

SECURING THE PROMISE

FALL 2026



ELEVATE
Our Strategic Future

Le Bonheur
Children's Hospital

Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., treats more than 500,000 children each year through community programs, regional clinics and 311 beds that feature state-of-the-art technology and family-friendly resources. Our medical staff of more than 240 physicians provide care in 45 subspecialties.

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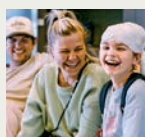
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Support Le Bonheur

For more information about ways to support Le Bonheur Children's by volunteering, attending events, developing partnerships and giving financially, please visit www.lebonheur.org/ways-to-help or call 901-287-6308.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

At Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, our care for children goes beyond the four walls of the hospital. We are deeply invested in improving the lives of families and the community. Health care is constantly evolving and so are the needs of the kids we treat. To be prepared to address whatever comes our way from now through 2030, we have embarked on our strategic plan called "ELEVATE."

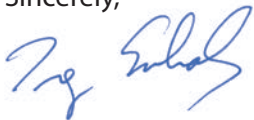
We are committed to each pillar of ELEVATE: improving access to care, innovating community care, providing clinical excellence, advancing research and education, and being the best place to work. In this issue, you'll read about the steps we are taking to make the goals of ELEVATE a reality and the ways this strategic plan will make a tangible difference for children and families.

At Le Bonheur, every Associate and provider who walks through our doors is valued, supported and encouraged, while every child has access to the care they need to thrive, regardless of their ability to pay.

As we look ahead to 2030, we're reaching higher — driven to continue our legacy of excellence, guided by compassion, innovation and a strong sense of responsibility for the children and families who depend on us.

We want to care for kids for generations to come and be prepared for whatever comes our way in the future. This plan is a promise that is only possible with your support. Thank you for helping us ELEVATE Le Bonheur for every child who needs us.

Sincerely,



Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS

President

Le Bonheur Children's Hospital



ELEVATE

Our Strategic Future

Le Bonheur Children's Strategic Plan

2025-2030



Improve Access to Care when and where families need us

Expand regional and national reach to ensure we're the leading pediatric resource.

Strategically align with the right partners who share our mission.

Make care widely available and timely.

Digitally connect our families to our services with leading technology.



Innovate Community Care and be the voice for children's health

Identify and respond to health needs.

Attract funding to the region to advance care for kids.

Reimagine health care delivery outside of the hospital's walls.

Speak up for families and drive progress in care.



Provide Clinical Excellence

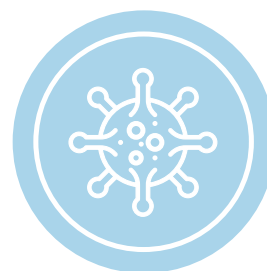
with a focus on patient- and family-centered care

Develop institutes and advance our programs of excellence.

Achieve top decile rankings for quality and safety.

Partner with families to improve outcomes and create an exceptional experience.

Leverage technology and innovation to improve quality care.



Advance Education and Research

for the discovery and treatment of childhood illnesses

Expand patient access to clinical trials to develop cutting edge treatments.

Identify new relationships and partnerships to collaborate on novel therapies.

Optimize research infrastructure to support growth and efficiency of research endeavors.

Create an innovation center to solve complex problems and create solutions.



Be the Best Place to Work

with empowered and engaged Associates and providers

Develop leaders and create clear advancement pathways.

Foster a mission driven culture.

Identify how problem solving and technology can improve workflows and teamwork.

Attract and retain top talent.

Scan here to learn more.





A New Chapter in Pediatric Care

Memphis Children's Clinic joins Le Bonheur Pediatrics

"A match made in heaven."

Those are the words Christopher Bell uses to describe Memphis Children's Clinic (MCC) joining Le Bonheur Pediatrics earlier this year. A lifelong patient at the MCC Whitehaven location, Christopher carried on a family tradition when he had his own children.

When Christopher and his wife, Amelia, welcomed their first son, Greyson, they entrusted his care to the Olive Branch MCC location near their Mississippi home. The Bells immediately felt at home with the clinic's family environment and expert physicians.

They welcomed two more sons, Carrington and Knox. All three boys are now cared for by Jami Carver, MD, at the Olive Branch clinic. While Carver provides expert medical care to the Bell family, she and her colleagues also celebrate the achievement of goals like earning straight A's and milestones on sports team.

"I was a patient at Memphis Children's Clinic throughout my childhood, and all three of my kids are

patients at the Olive Branch location. We are comfortable with Dr. Carver, and she has taken wonderful care of our three sons," Christopher said. "She has been a part of our

family for the past eight years and she has seen the boys grow and hit milestones in both school and sports."



Knox Bell has seen pediatrician Jami Carver, MD, since birth at the Memphis Children's Clinic location in Olive Branch. Earlier this year, Memphis Children's Clinic joined Le Bonheur Pediatrics.

Joining the Le Bonheur Family

Established in 1952, Memphis Children's Clinic has been a trusted provider of compassionate care for families like the Bells across the area at six locations in Shelby County and DeSoto County in Mississippi. With a mission of serving kids in the local community, MCC has provided skilled care to thousands of children from birth to adolescence.

When presented with the opportunity to join Le Bonheur Pediatrics, Memphis Children's Clinic Chief Medical Officer, Tim Gillespie, MD, said he and his fellow physicians were excited to unite resources and a shared rich tradition of patient care.

"Memphis Children's Clinic and Le Bonheur share



Christopher and Amelia Bell know they can count on Jami Carver, MD, to provide expert routine pediatric care for their three sons, Greyson, Carrington and Knox (l-r) at Memphis Children's Clinic. Christopher was a Memphis Children's Clinic patient when he was a child.

the same mission — providing the best care for all children regardless of their ability to pay or what is happening in the health care system,” Gillespie said. “We recognize the value of aligning with Le Bonheur so that we can do the most good for children and families as possible.”

According to Gillespie, MCC providers have already received positive feedback from patients and families about joining Le Bonheur. While the families hope to never need the resources available at the hospital in Memphis, they appreciate having access to world-renowned, expert care close to home.

Gillespie’s goal is for all children in the community to have consistent pediatric care by working to ensure every kid has a

“Memphis Children’s Clinic and Le Bonheur share the same mission — providing the best care for all children regardless of their ability to pay or what is happening in the health care system. We recognize the value of aligning with Le Bonheur so that we can do the most good for children and families as possible.”

Tim Gillespie, MD, Memphis Children’s Clinic Chief Medical Officer

medical home. He is dedicated to making that a reality for kids across the Mid-South.

“My hope is that by joining Le Bonheur, we are able to reach even more families and address basic medical needs that are not being met,” Gillespie said. “Together, we can work to address and identify behavioral health needs and the reasons why children are not receiving the medical care they need.”

Meeting the Need

Medical Director of Le Bonheur Pediatrics, Blake Bergeron, MD, echoes Gillespie’s excitement about becoming physician partners with MCC, citing a shared commitment to providing



Earlier this year, the Bell family participated in a special ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Olive Branch clinic to celebrate becoming part of the Le Bonheur Pediatrics family.

excellent medical care to kids and a distinguished history. In fact, many of the physicians in both groups trained together in medical school or residency creating a shared respect and comfort between the new “family” members. With six locations across Shelby County, Le Bonheur Pediatrics cares for kids from birth to adulthood.

“The goal of Memphis Children’s Clinic and Le Bonheur Pediatrics remains the same, namely that every single child in Memphis and Shelby County has a medical home,” Bergeron said. “The desire is for each office to be the first place parents reach out to for any question about their child’s health, where prevention follows scientific guidance and hopefully, where each child has the chance to grow from infancy into a healthy adult.”



Memphis Children's Clinic Chief Medical Officer, Tim Gillespie, MD, said he and his fellow physicians are excited to unite resources and a shared rich tradition of patient care with Le Bonheur Pediatrics.

Bergeron is proud that Le Bonheur Pediatrics is a leader in the Mid-South in providing mental health services to kids, namely by offering visits with in-office behavioral health consultants to ensure the emotional well-being of patients. Shared electronic medical records between the two groups create continuity of care and less time spent by families trying to track down test results and health histories.

Carver has heard positive feedback from her patients in Olive Branch who are excited to have easier access to Le Bonheur’s specialists and mental health resources.

“Now all of our patients’ Le Bonheur outpatient studies, specialists and hospitalizations will all be on one system, and our patients will be able to see all of their records in MyChart,” Carver said. “I have already talked to multiple families with chronic conditions who are excited that specialists will now have our notes and vice versa.”

