

LEGACY OF CARE



LEXINGTON SHRINERS MEDICAL CENTER,
IN A NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY, REMAINS COMMITTED
TO THE BEST ORTHOPEDIC CARE FOR CHILDREN

By Robin Roenker / Photos by Joseph Rey Au

Emma Grace is a smiling, bubbly, active 3-year-old who can run and play exactly like other kids her age. You'd never suspect, in seeing her now, doctors initially told her mother, Morgan Hall, that Emma Grace might never walk.

But thanks to doctors and therapists at Shriners Hospitals for Children® Medical Center – Lexington, Emma Grace has graduated from using a walker and leg braces and now moves with ease. She receives ongoing, weekly occupational and physical therapy at the medical center to continue building her core strength and agility.

“She has ataxia, which means that your cerebellum is smaller than the rest of your brain, and it doesn't produce the balance that your body needs,” explained Hall. “You wouldn't necessarily know that now because Shriners Medical Center has done such a great job. Our doctors do everything they can to get patients to overcome and see no limits to their ability.”



The new Shriners benefits from proximity to the UK HealthCare Kentucky Children's Hospital.



Patient rooms eschew the typical hospital drabness.

Left, patient Emma Grace visits Lexington Shriners' EOS Imaging System, a low-dose X-ray system that is the only one of its kind in Kentucky.



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Emma Grace has been a Shriners patient for two and a half years. And Hall was so impressed at her daughter's care that, a little more than a year ago, she took on a full-time role as manager of the medical center's public relations office as a way of advancing its mission and helping other parents — like herself — who come to Shriners seeking the best possible care for their kids.

"When I pass by families in the lobby, I can go up and say, 'I've been there before. I understand what it's like to sit in that chair,' " Hall said. "As a mom, I remember my first appointment here and how nervous and lost I was. But I walked away with so many answers. They have helped Emma Grace so much, and they are continuing to help her."

Next chapter of care

In May, Lexington Shriners Medical Center officially dedicated its new, state-of-the-art, \$47-million facility off South Limestone Street, directly across from the UK HealthCare Kentucky Children's Hospital. The move from the old campus on Richmond Road to the new location closer to UK was intentional. Shriners Medical Center's physician specialists in the fields of pediatric orthopedics, anesthesia, and rehabilitation also serve on the medical staff at



A nighttime motif makes the radiology room more inviting.

the Children's Hospital, so having the two facilities connected by a pedestrian bridge underscores and strengthens a longstanding collaboration .

Still, Shriners continues to operate independently and treats patients regardless of their ability to pay. The Lexington Shriners Medical Center — one of 22 Shriners healthcare systems nationwide — specializes in treating pediatric orthopedic conditions, from scoliosis and clubfoot to bone fractures and hip and limb disorders. Its patients range in age from birth to 18, or in a few cases up to age 21, and come from throughout Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana, West Virginia, and beyond.

The move to the new facility, which, unlike the previous location, provides



Pedestrian bridges connecting Shriners Medical Center with the Children’s Hospital underscore a longtime collaboration.

surgeries strictly on an outpatient basis, has already resulted in an uptick in patients. In 2016 approximately 11,000 children and teens came to Lexington Shriners to see their physician specialist and receive related services. The new facility has the capacity to care for and treat more than 14,000 children and teens.

The new building, highlighted by modern, curved lines and bright, inviting dichroic glass windows that change from blue to pink to yellow, depending on the way the sun hits them, marks the latest chapter in Shriners’ 90-year legacy of care in Lexington. The first Shriners facility opened in 1926 and was connected to the children’s ward at Good Samaritan Hospital. The first stand-alone Shriners hospital in Lexington opened on Richmond Road in 1955, with a third hospital — the one standing today — replac-

ing it in the same location in 1988.

“The new building is a wonderful combination of a modern medical office building and an ambulatory surgery center,” said Dr. Vishwas Talwarkar, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon and one of Lexington Shriners’s core physicians. “This structure allows the Lexington Shriners Medical Center to continue to carry on and



Shriners began at Good Samaritan Hospital, then moved to a dedicated building on Richmond Road.

