr. Hord and his team relied on Commission of Cancer guidelines on how to address barriers to care.

This has allowed the Showers Center staff to create a program that best meets the unique needs of their patient families. Gina’s own experiences give her additional insight regarding what patient families go through on a daily basis.

“'The saying 'You don't know what it's like until you've walked in my shoes,' is so true. By having a similar experience, I know how it is to live hour by hour, not knowing what's coming next,' she said.

In her role, Gina has helped implement new supportive care programs for families, including yoga, massage therapy and monthly dinners. She also assists child life staff in working with Flashes of Hope, a local organization that provides families with beautiful photographs of their children who are battling cancer and other serious conditions.

She helps coordinate the annual celebration for cancer survivors, which is held at Canal Park in conjunction with an Akron Rubber Ducks baseball game. She recently helped to bring back the Buddy Program, which pairs a Showers Center patient with a medical student from Northeast Ohio Medical University.

“I love my job,” said Gina. “I don’t always share my story with patient families, but when I do, I can see the walls come down as they become more comfortable venting with me about the challenges they’re facing.”
Meet Tulasha

Like many children who have experienced a serious illness, Tulasha Prasai wants to be a doctor or nurse when she grows up.

In December 2014, Tulasha, age 10, was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia (AML). She received high-intensity chemotherapy in the Showers Center.

Tulasha and her family are refugees from Bhutan who settled in Akron’s North Hill area 4 years ago. Her father, Dhanapati Prasai, explained that when Tulasha began having cramps, tiredness and nausea that continued to get worse, her pediatrician P. Cooper White referred her to the Showers Center where they discovered she had leukemia.

It was a difficult time for the family emotionally and spiritually, compounded by the fact that Dhanapati and his wife, Leela do not speak English. Medical interpreter Damber Subba, also a Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugee, helped the family understand their daughter’s medical treatment and communicate with her care team.

For the Prasai family, the services Damber provided went above and beyond the traditional level of support. When Tulasha was admitted to the hospital, Leela was unable to stay by her daughter’s side because she had to work, and Dhanapati stayed home to care for the couple’s youngest daughter, Alisha.

Damber was at Tulasha’s bedside every day during her 8-month long hospitalization. He was there while her medical team made their daily rounds, asking questions on behalf of her parents and communicating updates on her condition back to the family.

Immediately after Tulasha was diagnosed, the family received vouchers for the hospital’s parking deck and cafeteria. They also received Giant Eagle gift cards to help purchase groceries. This type of assistance is provided to all families when their children are newly diagnosed with cancer.

Social workers from Akron Children’s helped the family apply for Medicaid and find other financial resources. Tulasha also qualified for disability benefits through Social Security.

Dhanapati doesn’t know how they would have gotten through their daughter’s illness without Damber’s support, her medical team and the financial resources that enabled them to focus on helping Tulasha recover.

“Everyone involved gave their precious time,” Dhanapati said.

Today Tulasha’s leukemia is in remission. She is a 4th grader at Forest Hill Elementary School, where her favorite subjects are math and science.

She continues to receive support through the Showers Center’s School and Community Oncology Outreach Program to help with her transition back to school and daily life – ensuring she will have the bright future her parents hoped for when they started their new life in Akron.
During his internship at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Prasad Bodas traveled around Nepal on a motorcycle measuring health outcomes.

“It was a great experience for a college kid whose mother would have never let him have a motorcycle in the States,” he said.

That experience helped cement his decision to pursue a career in medicine, where he could impact health outcomes, rather than just measure them.

He attended medical school at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, followed by a pediatric residency at Boston Children’s Hospital.

“I liked working with kids, and resources for children tend to lag compared to those for adults,” Dr. Bodas said. “Because children are often underserved, pediatrics is not that different from public health.”

He found the rigorous scientific study of pediatric hematology-oncology to be especially satisfying, and also an area where he could make a big impact on his patients’ lives.

Five years ago, after completing a fellowship in pediatric hematology-oncology at Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital in Cleveland, he joined Akron Children’s.

“Working in a freestanding children’s hospital was important to me,” he said. “The care and concern our staff members have for patients is palpable.”

He was also impressed by Akron Children’s level of care and our close collaboration with other pediatric centers such as Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.

“Coming from larger cities such as Cleveland and Boston, I wasn’t sure what to expect, but Akron Children’s is very well positioned and has done more bone marrow transplants for sickle cell disease than any other pediatric hospital in the region,” Dr. Bodas said.

His interest in bone marrow transplants and sickle cell disease grew during his fellowship training, and he currently serves as the director of Akron Children’s sickle cell program.

“By the time patients come to us after being seen in the emergency department or their pediatrician’s office to determine what’s wrong, they are very sick and their families are scared and worried,” Dr. Bodas said. “It’s very rewarding to help them with these devastating illnesses and watch our patients thrive.”

Often former patients send him letters from college, which he finds particularly gratifying.

“Of course, losing patients is always hard, but I can’t imagine doing anything else,” he said.

Dr. Bodas and his wife Alina live in Moreland Hills with their son Rami, age 7, and daughter Nina, age 4.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading, traveling, cooking and spending time outdoors. He used to rock climb but has traded that hobby for hiking with his family.

