



Niko

Overcomes the Odds

Healing Emotional Pain:

How to Help
Kids Stop Self-
Inflicted Injury

When Money Gets Tight

Helping Children
Understand
Financial Woes



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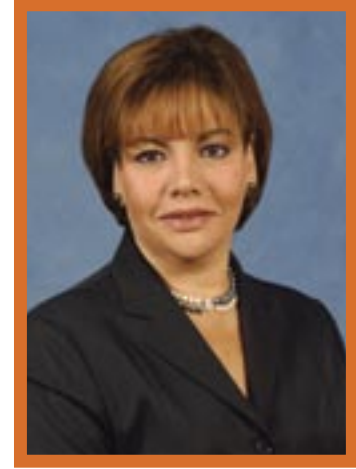


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Dear Friends,

Miracles really do happen every day. Whether a difficult operation is pulled off without a hitch or a child unexpectedly recovers from a life-threatening illness, some events happen that truly make you see life in a new way. Such is the case with this issue's miracle child.

Three-year-old Niko Addonisio was diagnosed with myocarditis, and after he was on a heart-lung bypass machine for several days, Niko's family prepared themselves for the worst. Suddenly, however, Niko began to get better, and he was home less than a month later. Read more about his incredible recovery on page 3.

Our feature article on pages 4 and 5 discusses a subject that can be frightening for parents and children alike. In rare cases, children begin to deal with emotional stress through self-injury. Find out how you can talk with your child about this concern and how Miami Children's Hospital can help.

Also included in this issue is an article with advice on a topic that is affecting everyone—the economy. Learn how to talk with your child about financial struggles that may arise and how to turn a difficult situation into a positive experience for your family.

Enjoy the autumn season, and remember that no matter what pediatric services you need, Miami Children's has high-quality programs to help put your child on the path to a healthy future.

Sincerely,



M. Narendra Kini, MD
President and
Chief Executive Officer

MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



Deise Granado-Villar, MD
Interim Chief Medical Officer and
Vice President of the Medical Staff

MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

PATIENT PROFILE:

Niko Addonisio

Overcoming the Odds

When Niko Addonisio became sick just after Thanksgiving last year, it seemed as though he had nothing more than a cold. His condition, though, quickly turned serious—leading to a diagnosis of myocarditis and dramatic, lifesaving care at Miami Children’s Hospital.

“On Saturday, he threw up in the middle of the night,” says Tracy Montes, Niko’s mother. “The next morning, he just wasn’t acting like himself, and as the day went on, he seemed to get worse. After dinner I felt his chest, and his heart was beating really fast. I’m not an overprotective parent, so when I began to worry, I immediately took him to the emergency room.”

NOT AN ORDINARY COLD

At the emergency room of a local hospital in Palm Beach County, Niko’s condition continued to decline, and medical providers couldn’t determine what was wrong. Finally, a cardiologist ordered an echocardiogram. The test revealed that Niko had myocarditis—a condition that weakens the pumping motion of the heart, leaving the body’s organs without enough blood to function.

Niko was fading fast before his mother’s eyes. She demanded that he be airlifted to Miami Children’s

Hospital. That timely decision would save Niko’s life.

“By the time he arrived, Niko had only 10 percent function remaining in his heart,” says Anthony Rossi, MD, Medical Director of the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit at Miami Children’s Hospital. Dr. Rossi and Robert Hannan, MD, cardiac surgeon at Miami Children’s Hospital, decided to put the dying little boy on a heart-lung bypass machine. The machine, designed and built by members of the hospital’s Congenital Heart Institute team, takes over the functions of the heart and lungs, allowing them to rest while healing occurs.

A TURN FOR THE BETTER

Days went by, and doctors and caregivers monitored Niko around the clock. At first, his condition deteriorated further. A heart transplant was the next step. But suddenly, Niko began to improve.

“His vital signs just kept getting better and better,” says Tracy. “Less than two weeks after he first got sick, the doctors were saying he was a miracle child.”

Without the heart-lung bypass therapy and the expert care offered at the Congenital Heart Institute, Niko’s story would have had a very



different ending. It’s the sort of care and outcome that led to the Congenital Heart Institute at Miami Children’s Hospital being ranked among the nation’s top programs for cardiology and cardiac surgery in *U.S. News and World Report’s* 2008 listing of “America’s Best Children’s Hospitals.”

