

Momentum.

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation Newsletter

Volume 21 / Winter 2020

Mary Free Bed
Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation



WHAT'S NEW

GRIFFINS SHARE JOURNEY OF HOW FAITH, HOPE AND MARY FREE BED HAVE FUELED MALACHI'S RECOVERY FROM TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

One of life's greatest lessons is how quickly it can change in a split second. That's why the Griffin family is so thankful for second chances.

"We look for every moment we can to celebrate," said Thomas Griffin, his son, Malachi, by his side.

They were visiting Grand Rapids from their home in Hancock, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, nearly a year after Malachi was involved in a Dec. 8, 2018 crash. He had life-threatening injuries, including a traumatic brain injury. Malachi's future was unsure at the time, but the Griffins never gave up hope.

Five weeks later, Malachi, who was 17 at the time, remained unresponsive but was stable enough to be transferred to Mary Free Bed to begin intensive rehabilitation. More than 140 days after he arrived – six months after

SAVE THE DATE

The seventh annual Mary Free Bed Foundation Gala is Oct. 17 at DeVos Place.

the accident – Malachi walked out of the hospital, headed home to Hancock.

"Dare to dream," Thomas said. "Because when somebody comes to Mary Free Bed, they're at their lowest point. Their hopes have been dashed. They don't know where life's going to take them. But here, you have the opportunity to dream again ... because of the persistence and passion of the people who work at Mary Free Bed."

In the months since Malachi graduated from the Mary Free Bed Kids program, he's

continued outpatient therapy near his home, working to further improve strength, mobility and endurance. The Griffins credit his Mary Free Bed team for putting him on the path to recovery.

Malachi (pictured above) and his parents shared their story with those gathered at the Mary Free Bed Foundation's Nov. 2 gala at DeVos Place. They hoped to inspire others to remain hopeful in the face of life's challenges.

The "Thrive" gala is a festive evening filled with phenomenal stories such as Malachi's, said Jocelyn Dettloff, the foundation's Annual Fund director. The fifth-annual event, attended by 900 guests, raised \$300,000.

Continued on page 2

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 27-June 24

Fine Arts Exhibition

Sponsored by Mary Free Bed Guild

Mary Free Bed Professional Building

May 6, 6-9 p.m.

Mary Evening at Olive's

Fundraiser to support Mary Free Bed's Betty Bloomer Ford Cancer Rehabilitation Program

Olive's, East Grand Rapids

May 9

Amway River Bank Run

25K Wheelchair and Handcycle Divisions

Sponsored by Mary Free Bed Guild, Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports

Downtown Grand Rapids

May 18, noon-1 p.m.

Let Freedom Spring fundraising luncheon

Proceeds benefit Mary's Mission *Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park*

June 1

Mary Free Bed Open golf outing

Fundraiser to support Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports *Thousand Oaks Golf Club*

MARY FREE BED TOURS

Join us for a tour of Mary Free Bed! Tours begin at 11 a.m. March 10, April 16 and May 12.

Reservations are required; email foundation@maryfreebed.com or call 616.840.8137.

STORIES THAT MOVE YOU



CLEMENTINE TRIUMPHS OVER BRAIN INJURY, INTERNAL DECAPITATION AND CHERISHES SECOND CHANCE TO 'LOVE'

Strength and dignity are tools Clementine Sikiri learned while growing up.

She was just nine when her family moved to Grand Rapids from a refugee camp in Rwanda, where they lived for several years under conditions and circumstances so difficult she prefers not to talk about them. While thankful for the opportunity to begin a new life in the United States, the transition was fraught with challenges and uncertainty. Clementine and her family – her parents and 12 brothers and sisters – persevered, finding strength in their faith and support from the community, and made Grand Rapids their home. Now 25, Clementine's found her own path empowering others as a refugee resettlement care manager at Bethany Christian Services.

"I'm very passionate about helping people who come here as refugees to become independent and self-sufficient," said Clementine, who graduated in 2018 from Grand Valley State University. "It brings me joy to help them create a life here, just like my family did."

