



Bringing You Closer to
the Lives You Help Change

Connections

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"Jack is a different baby now!" says Ann True. "He took off developmentally after his surgeries. He's babbling more and rolling over. I can't thank Gillette enough!" This summer, Jack will have surgery at Gillette to correct his crossed eyes. It will be his fifth surgery in eight months.



"Gillette Saved My Baby"

Thanks to You, Jack's Future Is Bright!

"It was heart-wrenching to hand my baby boy to the anesthesiologist," remembers Ann True. "But through my tears, I saw her snuggle him in her arms and speak to him so sweetly — like he was family. That's how they are at Gillette. I trust them with my son's life."

They Never Expected a Problem

Jack True's life began in October 2008. His mother's prenatal tests were normal. Her pregnancy was healthy, and her delivery uncomplicated. When they left the hospital, Jack's parents had no reason to suspect that their third child would ultimately need five surgeries in his first eight months of life.

When Jack was 2 months old, however, his parents noticed that his head was misshapen. "We thought maybe it was from lying on one side too much," says True. But the family's pediatrician suspected craniosynostosis — a condition in which parts of the skull, called sutures, close prematurely. Without surgery to separate the sutures, Jack's brain wouldn't have room to grow. The resulting pressure could lead to skull deformities and brain damage.

"He Had a Seizure in My Arms"

The family soon scheduled an appointment with two of Gillette's renowned surgeons — neurosurgeon Patrick Graupman, M.D., and

craniofacial surgeon Robert Wood, M.D. Before that appointment, however, the Trues rushed Jack to the hospital with new concerns. "He had a seizure in my arms," True says. "I was terrified."

The diagnosis: hydrocephalus (excess fluid on the brain). Left untreated, hydrocephalus can cause brain damage. Graupman inserted a shunt inside Jack's brain to drain the excess fluid into his abdomen. Jack might now need lifelong monitoring and surgical revisions to his shunt.

Surgery Brings Anxiety — and Relief

In fact, Jack needed two shunt revisions before he could have surgery to correct his craniosynostosis. "It was so hard to watch him go through the surgeries, but he felt so good once the fluid was under control," True says. "His smiles were bigger and his eyes were brighter. He was a new baby!"

With his hydrocephalus under control, Jack was ready for craniosynostosis surgery in April. More complex than his shunt revisions, the surgery required a longer hospital stay. "I was a total wreck," remembers True. "Jack's doctors and nurses were such a comfort. They truly make unbearable situations bearable."

"They Wrapped Him in Love"

Jack spent his first day after surgery in Gillette's Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. "They prepare you as much as possible, but it's heartbreaking to see your baby in intensive care," True remembers. "Once I got past the tubes and bandages,

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You Invest in the Future

Gillette Inspires Patient to Become a Surgeon

Travis Spangler says he'll never forget the experience. "The child's mother started crying and gave me a big hug," Spangler, 18, remembers. "In that moment, I had no doubt that I wanted to become a doctor."

Spangler was shadowing his own surgeon, Stephen Sundberg, M.D., who had just told a couple that amputation was their child's best course of treatment. "I comforted them with my experience as a double amputee," Spangler says. "I wanted to be proof that their child could accomplish anything."

The Best Surgeon Was at Gillette

Spangler's parents say they could have used similar comforting 18 years ago. Spangler was born with a rare condition in which the feet and legs don't develop properly. "I was in shock," remembers Julie Spangler. "I spent a lot of time wondering why this had happened."

The Spanglers flew to Delaware to get an opinion from a renowned orthopaedic specialist. "He said that the best surgeon to treat Travis was Stephen Sundberg at Gillette," says Julie Spangler with a laugh. "We flew across the country to find out that the best place for our son was in our own community!"

Stephen Sundberg, M.D., had some advice on how Travis Spangler (pictured) should spend his last summer before college. "He told me to just relax and have some fun!" says Spangler, who spent his previous summer conducting research related to cancer drugs.



"What Else Can I Do?"

Spangler was just 1 when Sundberg amputated his legs below the knee. Specialists at Gillette then crafted artificial limbs for him. He received a new set every year to keep up with his growth.

"Could I play every sport like some of the other kids?" he says. "No. But any time I faced a barrier, I asked, 'What else can I do?'" He found plenty of options — including, at 10, becoming the nation's first double amputee to earn a first-degree black belt in karate.

