

# SAINTS

# Alive!

Miracles happen because of you

## Born Again by the Ocean

### Your support saved Saqora's life

The Skenadore family was enjoying the holiday season in 2019 when Saqora (age 12 at the time) began experiencing extreme fatigue and pain in her right side. Saqora's grandmother packed her up and brought her to the HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Emergency Department (ED) to see what could be wrong.

Saqora was previously diagnosed with Diabetes, which causes fatigue and possibly thyroid issues, so Marsha hoped it was something easy to fix. But after further tests and blood work, the doctors at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital determined the pain was from her liver and they found cancer cells in her bloodstream.

The doctors explained to Marsha and the family that Saqora had Cell B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL). ALL is a form of cancer affecting the blood and bone marrow and gets worse very quickly if not treated immediately. "Had we not gone in that day, I do not know if she would have been able to be cured," said Marsha. In less than 24 hours, she had a port placed and received her first dose of chemotherapy. After a few days in the hospital, Saqora and Marsha returned home as her pain was managed and her fight against ALL had begun.

One day, Saqora came out of her bedroom, walked to a chair and sat down. "I remember asking her if she was okay," said Marsha. "But she couldn't speak or walk. All she could do was shake her head to tell me she could hear." Marsha rushed her back to HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital, where Saqora underwent an MRI to see what was happening.



"I lost it when she went to her MRI," stated Marsha, "I was scared and alone, that is when Dr. Long came and comforted me." The MRI results came back and showed Saqora suffered from neurotoxicity, a reaction to her spinal tap medications causing her to lose the ability to speak. There were several other visits to the ED due to reactions to her medication. Dr. Long had to tell the family that due to their Native American descent, Saqora was unfortunately more sensitive to the medications, so they had to try other options.

"Saqora wanted to fight. From the day she was diagnosed in that ER room, she looked right at me and said, 'Mom, I am going to fight as hard as I can,'" said Marsha. She battled difficulties with the spinal taps and mucositis, a side effect that made her mouth sore and inflamed. These problems required her to be on a medication pump for the pain and an IV to prevent dehydration.



*“She is my HERO!  
I cannot even describe how brave she is,”  
exclaimed Marsha. “She kept fighting!”*

About the staff at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital, Marsha said, “You have to put your child’s life in their hands each and every day.” The Skenadore family had nearly 180 days inpatient at the hospital and got to know the staff very well. The Child Life team would rotate in during their visits, always there to help when her port had to be accessed. They also received gift cards for gas and food to help with the financial burden treatments were causing, along with referrals to financial assistance programs, as Marsha missed 25 days of work during the first month of Saqora’s treatments. “Everyone was so supportive and made it so much easier and comforting for Saqora,” added Marsha.

Throughout her whole ordeal, Marsha would try to distract Saqora by asking her what she wanted to do when all this was over. She wanted to visit the ocean when she won her battle with cancer. After 848 days (2 years, 3 months, 27 days), she had her last spinal tap. The Skenadore family packed their bags, rented a van and headed to North Carolina. **Saqora had won!**

On April 23, 2022, Saqora’s wish came true. She took her very last chemotherapy pill on the beach looking out at the ocean. “It was amazing to see her do that. I cannot even put it into words honestly,” said Marsha, when asked about that emotional moment. **“It was like watching her being born again and I was seeing her for the very first time.”**

Because of YOUR support, children like Saqora have access to quick, excellent care; the compassionate caregivers to make a tough battle a little easier; and resources to make sure they don’t have to worry about the financial burden of their fight and can focus on what matters, their child.



## Continued Comfort Beyond Their Stay

Families of children with significant illnesses often face harsh emotional and financial strains, during and after their time at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital. Treatments and medications can be very expensive, food insecurities can cause problems at home, and days of missed work are all burdens that these families must carry, all while handling the medical needs of their child.

Caregivers at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital see firsthand just how much of an impact severe pediatric illness has on patients and their families.

Compassionate Care  
Program Going Above and Beyond  
to Assist Families

## Comfort Beyond Their Stay, Continued



However, because of **YOUR** support, the Pediatric Compassionate Care program is helping relieve these burdens. Modeled on our successful adult Compassionate Care program (also made possible by our incredible donors like YOU), this fund endeavors to help pediatric patients and their families worry less about all the “stuff” that goes along with severe pediatric illness and focus more on their loved one.

