



A GROUP EFFORT TO

Raise a Joyful Kid!

MEET NOAH ROBBINS

Learn about the Robbins' foster to adopt story

SIGNED
SEALED
DELIVERED
HE'S OURS!



Meet Noah

DECEMBER 11, 2020
Noah officially becomes a Robbins

A woman with dark hair, wearing a festive headband with gold and green decorations and a colorful necklace with large beads, is smiling broadly. She is wearing a pink t-shirt with white text that is partially visible as "ERR" and "AN".

ah Robbins

NOAH IS 6. He has a big smile, beautiful gray eyes, and red hair (which matches his vibrant personality). Many people at The Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center have known him since he was a baby because he has come to us so many times throughout the years.

Noah has a very rare orthopedic condition called arthrogyrosis, which impacts his joints, spine, and respiratory system. Because Noah needs a ventilator and has a gastrostomy tube (g-tube), we spent a lot of time with him during his first 5 years of life. Each time Noah transferred to a new foster home through Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families, we would train the new foster parents in our Pediatric Specialty Hospital, ensuring they would know how to take care of his medical needs.

As Noah grew, so did his personality. During his most recent stay at The Children's Home in 2019, he spent most of his time outside of his room playing on mats with his toys and the staff. But this time was different than his other stays. Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families contracted with our Adoption program to help find a family for him; something that had been handled by other agencies in the past.

During his stay at The Children's Home, Noah was oftentimes being pushed in a little car throughout the facility or carried on the hip of a nurse with his equipment in tow to say hello to his friends. He was spoiled and loved by our staff, and even tucked in to take a nap, which was his least favorite thing to do. Volunteers, patients, and their families were greeted cheerfully by Noah as they entered the unit.

But there was something weighing on us all as we left to go home to our families at the end of our shifts. We wondered, *What about Noah? Who will love him forever as their own child?*

At the same time, a friendship was blooming between Noah and husband and wife duo, Dave and Michaela Robbins. They had originally come to volunteer at The Children's Home to hold babies, but by a twist of fate (all babies were being fed) were introduced to Noah. As Noah's enchanting personality opened the hearts of Dave and Michaela, they happened to be actively working with The Children's Home's Adoption from Foster Care services in hopes of finding the right child to adopt. One day, they learned from their Adoption social worker that our Adoption department was providing SWAN services to Noah, and trying to find an adoptive family for him. From there, things started to come together.

A YEAR LATER, Noah's official Adoption Day was celebrated on December 11, 2020, as he formally became Noah Robbins. So many beautiful surprises unfolded as Dave and Michaela got to know their new son. We are excited to share them with you throughout this spring and hope that you will keep up with Noah's story on our social media channels, publications, and in our appeal letter, which will come out in a month or so. *Thank you to Dave, Michaela, and Noah for opening up about your unique and inspiring story.*

Ready. Set. Home!

LAUNCHES THIS SPRING

At The Children's Home, we are always finding new ways to teach and engage families in their child's care.

To address our hospital's growth, ensure our clinical expertise, and support each family's transition home, we forged a partnership with Highmark Foundation two years ago to enhance clinical education initiatives as well as develop an improved strategy for educating families.

With the support of this partnership, we developed *Ready. Set. Home!* to further promote education in caregiving for families in our community with medically fragile children.

Through *Ready. Set. Home!* we produced a nine-part educational video series for family caregivers, detailing how to complete a range of complex care procedures as well as simpler tasks.

Our video series covers the following topics:

- Caring for a Central Line
- Changing a Tracheostomy Tube
- Go Bag
- G-tube Care
- Nesting with Your Child
- Packing Your Kid Kart
- Trach Care
- Traveling with Medical Equipment
- Troubleshooting Tracheostomy Emergencies

We are now working with our video production team, Anthem Video, to develop a *Ready. Set. Home!* channel so families can easily tune in from within our facility as well as from home.

This spring, we will also produce a detailed *Ready. Set. Home!* binder to complement our video series and provide an additional reference guide for caregivers, both during their stay with us and after they return home.



READY. SET. HOME! video stills show complex care procedures completed on real patients at our hospital.





READY. SET. HOME! RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

Last month, we received some exciting news from the Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN).

***Ready. Set. Home!* was selected for their inaugural 2021 INNOVATION AWARD!**

This award aims to identify and recognize new and creative approaches that will provide better quality care for children and their families.

The Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center will be recognized during SPN's 31st Annual Conference, April 14-17, here in Pittsburgh.

We are grateful to SPN for recognizing our collaborative, multi-year effort to provide even more support and resources to the children and families in our care.

Learn more about SPN and our award at pedsnurses.org.



Shake Your Booties at Home

Friends and supporters joined us virtually on Saturday, November 7th for our 19th Annual Signature Fundraising Gala Shake Your Booties at Home. Although we were unable to meet in-person, special guest emcees, **Courtney and Kelly Brennan**, welcomed guests safely from their home bringing so much energy and entertainment to the evening!

A virtual heartfelt message from our CEO, Pam Keen, was given during our program as she thanked our supporters for standing by us during these trying times.

Guests were taken on an exclusive “Behind the Screen” virtual tour of The Children’s Home to get a closer look at our programs and all the amazing work that’s being done in Child’s Way, our Pediatric Specialty Hospital, and our Adoption program.

Attendees learned more about **Joey Black’s Adoption Story**, and our director of adoption and permanency services, Erika Schmitt, presented the Black Family with an award.



The Black Family

SPECIAL THANKS TO:



SAVE THE DATE!

SHAKE YOUR BOOTIES 2021

NOVEMBER 12
RIVERS CASINO

The Children’s Home – Shake Your Booties’ event is produced by Luxe Creative, a Pittsburgh-based design agency working in the worlds of live music, the arts, large scale events, fashion and interiors.



THROUGH SHAKE YOUR BOOTIES WE RAISED OVER \$220,000 FOR THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES WE SERVE!

COURTNEY & KELLY BRENNAN
emcee Shake Your Booties from the comfort and safety of home.

CHECK OUT OUR EVENT VIDEO AT [BIT.LY/SYATHOME](https://bit.ly/syathome)

A Note from Pam

This time last year, we were in the middle of a statewide shutdown order, Child's Way was indefinitely closed, and we were losing revenue as the weeks went by. But more than that, we were suddenly unable to support the children and families who relied on us to provide critical care, educational opportunities, and important social interactions. We had to temporarily lay off dedicated teachers and nurses. While we pivoted and planned to provide diminished services, there were days when we had no idea what the future would look like for our organization.

During these difficult and uncertain times our community of friends and supporters stepped up to help. Despite a challenging year for us all, our donors responded with generosity to support **#ComeTogether**, **#ONEDAY**, and **Shake Your Booties**. You supported our work, ensuring we could continue serving our region's most vulnerable children and families. We are so thankful for the dedicated support of people *like you*, and we cannot wait to welcome you back to The Children's Home just as soon as it is safe to do so.

Thankfully, the shutdown was only temporary, and we were able to reopen Child's Way last June, welcoming back many families and enrolling many new ones in recent months. And through it all, our Pediatric Specialty Hospital and our Adoption program continued their work,

whether on-site or remotely, ensuring that there were no gaps in service. Our staff all-stars, from our nursing and clinical staff to our housekeeping, facilities, security, and frontline administrative staff, made this possible. We are grateful for them and for all that they sacrificed to keep our doors open through a truly uncertain and frightening time.

While we are not completely on the other side of COVID-19, and it will still be a long time until we can safely say that, we are beginning to feel a return to normalcy. Despite the challenges of the past year, we continue to meet the needs of the community, fulfilling our mission and serving those who rely on us, and, of course, looking to find the silver linings through it all.

Thank you for sticking with us! We are excited to share some of the highlights and key moments from the past year with you through this newsletter. We hope you enjoy it!

On behalf of all of us at The Children's Home,



Pamela R. Keen

Pamela R. Keen
Chief Executive Officer



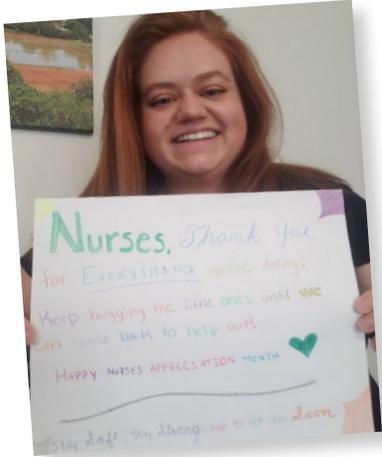
This past year has been full of many changes and surprises, but most importantly it has been filled with so much **love and support from our community.**