Despite his love of the outdoors, his co-workers were surprised when he recently went camping on the beach at St. John, with wild donkeys roaming nearby.

“Maybe because I wear a tie every day, they didn’t expect me to enjoy camping,” he said. “It was very primitive – definitely not glamping.”
As she was wrapping up her travel basketball season and beginning tryouts for the Walsh Jesuit High School freshman volleyball team, Jackie Deininger was on a 14-year-old girl's Cloud Nine – feeling strong, healthy and excited about starting high school.

But things began to change when she developed cold symptoms that she couldn't shake, which quickly progressed to shortness of breath.

Visits to her pediatrician and Akron Children's emergency department followed, where a CT scan found a 3.4 cm mass on her lung, leading to surgery.

On Aug. 10, 2015, just 12 days before her 1st day of high school, a lymph node tested positive for Hodgkin's lymphoma.

It was overwhelming news for Jackie and her family. There were lots of tears and disbelief.

"We found comfort in prayer and relied on our Catholic faith," said Janette, her mom. "We found strength in Dr. Jeffrey Hord, who had lots of confidence in the treatment plan and prognosis."

Family, friends, teammates and Walsh Jesuit's teachers and administrators rallied around Jackie as she was admitted to the hospital to begin chemotherapy. It was the toughest physical and emotional challenge of her young life.

Jackie and her dad, Ken, a former high school and college football and baseball player, developed a deep bond through their mutual love of sports.

"Jackie and I spent a lot of time together through her years in youth basketball, and there's no doubt in my mind that the lessons learned through sports and competition helped us get through her illness," Ken said. "In sports, you learn how to battle through things."

One of the first people Ken called following her diagnosis was T.K. Griffith, his good friend and Jackie's basketball coach. Just a few weeks earlier, her team traveled to the Cincinnati area for a tournament followed by a day at Kings Island Amusement Park.

Griffith, who is also an English teacher and coach of the boys' basketball team at Archbishop Hoban High School, penned a poem for Jackie called "The Beast," comparing their ride on "The Beast" roller coaster with the new demon they had to conquer.

"Through T.K.'s poem, the roller coaster became an allegory for our lives at that moment," said Janette. "The ups and downs, and the not knowing what's ahead. The fear, yes, but also the comfort of knowing we're not riding it alone."

A year later, Jackie is in remission. She's enjoying her sophomore year of high school, playing volleyball, another favorite sport, and spending time with the teammates and friends who helped give her the strength to slay "The Beast."
Members of the division of Hematology-Oncology are engaged in both clinical and translational research. The department’s physicians, nurses, advanced practice providers, pharmacists and others are members of the Children’s Oncology Group (COG), where they serve on a variety of committees.

Staff members also participate in an expanding portfolio of clinical research related to supportive care for childhood cancer patients, late effects of cancer therapy, psychological outcomes for childhood cancer patients and family members, bleeding disorders, disorders of thrombosis and coagulation, white blood cell disorders, stem cell transplantation, sickle cell disease and pediatric palliative care.

Enrolling childhood cancer patients in clinical trials, a practice that has been shown to yield improved outcomes, remains a high priority. In 2015, 12 patients were enrolled in COG clinical trials to test new therapies for childhood cancer. There were 54 enrollments in non-therapeutic COG studies – studies that explore, for example, the biology of children’s cancer or the late-term effects of cancer treatment. There were an additional 181 enrollments in a variety of non-COG studies, many focusing on non-malignant disorders.

Advanced Cancer Therapies Network

Established in 2013 as a clinical research collaboration with Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, the Advanced Cancer Therapies Network (ACTN) now includes the pediatric oncology programs at Dayton Children’s Hospital and the University of Kentucky. The ACTN provides childhood cancer patients with access to innovative pediatric cancer research therapies.

The clinical trials available through the ACTN include those sponsored by the COG, as well as the Pediatric Brain Tumor Consortium, National Cancer Institute Pediatric Phase I Consortium, New Approaches to Neuroblastoma Consortium, Collaborative Ependymoma Research Network, Neurofibromatosis Clinical Consortium, and other leading pediatric cancer clinical research consortia.

This collaboration has allowed Akron Children’s to open multiple phase I and II clinical trials. Dr. Sarah Rush and Dr. Steven Kuerbitz continue to work closely with researchers in Cincinnati and the other network programs to grow this exciting initiative by developing new research protocols and identifying additional areas for collaboration.
Translational Research

The division’s translational research program explores determinants of carcinogenesis in childhood bone tumors and leukemias focusing on “epigenetic” events that alter gene expression patterns in cancer cells. Through analysis of tumor specimens and the use of in vitro cellular models, Akron Children’s investigators, in collaboration with investigators at Kent State University and Northeast Ohio Medical University, are identifying molecular pathways that drive cancer cell development, focusing on pathways that may be specifically targeted with drugs or manipulated by pharmacologic epigenetic reprogramming.

Currently, research is focused on epigenetic events that contribute to relapse in acute lymphoblastic leukemia and to drug resistance in osteosarcoma. The laboratory offers basic/translational research training to our pediatric hematology-oncology fellows and interested residents in Akron Children’s Department of Pediatrics. It also provides a summer research experience for medical students.