As for the Bell family, Christopher said he is thrilled to see Memphis Children’s Clinic, a long-standing pediatric pillar in the community, join forces with one of the most respected children’s hospitals in the country.

“For MCC to join a wonderful organization like Le Bonheur is amazing,” Christopher said. “I’m grateful for my children to have access to the resources and care Le Bonheur offers.”

Earlier this year, the Bell family participated in a special ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Olive Branch clinic to celebrate the partnership and the beginning of a new chapter for pediatric health in the Mid-South. Because of your support, children and families have improved regional access to the medical care they need to thrive.



“The goal of Memphis Children’s Clinic and Le Bonheur Pediatrics remains the same, namely that every single child in Memphis and Shelby County has a medical home. The desire is for each office to be the first place parents reach out to for any question about their child’s health, where prevention follows scientific guidance and hopefully, where each child has the chance to grow from infancy into a healthy adult.”

Blake Bergeron, MD, Le Bonheur Pediatrics medical director



Blake Bergeron, MD, serves as the medical director of Le Bonheur Pediatrics. Le Bonheur Pediatrics has six locations across Shelby County and welcomed an additional six locations of Memphis Children’s Clinic to their group earlier this year.

LeBonheur Pediatrics



Bartlett
3155 Kirby Whitten Pkwy.
Bartlett, Tenn. 38134



Collierville
511 Market Blvd., Suite 105
Collierville, Tenn. 38017



Downtown
51 N Dunlap St., Suite 310
Memphis, Tenn. 38105



East Memphis
806 Estate Place
Memphis, Tenn. 38119



East Memphis
871 Ridgeway Loop Road, Suite 200
Memphis, Tenn. 38120



Germantown
1255 S. Germantown Road
Germantown, Tenn. 38138



Germantown/Collierville
7705 Poplar Ave., Suite #240
Physician's Office Bldg. B
Germantown, Tenn. 38138



Kirby/Hickory Hill
2725 Kirby Road, Suite #1
Memphis, Tenn. 38119



Olive Branch
9860 East Goodman Road
Olive Branch, Miss. 38654



Raleigh
3876 New Covington Pike
Memphis, Tenn. 38128



Southaven
7672 Airways Blvd.
Southaven, Miss. 38671



Whitehaven
1251 Wesley Drive, Suite #129
Memphis, Tenn. 38116



Specialized Care for Rural Areas

Le Bonheur expands partnerships, programs to bring world-class pediatric specialists to West Tennessee children

As a child growing up in rural Northwest Tennessee, Le Bonheur Hospitalist Sarah Camper, DO, saw firsthand how limited options could be for pediatric health care.

“We had to go to the health department to get our shots because no one kept kid shots,” Camper said. “When me or my sister got sick, we had to go to Nashville. That was definitely a hardship on our parents.”

For many families in rural areas, access to specialized pediatric care has only grown more scarce. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, pediatric inpatient beds

in rural areas have decreased by 26%, and 25% of children have seen an increase in the distance to their closest pediatric inpatient unit.

Camper, who also serves as medical director of Le Bonheur’s 21-bed inpatient pediatric unit at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, has also seen firsthand the benefits of having greater pediatric care in Jackson. “My sister’s children were admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) here,” she said. “That kept them from having to go to Nashville or Memphis. They got to be here, and all of our families got to see the babies and help give support.”

In response to this need for rural care, Le Bonheur has expanded its rural health programs and partnered closely with

Le Bonheur’s Outpatient Center in Jackson, Tenn., brings pediatric specialists directly to the children of West Tennessee. A variety of specialties and diagnostics are available in the 30,000-square-foot space.





Jared Hogan, MD, pediatric pulmonologist at Le Bonheur, is one of many who provide expert specialty care through the Jackson Outpatient Center.

West Tennessee Healthcare to provide specialized pediatric services to children.

With Le Bonheur's expanding presence through an outpatient center, inpatient unit, mobile health services and as the provider of care in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), families across suburban small town and rural West Tennessee now have access to expert pediatric general care and specialty care.

Le Bonheur to Jackson — The Outpatient Center

In 2018, Le Bonheur expanded its commitment to West Tennessee kids, opening a \$9.5 million, 30,000-square-foot, 20-room outpatient center. The center's location right off the interstate makes it quick and accessible for patient families throughout the region.

The idea was to expand on the existing clinic in the city and provide more access to specialized pediatric care for the children of West Tennessee. That center now offers allergy and immunology, cardiology, otolaryngology, neuroscience, surgery, nephrology and more. To deliver these subspecialties, the center is outfitted with a full roster of diagnostic tools like electroencephalogram (EEG), electrocardiogram (EKG), ultrasound and other advanced diagnostics.

Jared Hogan, MD, a pediatric pulmonologist at Le Bonheur in Jackson, said giving expert care to the patient population throughout West Tennessee "means the world to me."

"As a physician, especially one in a pediatric subspecialty, access is extremely important, and having such a robust group of strong physicians in the area helps provide support for the children of West Tennessee who are between two major metropolitan areas," Hogan said. "It's like a little diamond in the rough for our families."

"Our outpatient clinic location is very approachable and accessible for our patients, and we can provide lots of services in house. From the inpatient setting we are also expanding our skill sets and opportunities to provide even more services which should further decrease the pain and logistics of travel."

Pediatric Inpatient Care

In 2022, Le Bonheur and West Tennessee Healthcare deepened their collaboration to provide care for kids by developing a pediatric inpatient unit licensed to Le Bonheur inside Jackson-Madison County General Hospital. The



The 21-bed pediatric inpatient unit inside Jackson-Madison County General Hospital is run by Le Bonheur's pediatric experts. This allows children needing an inpatient stay to be closer to home while still receiving specialized pediatric care.



Le Bonheur's pediatric experts provide care to the children of West Tennessee inside of Jackson-Madison County General Hospital through a 21-bed pediatric inpatient unit and as the provider of care in the Level III, 42-bed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

“This expansion reflects our shared mission with West Tennessee Healthcare to bring specialized care to children and families in this region. By bringing Le Bonheur’s expertise directly into the NICU, we’re helping ensure that babies born in West Tennessee have the best possible start in life.”

Le Bonheur President Trey Eubanks, MD

call somewhere if we needed help. But we didn’t have an established relationship with a whole library of resources, which is what we have now with Le Bonheur. Now, there’s one number I call and request whatever specialist I need.”

“There’s so much more that we can do. The more layers of support we are offered, the more progress we are going to make.”

The NICU

21-bed unit is staffed by pediatric experts from Le Bonheur.

Vernessa Davis-Tharpe, MD, a pediatric hospitalist and recently retired medical director of Le Bonheur’s inpatient unit at Jackson-Madison, has practiced in Jackson for 30 years. She described the transition as a “joining of hands.” The partnership has brought good things for the staff and their patients, she said.

“Before, it was just us,” Davis-Tharpe said. “We could

Le Bonheur is further deepening its relationship at the hospital, too. In December 2025, the hospital expanded its partnership with West Tennessee Healthcare by becoming the new provider of care for the hospital’s NICU.

Le Bonheur’s providers, including neonatologists, nurse practitioners, cardiologists, neurologists, ophthalmologists, pulmonologists and other pediatric specialists, now staff the hospital’s 42-bed, Level III NICU, where the region’s most

vulnerable newborns receive the highest level of care. Neonatologist Josefina Go, MD, an established provider at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, will serve as the NICU's medical director.

"This expansion reflects our shared mission with West Tennessee Healthcare to bring specialized care to children and families in this region," said Le Bonheur President Trey Eubanks, MD. "By bringing Le Bonheur's expertise directly into the NICU, we're helping ensure that babies born in West Tennessee have the best possible start in life."

When more complex care is needed, Le Bonheur providers can coordinate with West Tennessee Healthcare to provide neonates a higher level of care in Le Bonheur's Level IV NICU in Memphis.

Care Even Closer

Camper and Davis-Tharpe said Le Bonheur's care for kids in West Tennessee covers a huge area, including Dyersburg, Union City, Martin, Savannah, Camden and more. Le Bonheur wants to cover even more ground, with pediatric care delivered to children right at their school.

An enormous, colorful box truck brings Le Bonheur care throughout Memphis and West Tennessee. The Le Bonheur on the Move Mobile Medical Unit provides care for kids not under the care of a primary care provider. The mobile unit care is given by Le Bonheur at no cost to families.