He's Bound for Medical School

Spangler applied the same level of determination to academics. One of his earliest goals was to follow in the footsteps of his surgeon and mentor. "I think I was 5 when I told my parents that I wanted to be a surgeon," he remembers. "I said that I was going to help kids, just like Dr. Sundberg."

Spangler will attend Brown University in the fall, as one of only a few freshmen already accepted into the school's prestigious medical program. "God gave me a unique pathway in life," Spangler says. "When you grow up with a disability, you naturally develop empathy for people who need help. I want to bring that empathy to my work."

Are You Inspired by Travis Spangler?

Read some of Spangler's writings about growing up with a disability — including his admission essay to Brown University — at www.gillettechildrens.org/travisspangler.

Treat Yourself to a Miracle!



When do summer and blizzards go together?

When they support kids at Gillette!

On **Thursday, Aug. 13, Dairy Queen will host Miracle Treat Day**. During the day-long event, participating Dairy Queen locations in Minnesota and western Wisconsin donate Blizzard proceeds to Gillette through Children's Miracle Network. For more information or to find a participating Dairy Queen near you, visit www.miracletreatday.com.

Make the Connection!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Build a Better World for Children!

Your gifts can help us build a better world for children who have some of the most complex needs in pediatric medicine. As a Gillette supporter, you'll be among an exceptional group of people committed to ensuring that all children receive the health care they need and deserve.

What You Can Do Today!

- **Donate online:** You'll make a difference today! Visit www.gillettechildrens.org/donate
- **Sign up for e-Connections:** You'll receive inspiring patient stories via e-mail. Visit www.gillettechildrens.org/newsletter
- **Get a Gillette Visa Platinum Rewards Card:** You'll support Gillette every time you shop! After you sign up and make your first purchase, a \$50 donation will go to Gillette at no additional cost to you. Cards feature artwork by Gillette patients. Visit www.gillettechildrens.org/creditcard
- **Find us on Facebook and other social media sites:** You'll connect with other Gillette supporters online. Join Gillette's new — and growing — presence on three popular social media sites: Facebook, YouTube and Wikipedia. Visit www.gillettechildrens.org/socialmedia

Connections is a quarterly publication of Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. Direct comments and questions to Andrew Olsen at 651-229-1766 or foundation@gillettechildrens.com.

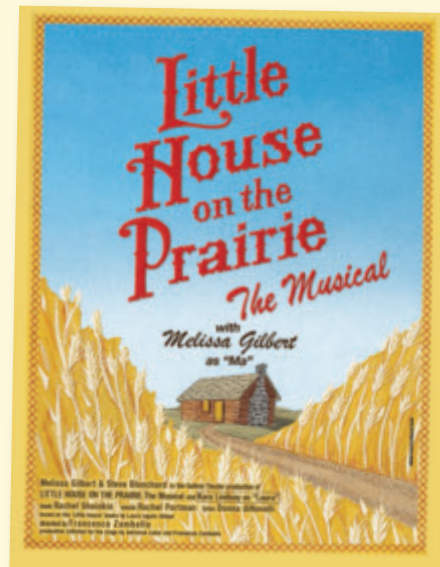
25th Annual Benefit You're Invited!

Friends of Gillette invites you to attend its 25th annual benefit, featuring *Little House on the Prairie – The Musical*. The event takes place on **Sunday, Oct. 25**, at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul. Ticket prices start at \$150 and include a preshow reception and silent auction at the RiverCentre. The reception begins at 3:30 p.m., and the show starts at 6 p.m.



Photo: ©Michael Daniel, 2008

Steve Blanchard as Charles "Pa" Ingalls and Melissa Gilbert as Caroline "Ma" Ingalls



Your ticket purchase funds life-changing care for Gillette patients. Over the past 25 years, Friends of Gillette has raised more than \$3 million to help Gillette provide under-reimbursed services and care for uninsured children. For information, or to reserve your seats, contact Judy Johnson at 651-229-1740 or visit us online at www.gillettechildrens.org/friends.

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though, I noticed that Jack was wrapped in a soft blanket covered in cars and trucks." Gillette volunteers make the blankets as gifts for babies and other patients recovering from surgery.

"They wrapped him in love," True says. "Everyone at Gillette — from the doctors and nurses to the volunteers — love my child as if he's their own. I don't have the words to describe the comfort that gives me."

Their Story Is Their Gift

This summer, Jack will have another surgery to correct his crossed eyes, which resulted from excess pressure on his brain. True says that, although the past eight months have been difficult, she feels an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

"Gillette saved my baby," she says. "Every time I think about that, I start crying. I want people to know what Gillette did for us. Telling our story is one small way that we can give back."