The Shannon E. Wilkes Targeted Therapy Program

Thanks to the Wilkes family’s generous support, Akron Children’s created the Shannon E. Wilkes Targeted Therapy Program in 2014, enabling our doctors to treat patients based on a better understanding of their individual cancer types. Targeted therapy involves molecular testing of cancer tissue to identify mutations in select genes within critical molecular pathways – pathways that drive tumor formation, growth and metastasis. Oncologists can then use this knowledge to identify drugs or other treatment modalities that block or inhibit these abnormally activated pathways. Optimally, treatment with an agent targeted to a specific molecule will kill cancer cells, while sparing the patient exposure to non-specific, and perhaps less effective, conventional chemotherapies. This can result in improved treatment efficacy with reduced toxic side effects.

Knowledge of specific mutations can also help doctors more accurately predict a patient’s prognosis, an important factor when choosing between more or less intensive treatment options. For instance, through this program we identified a young patient with medulloblastoma who had a mutation in her tumor that made her disease more amenable to treatment. As a result, we were able to decrease the dose of radiation she received, which will make her less likely to have hearing loss, thyroid problems and secondary cancers in the future.

Not every patient can be treated with targeted therapy. In pediatrics, the use of these agents is typically limited to those with high-risk tumors, metastatic cancers, cancers that are not responsive to chemotherapy or radiation treatments, or recurrent cancers.

Tumor sequence analysis is performed by Foundation Medicine, Inc. to help us better understand the “genetic signature” of the tumor and identify the appropriate targeted therapy. The molecular information company’s Pediatric Data Portal is a secure, web-based information center that provides access to molecular level tumor information in pediatric cancers. Foundation Medicine has one of the largest, most robust collections of common and rare clinical tumor profiles in the world as well as the ability to examine more than 300 genes at a time. Akron Children’s chose to work with Foundation Medicine because they are the oldest, most established company facilitating tumor mutation analyses. In 2015, we submitted 19 cases to Foundation Medicine, and the results impacted treatment decisions in at least 5 of these cases.

Research is crucial to advancing targeted therapies and developing new, effective treatments to fight cancer. To this purpose, Akron Children’s has established a cancer biorepository for tumor samples. Tumor tissue is collected at the time of diagnostic biopsy or tumor resection. Tissue in excess of that required for diagnostic testing is banked for current and future research. Additionally, other biological materials, including blood, serum and urine are also collected. Currently, our repository contains specimens from more than 30 patients.
Invited Review


Book Chapters


Recognized Contributor


Oral Presentations


Hord J. Journal article review for maintenance of certification learning session. 28th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology (ASPHO), Phoenix, AZ, May 9, 2015.


Poster Presentations


Showers Center faculty and staff are actively involved in educating future and current healthcare providers.

In 2015, invited educational presentations throughout the region included:

- Dr. Stephanie Savelli, “Caring for the Adult Survivor of Childhood Cancer,” Family Practice Residency Lecture Series, St. Joseph Warren Hospital, Warren, OH, Feb. 1.
- Dr. Steven Kuerbitz, “Getting with the Program: Epigenetic Control in Stem Cells,” Global Stem Cell and Regenerative Medical Education Network (online), Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, March 26.
- Dr. Jeffrey Hord, “How to Become a Pediatric Hematologist-Oncologist,” and “Childhood Cancer Overview,” Ohio University Heritage Osteopathic College of Medicine, Athens, OH, March 30.
- Dr. Jeffrey Hord, “How to Become a Pediatric Hematologist-Oncologist,” Careers Pathway Biology Class, Kent State University, Kent, OH, March 31.

Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Fellowship Program

The Hematology-Oncology Fellowship Training Program was approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in 2006. In July 2015, Dr. Aditya Sharma began his 3rd year of training, which focuses on research. He continued his basic research project studying aberrant methylation of RIPK3 in osteosarcoma. He also kept busy with his clinical duties in outpatient and inpatient settings. Upon completion of his fellowship, Dr. Sharma accepted a position as a bone marrow transplant hospitalist at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. Drs. Nicholas McGregor and Megan Sampson began their 2nd year of fellowship training and continue to focus on their research projects. Dr. McGregor is working with Dr. Prasad Bodas to study hydroxyurea utilization in Haitian children with sickle cell disease. Their research is a collaborative project with the hematology group at St. Damien’s Hospital in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. Dr. Sampson is studying von Willebrand disease using the American Thrombosis and Hemostasis Network database. Dr. Erin Wright joined our program after completing a pediatric residency at All Children’s Hospital in St. Petersburg, Fla. She has been very busy in her 1st year of fellowship training, working primarily in the inpatient unit and outpatient clinic.

16th Annual Alex Koufos, MD, Memorial Lecture

Sheri Spunt, MD, MBA, was the 2015 Koufos Lecturer. Dr. Spunt is the endowed chair of pediatric cancer, division chief of hematology-oncology and co-director of the Bass Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood Diseases at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford in Palo Alto, Calif. She is a nationally renowned expert in the field of sarcomas, specifically rhabdomyosarcoma. On October 2, she presented “Advances in the Management of Childhood Rhabdomyosarcoma” in the Considine Auditorium. Following the lecture, Dr. Spunt attended inpatient rounds and answered questions during a series of case presentations.