As for Niko, you’re likely to find him today running around like a typical 3-year-old, enjoying the company of his mom, dad Darren and sisters Brittani, Melissa and Amber. While Niko is still taking two medications, doctors plan to gradually reduce his dependence on them so that eventually he won’t need any medicine at all.

“He loves everybody,” Tracy says. “Everyone who meets him wants to take him home. To look at him, you would never know anything was ever wrong with him. He is perfect.”

“When I thanked the doctors and nurses for saving my son, they said, ‘ma’am, we didn’t save your son—he is a miracle child.’”

—Tracy Montes, mother of 3-year-old Niko Addonisio

**FUN FACTS
ABOUT NIKO**

FAVORITE...

FOOD: pasta of any sort

TOY: baseball or basketball

MOVIE: *Finding Nemo*

THING TO DO: jump in the pool or play with the family’s Chihuahua, Munchkin



A Sile



According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 2 million people in the United States—mainly female teenagers—intentionally injure themselves every year. While self-mutilation can be a one-time, experimental occurrence, experts say this unhealthy coping mechanism can become addictive.

“Self-mutilation—particularly teens cutting themselves with razor blades or other sharp objects—is a destructive way that some kids deal with feelings such as anger, frustration, depression and shame,” says Irma Coto, Clinical Coordinator on staff at Miami Children’s Hospital. “They focus on the physical pain of cutting, and it helps them forget about the emotional pain that is building inside.”

Know the Signs

While self-injury—particularly cutting—isn’t typically viewed by experts as an attempt at suicide, it’s still a cry for help that needs to be addressed. If you see any of these signs, it might be time to discuss the dangers of cutting with your child:

- Her arms or legs have visible cuts and scars.
- She is unable to adequately explain how the cuts and scars occurred.
- She wears long-sleeved shirts or pants to hide the cuts and scars, even in the summer.

If you think your child is displaying symptoms of cutting, it’s important that you get her the help she needs. Ask your child about the injuries and see if she’ll open up to you. Let her know that there are people who can help and get support from a behavioral health professional.

“Cutting is a sign of emotional fragility, but it also can lead to medical complications that include infection, nerve damage and the spread of disease,” says Irma Coto, Clinical Coordinator on staff at Miami Children’s Hospital. “It’s critical that you get help for your child now—before it’s too late.”

WHY SOME TEENS CUT

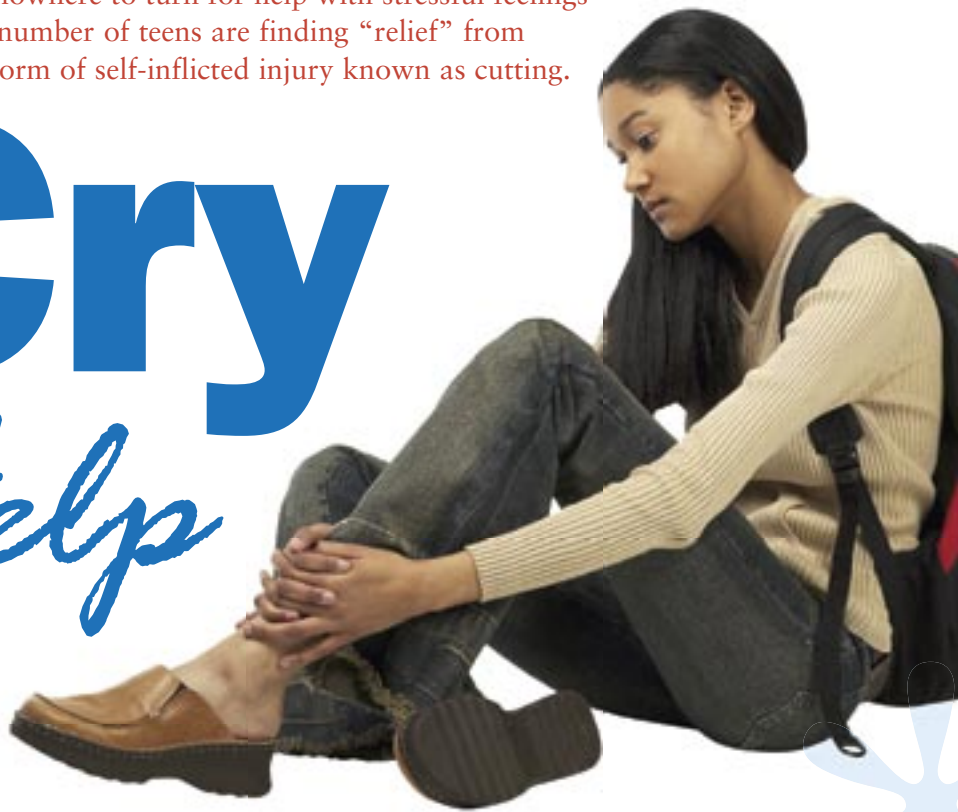
While cutting is seen by outsiders as an illogical way to deal with pain, those who perform the act say it is an attempt to control feelings they can’t handle on their own. When they don’t express their problems verbally, the emotions accumulate inside, and cutting is performed to relieve tension or to feel in control of a situation.