The Le Bonheur on the Move program provides comprehensive well-child exams, acute care, sports physicals, developmental/behavioral assessments, and medical/social service referrals. The program also helps provide transportation when children are referred to see specialists at Le Bonheur in Memphis and Jackson.

Thanks in part to donor support, Le Bonheur is able to provide the resources kids in West Tennessee need to thrive. 



Le Bonheur on the Move is a mobile medical unit that provides primary care for children at no cost to families by bringing the unit to West Tennessee schools.





Changing What's Possible

Inclusion Support helps children thrive in daycare, keeps families moving forward

When Lane Harris started daycare at 6 months old, his routine looked a lot like that of the other children in his classroom. He played. He made friends. He learned. He took naps.

And, like the other babies and toddlers, he was fed by his caregivers — with one meaningful difference. Lane's meals came through a G-tube, a feeding tube that delivers nutrition directly to his stomach.

For the staff at Lane's childcare center, caring for a child with his medical and developmental needs initially felt daunting. Uncertainty about how to safely meet those needs can become a barrier to inclusion for many childcare centers.

Thankfully for Lane and his family, Le Bonheur's Inclusion Support team was there to help bridge the gap.

Community Health Educator Shondra Rias has been with Lane since he was 6 months old. She trains his caregivers, provides onsite support for his care and communicates regularly with his parents and school staff. Each time Lane transitions to a new classroom, Shondra provides training to a new group of teachers.

For Lane's parents, Erin and Zeke Harris, this support has made something profoundly important possible: their son can attend daycare and preschool alongside other children his age while both parents continue working full time.

"The Inclusion Support team has been incredible," Erin says. "They're the reason that both me and my husband are able to work full-time jobs and Lane is able to go to school with any other typically developing child his age."

That is the heart of Le Bonheur's Inclusion Support

program: helping children with medical needs and developmental delays participate in typical childcare settings — and helping their families continue working, going to school and building their lives. As the only Inclusion Support program of its kind in the country, Le Bonheur is making a difference for children and their families every day.

Bridging the Gap

Inclusion Support serves children from birth through age 5 who have exceptional medical or developmental needs and require additional support to participate safely in a childcare setting.

The program receives referrals from physicians, therapists and other providers. Once a child is referred, the Inclusion Support team connects with the family and childcare center, reviews the child's medical and developmental needs, obtains necessary health and immunization records, and provides individualized education and training.

The team may also teach childcare staff how to manage a G-tube, administer medication, respond to seizures or allergies, use an EpiPen, safely provide thickened liquids or support a child with developmental or behavioral needs.

And the support doesn't stop after training.

Carey Wright, RN, Inclusion Support nurse case manager, describes her role as a "collaborator of care" rather than traditional hospital case management.

"In my role I can serve as a triage person, bridging the gap between the community and the hospital," she says.

If a child is having an issue with a G-tube, for example, Carey may be able to troubleshoot the concern directly with clinic staff rather than requiring the parent to make an

appointment, take time off work and bring the child to the hospital.

“After we teach all the things involved in a child’s care, we stay connected and retain those relationships,” says Carey. “Even once you’re signed off to do this independently, we’re still there providing support.”

That ongoing relationship is one of the program’s greatest strengths. Inclusion Support is not simply teaching a childcare center how to perform a medical task or behavioral accommodation. It’s creating a network of people who feel capable of caring for a child — and giving the family confidence that their child is safe.

And, incredibly, there is no charge. The program is provided at no cost to families or childcare centers, including the education and training provided to caregivers.

A Different Kind of Therapy

While school-based therapy supports a child’s developmental needs in and after kindergarten, Inclusion Support helps create the conditions that allow a young child with medical or developmental needs to participate in a typical childcare environment in the first place. The team often collaborates with pediatricians, outpatient therapists and Tennessee Early Intervention System providers while helping childcare staff at centers throughout Shelby County safely support children throughout the day.

For Erin, who is a physical therapist, this integration of services and school is critical.

“Having hands-on support for Lane at school is great because he’s getting the same education as his peers,” she says.

Le Bonheur Community Health Educator Shondra Rias has been providing onsite support for 2-year-old Lane Harris since he began attending a childcare center at 6 months old.



Two-year-old Lane Harris is thriving in his childcare environment, where hands-on support and educator training from Le Bonheur Inclusion Support help him participate alongside his peers.



“He’s also able to be around other kids his age, and that’s so important for development, as well.”

That benefit extends beyond the children receiving Inclusion Support, as Shondra and other program staff have experienced firsthand.

“Whether I’m doing a G-tube feeding, assisting with fine motor skills or helping a child engage in activities during free play, other children will often ask questions,” says Shondra. “I always answer their questions and talk openly about what I’m doing, so they become accustomed to it and it becomes routine.”

Carey remembers a new student at one of the program sites asking about another child’s G-tube feeding.

“I said, ‘This is her milk. It goes straight to her tummy because she can’t swallow it like you do,’” Carey recalls. “The child said, ‘So she can’t talk?’ And I said, ‘No, she can talk—just ask her a question’.”

The new student did exactly that, asking the other child her name and exchanging introductions before walking away.

These moments can be simple, but they matter. Children learn that differences are part of everyday life. They learn to ask questions. They learn how to help a friend who needs a little extra support. Inclusion, in other words, becomes part of the classroom culture.

When “Possible” Changes

Lane’s story illustrates what inclusive support can mean for one family.

Lane’s early days were medically complicated. After a normal pregnancy and delivery, he developed apnea, or a temporary lapse in breathing, at just 6 days old. His oxygen levels dropped dramatically, and Lane spent more than a week in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Le Bonheur. He was diagnosed with hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy, or HIE, and later developed significant swallowing difficulties. At 6 weeks old, after failing a swallow study, Lane received a G-tube.

The months that followed brought frequent respiratory illnesses, sleep apnea, nighttime oxygen and other complications.

Still, Lane started daycare at 6 months old.

Over the next two years, Inclusion Support helped him move through two infant rooms and two toddler rooms,

with Shondra training each new group of caregivers.

Then, this spring, another challenge arrived.

Lane fractured his femur and spent five weeks in a spica cast, a specialized body cast to immobilize his legs so they could heal, which required him to use a stroller and adaptive seating. The childcare center was understandably hesitant about how to safely manage his needs under these new conditions.

Lane's parents, who both work full-time, were also in the middle of a move and Erin was 22 weeks pregnant with twins. Without hesitating, the Inclusion Support team stepped in.

"For the three weeks he was at school with the cast on, we were there the entire time," says Melissa Smith, Inclusion Support supervisor. "We told the family, 'Whatever it takes for him to stay in the classroom, we will be there.'"

Team members rotated in so that someone was present from the time Lane's parents dropped him off until they picked him up. Erin remembers Shondra's support during that period as a key reason her family could keep moving forward.

"We are the traveling inclusion team. We go wherever we are needed to help support children and families."

Melissa Smith, Supervisor,
Le Bonheur Inclusion Support

"She made sure everything was ready to go, even providing an in-service for the teachers," Erin says. "Shondra was there every day to make sure Lane had what he needed, that the daycare could still support his needs."

For Shondra, the reason was simple.

"Both parents work, and all they wanted was for their



Shondra Rias, a community health educator with Le Bonheur Inclusion Support, provides a wide range of developmental and medical support to young children at childcare centers across Shelby County.

son to be able to continue attending school," she says. "So that's just what I do."

A Program Born from Possibility

Today, a team of seven — including five facilitators, a nurse case manager and the program supervisor — serves approximately 350 children each year across Shelby County, up from 200 children in early 2024. And from July 2025 through June 2026 alone, the team trained 972 individuals at childcare centers across the county.

Those numbers represent an extraordinary evolution for a program that was the unexpected answer to a difficult question: What happens to children who need additional support when the hospital's onsite childcare center closes?

Inclusion Support grew out of Le Bonheur Early Intervention and Development, or LEAD, where team members including Shondra, Melissa, Carey and LEAD director Jill Rogers once worked directly in an integrated childcare setting on the hospital's main campus.

Jill still remembers the uncertainty when the onsite childcare center closed in 2009.

"It was such a sad day when we closed our onsite daycare because we thought, 'Who is going to take care of



"You can have your normal life, you can keep your job, you can keep your hours and schedule. This team is there to help make sure your child's safe and fed and in an environment where they're able to thrive. You don't have to stay home and you don't have to feel like your child's missing out on these things other children are doing."

