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## Bringing Joy, During a Time of Pain

YOU ARE MAKING WISHES COME TRUE

In 2019, Abby Tuma was 15 years old, enjoying time with her friends and playing the sport she LOVES - volleyball. It was also the year that Abby was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a form of brain cancer, which took the game she loves away from her.

The Tuma family decided it was best to have brain surgery to remove most of the tumor. "I was so scared when my dad got me out of school and told me that I had to get surgery in a few days," said Abby. She attempted to distract herself from the reality she was living by doing puzzles, playing games, and visiting with friends.

**"I was VERY scared. I was scared I wouldn't be the 'normal' Abby again."**

Following her surgery, Abby underwent radiation for six weeks and nine cycles of chemotherapy over a span of 56 weeks right here at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital. On April 7, 2020, Abby was cancer free - but not for long.

Just over a year had passed when Abby and her family were told by her doctors that her cancer was back, and it had metastasized to her spine. This caused immense pain for her, which she was not a stranger to. "I don't think I have lived

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a day without pain since I was 10," said Abby "I've always had headaches, stomachaches, nausea, or something. It was always something that was hurting me." This time, Abby made the decision for herself to forgo the chemotherapy as she prepared to go off to college at UW-Lacrosse.

Abby moved away from home and began her first year of college and just like she was told, her tumors continued to grow and she began to lose feeling in her left leg. Shortly thereafter, she made the decision to leave college for a month and undergo more chemotherapy at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital, in hopes of slowing down the growth.

During that time, Abby signed up for a t-cell medical trial in Seattle. This trial removed cells from her body, "trained" them to fight against the cancer, and then infused them back into her body. After eight weeks, unfortunately, the trial did not work for her and she had a horrible new reality: t-cells inflamed the tumors around her spinal cord, damaging her nerves and putting her in a wheelchair.

"That was really hard," exclaimed Abby, "realizing I would never be able to do the things I loved doing was very emotional to me then, and still is today, it's just not fair." Following her t-cell trial Abby made the decision to forego any further chemotherapy as her cancer was considered incurable.

When reflecting on her cancer experience at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital, Abby has nothing but positive remarks. "It has been almost 4 years now and I have grown to love my doctors and nurses at St. Vincent's," said Abby. Her caretakers would talk to her about life and the ups and downs it can take you on, and she was able to build very close relationships over the years. "I am so thankful that I was placed with such an amazing team at St. Vincent's, I wouldn't trade them for anyone else!"

Thanks to the Pediatric Compassionate Care Fund, Abby was able to attend several Wisconsin Badger volleyball games, with her friends and family. "Being blessed with tickets to the Badger games was something I will not forget," said Abby. "I want to thank the donors for making this possible for me."

Because of **YOUR** support, patients like Abby can take a break from reality and make memories with their friends and families, which may not be an option otherwise.



## A Walk to Remember

On Oct. 15, in honor of National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, families and friends gathered at Green Isle Park in Green Bay. This event provided families who have experienced the loss of their pregnancy or infant a special opportunity to acknowledge and remember amongst family, friends and the bereavement community.

"When we come together as a community each year on Oct.15, it shows these families that they are not alone," said Keegan McKeown, Manager, Women and Infants. "There are others who have experienced this tremendous loss, but we can get through this together."

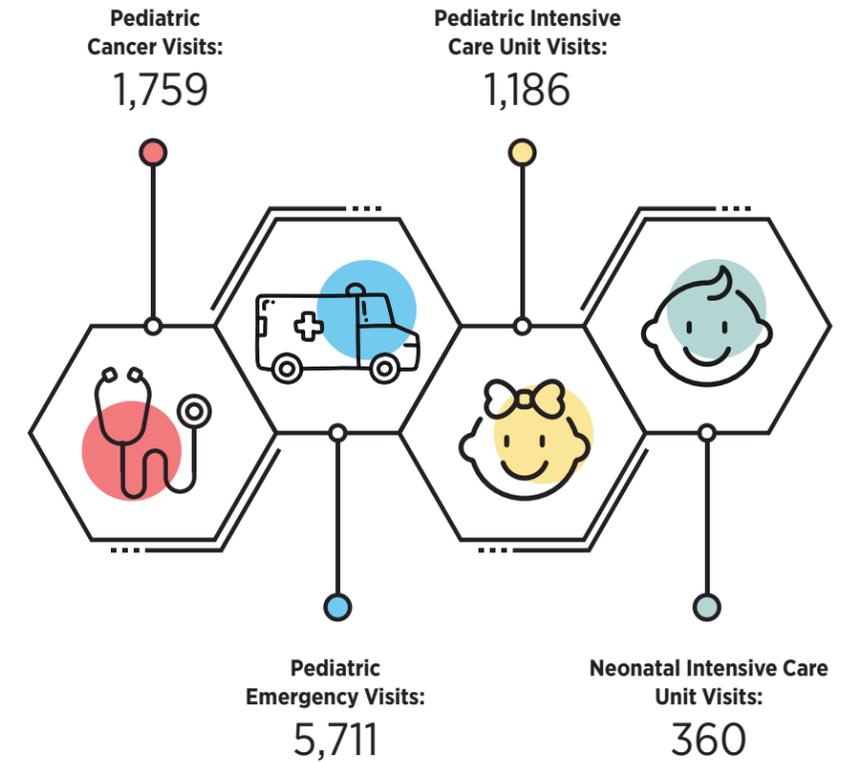
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## You are the Greatest Gift

