



**Shriners
Children's™**
Erie

Temple Newsletter

An update for our
Temple Affiliates



Dear Temple Affiliates,

We are thrilled to connect with you and share exciting updates from Shriners Children's Erie! Our dedicated team has been hard at work and we have many wonderful stories and developments to share with you. Thank you, for your continued support and dedication to changing the lives of children. Let's dive into the latest news!

If you plan to feature any of our content and need adjusted files, please contact **Izzy Spires** at ispires@shrinenet.org or (814) 875-8761.

Therapy Department Undergoes Another Successful External Audit

Shriners Children's Erie is proud to share the results of a recent therapy audit conducted by YesHIM, a third-party auditing firm specializing in healthcare compliance. The audit, which is performed multiple times throughout the year, focuses on occupational, physical and speech therapies and is part of the organization's ongoing commitment to excellence in clinical documentation and billing practices.

External audits like this one are standard across all therapy departments in the Shriners Children's healthcare system. These audits emphasize the importance of accurate CPT (Current Procedural Terminology) code usage, complete documentation and properly signed plans of care by authorized physicians or advanced practice providers (APPs). The ultimate goal is to ensure high-quality documentation that supports appropriate reimbursement and compliance.

For this most recent audit, 53 dates of service were randomly selected and 1,021 documentation elements were reviewed. Auditors examined every episode of care on the selected dates, including initial evaluations, progress notes, daily treatment notes and discharge summaries. Of the 1,021 elements reviewed, only 24 errors were identified—resulting in an outstanding accuracy rate of 97.6%.

The therapy department at Shriners Children's Erie consistently demonstrates high performance. In 2024, the team achieved audit scores of 95.2% in Q1 and 96% in Q3, reflecting the staff's continued attention to detail and professionalism.

These exceptional results are a testament to the dedication of Erie's therapy team. Their work not only supports compliance and financial integrity but also ensures the delivery of high-quality care to every patient.

Please join in congratulating the entire therapy team for their continued excellence and commitment to upholding the highest standards in care and documentation. Their efforts make a lasting impact on our patients and our mission.

Shriners Jammers Wrap Up an Incredible Season

The Shriners Jammers wheelchair basketball team closed out their season with a game to remember. For their final matchup, the team faced off against a group of parents, siblings and volunteers. There was no shortage of smiles on the court as players had the chance to compete against some of their favorite people. After the game, players were honored during an awards ceremony where each received a medal recognizing their hard work, dedication and personal growth. The celebration continued with food and time spent with teammates, families and friends.

The Shriners Jammers are about more than just physical activity. They provide a valuable opportunity for kids to build confidence, develop social skills and create lasting connections with others.

Special thanks go to Kristin Maguire and all the coaches and volunteers whose time, energy and encouragement helped make the season such a success. Their commitment left a lasting impact on every player and helped create an unforgettable experience for all involved.



New Radiology Equipment

The radiology department at Shriners Children's Erie is pleased to announce the installation of a new digital radiography (DR) wall mount detector, replacing a unit that had been in service for more than a decade. The previous detector had reached the end of its technological support lifecycle, no longer able to receive software updates or support new programs, making this upgrade a crucial step forward in maintaining high-quality imaging services.

The new detector is not only larger, but also provides enhanced image quality and introduces tabletop X-ray functionality, expanding the types of exams the department can perform. While the equipment is primarily used for standing imaging, one of the department's most frequent needs, the added flexibility allows the team to better support the varied needs of patients and providers.

This upgrade represents another step in the ongoing commitment to providing advanced, efficient and patient-centered care.



Positive Press Ganey Comments

See what patients and families have to say about Shriners Children's Erie.

"From the RN to the doctor, everything was amazing. Very kind, listened and answered all question and concerns."

Grateful Parent
2025 Press Ganey survey

"We love and appreciate Shriners!"

Grateful Parent
2025 Press Ganey survey

Dr. was amazing. Blew my expectations out of the water. Will never go to Pittsburgh again.

Grateful Parent
2025 Press Ganey survey

Save the Date – Trunk or Treat at Shriners Children's Erie! 🎃

Shriners Children's Erie will be hosting its annual Trunk or Treat on Tuesday, October 14 and planning is already underway to make this year's event the best one yet!

Volunteers needed: trunk decorators - get creative and have fun passing out candy to kids.

Those interested in volunteering or designing a trunk should contact **Izzy Spires** at 814-875-8761 or ispires@shrinenet.org.



Your Generosity Goes Further with Erie Gives Day 2025!