Friends, family and patients of Dr. Koufos established the Alex Koufos, MD, Lectureship following his death in 1998. Dr. Koufos was a pediatric hematologist-oncologist at Akron Children’s Hospital from 1988 to 1998.
School and Community Oncology Outreach Program

This program raises awareness about childhood cancer in schools and communities, aiming to dispel myths, misconceptions and fears. The staff includes Melinda Aylward, BSN, RN, CPON, hematology-oncology outreach coordinator, and schoolteacher Carla Lukens, BSEd. They serve as advocates for children and families by supporting the social and academic needs of pediatric cancer patients. They help children make a smooth transition back to school after an extended absence by ensuring they complete assignments during treatment and maintain relationships with school friends.

In addition, the hematology-oncology outreach coordinator advocates for classroom accommodations for patients, including scheduling and attending meetings to establish or revisit individualized education plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans.

In 2015, outreach activities included:

- Educational presentations in schools and community settings in 14 counties
- Skin cancer prevention materials distributed to more than 1,500 individuals at health fairs and community events
- Approximately 2,000 sun safety bookmarks distributed through public libraries in 8 counties
- Coordination of Go4theGoal’s “Lace Up” against childhood cancer campaign in September

Survivorship Program and Young Adult Transition Clinic

The Childhood Cancer Survivorship Program was established in 2002 to offer screening, prevention and treatment of late effects related to cancer therapy. Diagnostic and treatment services are offered to any childhood cancer survivor who has been off therapy for at least 2 years and has recovered from any acute effects related to treatment. Services are available to any childhood cancer survivor, not just those treated at Akron Children’s.

Multidisciplinary, comprehensive clinics are held twice a month and include an oncologist, nurse practitioner, social worker, physical therapist, school liaison, and/or schoolteacher, genetics counselor, dietitian, child psychologist and chaplain. Audiologists are also available, as well as subspecialists from cardiology, endocrinology, nephrology, ophthalmology, pulmonary medicine and gastroenterology. Many patients are offered neuropsychological testing to screen for potential neurocognitive deficits related to radiation and chemotherapy. We also have close working relationships with many area adult subspecialists to assist our young adult survivors.

We provide education to patients, parents and healthcare providers regarding potential late effects of cancer treatment. Each patient receives an individualized treatment summary.

The Young Adult Transition Clinic offers 18-25 year olds an opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns they may have regarding their cancer, treatment or late effects. We focus on the self-advocacy skills they will need to navigate the adult healthcare system. We provide them with educational materials, treatment summaries and plans for follow-up care. We also offer assistance with college and job applications. Our goal is to ensure they have the skills they need by age 25 to be responsible for their health and well being.

In 2015, the survivorship program provided medical care and services to 135 patients from 23 counties. Of these patients, 17 received bone marrow transplants and 22 were seen at our Mahoning Valley clinic.
Hemostasis and Thrombosis Center

Outreach is a key component of the comprehensive, family-centered care in our Hemostasis and Thrombosis Center (HTC). Our outreach nurse educator provides ongoing education for patients and families, as well as communities. While individual educational needs are addressed during clinic visits, education for extended family, school or daycare personnel, or home infusion training may be provided during a home visit or another location in the patient’s community.

Outreach activities held in 2015 included:

- **Home/self-infusion classes** – to promote independence by training patients or family members to infuse medication at home. A total of 33 patients and families attended 1 of the 11 home/self-infusion classes offered.

- **School and daycare presentations** – to provide education and ensure continuity of care in the community. A total of 47 teachers, students, and caregivers attended 10 presentations held at various schools and daycare centers.

- **Health fair displays** – to provide education and raise awareness about bleeding disorders among community members and medical professionals. More than 2,000 people were reached at 4 community events.

- **Professional training** – to increase knowledge about bleeding disorders among medical professionals. One educational training session was held for nurses at a home care agency in Huron County.

To provide support and encourage networking with other patients and families with bleeding disorders, we collaborate with the Northern Ohio Hemophilia Foundation (NOHF) to offer educational programs. In 2015, 3 programs were held for youth with bleeding disorders.

Region VI Sickle Cell Program

The sickle cell outreach education program provides education and raises awareness about sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait. In 2015, outreach educational programs were conducted through:

- Participation in 21 health fairs reaching 17,828 people
- 26 classroom presentations reaching 1,446 students and 5 teachers
- Sickle Cell Sunday educational mailings to 22 churches reaching 2,416 congregants
- The Mychal Clayton Sickle Cell Awareness Walk with approximately 200 participants
Akron Children’s Hospital is committed to maintaining and improving the quality and safety of the care we provide. Through a variety of quality improvement initiatives and collaborations with other children’s hospitals, accrediting bodies and other groups, we’re working to create and maintain the highest standards for patient care.

