



Kindness Fuels Gratitude

As Thanksgiving fast approaches, I'm reminded of commentary I heard on the radio. The deejay shared that instead of asking kids how their day was, you should try asking, "How were you kind today?" I thought this was interesting and actually, a fantastic question for everyone regardless of age. When I reflect on this statement as it pertains to everything Holly's Heart, I am absolutely overcome with emotion because my heart is bursting with gratitude. Whether you're reading this because you've donated, received a garment, shared one of our posts on social media, or are just interested in what we do; my team and I want you to know that **YOUR** kindness made a difference. It may not have seemed like a lot of effort at the time, but please know your support has made an incredible impact on the life of someone during a challenging and vulnerable time.

Kevin Heath said, "Wherever there is a human in need, there is an opportunity for kindness and to make a difference." Well, we are happy to share we just shipped our first delivery of ECMO friendly hospital gown alternatives, thanks to the feedback of Child Life Specialist, Katie Persha. You'll learn more from her on the next page; but she reached out on behalf of the ECMO patient population she supports, requesting a garment with snaps on both seams of one sleeve and snaps up to the collar. ECMO is a type of artificial life support that can help a person whose lungs and heart aren't functioning correctly. We were thrilled to learn the new ECMO design falls within the patent scope and even more excited to clothe this special group of patients with love.

As the year draws to an end and we find ourselves in the season of giving, please know we are overjoyed that in just over ten months, we've delivered over 1,500 smiles to patients- twice as many as last year and the year isn't over! THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! We are beyond grateful that together, we **ARE** transforming the hospital experience.

Patient Spotlight

Meet Amelia

Meet 4 year old Amelia! She was brought to the Texas Children's Hospital ER on August 5th because she was having a hard time breathing, had swelling in her face and feet, and was not herself at all. Her parents thought it was her asthma flaring up but eventually discovered that her heart was failing. On August 10th, they learned Amelia needed labs. It didn't go well at all. She was very stressed and crying so much while being poked for the lab draw, she went into cardiac arrest and had a seizure at the same time. The medical team rushed to her room and

couldn't find a pulse. They performed CPR on her for 30 seconds. Amazingly, Amelia came back on her own without needing to use the defibrillator! She returned to the ICU and was diagnosed with restrictive cardiomyopathy. Amelia's only option is a heart transplant. Amelia has been doing great, rocking her superhero garment and making friends while she's waiting for her new heart.



Child Life Specialist Spotlight

Katie Persha, CCLS — TEXAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL —

What role does a Child Life Specialist play during a patient's hospital stay?

Child Life Specialists wear so many different hats. I can teach patients about their diagnosis, hospitalization, and treatment options to help them better understand and cope; I can provide play and normalizing interactions to help patient's adjust to the hospital setting and support their developmental growth. I can be the support person that listens to them during hard times and accompanies them throughout difficult or painful procedures. I also get the opportunity to work with the siblings of my patients as they cope with their sibling's hospitalization.



Based on your experience and observations, how do the garments that Holly's Heart provides impact the patient and medical professionals who care for them?

These garments make such a positive impact on both our patients and their medical professionals! The hospital can be such a vulnerable place, and to not feel properly clothed or comfortable can negatively impact a child's recovery or hospital experience. These garments allow patients of all ages to have a better hospital experience.

- **Teenagers** enjoy being able to feel less exposed and more normalcy as these PJs are similar styles/comfort as athleisure wear they may wear at home.
- **Younger patients** often experience increased anxiety when they can see the medical lines connected to them and are more likely to pick at their lines which may cause them to need to be replaced. The phrase of "out of sight, out of mind" is so true with these garments. They comfortably cover all of a patient's lines so they then become less anxious and are less likely to mess with them. This is also one of the main reasons our medical professionals love these garments.
- **Bedside nurses** love how the snaps allow them to easily access their patient's lines and keep them better organized while still allowing their patient to feel comfortable and fully clothed.
- **Physical and occupational therapists** love how adaptable these garments are so that they are able to incorporate them into their early post-op session in the ICU, even when a patient still has dozens of lines/tubes connected to them.
- **ECMO patients**- We are really excited to have these new garments that are adaptable for this group, as they have often lost the most amount of autonomy based on how much medical equipment they have connected to them. For these patients to feel more comfortable and clothed provides them with a sense of normalcy and privacy that can be hard to find while on ECMO.

Calling Santa's Elves...



Holly's Heart believes that everyone deserves to feel the joy of the holiday season, especially those who are hospitalized and unable to celebrate in the same way as others. Therefore, we're dedicating all donations raised during November through January 2024 to providing festive garb for patients, complete with our special patented functionality that makes it easy for them to wear and enjoy.

With your help, we can make this a reality for the 2024 holiday season! Our mission is to raise \$20,000 over the next three months. Will you welcome the spirit of the season by helping us reach our goal?