Clementine's passion and positivity for life have fueled the way she's handled her greatest challenge yet.

The crash

On Feb. 20, 2019, Clementine was driving home when her car was broadsided by a cement truck. The impact was so great it caused her skull to separate from her spinal column, internally decapitating her. She was taken to Mercy Health Saint Mary's Hospital, where doctors worked to save her.

Clementine's injuries were life-threatening. In addition to her spinal column, Clementine experienced a moderately severe traumatic brain injury, her leg and jaw were broken, and she had a stroke during surgery that caused temporary paralysis.

"My doctor told me it's a miracle I survived," she said.

Two weeks after the accident, Clementine came to Mary Free Bed to begin rehabilitation. A halo brace attached to her skull stabilized her neck, her jaw was wired and she had a

feeding tube. She also had a tracheotomy for mechanical ventilation to help her breathe.

Clementine's specialized rehabilitation plan was vigorous and included physical, occupational, speech-language and recreational therapies as well as psychology services.

Recovery 'a human story'

Clementine's recovery was challenging, said Dr. Stuart Yablon, medical director of Mary Free Bed's Brain Injury Program. She dealt with a combination of medical issues, complications and setbacks, he said.

"It hasn't been an easy road for her," Yablon said.

Clementine endured seven surgeries (with one more to go) and worked diligently in therapy to improve her strength, endurance and coordination, all while wearing a halo that weighs seven pounds.

"I've been at peace, knowing I will recover with time," she said.

That spirit and determination, combined with the immense support of her family and community of friends, is what's helped Clementine heal, Yablon said.

"Hers is not a medical story as much as a human story," he said. "It's a story of perseverance and grace, of family sticking together during tough times."

Next steps

Clementine made such good progress that she was cleared to graduate on April 26 from the inpatient program. Since then, she's continued her rehabilitation with several months of outpatient therapy. Her goal? Running the 10K race in the Amway River Bank Run on May 9 and maybe the Chicago Marathon one day.

"Mary Free Bed will hold a special place in my heart forever," she said. "I became so connected to everyone. Everyone was so professional and just ... so loving."

"Life, to me, is about love. Because when you're gone, that's what people are going to remember about you – that you loved."

Continued from cover

Proceeds will go to Mary Free Bed's Brain Injury program to help patients recovering from traumatic brain injuries.

Traumatic brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability among adults and children in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Survivors experience an array of cognitive, physical and emotional challenges that necessitate specialized rehabilitative care.

"Our patients make remarkable progress," Jocelyn said. "Such extraordinary gains require significant resources to remain on the forefront of innovative therapy and

technology to best serve our patients."

Once again emceed by Tim Cusack, the gala also featured entertainment by world-class performers Kevin Cole and Heidi Kettenring, and music by DJ Adrian "AB" Butler.

Turn to pages four and five to see a gallery of photos from the event.

2019 Mary Free Bed Foundation Gala

THANK YOU, THRIVE SPONSORS

Bar

Pet Supplies Plus

Afterglow Party

Steve and Amy Van Andel Foundation

Entertainment

Ken Betz and Pat Brewer

Photo Booth

CareLinc

Reception

Miller Johnson Attorneys

Freedom

AdvisaCare

Prosper

Mimi Cummings
Kate Pew Wolters
Spectrum Health

Flourish

Advent Home Medical
Air-Caire Medical Supplies
Airway Oxygen, Inc.
BISSELL, Inc.
Carroll and Doyal families
Carter Products Company
CNA Financial Corporation/USI
Covenant Healthcare
Custer, Inc.
Dan and Carol Springer
Discount Home Improvement
Enviah
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Fifth Third Bank
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Pioneer Construction
Richard and Lori Hinkley
Sparrow Health System
Take His Hand Foundation
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Steelcase
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WOOD-TV