The division of Hematology-Oncology has had an active quality improvement committee since 2006. The team includes a dozen staff members from various disciplines and meets twice a month. Here is a summary of 2015 projects:

Patient/Family Satisfaction

A sample of Hematology-Oncology patients were surveyed in 2015 through Press Ganey, a nationally recognized organization that helps provide information to improve patient experience. The surveys are designed to assess satisfaction with care. Our division scored in the top 10% of all participating pediatric hematology-oncology programs in these categories:

- Patient safety, sensitivity to patient needs, cleanliness and patient privacy
- Physician/provider listening carefully, providing instructions that are understandable, knowledge of pertinent medical history, respect for what patients/families have to say, and spending enough time with patient/family
- Ability to access timely appointments as soon as needed

All of the survey participants recommended Akron Children’s division of Hematology-Oncology.

Here are sample comments:

- “The staff and my child’s physician are caring, compassionate and competent. We are extremely happy with the care they provide.”
- “We have had to visit Akron Children’s Hospital for the last 14 years due to my son’s illness since he was 4 years old. Everybody is like family.”
- “I appreciate that the staff uses MyChart messages to keep me informed on lab results and my child’s care.”

Morbidity/Mortality

The medical staff from a variety of disciplines involved in the care of hematology-oncology patients meets quarterly to review clinical events that led to significant morbidity or death. In 2015, the following cases were discussed in a confidential, peer-review format:

- 13 mortalities
- 6 unplanned transfers to the pediatric intensive care unit
- 22 hospital readmissions within 15 days
- 2 other events

PERCENTAGE OF FEBRILE ONCOLOGY AND SICKLE CELL PATIENTS WHO RECEIVE IV ANTIBIOTICS WITHIN 1 HOUR OF ARRIVAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - AKRON</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - MAHONING VALLEY</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5600 INPATIENT UNIT</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTPATIENT CLINIC - AKRON</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTPATIENT CLINIC - MAHONING VALLEY</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No febrile oncology and sickle cell patients were seen at the Mahoning Valley outpatient clinic in 2014
Reduction of Central Line-Associated Blood Stream Infections (CLA-BSI)
The entire staff is participating in the national quality collaborative sponsored by the Children’s Hospital Association to reduce central line-associated blood stream infections (CLA-BSI) among hematology-oncology patients in inpatient and ambulatory settings. Inpatient data submission began in November 2009, while ambulatory data was first submitted in 2012. Baseline infection rates were submitted and staff received education on central line care. In 2015, the CLA-BSI rate rose above the national mean. This prompted a complete investigation of current practices including bundle compliance, line care and details of each CLA-BSI case, such as associated disorder, type of line, type of infection and patient age. Currently a “Plan, Do, Study, Act” cycle is being developed to improve rates and bring them below the national mean.

Safe Administration of Chemotherapy
The chemotherapy administration safety initiative began in 2014 to address chemotherapy-related medical errors. The goal is to decrease the number of potentially harmful errors to below 15% of all chemotherapy-related errors. Errors are given a grade from A to I based on a standardized grading system called MIDAS, or Minor Incident Decision Analysis Software. Potentially harmful errors are those with a MIDAS grade of D or higher that required intervention or resulted in patient harm.

In 2015, we saw an increase in the number of grade D or higher chemotherapy-related errors. Upon further review, it became clear that defining chemotherapy-related errors and standardizing their grading in MIDAS would be necessary. This prompted the formation of a multidisciplinary review of all chemotherapy errors to define the severity grade of each case. These changes will be reflected in the 1st quarter of 2016. Previously implemented improvement processes included: chemotherapy huddles prior to the administration of chemotherapy, a 2-provider review of chemotherapy orders, and delivery of chemotherapy orders to the pharmacy 48 hours prior to administration for additional review.

Other Significant Quality Improvement Activities
- The bone marrow/stem cell transplant team reviews engraftment data quarterly with Hoxworth Blood Center, our partner in processing and storing marrow and stem cells. Review of 2015 engraftment data found a median time of 11 days to recover an absolute neutrophil count greater than 500 and a median time of 17 days to recover a platelet count greater than 50,000.
- For patients who had sibling-matched allogeneic stem cell transplants from 2009 to 2015, we achieved a 100-day survival rate of 100%.
- For patients who had other allogeneic stem cell transplants from 2009 to 2015, we achieved a 100-day survival rate of 88%.
- Since mid-2009, the division of Hematology-Oncology has been working to improve systems so that febrile oncology and sickle cell patients at risk for serious infection receive intravenous antibiotics within 1 hour of arrival at the hospital, regardless of point of entry (clinic, emergency department, inpatient unit). Our goal is that 90% of these patients receive IV antibiotics within 1 hour of arrival. Ongoing review has led to a number of processes designed to meet this goal. (See chart on previous page.)
- Vaccine-eligible oncology patients on therapy and at the greatest risk for infection were offered the seasonal influenza vaccine and in 2015, 97% received it.
Prasad Bodas, MD  
Ohio Department of Health Newborn Screening Advisory Committee

Irene Boehlefeld, RN  
Northern Ohio Hemophilia Foundation, Women with Bleeding Disorders Task Force  
Northern Ohio Hemophilia Foundation Board of Directors, Advisory Member

John Fargo, DO  
American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology  
- Certification and Continuing Education Committee  
- Early Career Development Committee  
Region V-East Hemophilia Advisory Committee

