



The Mt. Sinai Child Life Staff

The Child Life Program

The Child Life Program at Mount Sinai offers a full range of free activities and services to make the hospital experience easier, more familiar and more comfortable for children.

Our staff of certified Child Life Specialists includes experts in early childhood education, special education, creative arts therapy and recreation therapy.

Through play, art, school and socializing with peers, these experts help children retain their creativity, self esteem and independence, and continue their normal development while in the hospital.

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A Message from the Director

In this, our first issue of the *Mt. Sinai Child Life Quarterly*, we spotlight our many supporters and the volunteers who help us achieve our vision of providing innovative programming for pediatric patients and families.

The mission of the Child Life program and the Maternal Child Health Care Center is to create a family centered environment that addresses

the psychological and emotional needs of hospitalized children and their families.

We salute our many supporters and encourage others to join us as we continue our efforts to offer state of the art opportunities for coping and adjustment to the children and families we serve!

Please feel free to contact

me directly regarding these and other opportunities to volunteer or contribute to our efforts.

Diane Rode, Director
Child Life Program
The Maternal Child Health Care Center

The Mount Sinai Children's Center Foundation



Child Life Tiles, decorating the entrance to the offices.

For fourteen years, the Children's Center Foundation has supported innovative and therapeutic Child Life initiatives in Pediatrics. In 2001, the Foundation supported projects and programming including:

- The "Family Friendly" **Dove Movie Channel** in Pediatrics
- The annual **Maternal/Child Health Care Center Bereavement Ceremony**
- **Children and Health Care Week** activities
- **"Through Our Eyes"** Video Therapy services
- Extended playroom hours and the **"Kids TV"** close circuit broadcast programming

- Treatment room therapeutic **"Coping and Comfort"** supplies
- The ongoing, successful environmental enhancement initiative in Pediatrics and our successful **"What We Imagine: The Art of Feeling Better"** ceramic tile installation project.

In an institutional environment of cost containment, these program initiatives that dramatically impact on patient and family satisfaction would not be possible. We, along with the patients and families we serve, continue to appreciate the support of the Children's Center Foundation that enables us to offer the highest

quality of care that embraces the emotional and physical aspects of healing and recuperation.



"Through Our Eyes" Video Production by Patients



Parent Researching on the Internet

The Family Resource Library of The Maternal Child Health Care Center

In 2001 The Child Life Program completed the pilot development of the Family Resource Center Library within the MCH Family Resource Center. The Mount Sinai Auxiliary Board generously funded this pilot project in 2000 to provide specialized materials designed to supplement parent and patient education.

The library is currently staffed by Alike Hope Bryant (also our "Reach Out and Read" coordinator) for four half-days per week, with a goal of increasing accessibil-

ity. The library provides materials to children and their families in a non-threatening, comfortable atmosphere at times when family members are ready to absorb and use information. This family environment disseminates information to families through the use of a circulating book and video library, internet access and computer software, reference materials and pamphlets.

The goal of the library is to respect and encourage the choices families make for their children, while promoting partnership between fami-

lies and health care professionals.

Child Life Specialists inform families with hospitalized children of the libraries hours and assist in arranging appointments. Library Science internship and general volunteer opportunities are available in this developing family centered care environment.

For further information, contact Alike Hope Bryant at the Family Resource Library: (212) 241-7636.

Music Therapy in Pediatric Intensive Care

Providing a relaxing environment during procedures

The Music Therapy Program at Mount Sinai began in 1995 with a gift from **Gail Kreitman and Jeffrey Toll** to pilot a Music Therapy program in the Pediatric Intensive Care units. A Child Life Music therapist in these potentially traumatic environments enriches the lives of seriously and terminally ill children of all ages. The pilot was so successful, with appreciation expressed by children, families, and the full medical team, that Gail and Jeffrey have continued to fund the part time program annually.

The number of patients requiring music therapy interventions has continued to increase. Since 1998 with the

help of Mrs. Margarita Meyer, **The Karelsie Foundation** has provided generous funding to increase our Music



Music Therapist Laurie Toole with Dushun

Therapy programming. Today, our Music Therapist in Residence, Laurie Toole, provides music therapy interventions to our most seriously ill pediatric patients in all of the intensive care units. Laurie is

also available to assist health care staff in providing a relaxing environment during painful procedures or prior to surgery.

Health care staff and families continue to report that children who receive music therapy services seem to experience less anxiety and stress during their hospitalization.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of these important sponsors; without these gifts we would be unable to provide music therapy services to these seriously ill patients. Our goal for 2002 is to increase our music therapy programming in Pediatrics.