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making a difference



Clockwise from far left, Eric Miller, manager of pediatric orthotic and prosthetics services, fits Eunique for her brace; colorful drawings decorate the waiting area; occupational therapist Amanda Keele works with Emma Grace.



expand the mission of the Shriners Hospitals system to provide evidence-based, state-of-the-art, family-centered care as a part of a vibrant academic medical center.”

One key innovation at the new facility is its roughly \$1 million EOS Imaging System, a low-dose X-ray system that is the only one of its kind in Kentucky. The EOS allows for both 2D and 3D imaging but uses roughly 50 percent to 85 percent less radiation than standard digital radiography systems and 95 percent less radiation than a standard CT scan.

“Many of our patients have conditions that require them to have a lot of X-rays in the course of their lifetime,” explained Peggy Myers, Lexington Shriners’ radiology director. “We know that the danger from radiation is cumulative, and that radiation exposure in children, because they are still growing and developing, can do more damage than it would in an adult, so it was very important to our medical staff that we get this machine.”



making a difference



Input from the medical center's 120 staff members was key in designing the new building, said Shriners International member Jeff Sowder of Kansas, a Shriners Hospitals for Children board member who helped oversee construction of the new facility. "The entire Lexington staff was involved in the details of planning what the medical center would be when it was finished," he said. "That's a fact I'm especially proud of."

The new facility also includes a high-tech motion analysis center, where young patients' walking movements are digitally tracked and depicted in real-time via



Lexington Shriners Medical Center keeps its patients in mind with bright, children-friendly colors and motifs.

computer-generated stick figures — using the same motion-capture technology employed by Hollywood animators. The process tracks the force exerted in patients' ankles, knees, and hips as they move and offers physicians an additional tool in de-

termining the most beneficial treatment plan for each child.

"The data provides telltale markers, which we can identify, that show, for example, that a child may need a rectus transfer or a hamstring lengthening," explained



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The high-tech Motion Analysis Center allows patients' walking movements to be analyzed, as center manager Sam Augsburger does.

Sam Augsburger, manager of the Motion Analysis Center. "It used to be that a physician would watch a kid walk down the hallway and say, 'OK, we're going to do surgery A.' Then, six months later, watch her walk again and say, 'Now, we're going to do surgery B,' and then repeat that process over multiple anesthetics and interventions. This system, while it's not perfect, can help streamline that process. It provides physicians with an overall picture that says, this kid needs [procedures] A, B, C, and maybe E, and they can, potentially, do those all at once."



“

The new building is a wonderful combination of a modern medical office building and ambulatory surgery center.”