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Inclusive Performance Strategies
Integrity Back & Brain/Spartan Medical Supply
Kennari Consulting
MCS Marketing
Michael and Sue Jakubowski
MOSS
Orthomerica
Plante Moran
Public Affairs Associates
Randy and Donna DeNeff
Tim and Ping Liang
West Michigan Rehabilitation

Progress

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Cascade Dafo
Cerner Corporation
Experience Grand Rapids
Henry Ford Allegiance Health
Integrated Architecture
John Hunting
Kathleen Leavell
Lasers Resource
Leif Distribution
MetLife
Ossur Americas Inc
Ryan and Jessica Podvin
TM Group
Wendy Stock

2019 MARY FREE BED FOUNDATION GALA



Troy Bunn, Robert Ayotte, Berny and Waicel Jose



Heidi Kettenring



Nick and Haley Heslip, Lindsay and Derek Benedict, Lisa and Brett Rottman, Kate and Dano Pinkham



Candace Matthews, Seth Matthews, Mark and Cyndi Rector, Simone Matthews, Jocelyn Dettloff, Bruce Matthews



Dan Rohn, Marcus Fairfield, Monica Vigil



Tim Cusack with Kelly, Thomas and Malachi Griffin



Hunter Judson, Jim and Amy Keane, Tom Doyal, Claudia Judson, Nancy Doyal



Joanne Nicola, Maeve Wilson, Betsy Ehmann, Stacey Paul



Jay Cooper, Eva Aguirre Cooper, Julie and Tom Brinks



MARY FREE BED MOMENT



MARY & BRITE

Mary Free Bed's recreational therapy team brought holiday cheer to patients and their families by creating "Mary & Brite," a fun event on Dec. 18 featuring a light display in the Courtyard Garden, caroling, creative crafts, a yummy hot chocolate bar and visits with some furry friends.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE



GINNY SWANSON GIVES THE GIFT OF JOY BY CARRYING ON TRADITION OF DR. SWANSON'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Since 1954, Mary Free Bed has hosted Dr. Swanson's Christmas Party for young patients. The annual celebration was started by Dr. Alfred Swanson, a renowned orthopedic surgeon with a long association with Mary Free Bed, where he served eight years as chief of staff and treated patients for more than 50 years.

Dr. Swanson, who dressed like a cowboy to entertain the children, appeared every year until 2002. He died in 2016 at the age of 93.

The tradition continues today, thanks to the dedication and generosity of his wife, Dr. Genevieve de Groot Swanson. Ginny and Jennifer Lannon, Mary Free Bed's Patient Experience coordinator, work together to organize the beloved event.

"It's a special party for the entire family," Ginny said. "It's fun seeing the siblings together and the excitement in their eyes."

This year, current and former pediatric patients and their families gathered for the Dec. 7 holiday party. They were treated to entertainment by singer Jeanie B, a visit from Santa, gifts from the Billy Bear Hug Foundation and lots of merriment.

"It's an afternoon of beautiful humanity," Ginny said. "I love continuing what Al started."

GIFTS & GRANTS

The Mary Free Bed Foundation is thankful for the generous support from the following donors:

AdvisaCare
Amway
Baldwin Foundation
Campbell Foundation
Custer, Inc.
Dick and Betsy DeVos Foundation
Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation
Fusion Medical Supplies

Gazelle Sports Foundation
Gillett Family Foundation
Grand Haven Area Community Foundation
Grand Rapids Jaycees Foundation
Hope for Gabe
James and Jane Welch Foundation
JCT Foundation
Keller Foundation

Kiwanis of Michigan Foundation
Korff Foundation
Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation
NeuroCare Home Health
SpartanNash, Inc.
Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation
James and Almeda VanderWaals Foundation
William R. Lathers Trust

GUILD HIGHLIGHTS



HALLOWEEN HEROES PARADE IS CHILD-INSPIRED, CREATED WITH LOVE

Kids love Halloween, and volunteers from the community and Mary Free Bed made sure 35 patients celebrated in a special way.