Nathan, a 3-year-old little boy, had been receiving treatments for neuroblastoma for the past two years. After several cell transplants, numerous rounds of chemotherapy, multiple surgeries and two rounds of immunotherapy, his disease relapsed, and treatment was no longer working. The decision was made to send Nathan back to the comfort of his own home -- on hospice.

The family was already feeling a financial strain, but it worsened with Nathan’s diagnosis. While at home, Nathan needed to remain sedentary. He was hooked up to IV lines and his tumors were very painful when he moved. That is when his mother, Adriana, approached his caregivers at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital about helping their family purchase a kid-sized recliner to make his last moments more comfortable. Through gifts to the Compassionate Care program, YOU eased Nathan’s pain with a brand-new recliner that was just his size.

“Nathan loved the recliner. He was happy watching his tablet in his chair all the time,” said Adriana. “It was really nice knowing he was comfortable, happy and no longer in pain.”

Because of **YOUR** support, Nathan was able to spend his last days in comfort at home before he sadly passed away in August. Because of your generosity, families of children like Nathan can focus on their child’s treatment and recovery instead of the emotional and financial hardships that they come with.

## Raise the Checkered Flag!

Back in 2018, **YOU** decided to *Join the Fight* and share in our vision for the HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital. That vision was to provide children from all around Northeast Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan their own special state-of-the-art space for care. We are happy to share with you that renovations and upgrades are complete!

The final phase of the project was the remodeling of the north wing featuring:

- Family laundry and storage rooms
- NEW mother’s room, where moms can go breastfeed or have quiet time
- Larger family lounge featuring a kitchenette, TV area, and a computer station
- NEW secure entrance to the Children’s Hospital
- Child Life team suite
- NEW teen lounge, designed to meet the specific needs of our adolescent patients

Thank YOU for choosing to Join the Fight and making HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital a safe and comfortable environment for children and their families who enter Green Bay’s **FIRST** and **ONLY** Children’s Hospital. Thank you!



New secure entrance



New family lounge

# Donor Funded Breast Milk Dispensary

## Continues to Show Tremendous Growth

The breast milk depot and dispensary at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital is the first of its kind in Northeast Wisconsin. This program serves as a site for women to donate breast milk, provides free pasteurized donated breast milk to mothers and newborn infants at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital, and offers community members the opportunity to purchase pasteurized donated breast milk for their babies.

The breast milk dispensary helps ensure that babies have access to the nutritional resources they need to survive, as breast milk improves infant growth and development, as well as strengthen their immune function by producing natural antibodies.

“Having this resource at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital is such a valuable tool to the community. All of this could not have taken place without the generous support of our donors. Thank you for keeping our community healthy,” Keegan McKeown, Manager, Women and Infant Services.

Because donors like **YOU** help fund this program, mothers at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital who are unable to produce breast milk or are experiencing a low production during their stay, have access to pasteurized donor breast milk at no cost to them. In turn ensuring that babies receive the best possible start to life.



## Inspire others to support your passion!

### Create an online fundraiser with **JustGiving™**

Creating your own personalized fundraiser for HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital is now easier than ever. JustGiving has the tools you need to create your own personalized fundraising pages and allows you to invite your friends and family to give online.

Whether you want to dedicate your birthday, celebrate a milestone, honor a loved one, create a team challenge, or host an event, you can pay it forward and support a cause close to your heart.

This is an **easy and effective** way to make a difference in the lives of children and families being cared for at **YOUR** children's hospital. Donations are directed straight to the program of your choice at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital. There is no minimum requirement or hidden fees and the page expires when you want it to.

**Need assistance or have questions? Contact Shane Starr at  
Shane.Starr@hshs.org or (920) 884-5905.**

#### **GETTING STARTED IS EASY.**

- **Just visit <https://justgiving.com/campaign/SVCH>** and click "Start Fundraising."
- **Customize your link** and you can then customize your link and **INSPIRE** your friends and family with your personal story.
- **Customize your page** with stories, photos, and videos.