Erin Harris, mom to 2-year-old Lane

these children?" she says.

Ever resilient, the team found another way forward.

"When we were in the hospital, we were classroom teachers, and our classroom was integrated with typically developing children as well as children with special needs," says Shondra. "But with Inclusion Support, we're able to service more children, support more families and extend our reach to more childcare centers."

By bringing Le Bonheur's expertise into childcare centers throughout the community — and training caregivers to eventually provide that support independently — the program could reach far more children than a single onsite center ever could.

"What's very rewarding about it for me is seeing parents be able to go back to work and school and know that their child is well cared for while they're doing what they need to do to provide for their family," says Jill.

The Ripple Effect

Every day, Le Bonheur's Inclusion Support team quietly changes lives for the better without fanfare or ceremony.

A child can go to daycare.

A parent can show up for work.

A teacher who was once afraid of a G-tube learns how to provide a feeding safely.

A class learns that a child who does something differently is still a friend.

And when a child becomes more self-sufficient, the Inclusion Support team moves on to the next child, the next family and the next childcare center.

"We are the traveling inclusion team," Melissa says. "We go wherever we are needed to help support children and families."

That commitment and reach matters deeply in a

community where many families already face significant barriers to childcare, employment and education.

For some parents, Inclusion Support can mean the difference between remaining in the workforce and having to leave a job. For others, it can mean continuing an education or simply knowing that their child has a safe place to learn, play and grow alongside peers.

And for children, it can mean something that sounds deceptively simple: being a kid, in community with other kids.

Growing, One Milestone at a Time

Today, Lane is out of his cast and walking again. He continues to receive speech and occupational therapy, and he is reaching new milestones on his own timeline.

Over the summer, he was preparing to begin something new at school: drinking water from a straw cup.

It's a small milestone in the context of everything Lane has overcome, but small steps and simple accommodations may be precisely the point.

The goal of Inclusion Support is not to make children just like their peers. The goal is to help remove barriers that might prevent kids from being with their peers in the first place.

Eventually, Lane will no longer need Shondra beside him every day. When that happens, the knowledge she has shared with his teachers, the confidence she has helped build and the relationships she has formed with his family and caregivers will remain.

And Shondra will take what she has learned to another classroom, another child and another family.

That's how inclusion takes root: one child, one caregiver and one newly possible ordinary day at a time.

"I want families whose children may be struggling developmentally to know that Inclusion Support is available to them," says Erin. "You can have your normal life, you can keep your job, you can keep your hours and schedule. This team is there to help make sure your child's safe and fed and in an environment where they're able to thrive. You don't have to stay home and you don't have to feel like your child's missing out on these things other children are doing. Help is available, and it's made such a difference for our family."





Goodbye Seizures

Patient travels across the country for answers

Four years, five hospitals and 1,500 miles. That's what it took for the Blalock family to get answers and relief for their son Beck's seizures.

Because of Le Bonheur, 13-year-old Beck recently celebrated being two years seizure free — a milestone his parents, Melinda and Tim, thought nearly impossible a few years ago.

In 2020, the Blalocks went to several hospitals near their home in southern California, yet each time doctors gave them the same answer — Beck's EEGs and MRI, diagnostic tests to analyze the brain, were normal.

Beck's parents were concerned as they watched their son experience seizures night after night that didn't respond to medication. Desperate for answers, Melinda researched other options, looking for a hospital where Beck could get advanced brain imaging and finally receive a diagnosis. Le Bonheur's



In Beck's free time, he enjoys painting pottery, including pieces he has made for some of his neurology care team members, baking and spending time with his service dog, Jackson.



Neuroscience Institute repeatedly appeared on Melinda's computer screen as the best place to take Beck.

The Blalocks traveled from their California home to Memphis in 2021 so that Beck could receive the testing he needed at Le Bonheur. At the Neuroscience Institute, Beck underwent advanced brain imaging, including a magnetoencephalography (MEG) scan, and the results showed he was experiencing seizures deep in his brain that the previous EEG scans were not sensitive enough to detect.

At long last, the Blalock family had the answers they were desperately seeking as Beck's Le Bonheur neurologists and neurosurgeons discovered he experienced focal motor seizures.

"When we came to Le Bonheur, we felt heard from day one," Melinda said.

"Beck's care team got right to work to find an answer as to what was causing his seizures. In just three days, we learned more about Beck's brain than in the prior four years."

Beck underwent surgery to have a vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) implanted which helps prevent seizures and resulted in immediate improvement. Two years later at age 10, Beck had a responsive neurostimulation device (RNS) implanted in his brain to monitor and further prevent seizure activity.

"The RNS changed our lives forever. Beck has been seizure free since shortly after it was implanted

A responsive neurostimulation device (RNS) is implanted in Beck's brain to monitor and further prevent seizure activity. Le Bonheur Chief of Pediatric Neurology Jim Wheless, MD, provides expert care to Beck.



Beck Blalock and his family (l-r: Tim Blalock, Bauer Blalock, Beck Blalock, Melinda Blalock) travel to Le Bonheur from their southern California home so Beck can receive expert care.

in his brain,” Melinda said. “Every night, we wand Beck’s RNS device through his skull, which uploads data to the cloud so that Le Bonheur physicians can monitor the RNS 1,500 miles away in Memphis.”

Today, Beck is thriving and he recently started the seventh grade. He stays very active with musical theater, tap and voice lessons, along with ongoing therapies.

Beck has been able to significantly reduce the volume of medication he takes, and because he has remained seizure free for two years, he travels to Le Bonheur for check-up appointments and device management of both his VNS and RNS every six months.

When the Blalocks are at Le Bonheur, they enjoy spending time with other epilepsy families who have

“When we came to Le Bonheur, we felt heard from day one. Beck’s care team got right to work to find an answer as to what was causing his seizures. In just three days, we learned more about Beck’s brain than in the prior four years.”

Melinda Blalock, Beck’s mom

become an extended support system. According to Melinda, they often coordinate appointments and trips with them when possible. Beck also loves to participate in programming at Le Bonheur’s Seacrest Studio, a state-of-the-art broadcast



media center for patients and families in the hospital, and has hosted his own interactive show for fellow patients on several occasions.

“Words cannot express the gratitude we feel for Le Bonheur. Beck’s seizure control feels nothing short of a miracle,” Melinda said. “He has experienced tremendous growth in his development since the placement of his RNS device, learning math, writing and even reading — something we were unsure we would see.”



Beck loves to participate in programming at Le Bonheur’s Seacrest Studio, a state-of-the-art broadcast media center for patients and families in the hospital, and has hosted his own interactive show for fellow patients on several occasions.

Beck recently celebrated being two years seizure free. He returns to Le Bonheur every six months for check-ups with his neurology care team.



A Mississippi Miracle

Baby born at 25 weeks receives care at Le Bonheur

One pound and small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, that was the size of Sylvie Stevens when she was born at 25 weeks gestation.

Sylvie's mom, Presley Stevens, went for a routine anatomy scan at 22 weeks pregnant excited to see the daughter she was expecting to welcome in September. Presley couldn't wait to see her daughter's profile on the ultrasound screen and



Newborn Sylvie Stevens was born at 25 weeks gestation and weighed only 1 lb.

hear the beat of her growing heart. Having experienced a pregnancy loss shortly before this pregnancy, the Stevens family were overjoyed to have a baby girl on the way.

Their excitement quickly turned to devastation. It was at that doctor's appointment when Presley and her husband, Nolan, learned that their daughter was severely growth restricted and would not likely survive outside the womb. The Stevenses were heartbroken by the news and Presley wept as she struggled to wrap her head around their new reality.



Sylvie Stevens receives expert care in Le Bonheur's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, the region's only Level IV unit which is the highest level of care.

Three weeks later, Presley experienced a dangerous spike in her blood pressure. To give her daughter a fighting chance at survival, Presley needed to deliver her baby immediately.

Doctors rushed to deliver Sylvie who spent the first two weeks of her life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at her birth hospital. Sylvie needed more intensive care and resources so she was transported to Le Bonheur to receive the highest level of care in the region's only Level IV NICU.

Sylvie was diagnosed with a level-four brain bleed and a build-up of fluid on the brain called hydrocephalus. In order to help her breathe, doctors placed her on a ventilator. Currently, Sylvie is in an isolette to keep her warm as her body learns how to regulate its own body temperature.