The fourth annual Halloween Heroes Parade on Oct. 26 marched around Mary Free Bed and Mercy Health Saint Mary's hospitals with the Forest Hills Central Marching Band leading the way. The kids' wheelchairs disappeared into elaborate costumes created just for them. Among them were:

- Chase Fuller, 8, who dressed up as DJ Marshmello (pictured above). Staff for the internationally known DJ saw photos from the parade and reached out to Chase.
- Molly Malleis, 4, disguised as a "Jurassic Park" firefighter. She towed her twin brother, who was dressed as a dinosaur.
- Alicia Marewski, 7, had her wheelchair transformed into an ice cream truck, and her sisters dressed as ice cream customers.

Dozens of volunteers, including Mary Free Bed Guild members and staff, Owen-Ames-Kimball construction engineers, Grand Valley State University engineering students and Grand Rapids Police Department officers, worked for weeks to create the elaborate costumes. The kids kept their customized, transportable costumes to wear at school or around the neighborhood.

Joining the parade were Cosplay Crusaders superheroes and furry friends from the West Michigan Therapy Dog Association. Grand Rapids Police Department, Grand Rapids Fire Department, Life EMS and Kent County Sheriff's Department stopped by to greet the kids after the parade and to show off their emergency vehicles.

WHEELCHAIR & ADAPTIVE SPORTS



RECREATIONAL POWER SOCCER TEAM FORMING FOR POWER WHEELCHAIR USERS

Mary Free Bed's Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports program is gearing up to add power soccer to its roster of teams for people with disabilities. It will join more than 250 teams from around the world competing in one of the fastest-growing sports on four wheels.

Power soccer is the first competitive team sport designed for power wheelchair users, according to the United States Power Soccer Association. Last year, WAS offered power soccer classes to determine interest, said sports coordinator Jeovani Pantoja.

"It's important to offer more sports and opportunities for people with disabilities to strengthen the body mentally and physically," Jeo said.

WAS plans to create a recreational team this fall that will begin competing during the power soccer season, which runs from September through March. Anyone who uses a power wheelchair and can operate it safely is eligible to play. Participants include people who have quadriplegia, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities.

"Our goal is to eventually offer a competitive team, too," Jeo said.

Two teams of four players play two 20-minute periods on a regulation-sized basketball court, using an oversized soccer ball. Players use their own power wheelchair that must be equipped with a footguard.

"Our biggest issue is equipment," Jeo said. "We're currently using plastic guards, but to compete we need steel guards that won't break for safety reasons."

WAS received a grant from the Grand Rapids Jaycees Foundation and will purchase the equipment soon. Plans are in the works to offer a clinic this spring.



Mary Free Bed
— open —

Benefiting Mary Free Bed
Wheelchair & Adaptive Sports

Save the Date
Monday, June 1

Golf Outing

Thousand Oaks Golf Club

Momentum.

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Help us to be even more "green."

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PLANNED GIVING

SECURE ACT ENCOURAGES SAVING FOR RETIREMENT

The Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act, signed into law Dec. 20, is designed to facilitate and enhance retirement savings. Its provisions include changes to rules regarding traditional IRA contributions and payout requirements for surviving beneficiaries, establishing a new minimum age for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) and making part-time employees eligible for retirement plans.

Have you considered leaving a legacy through your retirement plan? A planned gift to Mary Free Bed is a great way to provide lasting support for our valuable programs and services.

To learn more, visit maryfreebed.giftlegacy.com or email Brad Kaufmann, director of Planned Giving, at brad.kaufmann@maryfreebed.com.

You can raise money for Mary Free Bed while shopping at no additional cost to you. Through **Amazon Smile**, visit smile.amazon.com and select **Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation**.



VISITS WITH VETERANS

To commemorate President Gerald R. Ford's 106th birthday, U.S. Navy sailors from the USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier, along with Susan Ford Bales, visited Grand Rapids in July for a wreath-laying ceremony. Sailors also stopped by Mary Free Bed to visit with veterans.