

September 25, 2025

The Shrine Vine

Shriners Children's Erie

October Birthdays

Darren Mackowksi - October 1
Lorrie Baney - October 6
Lynné Hanson - October 14
Michael McClincy, MD - October 16
Jim Merva - October 17
Zachary Duskas, MD - October 19
Lizzie Wyant - October 19

Celebrations and Special Dates

Dwarfism Awareness Month
Medical Ultrasound Awareness Month
National Physical Therapy Month

National Health Care Supply Chain Week
October 5 - 11

National PA Week October 6 - 12

Medical Assistants Recognition Week
October 20 - 24

National Health Care Facilities and Engineering Week October 26 - November 1

Indigenous Peoples' Day - October 13

Global Handwashing Day - October 15

Upcoming Holidays and Hospital Convenience Days

Thanksgiving

- Thursday, November 27 – Closed/holiday
- Friday, November 28 – Black Friday, “hospital” convenience day

Christmas

- Wednesday, December 24 – Closing early at 2:30pm for “hospital” convenience
- Thursday, December 25 – Closed/holiday
- Friday, December 26 – “hospital” convenience day



New Years

- Wednesday, December 31 – Closing early at 2:30pm for “hospital” convenience
- Thursday, January 1 – Closed/holiday
- Friday, January 2– TBD (More to follow)



Think Before You Post

Shriners Children's is an apolitical organization and our mission transcends the polarization of today's society. In response to recent national events and the firing of employees from well-known organizations shared across national media, we wanted to share a few social media reminders

NO social media account is “private.” A “like” is a public agreement of the statement made.

If you momentarily question whether something is appropriate to post or like, the answer is NO – IT IS NOT.

You are a representative of Shriners Children's, regardless of whether you have formally identified the system as your employer on your profile.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Micheal Widrig at mwidrig@shrinenet.org or X8780.



Protect Yourself from Respiratory Illnesses

Flu season is approaching faster than we think! It officially runs from November 1 through March 31.

To prepare, SHINE Education Modules have been assigned to all staff with information for the 2025–2026 flu season. Please complete these modules by October 31, 2025. (Note: the slides within the module were not updated for this year specifically.)

Shriners Children's Policy

- Annual flu vaccination is required for all employees and contracted staff.
- Shriners Children's Erie will not be offering flu shots onsite this year.
- COVID-19 vaccines are not required by Shriners Children's.

Documentation Requirements

All employees and contracted staff must provide a copy of their vaccine record and sign an attestation form once they receive their flu vaccine.

Staff who choose not to receive a flu vaccine must sign a declination form.

Those who decline vaccination are required to wear a mask while in Shriners Children's Erie from November 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026, except during lunch and approved breaks.

Both the attestation form and the declination form are available from **Emily Madder/Lorrie Baney** – you must receive your vaccine and/or submit your form by October 31, 2025. Again, a **copy of your flu vaccine record** is required with completion of the attestation form.

If you have any questions, please contact **Emily Madder** at emadder@shrinenet.org or X8720.



Shriners Children's October Online Store Open

The online merch store will be open for the month of October with exciting new clothing options available. Be sure to keep an eye on your inbox for the store link and don't miss your chance to grab the latest Shriners Children's Erie gear!

The webstore is also part of 31 Days to Amaze and will donate \$5 from every item purchased directly back to support our patients.

[LINK to Store](#)

Congratulations to Alex Betancourt!

We are proud to share that Alex Betancourt has been invited to present at the Orthomerica Star Summit, taking place October 1–3 in Orlando, Florida. He will be speaking on cranial remolding orthoses compliance and has also been recognized by Orthomerica as one of their "All Star Cranial Clinicians."

Alex is deeply committed to advancing the integration of orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) care within multidisciplinary medical settings. At Shriners Children's Erie, he has incorporated O&P services into plagiocephaly/torticollis, limb deficiency, scoliosis and rehabilitation/multidisciplinary clinics. He continually challenges the traditional view of O&P providers as technical support, instead advocating for their role as essential clinical partners in patient care.