-Pam Keen

From CEO's Special Message, Shake Your Booties

Thank You Volunteers



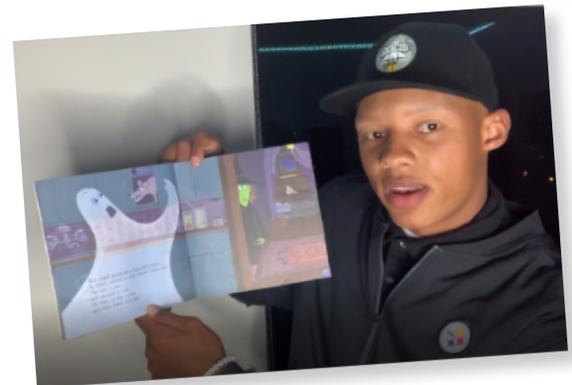
Despite our volunteer program being on pause due to COVID restrictions, our volunteers were still able to engage in creative and innovative ways!

At the beginning of quarantine, our volunteers shared special messages to celebrate **Nurse Appreciation Month**. Josh Dobbs, volunteer and Steelers QB, did several **virtual book readings** for the kids and staff in Child's Way. During the holiday season, Tanya and therapy dog Boone did a special **Facebook Live reading** of their new book, *Bow Tie Boone*. And some of our volunteers crafted beautiful and creative hospital **patient door signs** for us!



Although this has been a difficult and unprecedented time for everyone, we are incredibly appreciative and overwhelmed by the outpouring of support that our volunteers have shown in 2020!

We miss everyone immensely and cannot wait to welcome volunteers and special visitors back into the building.



Supporter Spotlight

FISA FOUNDATION

Thank you to FISA Foundation for being a dedicated partner and supporter of our work. We are grateful for a recent \$25,000 grant we received from FISA Foundation to support Child's Way. A key partner for over two decades, FISA Foundation seeks to build a culture of respect and improve the quality of life for women, girls, and people with disabilities throughout southwestern PA.

Beyond funding support, FISA board member, Susan Davis, also participates on our Community Health Needs Assessment steering committee, providing the insight and expertise she gained through her years of work as founder and director of Every Child, Inc. and Project STAR at The Children's Institute.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FISA FOUNDATION

Building on their mission this year, FISA spearheaded a new initiative, **Race + Disability: Understanding Intersectional Oppression**, to help educate community members about these complex issues and to better serve people of color with disabilities throughout our region. *Find out more at fisafoundation.org/disability-inclusion-pgh/race-and-disability.*

A Colorful Collaboration

THE CHILDREN'S HOME GOT A LOT MORE COLORFUL LAST YEAR, BUT DUE TO COVID-19, NOT MANY PEOPLE HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO SEE OUR NEW ARTWORK.

At the beginning of 2020, our very own resident artist and volunteer manager, Meredith Stafford-Chapman, created three murals to bring bright nature scenes to the walls of our Pediatric Specialty Hospital. Before joining our team here at The Children's Home, Meredith worked at the Frye Museum in Seattle, WA. She has exhibited her work at the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum in Roanoke, VA and at Ghost Gallery in Seattle. Meredith studied studio art and business at Hollins University.

Meredith designed and outlined the murals in a paint-by-number style, setting the scene for our PNC and PPG volunteers who spent a late February day last year filling the drawings in and bringing them to life.

The murals, *Western Wildlife*, *Ocean Scene*, and *Cow Pasture*, have turned otherwise boring walls into fun scenes for patients, families, and staff to stop at and enjoy. As a final touch, plexiglass was recently added to protect the murals from everyday wear and tear, ensuring they stay as bold and bright as the day they were painted.

We can't wait until our volunteers, friends, and supporters can return to The Children's Home to see our new murals! *In the meantime, check out our time lapse video of the project at bit.ly/TCHMurals.*

MEREDITH STAFFORD-CHAPMAN
and *Cow Pasture* mural





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FOSTER CARE AWARENESS
MONTH!**

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FOSTER TO FOREVER

*A Video Premier & Virtual
Watch Party*

FREE! REGISTER AT
[BIT.LY/FOSTER2FOREVER](https://bit.ly/foster2forever)



**Support more
kids like Noah!**

You can ensure every child's story has a
happy ending.

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childrenshomepgh.org