"Sylvie is truly a miracle," Presley said. "She is a fighter and it means so much that we have access to this amazing care for her at Le Bonheur."

Sylvie continues to improve each day and as she grows, she will eventually need a shunt placed in her brain to help drain the fluid.

"When we are not able to be at the hospital, Sylvie's care team has done a great job explaining everything in detail to us over the phone. Every nurse in the NICU has been so positive and made us feel comfortable."

Presley Stevens, Sylvie's mom



Presley and Nolan Stevens of Hickory Flat, Miss., with their newborn.

Presley and Nolan travel the 90 minutes from Le Bonheur back to their Hickory Flat, Miss., home to care for their 5-year-old son and when they are unable to be at Sylvie's bedside, they are grateful for the updates they receive from her care team.

"When we are not able to be at the hospital, Sylvie's care team has done a great job explaining everything in detail to us over the phone," Presley said. "Every nurse in the NICU has been so positive and made us feel comfortable."

While the Stevens family know Sylvie has a long road ahead before she is able to go home for the first time, they

also know Le Bonheur will be there every step of the way to care for any health needs that arise.

Thanks to your support, a few years ago Le Bonheur expanded its NICU and added more beds so that babies like Sylvie have access to the care and resources they need to not only survive but thrive. 



Sylvie Stevens was born at 25 weeks gestation and could fit in the palm of an adult's hand.



Charting a Course

*One physician. Hundreds of future physicians.
Countless children helped.*



According to Erin Lawrence, MD, (pictured at left), Elisha McCoy, MD, (pictured at right) teaches residents like herself both effectively and efficiently.

Great pediatricians don't just appear. Someone taught them. Someone showed them how to explain a frightening diagnosis to anxious parents. Someone taught them when to trust their instincts, when to ask for help and when to step in. Someone showed them that medicine isn't just about treating disease — it's about caring for people.

For many pediatric residents at Le Bonheur, that teacher is Elisha McCoy, MD.

As division chief of Pediatric Hospital Medicine and a professor at UT Health Sciences, McCoy spends her days caring for hospitalized children. But her impact extends well beyond the patients she sees herself. Every resident she teaches will someday care for thousands of children over the course of a career.

That ripple effect of teaching is one of the most meaningful ways donor support touches children and families across the Mid-South and beyond. That support is needed in pediatrics now more than ever, McCoy said.

"Pediatrics is in a vulnerable position right now," McCoy said. "It's a subspecialty that is not getting a ton of respect. But it is incredibly

important. So, right now, what we need are people who see the value of pediatrics.”

A Childhood Shaped by Medicine

Long before she became division chief of Pediatric Hospital Medicine at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital, McCoy was a little girl with a curved spine.

After McCoy’s pediatrician first noticed this, that little girl from Clarksville, Tenn., was referred to Monroe Carrell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt in Nashville. She spent a good deal of time at Vanderbilt undergoing treatment for scoliosis.

“I’ve literally been seeing specialty physicians since I was a year of age,” McCoy said.

Those visits — and the care she received there — left a lasting impression. So, too, did the gravity of her doctors’ advice. Her parents didn’t know anything about scoliosis or medicine, she said, so they leaned on the advice they were given by McCoy’s doctors, especially her surgeon.

“If you would have asked me — my entire life growing up — I was going to be an orthopedic surgeon because of course I was,” McCoy said.

Even though the surgeon part of her dream faded, “There was never a doubt in my mind that I was going to be a doctor.”

Four Tries to a Hard Road

For many physicians, medical school follows a predictable timeline. For McCoy, it did not. After graduating from college, she applied to medical school four times before she was accepted.

During those years, McCoy worked at Church Health, helping uninsured and underserved patients navigate the healthcare system. The experience showed her how difficult it can be for families to obtain medications, find resources and access care.

The rejections were discouraging, but they did not change her goal. When she was finally accepted to the UT Health Sciences, she carried that perseverance with her through medical school.

Today, she shares that experience with students facing rejection or self-doubt.

“If you want it, it’s worth it,” McCoy said. “The persistence is worth it. The perseverance is worth it.”



Elisha McCoy, MD, trains the next generation of pediatricians at Le Bonheur, the same place where she completed her residency.

Discovering Her Calling

McCoy’s path to Le Bonheur and her specialties weren’t straight lines either.

During residency, McCoy discovered a love for caring for hospitalized patients and became increasingly interested in academic medicine. She enjoyed teaching learners, working with teams and solving complex clinical problems.

Another turn further clarified her path. Through a grant-funded quality and safety program at the Veteran’s Administration (VA), McCoy became a chief. The opportunity gave her the chance to test the waters of what it looks like to be an academic and work with students and residents.

“As a chief resident, we do schedules, we do teaching, we get to be an attending,” she said. “But I was also able to get basic training in quality improvement and patient safety that I could bring back to the residents I was working with.”

McCoy realized she wanted a career that blended patient care, teaching and leadership. Today, she gets to do all three at Le Bonheur.

Teaching Between Patients

On some mornings at Le Bonheur, resident teams may see two dozen hospitalized children before lunch. Rounds move quickly. Questions come constantly. Families need answers. Somewhere in the middle of all that, McCoy teaches.

Pediatric resident Erin Lawrence, MD, remembers being intimidated the first time she worked with McCoy.

“Dr. McCoy is clearly very knowledgeable,” Lawrence said. “But I very quickly figured out there’s no reason to be intimidated. She is absolutely the best person that I’ve worked with in terms of teaching residents.”

Amid those whirlwind rounds in the hospital, Lawrence said McCoy has developed a remarkable ability to teach without slowing patient care.

“Training the next generation of physicians at my training institution is special because I have had some of the same experiences that these trainees are having, so I can relate in some ways. But it is also exciting to see how the training program is stronger and grown in ways that allow more opportunities for the residents than when I was in their shoes.”

Elisha McCoy, MD, division chief of Le Bonheur Pediatric Hospital Medicine

“Dr. McCoy somehow manages to teach both effectively and efficiently,” Lawrence said. “She makes sure to work in life teaching points and small pearls that are actually extremely helpful. That’s an art that Dr. McCoy has figured out very well — being both effective and efficient.”

Just as importantly, she allows residents to lead, Lawrence said. Most conversations with families begin with the residents, she said. McCoy watches and listens. Only when they need help does she step in.

“If things get a little dicey, or we’re uncomfortable, all we have to do is give her a look like, ‘Hey, I don’t know how to answer this question,’ and she automatically steps in to support us,” Lawrence said.

For McCoy, that’s intentional. Residents don’t become confident physicians by watching. They become confident physicians by doing.

“I can watch a family member’s facial expression change or their body posture will change — something will happen,” McCoy said. “The residents who can pick up on that and adjust will succeed.”

Supporting a Culture of Learning

Every year, another class of residents finishes training at Le Bonheur. Some stay in the Mid-South, others return to small towns across Tennessee or build careers in children’s hospitals around the country, yet each carries forward lessons learned from physicians who invested in them. McCoy hopes their time at Le Bonheur has given them the confidence to think critically, care deeply and keep learning long after they leave the residency program.

For Le Bonheur, that culture of learning reaches far beyond the walls of the hospital. Every resident who trains here will one day care for thousands of children and families over the course of a career. Every lesson passed from teacher

to student has the potential to improve countless lives. Dr. McCoy knows this better than most, returning to teach at Le Bonheur where so many others taught her.

“Training the next generation of physicians at my training institution is special because I have had some of the same experiences that these trainees are having, so I can relate in some ways,” McCoy said. “But it is also exciting to see how the training program is stronger and grown in ways that allow more opportunities for the residents than when I was in their shoes.”



Elisha McCoy, MD, division chief of Le Bonheur Pediatric Hospital Medicine, and Erin Lawrence, MD, Le Bonheur pediatric resident, round on a patient at Le Bonheur.



Hope at the Genetic Level

Le Bonheur doctor publishes a breakthrough for Dravet syndrome

Le Bonheur Children's Hospital Chief of Pediatric Neurology James Wheless, MD, and his team are part of a groundbreaking clinical trial, published as the lead article in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, that targets the genetic root cause of Dravet syndrome, a rare and devastating form of epilepsy that begins in early childhood.

"It was the first time ever in the treatment of epilepsy that something like this had been done," Wheless said. "To look at not only efficacy — is it going to help their seizures

— but are they better in other ways such as cognition and behavior. That's what made this study unique from a practical standpoint."