—DR. VISHWAS TALWALKAR

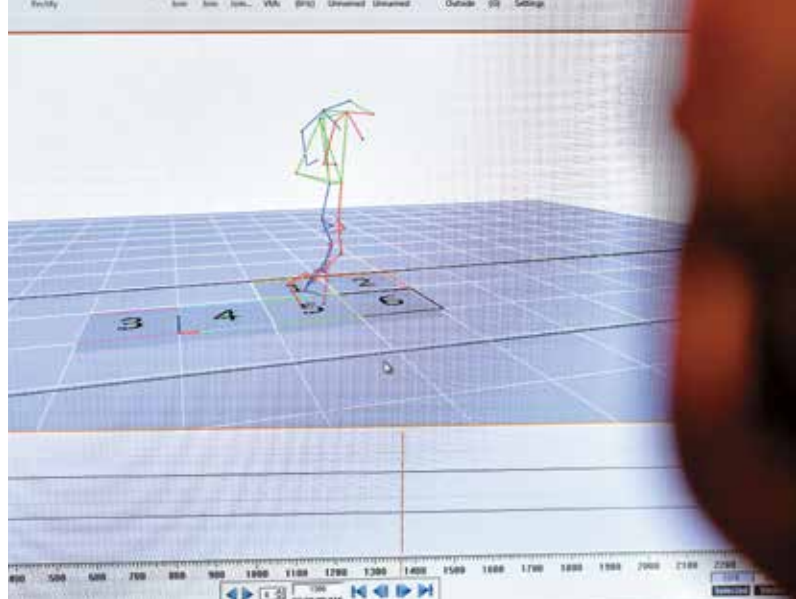


While state of the art, the building was created with children in mind. Interactive, movable magnetic art and motion-sensor art on lobby walls encourage kids to create and play while they wait for their appointments. Hallways are decorated in bright, child-friendly motifs. Walls on the third floor, where patients are fitted with casts, orthotic braces, and prosthetics, are covered with colorful animal murals — seals, flamingos, sheep, and squirrels, all at play.

During a recent visit, Eunique, an eight-year-old scoliosis patient, smiled while being fitted for a TLSO brace, which would wrap around her torso to support her back. While Eric Miller, manager of the medical center's POPS (Pediatric Orthotic and Prosthetic Services) wrapped her in fiberglass casting tape, Eu-

nique tried to decide whether to choose a repeating pattern of frogs or cats as the embedded design on her brace — an important decision, as she would need to wear it 23 out of 24 hours a day.

In addition to customizing the braces in patients' favorite patterns, the medical center's POPS division uses high-tech, 3D scanning and computer-aided design technology to scan patients'





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Top, dichroic glass windows change color, depending on the way the sun hits them; above, bright wall imagery makes this corridor inviting; right, Chris Burke works on a prosthesis.

WANT TO HELP?

To donate or to discuss opportunities for other funding support for Shriners Hospitals for Children® Medical Center – Lexington, contact director of philanthropy Dale Wallenius at (859) 268-5768 or dwallenius@shrinenet.org.



bodies — or a fiberglass cast of their bodies — in order to create orthotics and prosthetics that fit perfectly. It's another of the innovations that make Lexington Shriners Medical Center a national leader in pediatric orthopedic treatment.

Depending on their conditions, many Shriners patients receive treatment and therapy for years — sometimes their entire childhoods — all regardless of the family's ability to pay. Funds to build the new \$47 million medical center came from Shriners International; the Shriners Hospitals for Children Corporation located in Tampa, Florida; the pending sale of the Richmond Road campus; and a robust capital campaign supported by many individual and community donors.

Charged with raising \$7 million for the new building over three years' time, the Champions for Children Campaign raised \$7.5 million in community funding in just one year. "The community responded very strongly. We have over 150 named

rooms and areas, with an additional 10 to 15 rooms and areas that can still be named," said Dale Wallenius, the Lexington Shriners Medical Center's director of philanthropy.

Wallenius attributed the overwhelming community support to Shriners' long-standing reputation for high-quality care. And to thousands of success stories such as Ohio patient Ricky Vandegrift's.

The 19-year-old, born without a left fibula, had his left leg amputated at Lexington Shriners when he was 18 months old. Since then, he's walked using prosthetics, and this summer he hiked the entire Appalachian Trail on a prosthetic leg made by the POPS department of Shriners Medical Center.

Another Shriners success, 21-year-old Lexington native Moran Nickodem, penned an emotional open letter about "graduating" this May from Shriners after two decades of care — including 40 surgeries on her hips, spine, and more — which is shared on its website. "The care received over my lifetime at this facility has been nothing short of amazing. The doctors are more than just doctors to me and my family; they *are* our family," she wrote.

The close rapport between Shriners' staff and patients is one of the most rewarding things about working there, said Talwalkar. "We have the opportunity to really get to know the patients and their families. We often treat patients from newborns until they're in college, and we get to watch them grow up and mature within the Shriners family," he said. "We learn and laugh with them a lot and sometimes even cry with them a little. The opportunity to care for these unbelievably optimistic and resilient individuals is personally gratifying and professionally fulfilling for all of us." **KM**

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