This recognition highlights Alex's knowledge, dedication and leadership in advancing patient-centered care. Congratulations, Alex, on this well-deserved honor!



Issue with the New Food Kiosk? Scan the QR Code

If you experience any problems with the kiosk, need to make a request, have a complaint or require a refund, please scan the QR code located at the kiosk. These messages go directly to the market and will be handled appropriately.

Please note: We do not have staff onsite who can make changes or issue refunds, these must be submitted through the QR code.

Fall Basket Winner 🎉

Congratulations to Lizzie Wyant, the winner of our Fall Raffle Basket!

This basket was organized as a fun way to raise money for next year's Employee Engagement Picnic, and we're so grateful to everyone who participated. A special shout out goes to Alex Jakubowski, who took the lead on this initiative. The raffle was a big hit thanks to her hard work and creativity. Amazing job, Alex!

Stay tuned for details on our next raffle basket. You could be the next lucky winner!



Welcome New Employees!



We are excited to welcome Rick Zimm, PA-C, to Shriners Children's Erie!

Rick earned his bachelor's degree in Health Sciences from Gannon University in 2004, followed by a master's degree in Physician Assistant Sciences from Gannon in 2005. He has dedicated his entire career to hand surgery and orthopedics, beginning at UPMC Presbyterian Plastic and Hand Surgery and later at HMRO in Erie.

Throughout his career, Rick has been actively involved in research, contributing to multiple studies. He brings extensive experience in treating a wide range of upper extremity

conditions, with a particular focus on acute injuries such as fractures, lacerations, sprains and ligament tears.

Rick is a proud member of the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) and the American Association for Hand Surgery (AAHS). His expertise and passion for patient care make him a valuable addition to our team.

Please join us in giving Rick a warm welcome to Shriners Children's Erie!



Did You Miss the Trunk or Treat Deadline? 🎃

It's not too late to register a trunk. If you're interested in volunteering or designing a trunk, please contact **Izzy Spires** at X8761 or ispires@shrinenet.org.

Peach St - 1908 Keystone Drive, Erie PA, 16509
Lakewood NY - 318 E Fairmount Ave, Lakewood NY, 14750



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Offer valid through 10/31/2025 at Spirit Halloween and SpiritHalloween.com. Coupons that are forged or altered in any way will not be accepted. Not valid on prior purchases, associate discount or taxes. If merchandise is returned, coupon discount will be deducted from items prior to refund/credit. Limit one per customer. Shipping offers cannot be combined with other discounts at store kiosks or online. No cash value. Spirit Halloween may cancel promotion at any time. Exclusions may apply. ©2025 Spirit Halloween Superstores, LLC.

Baby Sprinkle Celebration for Jon and Family

The cafeteria was filled with joy as we gathered to celebrate Jon, his wife Stephanie and their son Evan, who is excited to become a big brother! The baby sprinkle was absolutely beautiful, with plenty of love and support shown for Jon and his growing family.

A special shout out goes to Debbie Miller for planning such a wonderful event that made the day so memorable.



Remembering Malkin

For over two years, Malkin, a gentle and calm therapy dog, visited Shriners Children's Erie, bringing comfort and joy to patients and their families. With his warm presence and unwavering friendliness, Malkin became a cherished part of our Shriners community, offering a source of unconditional love.

Malkin's remarkable career as a therapy dog spanned 15 years, during which he logged an impressive 2,057 visits across a variety of settings. At our

facility he touched countless lives, whether greeting patients at our facility, providing calm reassurance during difficult moments or simply sitting quietly as a comforting companion.

Recently, Malkin's health began to decline and he has since crossed the rainbow bridge. While we mourn his loss, we also celebrate the legacy of kindness and comfort that he leaves behind. We extend our deepest gratitude to Marian, Malkin's devoted owner and to Therapy Dogs United for sharing Malkin's unique gift with so many.

Malkin's memory will continue to inspire us, reminding us of the simple yet powerful ways that love, empathy, and companionship can transform lives.