The Mobile Music Cart

Child-Friendly Surgical Waiting Area Opens

On January 12, Michael Rothschild, MD, and Steven Dolgin, MD, were on hand to unveil the newly enhanced pediatric surgical waiting area. The renovated space received a new mural cour-

tesy of **Meet Me at Mount Sinai**.

In his remarks about the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Dr. Rothschild joked about how the idea for the renovation was born. "When I ap-

proached the **Meet Me at Mt. Sinai** folks about the broken VCR, I had no idea what I was getting myself into." In actuality, pediatric surgeons, doctors, and anesthesiologists donated the funds to

turn the walls of the waiting room into a more soothing underwater scene. Similar art renovations completed last March in the Pediatric Ambulatory Clinic at Mount Sinai have also been well received. **Meet Me at Mount Sinai** is a

pre-operative program for children and their families, run by the Maternal and Child Health Care Center. Seeking to provide comprehensive emotional preparation for both youngsters undergoing an operation and parents with

a child in surgery, the program includes members from the Departments of Social Work, Nursing, and Child Life.

For more information on the waiting room project or the Meet Me at Mt. Sinai Pro-

Computer Technology for Pediatric Patients

Computer-based activities enable hospitalized children and adolescents to engage in normalizing and therapeutic processes that foster coping and adjustment.

Our mobile computer equipment includes laptop and desktop computers, a scanner, color printer, digital cameras, and a wide range of software. With creative software such as Printshop, Publisher, and arts programs pediatric patients and families are able to access art, design, and creative writing tools easily. Computer arts enable patients to express themselves creatively and offer opportunities for communication.

In 2001, two generous

gifts have enabled us to bring technology to larger numbers of pediatric patients. The **Frances Pope Memorial**



Consultant Luis Borges training Child Life Staff

Fund, which piloted *The Andrew Baeumler Pediatric Technology Program* in 1999, continued the program with a generous grant to purchase state of the art computer equipment and to

support a Child Life Consultant to coordinate technology programming with hospitalized children restricted to bed.

A longtime Child Life volunteer, **Maura Surnamer and her husband Joel** supported Child Life's computer arts program by funding the purchase of laptops (and much-needed videos!). These gifts have made it possible for us to offer our most isolated pediatric patients rich opportunities to express, connect, and engage in creative computer arts activities.



Pediatric Patients have access to laptops when restricted to bed rest

The Gift of a Volunteer

Volunteers serve as invaluable assistants to the Child Life program in Pediatrics. Many routinely scheduled Child Life activities as well as "special events" simply could not run without the help of these generous people.

Representing a variety of ages and backgrounds with unique personal skills, these people donate their time and resources throughout the year to children and adolescents during their hospital stay and/or clinic visit. Whether holding a baby, donating materials for a party, or sitting by the bedside of an adolescent, volunteers enhance the emotional

well being of our patient population.

Dressed uniformly in blue jackets, volunteers stand out as "safe" people within the hospital environment to whom both children and families can look to as playmates and nurturers. While a child eagerly awaits the opportunity to engage in a fun game of Candy Land, a weary parent may finally be able to leave that child's bedside for a quick cup of coffee or a breath of fresh air.

A group sponsored party is a welcome event during a long hospital day, allowing for patients and families to

meet one another in a relaxed atmosphere.

Each week, Child Life Specialists receive words of appreciation from parents, medical staff, and patients praising our enthusiastic volunteer team.

The Child Life program would like to extend many thanks to all of these dedicated people who support our program and the pediatric families at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Caroline Boynton in the Volunteer Department at 212-659-9180.

"Child Life receives words of appreciation from parents, medical staff, and patients praising our enthusiastic volunteer team."



Creating in the Playroom

A Special Thank You

As 2001 Draws to a close, the Child Life Program thanks the many individuals and groups who have contributed to creating family friendly environments throughout Pediatrics at Mount Sinai. Small and substantial donations

alike enhance Child Life programming for our pediatric patients.

Without your collective generosity and commitment to humanizing healthcare for children and for families, we would be unable

to provide the depth of programming that is so essential to our mission.

On behalf of the patients we serve, we wish you peace and health over the holidays and in the coming New Year.

Devorah Aberra
Amy & Reuben Adolf
Sandy Altman, *NY Flyers*
Paul J. Appel, *NY Life Insurance*
Kelly & Joe Bandalos
Monica Banks, *NY Life Insurance*
Karen Barry, *Middleberg & Associates*
Joanne Barry
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