

CHILDREN'S HEROES

“We are so deeply grateful for your generosity.”

Your support gives new life to a child like River!

Nearly every day at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, a tiny miracle takes place. A baby is born — and, each time, it changes the hearts, hopes, and futures for the families that welcome them.

For proud parents Lauren and Rick, River was their second miracle. And he was perfect. Yet, little did they realize the journey they were about to take with their newborn baby boy.

Shortly after he was born, Lauren and Rick noticed some bruising on River's back. Concerned, their doctor referred him to UPMC Children's. The diagnosis: River had Factor VII deficiency, a rare genetic disorder that affects the blood's ability to clot. It occurs in only one of 500,000

people worldwide.

But that was only the beginning.

River was having frequent, spontaneous nosebleeds and intestinal bleeding. So, his hematology team ordered more tests. At just 9 months old, River was diagnosed with a second rare bleeding disorder: Glanzmann thrombasthenia (GT). **This was literally a one-in-a-million condition.**

To have even one of these disorders is incredibly rare. But to be born with both is medically unheard of. In fact, River is believed to be the only person in the world diagnosed with both Factor VII deficiency and GT!

As River grew, doctors were faced with the

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THIS MOMENT

PUT A CHILD'S FUTURE FIRST

In a single moment, everything can change for a family. When a child is suddenly injured, or when a family receives a diagnosis they never expected, your support ensures they can receive the best care available right here at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. With just nine months left in our largest-ever campaign, entitled *This Moment*, now is the time to put a child's future first. Make your gift count today.

Our bold vision is to raise \$200 million to bolster four key priorities:

- Advancing **research** to unlock the care and cures of tomorrow.
- Delivering an unparalleled **patient experience** to heal the whole child.
- Fostering **clinical excellence** and delivering exceptional care to every child, every time.
- Investing in **community health** to give each child the chance to thrive.

By making a gift today, you can be a part of the lifesaving care, treatment, and research that help a child thrive. Visit givetochildrens.org or **scan the QR code** to learn more about the campaign.



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difficult task of creating a treatment plan. And as his condition became increasingly life-threatening, River's parents and doctors determined a bone marrow transplant (BMT) would be the best course of action. BMT is a procedure that replaces diseased bone marrow with healthy tissue. It's the only known cure for GT. And it worked!

Lauren and Rick were thrilled, but River's Factor VII remained an issue.

He developed a complication — a type of anemia that was very difficult to treat. And it meant countless hospital visits and prolonged admissions, multiple infections, pulmonary emboli, and frequent blood transfusions — sometimes two or more transfusions per day just to keep him alive.

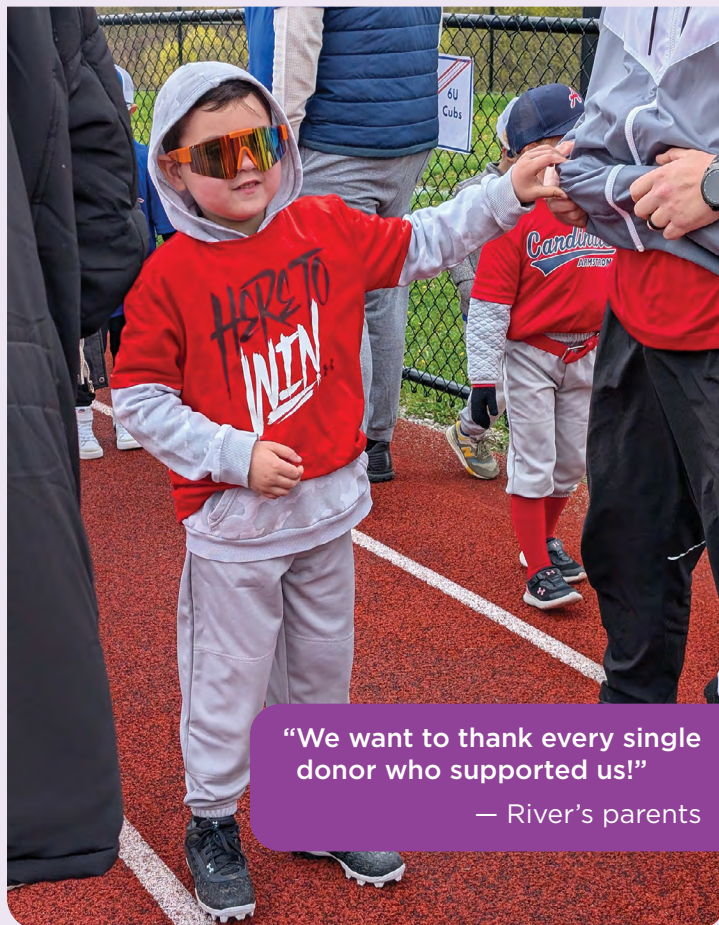
River spent his fifth birthday in the pediatric ICU. Lauren and Rick were terrified of losing their youngest child.