31 Days to Amaze Partners

31 Days to Amaze is a month-long celebration of community generosity, where local businesses and organizations come together to support Shriners Children's Erie. Throughout the campaign, our partners host special events, fundraisers and donation opportunities that directly benefit our patients and families.



Books-A-Million

From October 19 through December 7, visitors to the Millcreek Mall Books-A-Million store can donate a book to support patients at Shriners Children's Erie. This annual book drive helps bring comfort and joy to kids during their visits.



Faith, Hope and Images

Our Shriners Children's Erie webstore donates \$5 from every item purchased directly back to support our patients. The store opens four times throughout 2025, giving families and friends multiple chances to shop for a cause.

[SHC-Erie](#)



Movement Mortgage – Amanda Keith

Amanda Keith with Movement Mortgage is giving back in a big way! For every mortgage loan closed before



Plyler Entry Systems

Through the Erie Otters Cash for Kids fundraising campaign, Plyler Entry Systems is teaming up with the Erie Otters and Shriners Children's Erie. For

December 31, 2025, she will donate \$100 and Movement Mortgage will match it, doubling the impact to \$200 per loan for Shriners Children's Erie.

<https://31daystoamaze.org/partner-movement-mortgage/>

ZEF Color Society

ZEF Color Society is raffling off a deluxe R+Co Bleu box valued at \$258. Throughout November, customers who donate to Shriners Children's Erie will be entered for a chance to win while making a difference.

<https://31daystoamaze.org/zef-color-society/>

KANECT Recycling & Savannah

Our patient ambassador, Savannah, is collecting pop tabs throughout October to help provide care for children in need. Kanect Recycling is matching every recycling amount she brings in, up to \$5,000!

<https://31daystoamaze.org/kanect-recycling/>

Moore Research

For the month of September, Moore Research is collecting toys and other good for Shriners Children's Erie. Please see the flyer for accepted items.

<https://31daystoamaze.org/moore-research/>

every goal scored during the 2025–2026 season, including playoffs, \$10 will be donated to support local kids.

Macy's

From October 16–31, shoppers at Macy's Millcreek Mall location can round up their purchases or make a donation at checkout. Every contribution supports the patients and families of Shriners Children's Erie.

<https://31daystoamaze.org/partners-macys/>

Jeni's Ice Cream

On October 16, Jeni's Ice Cream in Chagrin Falls, OH will donate 20% of all proceeds from 3–6 p.m. Enjoy a sweet treat while supporting kids at Shriners Children's Erie.