Jeffrey Hord, MD  
Children’s Hospital Association  
Childhood Cancer and Blood Disorders Learning Network, Faculty  
American Society of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology  
- Workforce Task Force, Chair  
- Practice Management Committee, Chair  
- Certification of Continuing Education Committee  
American Thrombosis and Hemostasis Network, Data Quality Working Group, Chair  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
- Section on Hematology/Oncology Executive Committee, Chair  
- Pediatrics In Review Editorial Board  
U.S. News & World Report  
Best Children’s Hospitals Cancer Working Group, Chair

Awards

Akron Children’s Cancer Program ranked in U.S. News & World Report's Best Children’s Hospitals 2015-16 listing

Dr. Donna Patton, Dr. Jeffrey Hord, Dr. Steven Kuerbitz and Dr. Stephanie Savelli named a 2015 “Top Doc” in pediatric hematology-oncology in northeast Ohio

4 bone marrow transplant rooms on the Akron campus became the 1st hospital rooms in the world to be certified as meeting Well Building Standards.
GRANTS

In 2015, the Showers Center received grants totaling $516,267 from the following organizations and foundations:

- Albert W. and Edith V. Flowers Charitable Foundation
- Cincinnati Children’s Medical Center, Phase 1 Trials
- CureSearch Community Impact Award
- CureSearch, Children’s Oncology Group Clinical Trials
- Cascade Hemophilia Consortium
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hemostasis and Thrombosis Center
- Hemophilia Foundation of Michigan/MCHB
- Ohio Department of Health Sickle Cell Program
- National Children’s Cancer Society
- Johns Hopkins University Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
“The emergency department staff was amazing and immediately brought a sense of calmness to my frayed nerves,” said Erin. “They ran several blood tests and kept my son laughing each time they came in and out of the room.”

Connor was diagnosed with immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), a bleeding disorder in which the immune system destroys the platelets necessary for normal clotting of the blood. It can cause bleeding into the skin, easy bruising, nosebleeds and bleeding in the mouth.

It was then the Ohls met Dr. Jeffrey Hord, who became Connor’s hematologist-oncologist.

“When it was decided that he would be admitted, one of the nurses gave him a Lego set to build. She won his heart. He loves Legos,” Erin said.

Once he was settled in his hospital room, Connor began receiving intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) to treat his bleeding disorder. When he awoke in the morning, he met his nurse, Amy.

“Amy was the most amazing and cheerful nurse,” said Erin. “She danced with Connor and was so attentive to his every need.”

Later that day, a volunteer arrived with the Cookie Cart and helped Connor make homemade sugar cookies from his bed.

“A little while later, a soft plush dog was given to him. He said he didn’t want to leave,” Erin said.

Just 24 hours after arrival, Connor was able to go home. Oftentimes, ITP completely resolves with IVIG treatment. However, 1 month later, Connor’s platelet count was back down so he needed a bone marrow aspiration before starting the next phase of treatment.

He’s now on an oral steroid regimen to raise his platelet count and hopefully cure his disorder once and for all.

Despite side effects from the steroids and the uncertainty of whether he’ll be able to play contact sports next season, Connor takes his illness in stride.

“He’s always positive and doesn’t let it get him down,” Erin said.
Kent State University
Flash-A-Thon

For the last 4 years, students at Kent State University have moved and grooved for a cause during the Flash-A-Thon dance marathon.

Organized by students, the annual marathon raises money for the Showers Center. It’s one of hundreds of Miracle Network Dance Marathons held across the United States and Canada.

This philanthropic movement has raised $135 million to help children at more than 170 Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals nationwide, including Akron Children’s, since it began 25 years ago.

Since its inception, the Flash-A-Thon has raised more than $105,500 for the patients and programs of the Showers Center. It’s become a great addition to the center’s community support programs and a wonderful way for students and community members to support a common cause, while instilling in students the importance of philanthropy.

“Flash-A-Thon is about widening Kent State University’s heart to the broader community,” said Ann Gosky, Flash-A-Thon Faculty Advisor and Director of the Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement at Kent State. “Interacting with the children and their families has filled the hearts of our students and taught them so much about the benefits of giving and being engaged.”

Being able to meet the families and patients is a huge motivator for all the hard work the student organizations put into the event throughout the year.

Kent State has been hosting the event since 2013. A year-long fundraising event, it concludes with a 12-hour dance marathon where participants stand, dance and stay active to represent patients at Akron Children’s who would much rather be standing or dancing with them.

Stories of the hospital’s Miracle Children are featured during the Flash-A-Thon. There are themed dance hours, games and lot of chanting “FTK” (For The Kids) to keep the dancers motivated. Students don’t need superhuman stamina to participate, just a willingness to stand for those who can’t.

“Meeting these kids and families is life changing and the only motivation you need to do this event, no matter how much work it involves,” said Hilary Shafer, who directed this year’s Flash-A-Thon.

In addition to Kent State’s Flash-A-Thon, Walsh University and the University of Akron also host dance marathons to support Akron Children’s.
Philanthropic Support

The work carried out by the Showers Center staff would not be possible without the generous support of individuals, corporations and community groups. In 2015, our center spent more than $920,000 of donated funds to provide patient assistance, conduct research, and enhance and build our programs.

In 2015, we received approximately $765,000 in philanthropic gifts. Our major supporters are recognized with a plaque on the “Friends of Hematology-Oncology Wall” on display in our center.

