

# ImPACT

A newsletter from the  
Parent Advisory Council



September 2022

## PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC) BACKGROUND

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) currently includes parents and caregivers from our Akron and Mahoning Valley (MV) campuses whose children have received care at Akron Children's. Advisors work with hospital liaisons on behalf of other families to enhance the delivery of family-centered care. Parents serve on hospital committees and participate in hospital focus groups and performance-improvement projects. Parents offer support on our program development and policy upgrades. Learn more at [akronchildrens.org/PAC](https://akronchildrens.org/PAC).



## PATH TO PAC: FEATURING AMY DAPRILE



### What was your path to PAC?

In July 2006, our son, Nathan, was born with a rare genetic anomaly. We were referred to Dr. Olivia Wenger in genetics for further testing. In 2008, Nathan had his tonsils and adenoids removed plus tubes put in his ears. Following surgery, his lungs collapsed, and we spent 73 days in Akron's pediatric intensive care unit (PICU). Nathan was on a vent for 2 years and had a tracheostomy for 4 years. Recently, Nathan underwent spinal correction surgery due to neuromuscular scoliosis resulting from his cerebral palsy. Now almost 16 years old, Nathan is a thriving, happy young man due to all the excellent care he has received from Akron Children's. After speaking to Kelsey Moreton in 2020 and looking for ways to give back to the hospital, I joined the Parent Advisory Committee.

### Why do you believe PAC is important?

PAC is important because it allows families an opportunity to provide suggestions on how to strengthen the hospital's relationship with patients and caregivers. I believe Akron Children's is unique because they realize the importance of patient care beyond the hospital doors. Akron Children's extends care into the community via health fairs, vaccination clinics and supply drives. PAC is part of the process in identifying what areas need assistance.

### If there were no barriers, what would your dream PAC look like (service, equipment, etc.)? Dream big!

I would love to see a Ronald McDonald House in Youngstown again.

## VIEW FROM THE VALLEY



"The best day ever!" exclaimed Matty as his family was leaving the Akron Children's Hospital and Adaptive Sports Ohio event on August 7, 2022, which was held at On Target in Canfield. The event allowed participants and their families the opportunity to kayak and fish, as well as hit targets at archery or paintball gun stations. In addition to the Mahoning Valley and Akron Parent Advisory Councils and the staff from Adaptive Sports Ohio, the event also hosted volunteers from On Target and physical therapy students from Youngstown State University (YSU) to assist all guests at the different stations at the facility. This is the third event hosted between the organizations at this location.

Volunteers assisted participants with life jackets and helped boaters get into kayaks and give instructions on how to paddle. All equipment was provided, but some individuals brought their own fishing gear.

Dr. Sheryl Handler, pediatric orthopedic surgeon at Akron Children's Mahoning Valley, enjoyed watching her patients and families participate in the event.

"I'm so happy that we were able to get together this year after a 2-year hiatus due to COVID," she said. "I always take great pleasure watching children with physical disabilities, many of whom are my patients, participate in a fun day of activities like adaptive kayaking, archery, paintball and fishing.

"The Adaptive Sports Ohio programs allow these kids and young adults to enjoy activities that are otherwise not accessible to them. I look forward to this outing every year," she added.

"It was fun watching the kids hit targets with paintball guns and bows and arrows," said Laura Elder, a member of PAC. "I never knew my daughter had such good aim!"

The partnership between PAC and Adaptive Sports Ohio began when the 2 organizations joined forces and sponsored their first event at YSU's Beeghly Center featuring wheelchair basketball, wheelchair soccer and cheerleading. During the winter, a sled hockey event was held at the Covelli Center, and Phantom players joined event participants on the ice. Baseball and track and field events were held at Chaney High School in the summer.



## PAC IN ACTION

Akron Children's Hospital has one of the largest and most comprehensive simulation centers of its kind in this region. Spanning more than 30,000 square feet, the center is dedicated to advancing the field of simulation in health care through innovation and research. Its primary goal is to promote high-quality patient care, enhance patient safety and improve multidisciplinary teamwork and communication. The Society for Simulation in Healthcare has accredited the center in the areas of teaching/education and systems integration. (Cont.)

## PAC IN ACTION (CONT.)

PAC members have had several opportunities to participate in simulation events. They have been active participants in the Intern Boot Camp Simulation for first year residents for many years. This training gives residents the opportunity to role-play and interact with patients, families and attending physicians in a controlled setting. Throughout their onboarding training, the residents are presented with a variety of standardized patient scenarios focused on communication and shared decision-making.

Caregivers also serve in various roles, such as a disgruntled parent, tired parent or grandparent to provide an opportunity for residents to experience scenarios they may encounter in the hospital setting. During each role play, residents practice utilizing patient and family-centered care approaches when engaging families and presenting medical information to the attending physician. Following the simulation, the resident, parent and attending physician debrief to talk about what went well and anything that could be improved. This type of training provides residents an opportunity to practice difficult situations and ask questions in a safe environment. It also allows parents an opportunity to play a part in the education of future physicians.

"I appreciate being included in the debriefing session with the residents. Having the opportunity to share with residents how words, tone, body language, gestures or confidence impact (good or bad) a situation is priceless," said Kristin Hafford, patient and family engagement coordinator. "I often interact with residents in different simulation trainings throughout their experience at Akron Children's. To see the growth in our residents from their first simulation during boot camp (somewhat nervous) to a de-escalation simulation at the end of the year (poised and confident) is very encouraging, and makes me proud of the work we are doing."

Dr. Kate Rhone, who is in her first year of residency, says she values the experience and learning opportunity the simulations provide.

"Staff and PAC members provide a safe environment to practice different scenarios that any physician may encounter throughout their career," she said. "I have already used the feedback parents and attending physicians gave during boot camp in multiple situations as an intern."

"The direct feedback allows each intern personalized training based on our own strengths and weaknesses," she added. "My approach to family interactions has been molded and I feel more prepared to tackle a multitude of situations because of this experience."



## TAG LINE

The Celeste Myers Dental Clinic is specially trained to handle a range of issues associated with children's dental health. The clinic provides complete preventive and therapeutic oral health care services for children up to age 14, including those with special health care needs. The clinic is equipped with a sensory friendly space for patients and families who may need a more relaxed setting to wait in.

Teen Advisory Group (TAG) member Xyia West began going to the dental clinic when she was 12.

"That's when I met the best dentist in the world, Dr. Jeffrey Berlin. He was so nice to me and my family. He always found a way to make me laugh," she said. "He always asks about my family, which means a lot to me. I love how he interacts with my little brother, who is on the autism spectrum. Since I recently turned 15, I just had my last appointment at the clinic. I hope my next dentist will be just as great as Dr. Berlin."