After multiple therapies proved unsuccessful, doctors started River on an experimental drug treatment plan. To his family's relief, it also worked!

River received his last blood transfusion and is currently in remission!

River is now 6 years old and thriving! Although he still takes multiple medications every day, he visits UPMC Children's only for outpatient care. And his parents say he is back to being a regular kid!

"We want to thank every single donor who supported us," say Lauren and Rick. "Without



your help, we wouldn't have been able to stay by our son's side in the hospital or keep up with our bills. We wouldn't have had the peace of mind of knowing our next meal was covered. **We are so deeply grateful for your generosity and selflessness.**

A photograph of a baby sitting in a hospital bed. The baby is wearing a white floral-patterned onesie and has a medical bandage on her right arm. She is sitting on a colorful, multi-colored crocheted blanket. To her right is a large stuffed penguin. The bed has white metal railings. In the background, a remote control and some medical equipment are visible on a table.

Your support leads to new treatments for patients like Stevie.

You Help Give Children a Fighting Chance

At This Moment, Stevie's hope grows with your help!

Stevie was born a seemingly healthy baby girl. But when she was 2 months old, her parents, Breigh and Michael, noticed she was having intestinal problems. Doctors initially suspected a dairy allergy, but her medical problems continued.

When Stevie began daycare, she was constantly sick. At her 9-month check-up, she hadn't gained weight, even though she'd been eating well. Her pediatrician diagnosed her with "failure to thrive."

A month later, Stevie was back in the ER with symptoms of norovirus. She was admitted at UPMC Children's for dehydration, and her medical team began taking a closer look at her history.

They found that Stevie had Crohn's disease, a type of chronic inflammatory bowel illness that causes swelling and irritation of the digestive tract, potentially impacting growth and development for patients as young as Stevie.

Doctors shared that Stevie had one of the most severe cases of Crohn's they had seen in a patient so young.

The news came as a shock. But it also brought clarity after 10 months of medical appointments and constant concern for Stevie's health.

Stevie underwent an emergency colectomy, a surgery to remove her colon. The operation meant Stevie would need to live with an ostomy bag, a removable pouch attached to the skin around an opening in her abdomen. But it was necessary to prevent further life-threatening complications.

Stevie's colectomy surgery was a success! And after weeks in the hospital recovering from surgery, she finally went home. **Breigh and Michael say**

their daughter is like a whole new baby post-surgery. Now 2 years old, she is strong, independent, and full of life.

Through it all, Breigh and Michael remain optimistic for her future. Groundbreaking research — and the generosity of donors like you — continue to lead to new

treatments for children and adults living with GI conditions like Crohn's.

"Donor support isn't just funding important research. It's giving kids like Stevie a chance at a future filled with health, joy, and freedom from pain," Breigh says. "Thank you for being an integral part of Stevie's journey, and for giving families like ours hope."

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— Stevie's mom, Breigh

A New Era in Heart Transplant Care

Dr. Brian Feingold, medical director of the Heart Failure and Transplantation Programs at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, has helped us achieve a research milestone in pediatric cardiology. **And it shows the direct and significant impact your generosity has on pediatric research — and saving children's lives!**

We can now use a non-invasive blood test to screen for heart transplant rejection in children.

For decades, the standard of care for a patient who received a heart transplant required lifelong biopsies. It was an invasive procedure that could be stressful, uncomfortable, and inconvenient for young patients and their families.

Now, thanks to the research of Dr. Feingold and his team — **which was supported by philanthropy from generous donors like YOU** — we have entered a new era in which a simple blood test can

be used to effectively assess the health of a transplanted heart: the first of its kind to be used in the routine care of pediatric heart transplant recipients.

Together, the brightest minds in pediatrics — and the generous donors, like you, who support their work — can continue to power the advancements that can change a child's life.

Your investment in research accelerates the work of leaders like Dr. Feingold, making cutting-edge care accessible for each child who needs it.

Thank you, as always, for your commitment to children's health.



Your generosity fuels Dr. Feingold's research and helps save lives.

Give the Gift of Possibility

Make an immediate impact for the kids and families we serve through your **Donor Advised Fund**. Direct a gift now or explore the option to name UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation as a beneficiary to your account.

For more information contact: Nicole Riggleman Kelly



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My Gift to Help Critically Ill and Injured Kids

Please accept my gift of \$_____ to provide lifesaving care for critically ill and injured children.

- ☐ I have enclosed a **check** (payable to UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation).
☐ Please charge my **credit card**.

- ☐ Please contact me about naming UPMC Children's Hospital Foundation in my will, trust, or long-term financial plans.

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