Thanks to the following who provided significant support in 2015:

**Fundraising Events**
- Alicia Cooper Memorial Fundraisers
- BraveStrongGirl
- Dancing for the Kids
- East Coast Martial Arts Seminar
- Flip for the Cure
- Giant Eagle Register Campaign
- Go4TheGoal/Lace Up
- F.I.T. Baseball Fundraiser (Archbishop Hoban vs. St. Vincent-St. Mary)
- Haulin with Colin Event
- Kyle Stewart Day
- Kylie Rose Run
- LOPen Charity Golf
- Mike Dunaway Memorial Fundraiser
- Mychal Clayton Sickle Cell Walk
- Project Ed Bear
- Rubber Ducks Movie Night
- Starcher Family Fundraisers
- Team Trevor

**Major Donors**

**Individual, Corporate and Foundation Gifts Greater than $250**
- Mr. Nicholas G. Accordino
- Akron Baseball Concessions, Inc.
- Akron Community Foundation
- Mr. Shawn Alvey
- Amazing Tickets
- Archbishop Hoban High School
- Mr. and Mrs. Carl Arnold A-UMADAOP, Inc.
- Aurum Wealth Management Group, LLC

**Dr. and Dr. Chad Bailey**
- Ms. Jo Marie Bailey
- Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Balzarini, Jr.
- Bank of America

**Barberton Soccer Association**
- Dr. and Mrs. Daniel P. Bortan
- Ms. Elizabeth Bartz
- BDO USA, LLP
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael T. Beauduccchi
- Mr. and Mrs. Timothy J. Ventivigna

**Mr. Matthew Betlee**
- Mr. and Mrs. David L. Biaslosky
- Dr. and Mrs. Michael T. Bigham
- Dr. and Mrs. Prasad V. Bodas
- Dr. and Mrs. Vinayak D. Bodas

**Bonfire Funds, LLC**
- Boyer’s Greenhouse & Farm
- Mr. Robert W. Brandhorst
- Mr. and Mrs. David L. Brennan
- Brunswick City School District

**Buckeye Community Health Plan**
- Buckeye Corvettes, Inc.
- Mr. Michael S. Bunyak
- Mr. and Mrs. James L. Burdette

**California Products Corporation**
- Mr. and Mrs. Barry J. Campbell
- Ms. Christina L. Canova
- Care Source Management Group

**Cargill Incorporated**
- Mr. and Mrs. Paul N. Catania
- Mr. John P. Cerar
- Chipotle Mexican Grill
- Ms. Paula B. Christ

**Coblentz Distributing**
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- Mr. and Mrs. William J. Granchi
- Mr. William M. Gray
- Mr. Steve Gray

**Green Local School District Board of Education**
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- Mr. Ryan Hannan
- Hard Rock Rocksino Northfield Park
- Hartford Insurance Company
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- Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Hengle
- Dr. and Mrs. Gregory Hill Hill, Barth & King, LLC
- Hillsdale Cancer Crusaders
- Mr. Geoffrey F. Hoff
- Drs. Jeffrey and Patricia Hord
- Mr. Charles S. Howard, Jr.

Ms. Lilian Garcia
- Mr. and Mrs. Stanley C. Gauld
- Mr. and Mrs. Larry D. Geier
- Global Builders
- Mr. and Dr. Lamthardus Goggins
- Mr. and Mrs. Scott D. Gold
- Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. Corporate Headquarters
- Mr. and Mrs. John J. Gosky
- Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Gramsky
- Mr. and Mrs. William J. Granchi
- Mr. William M. Gray
- Mr. Steve Gray
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Mr. David Jesse
Mr. Richard M. Jorz and Ms. Carrie Smallwood
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew S. Juvan
Mrs. Priscilla R. Kaufmann
Dr. Kelly Joyce
Mr. Matthew Kelly
Mr. Stuart S. Kent and Ms. Trisha R. Kent
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Mr. and Mrs. Ron Kirksey
Mrs. Cynthia Knight
Mr. Kevin Kovach
Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Kramer
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Lake County Captains
Mr. and Mrs. David Laskey
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Mr. Gregg Lauck
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Mr. and Mrs. Brian E. Lippert
Mr. Jason Loehr
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Mr. and Mrs. D. Scott Loudon
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Mr. Timothy A. Mead
Mellion Orthodontics
Mr. and Mrs. Mitch M. Merriman
Mets Construction
Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Monaco
Moonbeam, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Morgan
Mr. Chad J. Motsinger
Mr. Kurt Movsesian
Ms. Gena M. Mullis
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Musitano, Jr.
Nano Frog Brewery
Mr. and Mrs. James R. Napier
Neola Corporation
Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Neubert
Northwestern Mutual – Akron Office
Ms. Hannah Oakes
Ohio Family Practice Center
Ms. Denise O’Malley
OMNOVA Solutions Foundation
Paris Storage, LLC
Project Ed Bear, Inc.
Ray “Boom Boom” Mancini Foundation
RE/MAX Edge Realty 370
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Mr. Ryan P. Reitzler
Revere Middle School
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Ms. Jessica Rustin
Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Sabec, Jr.
Mr. Bret Saberhagen
Ms. Jessica R. Salak
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Mr. Evan Scocos
Scott Electric Foundation, Inc.
SEM Group
Sequoia Financial Group
Mr. David J. Shaffer
Shawn Gaffney Memorial Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Sherman
Mr. James Sherwood
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Shimmel
State & Federal Communications, Inc.
Stephen A. Comunale, Jr.
Family Cancer Foundation
Ms. Cynde Stetler
Mr. Gary Stevens
Stow Youth Football Booster Club, Inc.
Stow-Munroe Falls High School
Summit Racing Equipment
Super Heroes To Kids In Ohio
Mr. and Mrs. John P. Susany
Tape Central, Inc.
Mr. Edward T. Tekei
Terry Lumber & Supply Co.
Third Estimate Corporation
Tire Town Golf Club
Toast Life Foundation
Trevor Weigand Charitable Foundation
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Mr. Thomas Ulery
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Mr. Luke J. Petherbridge
Mr. David E. Phillips
PK Crushing & Materials
Mr. and Mrs. Michael F. Poldruhi
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Porter
Mr. Donald C. Shingler
Mr. and Mrs. David M. Showers
Showers Family Foundation, Inc.
Mr. Jim D. Siebers
Mrs. Aileen A. Smith
Mrs. Elizabeth L. Smith
Mr. Greg L. Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew R. Smith
Mr. Patrick C. Smith
Mr. Robert D. Smith
Ms. Melissa Somers
St. Hilary School and Church
St. Sebastian Church
Mr. and Mrs. Shawn C. Starcher
Marc and Linda Voorhees
Mr. and Mrs. James R. Walser, II
Mr. Jason Warden
Western Reserve Hospital
Whitmer LawnCare, LLC
Mr. and Mrs. John F. Winterton
Wishes Can Happen, Inc.
Ms. Lisa Wittman
Mr. David Wright
Ms. Christina L. Zamarro
Mr. Gregory O. Zaun
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Mr. and Mrs. Philip E. Partin
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Mr. Gregory O. Zaun
Akron Children’s offers several programs to support hematology-oncology patients and their families. Here are highlights from 2015:

The 4th Annual Prom-to-Remember was held in March at the Ritz-Carlton in Cleveland. The event is organized by The Unforgettable Prom Foundation, Inc., an organization dedicated to helping families and their teens with cancer.

The 33rd annual Camp Ed Bear, held at Camp Carl in Ravenna, was a huge success with 92 campers. Featuring a safari theme, Camp Ed Bear offered activities such as rock wall climbing, zip lining, swimming, arts and crafts, horseback riding, pontoon boat rides, canoeing and dancing. Campers also enjoyed visits by Outback Ray and the Astronomy Club, and tested their coordination by catching flying flapjacks from Chris Cakes. The camp is made possible by the continued financial support of Project Ed Bear and help from numerous hospital staff and volunteers.

Starting in the spring of 2015, family dinners were provided once a month to patient families through funding by the Littlest Heroes.

The 4th Kids’ Hematology-Oncology Awareness Celebration in the Mahoning Valley was held on August 23 at Eastwood Field, which included a Mahoning Valley Scrappers baseball game.

A celebration for childhood cancer survivors was held in September at Canal Park in conjunction with an Akron Rubber Ducks baseball game.

The Mychal Clayton Sickle Cell Walk was held in September at Lock 3 in Akron.

The 5th annual Mahoning Valley Holiday Celebration was held on December 8 at Antone’s Banquet Centre in Boardman. There were 120 patients and families that attended the dinner, which was made possible by Project Ed Bear and Making Kids Count. Families enjoyed music, a photo booth, craft stations for the children and a special visit from Santa.

The Akron Children’s Hospital Hematology-Oncology Holiday Celebration took place on December 10 at Tangier Restaurant in Akron. Wishes Can Happen sponsored this holiday dinner for patients and families, which featured crafts, cookies and a visit from Santa. Families also received a family photo to commemorate the evening.

Akron Children’s division of Hematology-Oncology offered massages and yoga for patient families, as well as parent social hours, where cookies, bagels, milk and coffee were served. These services were provided through a grant from CureSearch.

Santa’s Workshop, which is sponsored by Wishes Can Happen and the Littlest Heroes, was held throughout December to assist patients in purchasing gifts for their families.

In December, holiday stockings supplied by Project Ed Bear were distributed to patients, and 136 hematology-oncology patient families participated in the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad’s Polar Express.

Throughout the year, Flashes of Hope came to Akron Children’s to take portraits of patients and their families.

The teen support group for patients with an oncology diagnosis continued to meet once a month during 2015.
Akron Children’s Hospital is ranked among the best children’s hospitals by U.S. News & World Report, but it’s our compassionate approach to treatment that makes us truly exceptional. To ensure families have convenient access to pediatric care, we have 2 hospital campuses in northeast Ohio and 90 urgent, primary and specialty care locations.

We partner with other health systems to bring our neonatal and pediatric expertise to patients in their community hospitals, and our home care and school health nurses care for kids in their homes and schools. With nearly 915,000 patient visits in 2015, we’ve been leading the way to healthier futures for children through quality patient care, education, advocacy, community service and medical discovery since 1890.

Learn more at akronchildrens.org.