Cutting for the first time is usually impulsive, and the “rush” teens get from this behavior may cause it to escalate into a compulsion. As a result, the cutter can have dozens, if not hundreds, of cuts on his or her arms, legs and chest—all areas that can easily be covered by clothing.



The teenage years can be a tumultuous time for many, but they're often more difficult for those who feel as though they have nowhere to turn for help with stressful feelings or situations. Unfortunately, a growing number of teens are finding "relief" from their emotional pain with a dangerous form of self-inflicted injury known as cutting.

Don't Cry for Help



"Though the portion of the brain that needs emotional and social rewards is very active in the teen years, the part that controls impulses doesn't mature until adulthood," Coto says. "When teens don't have the capability to cope with difficult situations, they may adopt a mentality that makes cutting seem like a logical solution to pain."

However, it's deeper than that. When a person cuts compulsively, the brain begins to associate the experience with relief. As tension builds, the body begins to crave the feeling it experiences during cutting, and the urge to cut can control a person's day-to-day activities.

HIDING THE PAIN

As the marks and scars left by cutting heal, it's not uncommon for cutters to hide the slashes with long-sleeved shirts and long pants—even in the heat of the summer. Cutters often become secretive and close themselves off from their friends and family members, so parents may be the last to know that their child has a serious problem (see sidebar, "Know the Signs").

"When parents suspect their son or daughter is cutting, it's critical to talk

with the child about the problem and then reach out to professionals for help," Coto says. "Though cutting is not an attempt at suicide, it's still considered an extremely risky behavior that needs to be addressed. Parents aren't always equipped to handle this level of instability on their own."

LEARNING TO COPE

Treatment for teens who perform self-mutilation can include everything from individual and group behavioral therapy to family therapy and medication. During treatment, therapists and counselors will work closely with teens to help them learn different coping mechanisms.

"Because cutting can turn into an addiction, it can be a hard pattern to break," Coto says. "However, with guidance and support, teens can move on from this dangerous habit."

For information about the services available at the Department of Psychiatry at Miami Children's Hospital call (305) 663-6503.

Healing Past the Hurt

If you're a teen who's been experimenting with cutting, take these steps toward getting help for your problems.

- 1. TALK ABOUT IT.** While you might think that talking about cutting is hard, former cutters say that it was a relief to talk about their problems with someone. If you're not comfortable opening up to your parents, confide in a doctor, a trusted teacher or another relative.
- 2. LOCATE THE TRIGGER.** Because cutting is a reaction to an event or feeling, try to find out what triggers you to cut. Then, try to avoid situations that can lead to the trigger.
- 3. GET HELP.** Help is available, but you have to ask for it. If you go to an adult for help and don't find the solution you were seeking, go elsewhere until you get the help you need.
- 4. KEEP TRYING.** Because cutting is like an addiction, you probably won't be able to quit overnight. The emotional pain you're experiencing might only be resolved with the help of a counselor or a behavioral health professional.

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Don't Scratch That Itch!

Eczema is a common skin problem for kids, but Miami Children's Hospital can help.

Whether your child has an allergic reaction to poison ivy or your favorite laundry detergent, he or she is likely to get eczema—or rashes—at some point in time. Eczema is a broad term used to describe many different kinds of skin inflammation. The most common form of eczema is called atopic dermatitis,

but it can include numerous other conditions as well.

“Eczema is a general term used to describe skin irritation characterized by itching, redness and swelling,” says Ana Duarte, MD, FAAD, Director of the Division of Dermatology at Miami Children's. “It can be caused by any number of things—such as dust, animal dander, soaps, detergents, plants, diapers, certain fabrics (wool), metals or even extremes in weather—and symptoms can range from mild itching to severe blisters, swelling and oozing.”

TREATMENT

Fortunately, uninfected eczema is not contagious, and numerous treatment options are available. Here are some of Dr. Duarte's tips for tending to your child's eczema:

- To reduce inflammation, try an over-the-counter topical steroid cream in combination with an oral antihistamine.