In the past 35 years, Wheless has served as an investigator on nearly every major epilepsy treatment brought to market — more than 180 trials in total. This depth of experience, combined with the expertise of a Level 4 comprehensive epilepsy program, led Le Bonheur to be selected as one of only a handful of sites nationwide to participate in the recent Dravet syndrome trial.

Across multiple centers including Le Bonheur, 81 patients were enrolled in phase 1 and 2a studies to test the safety and efficacy of the drug zorevunersen. Results showed that patients



Le Bonheur Children's Hospital Chief of Pediatric Neurology Jame Wheless, MD, recently had a groundbreaking clinical trial on Dravet syndrome published in The New England Journal of Medicine.



Wheless treats patients with Dravet syndrome, which is a severe genetic epilepsy, at Le Bonheur.

saw a dramatic 58.82% to 90.91% drop in seizures with only mild to moderate adverse events.

Understanding Dravet Syndrome

Dravet syndrome is a severe genetic epilepsy that typically appears in infancy. Children experience frequent, prolonged seizures — often resistant to standard medications — along with developmental delays, speech challenges, behavioral issues and problems with motor skills. Even when seizures are controlled, many children experience a decline in cognitive and functional abilities.

For years, treatment has focused on managing those symptoms, primarily the seizures. But advances in genetics have transformed how doctors understand the disease. Researchers can now identify the specific gene mutations responsible, part of a rapidly growing list of hundreds of genetic causes of epilepsy.

For Dravet syndrome, this is the SCN1A gene. While

most people have two copies of the gene, children with Dravet syndrome have just one normal copy. This gene controls production of a protein needed to move sodium within brain cells that is critical for proper brain function.

“With the realization that we could test and say, ‘This is what’s causing your epilepsy,’ that led to the next obvious thing that you could possibly ask me as a parent of that child: ‘What can we do about it?’” said Wheless.

A New Kind of Treatment

The new therapy tested by the Le Bonheur team, called zorevunersen, now offers a promising answer to that question.

The therapy tested in the recent trial uses an antisense oligonucleotides (ASOs), a class of treatments designed to target ribonucleic acid (RNA) and modify how disease-related genes are expressed, helping to correct the underlying biology of the disease.

For Dravet syndrome, zorevunersen works by increasing the production of the functioning SCN1A gene to produce as much as twice the amount of protein to restore protein levels to a more normal functional amount. The drug is delivered directly to the spinal fluid so that it can reach the brain.

The trial marked a major milestone: a first-in-human study of this kind of gene-targeting therapy specifically for epilepsy — and one conducted in children, where the disease does its most significant damage.

The Results

The children enrolled in the study were already receiving the best available treatments. Even so, they continued to experience frequent seizures, often daily to weekly. Patients in the study had to have at least one seizure per week to qualify to participate. In total, more than 80 children and adolescents with Dravet syndrome participated in the early phases of the trial, with most continuing into long-term follow-up.

Each patient visit can involve up to 15 to 20 people — physicians, nurses, study coordinators, pharmacists, neurosurgeons, anesthesiologists, radiologists and regulatory specialists. Delivering the therapy requires precision and coordination, from preparing the medication to safely administering it into the spinal fluid.

Depending on the study phase, patients received one to three initial doses of the therapy, with many continuing on a maintenance schedule of repeat dosing every four months.

The initial phase of the trial focused on safety, gradually increasing doses while closely monitoring patients. It was safe — no serious side effects. The trial was cleared to continue.

It worked.

By the second injection, families told Wheless they had never experienced that level of improvement before. Seizures were reduced or stopped on their own. This had never happened before, they told Wheless. They had always had to go to the emergency department for medicine to stop the seizures once they began.

“There were some kids early on that we could tell, wow, this is going to be a gamechanger,” Wheless said.

“With the realization that we could test and say, ‘This is what’s causing your epilepsy,’ that led to the next obvious thing that you could possibly ask me as a parent of that child: ‘What can we do about it?’”

James Wheless, MD,
Le Bonheur Chief of Pediatric Neurology

The study results showed that seizures were reduced by anywhere from 58.82% to 90.91%, a dramatic improvement for patients already on optimized care.

Even more striking were the changes beyond seizures. Historically, children with Dravet syndrome experience a gradual decline in areas like

communication, cognition and motor function. In this trial, that pattern was not only stopped — it reversed.

“For some of these kids, they were literally saying the first couple of words to their parents they’d ever heard them say,” Wheless said.

Handwriting improved. Cognition improved. Children who may have appeared uncoordinated kicking a soccer ball now looked smooth, no longer standing out from their peers. For families, the changes were life-altering.

Looking Ahead

The success of the initial trial has already led to the next phase: a larger study aimed at securing broader approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and expanding access to more patients.

But the implications reach far beyond Dravet syndrome. Wheless believes this approach represents the beginning of a broader transformation in neurology — one driven by the ability to identify and target genetic causes of disease.

“The technology that’s allowing us to diagnose genetically based epilepsies is really exploding,” said Wheless. “That’s really going to skyrocket over the next five years across all of neurology, not just epilepsy, but to other disorders in the past that we thought we couldn’t treat.”

Instead of managing symptoms, doctors may be able to change the trajectory of a disease — preserving development, improving quality of life and reducing the long-term burden on families. But there is more work to do.

“We still have kids that need better treatments,” Wheless said.

But for families who have spent years navigating the uncertainty of Dravet syndrome, the Le Bonheur team has produced something that once seemed out of reach: hope. 



The Best Place to Work

Le Bonheur nurses celebrate milestone years of service

With more than 130 years of combined nursing experience, three Le Bonheur Associates exemplify what it means to care for others with compassion.

Sabrina Para, RN, Kristy Traver, RN, and Dawn Billings, RN, all took different paths in their nursing careers, but each of them has devoted their lives to helping people during some of the scariest and most vulnerable times of their lives.

Innovating Better Patient Care

When Sabrina Para was in nursing school, she did a rotation at Le Bonheur and discovered her passion for working with kids. She applied for a job and was initially hired to work in an infant care unit called Pediatric Acute Observation (PAO).

Para eventually made the transition to the Postanesthesia Care Unit and spent years helping patients recover as they woke up from surgery. During her time in the surgery department, Para observed some patients have their surgeries canceled as surgeons or anesthesiologists deemed them not approved for surgery.

Ever the innovator, Para was one of the first nurses that organized and developed the Early Admission Surgical Express (EASE) program for surgery patients which was later renamed the preoperative screening department. Prior to surgery, patient families receive a call from a preoperative screening nurse to ensure they have followed the instructions from their care team and are ready for surgery. They also confirm that Le Bonheur has an accurate medical and anesthesia history for the patient so the hospital is able to provide safe care.

“I love putting the puzzle together to make sure we have everything on the patient’s chart ready to go for surgery so there won’t be any concerns or problems when they show

up at the hospital,” Para said. “There is a lot that goes into getting a patient and their family ready for surgery and the surgeons and anesthesiologists appreciate the work we do in advance to ensure everything goes smoothly.”

Para was also instrumental in moving patient forms and medical records from paper to electronic. She embraced



Sabrina Para, RN, celebrated 50 years of service at Le Bonheur this year. She has spent most of her career in charge of pre-surgical screening.

“Reflecting on my career, I’m most proud of how we implemented electronic charting to streamline patient care and better care for them in the process. We have come a long way as a hospital from a small four floor building to a big beautiful new space complete with wonderful artwork and state-of-the-art technology.”

Sabrina Para, RN, Le Bonheur pre-surgical screening

electronic charting and provided feedback to help make the system work better for pediatric patients.

“In 2020, we still had so many patient forms on paper and we transitioned them to be electronic,” Para said. “This allows us to look back on past surgeries and diagnostic tests which provides more information, a better continuity of care as well as safer and more quality care.”

As she celebrates a remarkable fiftieth year as a Le Bonheur Associate, Para’s words of wisdom to nurses are to get involved and be proactive, and help the hospital improve by identifying areas that can be better.

“Reflecting on my career, I’m most proud of how we implemented electronic charting to streamline patient care and better care for them in the process,” Para said. “We have come a long way as a hospital from a small four floor building to a big beautiful new space complete with wonderful artwork and state-of-the-art technology.”

Calm in the Storm

Car accidents. Severe illness. Gunshot wounds. Kristy Traver has seen it all during her 40 years in Le Bonheur’s Emergency Department (ED). When Traver began her first Le Bonheur shift in 1986, she was immediately drawn to quickly thinking on her feet and responding to the needs of the children in her care.