### YOUR SUPPORT IN 2022

Day in and day out, your gifts are hard at work, touching every child who walks through our doors. Whether that is a little girl who has broken her arm, a little boy who slipped and fell, or a newborn baby at the NICU - **YOUR** support saved them all!

This is the care we provide each day. Gifts like yours to the HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital directly and indirectly touch **ALL** patients we serve each year.



## 12 Months: 12 Gifts of Healing and Hope

### BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR TODAY

Providing renewed health and hope to children and their families at HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital easier than ever. By becoming a monthly donor, you can continually comfort and heal patients in our care in **YOUR** community. As a monthly donor, you will contribute/receive:

- Make **automatic** monthly donations paid from your credit card, it is easy and convenient.
- It enables you to make a larger impact by spreading payments out, rather than one lump sum.
- Designate your gift to a specific need close to **YOUR** heart or to the area of greatest need.
- Receive an annual acknowledgement letter for tax purposes.
- Elect to change or suspend your donation at any time. You're in complete control. If you need to make changes, please let us know.

#### Beginning is easy!

1. Visit our secure, online donation form at <https://giving.hshs.org/SVCH/donate>
2. Select a monthly gift amount or add your own.
3. Check "Make this a monthly gift".
4. Provide your contact info, payment method, and any optional details.
5. Click "Donate Now".

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, please contact us at 920-433-8620 or [WI-Foundations@hshs.org](mailto:WI-Foundations@hshs.org).



# A Walk to Remember

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## It is such an honor to be able to walk alongside these families. - Keegan McKeown

The event featured a bubble release and a 1-mile remembrance walk. SHARE, a fully donor-funded program, hosted the day of remembrance. Primarily, SHARE provides emotional, physical, spiritual, and social healing, as well as sustaining the family unit. Additionally, it provides information, education and resources on the needs and rights of bereaved parents and siblings.

Not only does SHARE provide fantastic resources for families, but it also provides an opportunity to honor the life lost and create a lasting legacy. Remembrance items like hand and foot molds, photography and memorial services are all offered at no cost to parents dealing with this grief.

"It is important to keep the memory of these babies alive. They may have been small, but they have left such a huge footprint on our hearts. We are here to walk with them during and through their grief," said Keegan.

**YOU** are helping parents and families receive the comfort and support needed to deal with the loss of an infant. Thank you!



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NICU Reunion

On Friday, Sept. 30, over 350 people attended the inaugural HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital NICU alumni picnic. It was a day of celebrating the NICU's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with former and current providers as well as families of NICU graduates.

"Few understand the experience of having a child in the NICU," said Betsy Carney-Hoffman, NICU Manager. "It can be a difficult experience for parents and caregivers, and on that has ripple effects far outside the days, weeks, or months a baby spends in our care. This special event gave our former patients and their families, and those who cared for them, a special chance to reunite and connect on their shared experiences."

Guests were welcomed at Green Isle Park in Green Bay with lots of family fun, ice cream and a live concert with Kristen Graves, the musician behind our latest HSHS St. Vincent Children's Hospital commercial.

"It was really great to see all the NICU grads and their families again," said Wendy Foth, Assistant NICU Manager. "They were so happy to show us how much their babies have grown, and we were so proud to have had a part in that. Days like these are very rewarding."