Help Us Change More Lives!

More children need us. More families choose us. That's why our surgical cases have increased 135 percent over the past 10 years. Our surgery space, however, has remained unchanged. Today, we have only two operating rooms large enough to accommodate complex surgeries. We need at least six. With your help, we plan to build a new surgery suite that can deliver the world-class care that our patients need — when they need it. Learn how you can help by visiting www.gillettechildrens.org/surgery.



A Word From Our President

Margaret Perryman

Build a Better World for Children

They are moments that inspire me. A girl takes her first steps after rhizotomy surgery. A baby smiles after a cleft lip and palate repair. A boy practices tying his shoes with his new prosthetic hand. Such events force me to step back and truly appreciate what we do at Gillette.

Every day, and in powerful ways, we rebuild children's bodies. They are bodies affected by developmental disorders, injured in accidents or ravaged by infections. But our surgeons have the power to make transformations. In doing so, we change the lives of children for the better — easing their pain, improving their sense of self-worth, and bringing newfound abilities and independence.

Our surgical expertise has made us the premier pediatric specialty hospital in the Midwest, attracting patients from all Minnesota counties, 41 states and 16 countries. Demand is so high that our surgical cases have increased 135 percent over the past 10 years. As demand has grown, so has the complexity of our procedures. For example, our surgeons perform multiple orthopaedic corrections during one surgery — drastically reducing the number of hospitalizations a child must endure.

Despite such increases in surgical demand and complexity, however, our surgical space has remained unchanged. Today, we have only two operating rooms large enough to accommodate the intricate surgeries needed by more and more children in our community.

We're therefore planning an expansion that includes six state-of-the-art operating rooms and improved family features. Before we lost \$10 million in state funding, we had hoped to begin construction this fall. Now, we must delay construction until late in 2010.

As we consider ways to trim costs, your generous gift will help us include the technology and features our patients need and deserve. To learn more, visit www.gilletechildrens.org/surgery or call Dan Moore, capital campaign associate, at 651-325-2335. Please join us in building a better world for children!

Why we Give

Local Musician Inspired by Gillette

"They say there are glass-half-full people and glass-half-empty people," muses David Allen. "Well, I used to be a glass-broken kind of guy. That changed after our experience at Gillette."

A Baby Changes Everything

Allen had been working as a musician when he and his wife, Kimberly, had their first child. Baby Alexandra (Lexi) quickly became the center of the couple's world. But the joys of parenthood also came with challenges.

"By the time she was 5 months old, we noticed that her head always hung to the side — like it was stuck or too heavy," Allen remembers.

Lexi was diagnosed with torticollis — a condition in which the muscles on one side of the neck shorten and cause the head to tilt. Because Lexi couldn't move her head freely, she developed a noticeable flat spot on the back of her head. Allen brought Lexi to Gillette for weekly physical therapy. She also wore a Gillette CranioCap® orthosis for several months. The device — which looks like a helmet — helps to reshape the skull.

"I Often Felt Guilty"

Allen says Lexi's experience pales in comparison to what many children go through. "At Gillette, I saw kids who were struggling to take a few steps or tie their shoes — things that you and I take for granted," he remembers. "I often felt guilty that my child's condition could be so easily treated."

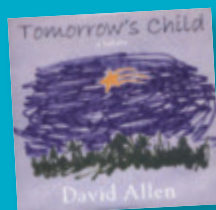
Allen became inspired to use his musical talents to give back to Gillette. He put together a children's music CD titled *Tomorrow's Child, A Lullaby*. He donates \$3 from every purchase to Gillette. He and Lexi also have represented Gillette at several Children's Miracle Network events. Most recently, Allen set up a Gillette personal fundraising page to solicit support from his family and friends.

We Owe It to Children

Allen says he's now driven to do whatever he can to help children. "Children count on adults to fix whatever needs to be fixed — whether it's something as simple as a toy or as complex as their brain," he says. "We owe that to them."



"Helping children is an investment in our future," says David Allen (with his wife, Kimberly, and children, Lexi and Jonathan). "What better way to pay it forward?"



Get Your Copy Today!

David Allen donates \$3 from every purchase of *Tomorrow's Child, A Lullaby* to Gillette. Visit www.tomorrowschildcd.com to listen to tracks and purchase a copy for just \$9.99. Your purchase brings life-changing care to children at Gillette!