

*For our friends and supporters.*

## Four-Legged Care Givers

**A**s soon as he walks through the lobby at Hasbro Children's Hospital, Moby's ready to get to work. Stepping off the elevator on the fifth floor, the eight-year-old golden retriever is spotted by 14-year-old Grace and her mother, Tara, and Moby knows it's time to spring into action. "Today's been a miserable day for my daughter, and it's only 10 a.m.," says Tara. "But when she sees Moby, she is all smiles. It happens every time he comes to visit."

This is not the first time Grace and Moby have met. Grace has Rett Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that affects her ability to speak, walk, eat, and sleep. She also has epilepsy and has been hospitalized numerous times for seizures. Tara says pet therapy is really a game changer for Grace. "She gets major brain agitation after she has a seizure, but Moby helps turn that around," Tara explains. "The more he bumps her and wags his tail in her face, the better. Just looking at him relaxes her... and helps her to get to sleep. We have two dogs at home that we all love. Being with Moby here is a little like being at home, which is an added benefit."

Moby is David Schechter's third golden retriever in the pet therapy program at Hasbro Children's Hospital and one of 10 dogs that visit the patients here regularly. Pet therapy is a volunteer program, overseen by Child Life Services, that brings trained dogs and their owners to seven areas of the hospital, including inpatient units, intensive care, and outpatient clinics. The visits take place either weekly or bi-weekly.



Grace and Moby

David started volunteering with his first dogs, Maxwell and Montgomery, 16 years ago. His fourth dog, four-month-old Micah, is in training now.

"I had no idea what I was in for, but I decided I was going to make participating in this program a priority. If a child life therapist needs a dog to be here, for any reason, they know they can call me at any time," says David. "You form bonds with the kids and I take comfort in knowing that my dog and I helped make their time better while they were at the hospital."

The impact the pups have on the patients and families is significant. In addition to helping reduce heart rate, calm and reduce anxiety, and improve mood, the dogs get through to patients in ways that people sometimes might

*continued*



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Moby and Franklin



Moby and his owner David

not. “For instance, a child who refuses to participate in physical therapy will rarely, if ever, say no to walking the dog,” says child life specialist Kimberly Morse. “And when they take that walk, not only are they getting therapy, they are also feeling an enormous sense of pride.” The pet therapy visits benefit the staff as well. “Our work can sometimes be overwhelming and the dogs help lighten everyone’s day,” adds Kimberly.

Moby sports his own hospital ID badge and takes hugs from whoever is offering them. And what he gives in return is immeasurable.

## A Groundbreaking Initiative

The Cranston Police Department and the Lawrence A. Aubin, Sr. Child Protection Center at Hasbro Children’s Hospital are collaborating on Rhode Island’s Canine Comfort Therapy Program, believed to be the first of its kind in the country. This groundbreaking initiative features the first comfort therapy dog to serve as a member of a Rhode Island police department, as well as the first resident canine in a local hospital.

The comfort therapy dog, an Australian labradoodle puppy, named CALI (Cranston Police Department, Aubin Center, Leadership in Innovation), will be handled jointly by a Cranston Police Detective and a physician from Hasbro’s Children’s Aubin Center. Together they will help foster an open and trusting dialogue with children suspected of being victims of maltreatment (including sexual and physical abuse).

“When you see the difficulties families and children go through following a very traumatic experience, having a dog present provides great comfort. It’s truly a resource to help with the stress and anxiety our families and patients experience as a result of very traumatic incidents,” says Christine Barron, MD, director of the Aubin Center.

## What is Child Life?

Child Life Services specialists provide activities that help reassure pediatric patients and their families regarding illness, hospitalization, surgery, and other procedures. Their role includes:

- Helping children understand, at a developmentally appropriate level, what will happen in the hospital.
- Practicing distraction and relaxation techniques to ease pain and enhance coping skills.
- Encouraging children to express fears, discuss perceptions about the hospital, and gain a sense of control.
- Offering a positive yet familiar experience that provides continued growth and development and opportunity for self-expression.
- Facilitating and supporting therapeutic activities such as creative arts, pet therapy, computers, and other programs.
- Coordinating birthday and holiday celebrations and visits from special guests.