<https://31daystoamaze.org/partner-jenis-ice-creams/>

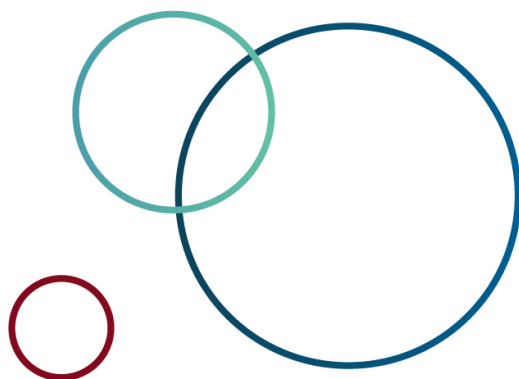
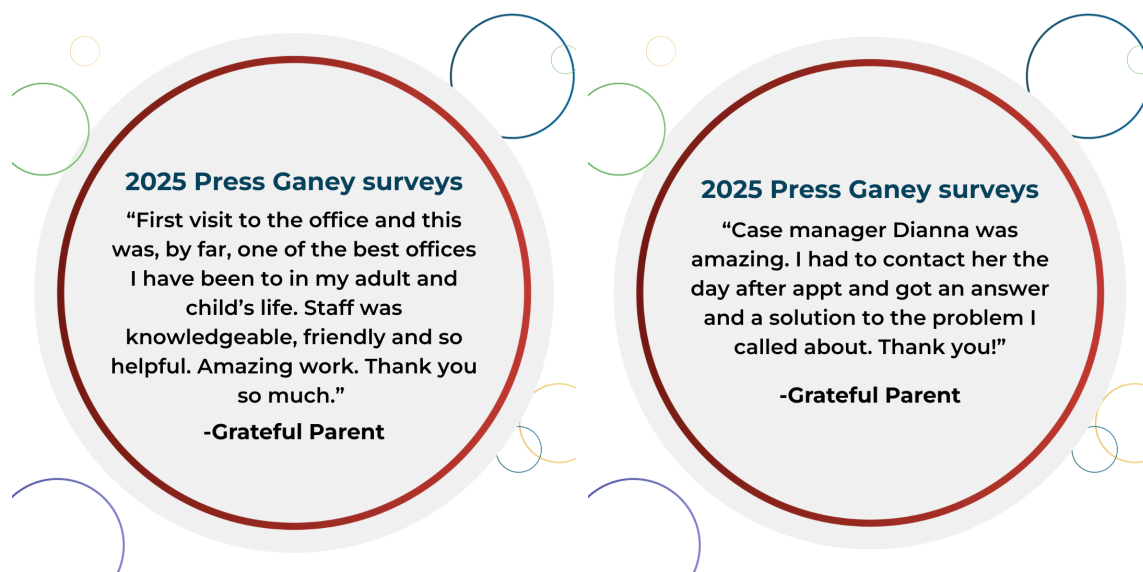
Spirit of Children

Each fall, Spirit Halloween supports Shriners Children's through its Spirit of Children campaign. Since 2007, they've raised nearly \$13 million nationwide to help child life specialists support patients and families. Shoppers can also use a coupon for \$10 off and \$10 will be donated to Shriners Children's.



Positive Press Ganey Comments

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



Open Positions

Maintenance Tech - Per Diem
Medical Assistant - 1.0 FTE



Staff Shout Outs

Please take a moment to recognize a coworker who helped you or someone who went above and beyond in their day.

"Thank you to Barbara Weber for stuffing envelopes, labeling and posting a huge mailing to notify Dr. Dede's patients of his departure! Your willingness to tackle this task and ability to do it so quickly allowed us to get these important letters out in a timely manner."

- Micheal Widrig

"Shout out to Izzy and Micheal for the fantastic work they do putting together the Shrine Vine and sharing all the wonderful things happening at Shriners Children's Erie!"

- David Schumacher

A big shout out to our maintenance team and everyone who took initiative during Monday's Code Red. Unexpected events can be unsettling, but your leadership and quick action ensured the safety of others and our patients. Thank you!"

- Lorrie Baney

"A huge thank you to our patient access team, clinic staff, rehab team, POPS and providers for going above and beyond to welcome and treat new patients so quickly. The tremendous growth we've seen this year is because of your incredible teamwork, dedication and support, we couldn't have done it without you!"

- Mary Eighmy

"A big thank you to everyone who created Erie Gives pages and helped raise money on Erie Gives Day! Thank you, Christine Betancourt, Rebecca Bowman, Tayne Christiansen, Samantha Fields, Penny Lindey, Rachel Mauro, David Schumacher, Sarah Steeb, Sara Watkins and Micheal Widrig. I appreciate you all for taking the time to help philanthropy reach its goals."

- Nicole Vommaro

"Shout out to Allie Blatt, Allie DiPlacido, Christine Betancourt and Holly LaFuria for stepping up to share baby safety tips on camera for our social media! I know being recorded isn't always easy, but your time, effort and willingness to lend your voices made such a difference."

- Izzy Spires

"A big thank you to Alex and Emily for creating and running a new report for me to track patient zip codes over the past year. You are both so easy and pleasant to work with!"

- Micheal Widrig

"Shout out to Micheal and Izzy! Thank you for always keeping me stocked with fresh material to share with our external referring providers, it makes such a difference in highlighting the amazing care we provide. Your hard work, creativity, and support never go unnoticed and I'm so grateful for you both!"

