

Bringing you closer to the
lives you help change

Fall 2019



Your Generosity at Work for Families



Nicole Leinonen, mother to Ella, says she'll never forget the phone call that changed her life. "Every time I think of that phone call from Gillette telling me I qualified for some financial assistance, I get emotional. I'm amazed at how generous people are," Nicole says. "The Gillette Assistance Program (GAP) means I can focus on Ella and her needs. I don't have to be so stressed worrying about how, as a single parent, I can pay for her care."

At Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, we're committed to providing affordable medical care to our patients. A team of financial experts at Gillette works with families to find ways to help pay their medical bills. The Gillette Assistance Program is an application-based program that helps families manage the costs of high deductibles or high copayments for medical care. "Our wonderful Gillette employees work with our families every day and want to help lift any financial burdens," says Ashley Burch, Gillette manager of Charge Integrity.

"When we can take some pressure off of a family dealing with their child's health issue—that just makes our day!"
—Ashley Burch, manager of Charge Integrity

Ella's primary doctor referred her to Gillette in 2017. She saw many specialists and went through rounds of medical tests before Gillette doctors discovered Ella had a tethered spinal cord and a rare genetic syndrome. In the midst of Ella's diagnosis, Nicole was suddenly laid off from the job she had for 21 years. She lost her medical insurance and faced medical bills for Ella's care.

"I knew Gillette was the best place for Ella and she was getting excellent care," Nicole says. "I worked with Gillette to get on a payment plan to pay my bills. One day when I was making a



payment online, a message came up on my computer and it gave me a number to call for some financial assistance. I thought, 'I'm not sure the program is meant for someone like me,' she adds.

"Life can change so quickly, so when someone is there to help financially during a stressful and emotional time, it's so appreciated," says Nicole Leinonen, mother to 13-year-old Ella.

"I called and spoke to a super nice person at Gillette, and she encouraged me to apply to the GAP program. I sent over some paperwork using my computer. The very next day she called back and said, 'Nicole, I have very good news.' That's when I found out we qualified for help. I was so overwhelmed and grateful that I cried. I could barely speak on the phone," Nicole recalls.

"Thanks to the generous support of people who care, we're able to help even more families," Burch reports. "In 2018 we approved 186 families to get assistance through GAP. In the first six months of 2019, we've already helped 236 people get enrolled in GAP."

Your generous support ensures kids like Ella get the life-changing care they need. Please return the enclosed envelope or visit gillettechildrens.org/fallconnections to make a gift.

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See our Tribute List:
gillettechildrens.org/tribute

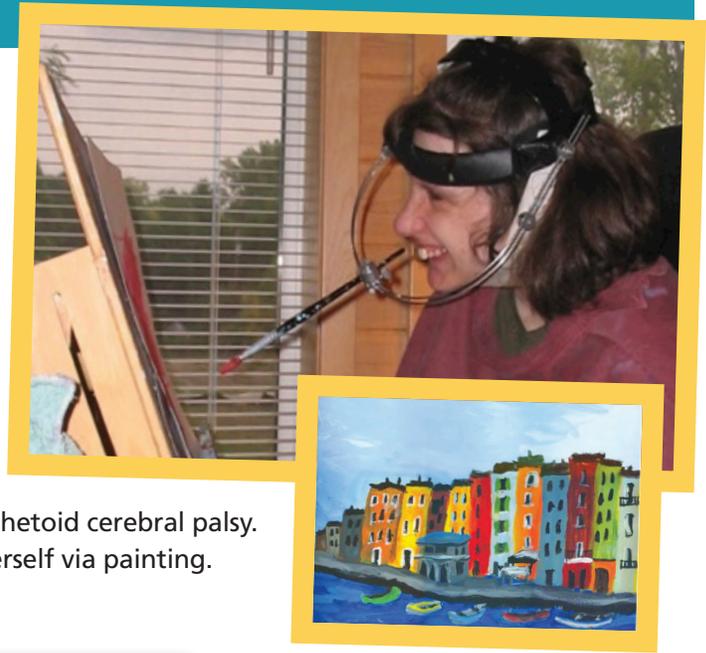
Gillette Makes Headlines

People around the state and country are talking about Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare and the patients we serve who are improving our community. Here is some recent coverage highlighting our providers, patients and advocacy.



Artist and Gillette patient Kari Wagner's painting and personal story were featured in the *Star Tribune*. Wagner's artwork is being shown at the Cambria gallery in downtown

Minneapolis. A lack of oxygen at birth left her with severe athetoid cerebral palsy. She communicates with the help of a tablet and expresses herself via painting.



Gillette patients teamed up with professional water skiers from the Shakopee-Prior Lake Shockwaves Water Ski Club on August 13 to have a blast doing adaptive water skiing.

Several media organizations, including the *Star Tribune* newspaper, covered this inspiring event.



Gillette's collaboration with the Bakken Museum for the new "Personal Prostheses" exhibit was highlighted during a Fox 9 television segment. Gillette prosthetist Michelle Hall, MS, CPO, LPO, FAAOP (D) and patient Peter Winslow were both interviewed for the piece. Winslow was born without most of his limbs, and Hall crafted a prosthetic arm so he could play the trombone. The exhibit will be on display at the Bakken Museum in Minneapolis until at least the end of the year.



To read more about these stories and other Gillette happenings, visit our Facebook page at [gillette.mn/news](https://www.facebook.com/gillette.mn/news)

Helping Gillette One Cup of Lemonade at a Time

For the past four years, Joe, his family and his personal care assistant (PCA) Bill Aberg have hosted a very popular lemonade stand and donated the proceeds from their sales to Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare.