“When I first started, I worked nights in the emergency department. My very first day out of orientation, I was the nurse in charge of the emergency department with two other nurses who had just graduated,” Traver said. “The ED was very small. There were no cell phones or computers, the hospital had paper charts and an overhead paging system to contact doctors and Associates.”

While a lot has changed over the years, from enhanced technology to a much larger ED with significantly more patient beds, Traver’s passion for

taking care of children and families during some of the toughest moments of their lives has not.

“I am at Le Bonheur because I like my patients, my coworkers and doctors. I like what I do and I’m always learning and growing,” Traver said. “In my role you see people at their worst, you are taking care of not just the child but the whole family, so it is important for me to be able to help families navigate the situation.”

As an ED Charge Nurse, Traver directs her fellow nurses on the floor, prioritizing patients and ensuring they have the resources they need. Traver says it’s imperative that she remains calm and flexible to help her staff succeed.

Traver enjoys that the ED provides the opportunity to do a little bit of everything — no two days are alike and she is able to care for kids of all ages with a variety of medical concerns. Families count on Traver to be prepared to care for children from infancy to adulthood and treat whatever illness or injury they walk through the ED doors with.

When Traver’s husband had a heart attack, she learned even more about walking in the shoes of a patient and their family, making her an even more compassionate and understanding nurse. With her daughter set to graduate nursing school later this year, helping others is a family value that runs deep.

“The advice I give to my daughter is ‘you be the nurse you want to work next to and help your fellow nurses when they need help,’” Traver said. “Be a sponge, look things up and ask questions, those are the qualities that make for a great nurse.”



Kristy Traver, RN, has worked at Le Bonheur for more than 40 years. She is a charge nurse in the emergency department where she directs her team as they handle complex care for kids.



Jason Frischer, MD, joined Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and UT Health Sciences last year as Surgeon-in-Chief and chief of Pediatric Surgery.

Leading the Next Era of Surgical Excellence

Jason Frischer, MD, always aspired to pursue medicine. His interest began through a mentor relationship with his own pediatrician, and, as a seventh grader, he wrote an essay about wanting to study pediatric cardiology, which he worked toward through high school, college and into his early medical career. However, a fateful softball game pivoted him away from cardiology and towards pediatric surgery.

"My path to pediatric surgery began serendipitously on a softball field in Prospect Park in Brooklyn," Frischer recalled. "While playing third base in a student-faculty softball game for medical school orientation, a junior faculty member also playing third base invited me to join him in the operating room for an appendectomy. I thought it was the coolest thing in the world; I still remember it today."

Last year, Frischer joined Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and UT Health Sciences as Surgeon-in-Chief and chief of

Pediatric Surgery, bringing more than 17 years of experience from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and a strong belief in the power of lifelong, coordinated, compassionate care.

After graduating from SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Frischer completed post-graduate training in general and pediatric surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital and New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center. He took his first job at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and he developed expertise in treating complex colorectal conditions.

At Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Frischer fell in love with the specialization because of his ability to "take care of patients for the better part of a lifetime."

"I have patients I met when they were tiny and are now nurses, married, parents and I still take care of them today," said Frischer.

In his new role at Le Bonheur, he plans to unite teams across

disciplines to deliver comprehensive care for children with complex surgical needs.

"I am a big believer in multidisciplinary care and more specifically an interdisciplinary approach. When you build teams around coordination, they become leaders in the field," said Frischer.

At Le Bonheur, Frischer sees an opportunity to unite surgical excellence with the personal, lifelong relationships that have defined his career. With his surgical expertise, global perspective, and dedication to serving patients, Frischer is prepared to guide Le Bonheur's surgical program into its next era.

"I want to be a surgical leader for the patients and families of Memphis, Tennessee, the Mid-South and the whole Southeast and Southern region," said Frischer. "I anticipate within the next few years we will be the leaders of surgical care for that area."



Bridging the Gap

For more than 35 years, Dawn Billings worked in the recovery room of Methodist North and University hospitals. In 2023, an opportunity to work with kids materialized closer to home. Le Bonheur was seeking a school nurse supervisor in Tipton County to oversee 13 full-time nurses that care for 10,000 students across 13 schools. Billings was hired and has flourished in this new chapter in her career.

Le Bonheur's school nurse program helps bridge the access gap for kids to receive health care and provides the resources they need to stay in school. According to Billings, without school nurses there would be increased absenteeism and learning loss as students would miss valuable time in the classroom to address medical concerns.

Not only do the school nurses under Billings' supervision help manage routine childhood illness, bumps and bruises, they are also able to assist with more serious medical needs and provide resources to families.

"We have kids with chronic medical conditions that require care, like diabetic students who need insulin shots and asthmatic students who need help with their inhalers," Billings said. "We are able to provide that assistance, and we



For more than 40 years, Dawn Billings, RN, has been an Associate at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare. Since 2023, Billings has worked for Le Bonheur as the School Nurse Supervisor in Tipton County.

hear from parents that they feel better knowing there is a trained nurse in the building."

When a student receives a new medical diagnosis, Billings and her team are able to facilitate a referral to a specialist at Le Bonheur or assist with navigating the necessary care.

Not only do parents and students like having a robust school nurse program in Tipton County, schoolteachers and administrators are grateful for the resource, too.

For Billings, helping children and families is what's kept her at Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare (MLH) for 40 years and counting.

"It's always been about the mission, the patients and patient care that has kept me in nursing at MLH," Billings said. ^



Dawn Billings worked for over 35 years in the recovery room of Methodist North and University hospitals.

With Heartfelt Thanks

We are so thankful to donors like you who give from the heart.

Thanks to you, we are always here when children and families need us most. We are honored to take care of kids like Benton.

A few hours after his birth, Benton was taken to Le Bonheur to undergo surgery. In his first week of life, Benton underwent seven surgeries to repair his intestines. Born with gastroschisis — a birth defect where a baby is born with their organs outside of their body — Benton spent 153 days in Le Bonheur's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Once Benton underwent a successful surgery to close his abdomen, he was able to go home. His parents, Jordan and Danny, were in constant contact with the gastrointestinal team at Le Bonheur to update them on their son's progress, and at 7 months old, Benton was able to wean off of IV nutrition.

When Benton had complications with his digestive system, he was able to see a Le Bonheur doctor closer to home at the Le Bonheur Outpatient Center in Jackson, Tenn.

"We are grateful to be able to rely on the same people who have cared for Benton since his birth," Jordan said. "Being able to go to Jackson and receive care from Le Bonheur is amazing. I don't have to take an entire day off work to go to Memphis, and Benton's entire medical history is already there."

Now 10 years old, Benton loves to hunt, fish and play baseball — all the typical kid activities that his parents weren't sure he would be able to do when he was a baby.



Scan the QR code to see a list of all the donors who made a difference for kids this year. Don't be left out! Give today and add your name to next year's list.



Comforting, supportive and filled with kindness

A place where they can stay together



FedExFamilyHouse

For months, Breanna and Hayden Erwin carried a weight no parents should have to bear.

At just 5 years old, their daughter, Rikki Leigh, was diagnosed with hypermotor orbitofrontal epilepsy, a rare form of epilepsy that causes frequent nighttime seizures. Rikki Leigh was experiencing more than 30 seizures a night. What followed was a season filled with medical appointments, treatment plans, sleepless nights and constant uncertainty.

Every night brought new worries. Every doctor's appointment brought added information to process. Every decision felt important.

Like any parents facing a serious diagnosis, Breanna and Hayden wanted answers and the best possible care for their daughter. During their search, they were referred to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, so they began their trip from their home in Freeport, Fla., to Memphis, Tenn., for specialized treatment.

What the Erwins did not know at the time was that they would find more than expert medical care; they would find a community.

For families traveling to Le Bonheur, the journey involves much more than packing a suitcase. Families arrive carrying fear, exhaustion and the emotional strain that comes with watching a child face a serious medical condition, in addition to being away from the familiarity of their own home.

When the Erwins arrived in Memphis, they found comfort

and support at FedExFamilyHouse, free lodging for out-of-town families receiving care at Le Bonheur.

"Our experience at FedExFamilyHouse was truly indescribable," Breanna shared. "For the first time in a long time, we felt like we could exhale."

Those moments of relief became some of the most meaningful parts of their journey. Between appointments and treatments, Rikki Leigh and her sister, Stevie, found opportunities to simply be kids. Whether it was enjoying special goodies and toys back at FedExFamilyHouse, spending time together as a family or taking a trip to the Memphis Zoo, those small moments provided a sense of normalcy during a season that often felt anything but normal.