- Mary Eighmy

"Shout out to care management for all your coordination with the surgery planning process and keeping things smooth!"

- Emily Madder

"Shout out to Sara Watkins, thank you for all your input and knowledge to ensure our patients are triaged for their best care!"

- from the entire patient access team

"A heartfelt thank you to all the providers and staff who have joined me for in-services with our external referring providers. Your willingness to share our story and showcase the incredible care we provide means so much. I truly appreciate your support, engagement and teamwork, it makes all the difference!"

- Mary Eighmy



Community Safety Event

Shriners Children's Erie will host the Community Safety Event this Saturday, September 27, from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the front parking lot.

Formerly known as the Car Seat Safety Event, this annual event has grown to include a variety of community health and safety partners who will be sharing valuable resources with families.

We look forward to another great day of supporting our patients, families, and community!

Is Your Child In The Right Car Seat?

Shriners Children's Erie is hosting a **FREE** car seat safety event, where certified personnel will inspect your car seats to ensure proper installation and usage. Several community partners and organizations will offer valuable resources and tips for child safety.

No registration is required. Just bring your car seat instructions and vehicle owner's manual. It's best to have your child with you for a proper fit check.



September 27, 2025



9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



1645 W 8th St Erie PA, 16509

Contact: Kristie Gunn at
(814) 875-8844 or
Kgunn@shrinenet.org

Free Lead Testing

Fire Safety Education

and other valuable
family resources

Lots of
Giveaways

Community Partners & Resources

- Erie County Department of Health
- Voices for Independence
- Highmark Caring Place
- Community Health Net
- Erie Family Center
plus more!



**Shriners
Children's™**
Erie



Mission Minute

Shriners Children's Erie patient Abagail and her orthotist, Hannah Clark, MS, CPO, traveled to Orlando, Florida, where they received prestigious national recognition from the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (AOPA) at its National Assembly. On September 4, the pair served as keynote speakers,

sharing their story with an audience of more than 500 attendees. “It was pretty scary, I was really nervous, but I was so happy when Hannah joined me on stage to help tell my story,” Abigail reflected.

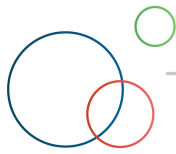
For the past four years, Clark has cared for Abigail, working closely with the POPS team and Spinal Technology to design a custom anterior open Boston-3D brace specifically for her. Abigail’s physician, Stephen Mendelson, MD, recognized that managing her severe double major curve, which included a high thoracic curve, would require a unique approach and requested a brace that was both low profile and highly effective. Unlike traditional braces, the Boston-3D applies corrective pressure on the outer side of the curve while cutting out corresponding areas on the inner side, allowing the spine to shift in the desired direction. Thanks to Abigail’s dedication to wearing the brace and the customized design, her scoliosis curve has been reduced by more than 50%, an outcome that is rarely achieved.

Coincidentally, just days before Clark learned of AOPA’s prompt, Abigail had jokingly remarked that she deserved an award for her dedication to wearing her brace. And she truly did, so Clark knew exactly who to nominate. Abigail’s journey perfectly illustrated the prompt: The symbiotic relationship between manufacturers, clinicians and patients—leading to successful fits and outcomes—is often overlooked unless it involves a high-profile case.

Within days, they found out they had been chosen. Soon after, Abigail and Clark were invited to Orlando to share their journey on the national stage. The trip also brought another milestone for Abigail and her family, it was their very first time flying on an airplane, adding to the excitement and memories of this once-in-a-lifetime experience. “To see her speak up on stage was a very overwhelming, full-circle moment. That moment was for her,” said Abigail’s mother, Shameka.

Their story demonstrates the power of collaboration—patients, providers and industry partners working together to achieve life-changing results. By celebrating Abigail’s perseverance and Hannah’s expertise, this national recognition not only highlights the impact of personalized scoliosis care but also underscores the role of Shriners Children’s Erie in advancing pediatric specialty care locally and across the country.





Facebook



Instagram