# The Washington County Fair and Rockwell Amusements Team Up for Hasbro Children's

**T**his past fall, one of New England's longest-standing traditions partnered with the area's leading pediatric hospital to make a difference in the lives of sick children. During its five-day run, The Washington County Fair offered guests several ways to donate to Hasbro Children's Hospital, with the community coming together to raise \$26,000.

Dubbed the "FUNdraiser" of the state's largest agricultural event, the Washington County Fair and Rockwell Amusements joined forces to offer visitors a complimentary merry-go-round ride for a minimum \$2 donation to the hospital. Taking their generosity further, the partners both matched the first \$2,500 in donations. The merry-go-round was introduced to the fair this year specifically for the FUNdraiser and was enjoyed by several thousand families.

Patrons also had the opportunity to donate to Hasbro Children's throughout the fair's concessions area as 25 food vendors participated in a challenge to see who could raise the most money. The challenge generated \$9,895.82 of the total raised, with the Hope Valley Fire Department booth "winning" the friendly competition by raising \$2,465.



The Washington County Fair

"We could not be more grateful to the Washington County Fair and Rockwell Amusements, not only for their generosity, but for also making our hospital an important focus of their event," said hospital president Margaret M. Van Bree, MHA, DrPH. "Just as families come from all over to enjoy the fair, families across southern New England rely on our hospital for their children's care—it is beyond heartwarming to see our community respond with such kindness."

## URI's Inaugural RhodyTHON Raises Record Amount



More than 1,000 University of Rhode Island students, staff, and faculty packed Mackal Field House in the spring of 2018 for the school's inaugural "RhodyTHON" dance marathon, an event that raises funds for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals across the country, including Hasbro Children's Hospital. Beginning at 6 p.m. on a Saturday and continuing until early Sunday morning, students danced the hours away, raising \$171,476.36 for Hasbro Children's—a record amount for a first-time Children's Miracle Network Hospitals dance marathon. The second annual RhodyTHON is scheduled for March 30, 2019.

# Family's Mission is Pediatric Cancer Research

**C**onnor Urban was almost two when he fell in February 2013. Parents John and Celeste rushed the toddler to the hospital, fearing a concussion, but a brain scan revealed something incalculably worse: a baseball-sized mass.

Hasbro Children's Hospital neurosurgeon Petra Klinge, MD, removed as much of the tumor as she safely could. But the diagnosis from Connor's oncologists packed a one-two punch. He had a rare and aggressive brain cancer called choroid plexus carcinoma. And few options existed to treat it.

"There was little research dedicated to children's cancer," says John. "We knew we had to do something."

The Portsmouth couple were instantly inspired to action when, one day, John went out for a stress-relieving run. It was shortly after the attack on the Boston Marathon and amid the sorrow, Connor's dad decided to do something positive. He would run the next marathon to raise funds for pediatric cancer research. The Urbans began collecting pledges.

Meanwhile, Connor's oncology team discovered a protocol "bordering on the miraculous," says John—

a Germany-based trial for choroid plexus carcinoma, which affects one in three million children.

Today, Connor is seven and cancer-free. He races his five-year-old sister, Brooke, and retains the sweet nature that got him through 18 months of treatment. And after three marathons, the Urban Pediatric Cancer Research Fund has raised more than \$43,000 for the hospital that saved Connor's life.



Connor Urban

"Words can't do justice to the gratitude we have for Hasbro Children's and its fabulous staff," says John. "We feel incredibly fortunate."

## Annual Fundraising Events

*Heroes Ball*  
HASBRO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

March 2, 2019



April 4, 2019



July 22, 2019

Learn more about these and other events at [giving.lifespan.org/Hasbro/Welcome](http://giving.lifespan.org/Hasbro/Welcome).



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