The 15th annual Erie Gives Day is scheduled for Tuesday, August 12 from 12am to 11:59pm. This 24-hour day of giving invites thousands of donors from across the country to support their favorite charity. All donations given during this campaign will receive a pro-rated match from the Erie Community Foundation and its sponsors, ensuring that your gift can make an even greater impact on the lives of children and families at Shriners Children's Erie!

How to support Shriners Children's Erie during Erie Gives

Donate Online on Tuesday, August 12

- Gifts will be accepted on August 12 beginning at midnight (minimum donation = \$25)
- Online donations can be made via credit card (American Express, Discover, Mastercard, or Visa)
- New this year – all fees (transaction, platform and processing) are completely covered! This means that 100% of your donation goes directly to Shriners Children's Erie!

By Phone on August 12

- Call The Erie Community Foundation at 814-454-0843 between 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support.

If you have any questions, please reach out to **Nicole Vommaro** at 814-875-8746 or nvommaro@shrinenet.org



Shriners Children's Erie Patient Ambassador, Henry, Hits the Road

Learning to drive is one of the biggest milestones in a teenager's life. It marks a major step toward independence and opens the door to new levels of freedom and responsibility. For a teenager with a physical disability, that milestone can come with added challenges and 17-year-old Henry is more than ready for it!

Henry has been a patient at Shriners Children's Erie since he was just four years old. Born with achondroplasia, a form of dwarfism and having experienced a stroke in utero, he has overcome more than his share of challenges. Through his determination and the steady support of his family and a dedicated therapy team, Henry has made remarkable progress in both physical and occupational therapy. With years of hard work behind him, the next step in Henry's journey toward independence was learning to drive. Getting his permit didn't come without a few bumps in the road. Henry failed the written portion of the exam the first time, but he didn't let that discourage him. He studied hard, took the test again and passed. "It felt awesome to pass," he said with a proud smile.

Henry's mom, Natalie, recalled just how challenging the process was to get his permit. "There were so many dead ends and conflicting answers. Every person we spoke to had something different to say and we could never get a clear, consistent path. It was incredibly frustrating," she said. "But we never questioned whether Henry would drive. It was always just a matter of when." While they awaited answers, they proceeded with making the adaptations that were needed on the family vehicle to ensure he could drive safely and confidently. Modifications included pedal extensions, a custom steering adaptation and a seat cushion to give Henry full visibility and control.

After more than a year of navigating red tape and uncertainty, Henry passed his permit exam officially beginning his journey behind the wheel and bringing a wave of relief and excitement to both him and his parents. Now that he's behind the wheel, Henry loves driving and looks forward to getting his driver's license. "I can't wait to be able to go hang out with my friends whenever I want," he said. While he's still learning, it's his dad, Seth, who rides along during practice sessions. Natalie is more than happy to let dad take the lead.

Henry is especially excited about the day he won't need an adult in the passenger seat every time he drives. Natalie is looking forward to that, too. "Once he has his license, he'll be able to drive himself to appointments, which will be a huge help, especially with two younger kids at home," she said. "He can also run errands and help out more around the house."

Therapists Kristen Ciacchini, OTR/L and Carrie Herrmann, PT, have played an instrumental role in helping Henry gain the strength and confidence to walk independently and work toward greater independence. "If I want to learn how to do something new, they always help me accomplish it," Henry said. From the beginning, both therapists have collaborated with Henry and his family to support his long-term goals, including learning to drive. "His therapy at Shriners Children's Erie has focused on strength, coordination, range of motion, transfers, self-care, as well as meal prepping, housekeeping and other instrumental activities of daily living," said Ciacchini. As part of that care, therapy also addressed the physical demands of driving. "We worked on strengthening his arms, legs and core so that he can sit up and have enough

muscle endurance to sustain the amount of time he needs to drive,” added Herrmann. These skills not only help Henry behind the wheel but also prepare him for life after high school, whether he chooses to go away to college or continue building his independence at home.

Although the process of getting a driver’s permit was long and filled with obstacles, Natalie says it was absolutely worth it. Henry has even more big milestones on the horizon. “He’s graduating high school next year and starting to think about college,” she shared. “He’s gaining more independence every day and I’m just so excited for him.” For Henry, earning his driver’s permit is more than just a goal he has achieved, it’s a key step toward building the foundation of his future. Henry’s journey is just beginning and the strength, skills and confidence he gained at Shriners Children’s Erie have prepared him to embrace whatever his future holds.