Joe's been a patient at Gillette since he was 3 years old. That's when Gillette doctors diagnosed him with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. His level of cerebral palsy means all four of his limbs are affected and he has difficulty speaking. Gillette specialists make sure he has the best tools to be as independent as possible, including a power wheelchair and an alternative and augmentative communication device that runs on his iPad.

This year, Joe and his lemonade stand crew more than doubled their total sales from last year. The money is used to buy gas cards for Gillette families who have to travel to get the care they need.

Joe says he feels lucky to live so close to Gillette's campus in St. Paul and he wants to be sure ALL kids can have access to great care.



Help Joe ensure all kids have access to great care. Please donate by returning the enclosed envelope or visiting gillettechildrens.org/fallconnections

Thanks for Sweet Success on DQ Miracle Treat Day

The signature red spoons were lifted and there were smiles all around as this year's Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day raised a lot of money for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals (CMNH) and Gillette.

It's the 35th anniversary of this fun event. On Miracle Treat Day, \$1 or more from every Blizzard® Treat sold at participating DQ locations is donated to CMN Hospitals. Minnesota's CMN Hospital is Gillette! All of the Miracle Treat Day funds raised in our region stays in our community to help local kids.

A sincere thanks to the Dairy Queen franchisees, employees and ice cream fans for making this year a success.



Remembering a True Friend of Gillette



This June, we said goodbye to a shining light of our community, a generous benefactor and a true Friend of Gillette. Alexandra McCarthy Bjorklund was one of the founding members of the Friends of Gillette, a long-standing volunteer organization that supports our mission of Gillette and advocates for our kids. She leaves a legacy of generosity and caring.

Alexandra McCarthy Bjorklund Her nephew David Nicholson and his wife Barbara are Gillette parents who first brought their young daughter, Britta, to be seen at Gillette because she was born with special health care needs related to spina bifida. Barbara, who went on to become a Friends of Gillette co-founder, remembers how her mother-in-law, Pondie Nicholson Johnson, and Bjorklund (“Aunt Alex”) had marveled at Barbara and David’s ability to take care of young Britta. She wondered how they would manage caring for this tiny child who had so many needs. Barbara told them, “We have family, and we have Gillette – they are like family for us, too.” So began this family’s deep connection and support for Gillette.

“Alex, Pondie and I were so excited about raising money for Gillette,” Barbara recalls. “Alex said Gillette was ‘a gem right here in St. Paul’ and wanted to build awareness about the wonderful hospital that helped children with special health care needs right here in our back yard. She was so well connected! We had a lofty goal, but we sent invitations to that first Friends of Gillette Benefit in 1985 using the 800 names on her Christmas card list! Many of her friends and family bought tickets as a result, which ensured the success of the Benefit.” Alex and Pondie supported and recognized Gillette in many ways, including renovating family waiting areas that “provided children a place to play.”

Nicholson says everyone knew Bjorklund as a loving, warm and generous person. She came from a family with considerable means, but also with a tireless work ethic instilled in all its children. And both Alex and Pondie believed that you have to give back to your community when you’re so blessed.”

Since forming in 1985, Friends of Gillette has been a vital part of Gillette’s fundraising, influencing the donation of more than \$5.7 million through benefits, events and individual contributions, and dedicating countless hours in volunteer service to our patients and families. It’s a legacy that paves the way for so many new Friends of Gillette who lovingly invest in its future.

Mark Your Calendar!

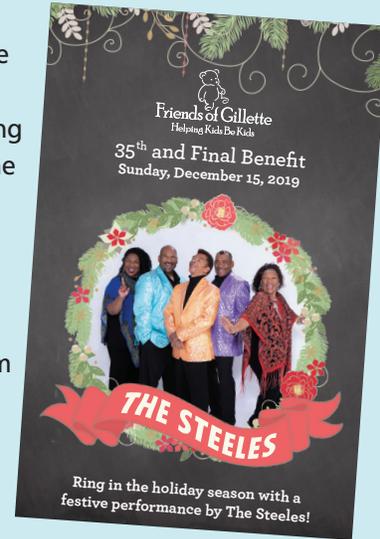
Friends of Gillette 35th and Final Benefit

Sunday, December 15, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.
Saint Paul RiverCentre

Please join the Friends of Gillette as they celebrate 35 years of making a difference in the lives of children and families!

Enjoy brunch followed by an inspiring program and live performance by The Steeles.

For tickets or more information, go to gillettechildrens.org/friends or call the Foundation at 651-229-1726.



It’s Not Too Early to Think About Year-End Giving

Every year, at Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare we dedicate our lives to helping our kids discover what they CAN achieve. In every aspect of care, everything that matters to our families, matters to us. **And every year, your support makes that possible!**

There is more than one way to give to Gillette patients. Watch your mail for our year-end giving mailing. All contributions postmarked by December 31, 2019 will count as a valuable deduction on your

2019 tax return. You can also talk to your professional advisor about donating appreciated assets or an IRA charitable distribution.

Your year-end gift will help Gillette and our patients achieve more moments of CAN.

Contact Gillette Children’s Foundation with any questions at 651-229-1726 or foundation@gillettechildrens.com



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Connections is a quarterly publication of Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare.

Direct comments and questions to 651-229-1726 or foundation@gillettechildrens.com.

Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare is named in honor of orthopedic surgeon Arthur Gillette, MD, who helped found the nation’s first hospital for children who have disabilities. We are an independent, not-for-profit children’s hospital, and our organization has no affiliation with the Gillette Company or the Gillette brand of personal care products.

Connect With Us!