For Breanna and Hayden, having a place where they could stay together as a family made all the difference.

"More than anything, we finally belonged somewhere and felt cared for. There was comfort that if we needed

something as simple as a toothbrush, a blow dryer or even just guidance, it was only a few steps away," said Breanna. "All of our stays at FedExFamilyHouse have been the same: comforting, supportive and filled with kindness."

Their close proximity to Le Bonheur eased the burden of travel and allowed the family to remain together throughout Rikki Leigh's treatment journey. It also provided something that



Outside FedExFamilyHouse, sisters Rikki Leigh and Stevie found moments of joy together, even in the midst of an uncertain journey.

"More than anything, we finally belonged somewhere and felt cared for. There was comfort that if we needed something as simple as a toothbrush, a blow dryer or even just guidance, it was only a few steps away. All of our stays at FedExFamilyHouse have been the same: comforting, supportive and filled with kindness."

-Breanna Erwin, Rikki Leigh's mom

FedExFamilyHouse is more than a place to stay; it's a place where families can simply be together.

can be difficult to find during a medical crisis — a sense of comfort, stability and belonging.

Just as meaningful was the care they received at Le Bonheur's



Sometimes healing looks like sisters sharing a smile between appointments. Rikki Leigh and Stevie enjoy the playroom at FedExFamilyHouse.

Neuroscience Institute. After searching for answers across multiple states, the Erwins found a team that gave them hope when they thought they were running out of options. More than expert

medical care, they found providers at Le Bonheur who, according to Breanna, "treated Rikki Leigh as if she were their own daughter," making the entire family feel seen, supported and informed every step of the way.

While Rikki Leigh's medical journey continues, so does the support that surrounds her. The Erwins still travel to Memphis every few months for specialized treatment and follow-up care at Le Bonheur. Those trips feel different now. They know where they'll stay, and they know they'll be welcomed. But most of all, they know they are surrounded by people who care.

Today, Rikki Leigh is 10 years old and experiencing less than five seizures a night, giving the Erwin family renewed hope for the future. When the Erwins return to Memphis, they return to more than a hospital, they return to a place where they find comfort during one of the most difficult seasons of their lives — a place where they can stay together, focus on Rikki Leigh, and, for the first time in a long time, simply exhale.

Because of the generosity that sustains FedExFamilyHouse, families like the Erwins continue to find comfort, community and a place to call home while their child receives care from Le Bonheur.

Join us for the 2026 FedExFamilyHouse 5K Run/Walk



Recent Events



FedExFamilyHouse Gala

The FedExFamilyHouse Gala serves as the cornerstone of raising operational funds for FedExFamilyHouse and advances our mission of providing free lodging to families traveling from around the world to Memphis, Tenn., for treatment at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. This year's Gala raised \$1.6 million. Save the date for next year's FedExFamilyHouse Gala on April 3, 2027.

Le Bon Appétit

On June 6, 25 award-winning chefs and mixologists from Memphis and across the country came together to create an incredible culinary experience for more than 1,000 attendees. Hosted by Chef Kelly English and the Le Bonheur Club, guests enjoyed unique and creative delicacies, specialty cocktails, live custom art and danced the night away to the soulful sounds of Rebirth Brass Band. For the second year, the party turned up the heat during the Le Bon Appétit After Party hosted by Chefs Sarah Cai and Arturo Leighton and overall has raised more than \$1 million for specialized medical equipment, child-specific programming and technology for Le Bonheur.



Upcoming Event

Gurus of Golf

The 18th annual Gurus of Golf raised \$389,515, bringing the 18-year event total to more than \$4.7 million. The event brought the best teaching pros in the world to spend a day working with players as they raised money to support Le Bonheur.

Le Bonheur parents Alex and Jenay Boggs shared their son Samson's inspiring Le Bonheur story with golfers. Samson spent 72 days in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and today he is thriving!



Enchanted Forest

The Enchanted Forest Festival of Trees begins each year with a stroll through the magical Festival of Trees that fills Memphis' Pink Palace Mezzanine with beautifully decorated trees. Once inside the exhibit, children of all ages are charmed by the animated characters set in the magical snowy setting of The Enchanted Forest. In 2025, the event raised \$241,000 for Le Bonheur Children's! Join us for this year's Enchanted Forest Festival of Trees from Nov. 21 through Dec. 27. Visit lebonheur.org/enchantedforest for more details. A perfect holiday tradition for the whole family to enjoy!



Giving Back Through Generations



Growing up in rural Arkansas, Mary Virginia Rogers knew she wanted to help people by pursuing a career in nursing. She came to Memphis to train and completed rotations at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital.

Mary Virginia had no idea that more than 80 years later, her great grandniece, Ginny Rose Williams, would require the expert care only Le Bonheur can provide. Ginny Rose was born with Trisomy 14 mosaic and was transferred from her birth hospital to Le Bonheur's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) where she spent six weeks. After being discharged, Ginny Rose continued to receive routine care at Le Bonheur Pediatrics as well as undergoing therapy treatments and GI follow-up care.

According to Ginny Rose's grandmother, Mary Williams, Mary Virginia knew that Ginny Rose would need extensive medical care so she set up a trust to ensure that Ginny Rose's needs would be taken care of. "Ginny Rose couldn't speak but her actions translated her responses," Mary Williams said. "Between her therapist and teachers, she developed her own language so they fully understood what she was saying. This special language extended to her baby brother who was Ginny Rose's best friend."

When Ginny Rose passed away in 2020, the balance of her trust was designated for Le Bonheur, as Mary Virginia wanted to give back to the hospital that cared for her great grandniece.

"Health care was always important to Mary Virginia, she knew that if kids had access to the care they needed, they had a better opportunity to live longer and have a better life," Mary Williams said. "Kids can't control what they are born with and it is important for people who can assist and donate to do so in order to help children and their families."

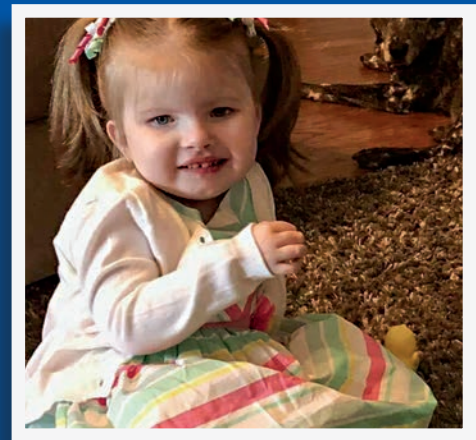
In 2025, Mary Virginia Rogers passed away and left a transformational gift to Le Bonheur through her trust which will allow Le Bonheur to continue caring for children like Ginny Rose. On March 30, 2026, a NICU room in Le Bonheur's expanded NICU was dedicated in honor of the gift from Mary Virginia Rogers and in celebration of the life of Ginny Rose Williams.

"The plaque in the NICU means so much to our family," Mary Williams said. "It shows the generosity of my aunt, Mary Virginia Rogers, and that she cared enough to help the hospital in so many ways."

For information about naming Le Bonheur as a beneficiary of your will or trust, please contact Cathy Wilson, J.D., CFRE, CAP® at **901-287-5575** or **cathy.wilson2@lebonheur.org**.



A room in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit has been dedicated in honor of Mary Virginia Rogers and her great grandniece, Ginny Rose Williams, who received care at Le Bonheur. Pictured above outside the NICU room: Mary Williams (Ginny Rose's grandmother) and Bridget and Brad Williams (Ginny Rose's parents).



Ginny Rose Williams received care at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, including six weeks in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Le Bonheur
Children's Hospital

Address Service Requested



Save these dates to participate in the Le Bonheur Pumpkin Run 5K & Family Walk!

Pumpkin Run is in its 22nd year, with events to be held in Memphis, Tenn., Tupelo, Miss., and Jackson, Tenn.

Participate in all three for a special award. Virtual options are also available.

There will be a post-race family friendly party with kids' costume contest, food and entertainment at each event.



Jackson, Tenn. – Saturday, Oct. 3
Tupelo, Miss. – Saturday, Oct. 10
Memphis, Tenn. – Saturday, Oct. 17

Le Bonheur
PUMPKIN RUN
MEMPHIS - TUPELO - JACKSON 5K



For more details and to register, run to PumpkinRun.org.