- Have your child take short, lukewarm baths with non-soap cleansers.
- Use a moisturizing cream or ointment. Avoid lotions that contain fragrance.
- Keep your child's fingernails short and teach him or her to rub—not scratch—his or her skin.
- Try to make your child's environment as dust-free and hypoallergenic as possible—the less carpet and curtains, and the fewer stuffed animals, the better.
- Have your child wear loose, lightweight, 100 percent cotton clothing.

“If you try all of these things and none of them alleviates the symptoms, you should contact your child's physician or a dermatologist,” Dr. Duarte says. “There are many things we can do to help.”

For more information on eczema or to schedule an appointment with a dermatologist, call the Miami Children's Physician Referral Line at (888) MCH-DOCS (624-3627).

Convenient Care When Your Child Needs It

When you arrive to pick up your 6-year-old son from school, he tells you he doesn't feel well—he has a sore throat and cough and feels as though he may have a fever. You know he needs to see a doctor, but it is too late to make an appointment.



You can be sure your child will receive the best care available at Miami Children's Hospital Doral Center. This new outpatient facility offers late hours and walk-in service to meet your family's needs. Services available include:

- after-hours medical care for minor illnesses and injuries
- rehabilitation services
- X-ray, MRI and ultrasound
- pediatric dental services (available late 2008)

“Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all our patients, and

offering a wide range of services in the community is one of the best ways we can serve the children of South Florida,” says Al Rego, Regional Director of Ambulatory Services for Miami Children's Hospital.

Miami Children's Hospital Doral Center is located at 3601 NW 107 Avenue in Doral. Hours for Urgent Care services are 5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. For more information about available services or to make an appointment for your child, please call (786) MCH-DORAL (624-3672) or visit www.mchdoralcenter.com.

Mark Your Calendars!

The following classes are held on a monthly or quarterly basis at Miami Children's Hospital (MCH).

Please call (305) 662-8282 for further information.

Parenting Boot Camp

Parenting Boot Camp is a creative and interactive class for parents and soon-to-be parents. Facilitators assist expectant moms and dads down that unfamiliar path of life's journey called parenthood. Our goal is to help new parents learn the value and importance of interacting with their babies in ways that will ensure an attached and bonded relationship.

Highlights of this program include instruction on diaper changing, bathing, appropriate dress, crying, how to recognize when a baby is sick, feeding, developmental stages and child development activities.

New Sibling Class

This program is designed to prepare children ages 3 to 7

years old for a new brother or sister. Positive sibling skills will be presented in a fun, interactive way that teaches children about the important contributions they can make as big brothers or sisters. Please call (305) 662-8282 for further information.

Infant Massage

Infant massage is designed for children from birth to 15 months. Our hands-on method ensures you will learn the art of interactive massage to suit your baby's individual needs and developmental level. Infant massage encourages relaxation for both parent and baby, promotes longer and deeper sleeping patterns and can relieve colic symptoms, among other benefits. Please call (305) 662-8282 for further information.

Stranger Danger

This workshop, sponsored by Miami Children's Hospital and the Child Assault Prevention Project of South Florida (CAP), helps parents and children ages 5 to 12 prevent stranger danger and abduction. Children and parents

learn how to identify a stranger, child protection awareness, techniques strangers use, strategies on what to do when confronted with a stranger and self defense.

CPR Class

This course in pediatric CPR teaches parents, grandparents and caregivers how to administer CPR to infants and children. This class is available in both English and Spanish.

Child Passenger Safety

Child safety is our priority. Child passenger safety technicians will check your child's seat for defects, recalls, installation and fit. Please contact (305) 663-6800 for more information.

For a list of support groups, visit www.mch.com/patient/support_group.htm.



Among the *Best* in Pediatric Services

For families with children—including those who suffer from serious medical conditions—it can be difficult to decide where to turn for health care. Fortunately, nationally recognized pediatric services are available at Miami Children's Hospital.

According to *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best

Children's Hospitals" issue,

three of the pediatric specialty services offered at Miami Children's were recognized as being among the best in the nation. They include:

- Miami Children's heart and heart surgery program (number 13)
- Miami Children's neonatology program (number 17)
- Miami Children's neurology and neurosurgery program (number 22)

The 113 hospitals surveyed by *U.S. News & World Report* were ranked using a new methodology that consisted of a three-part blend

of reputation, outcome and care-related measures that included nursing care, advanced technology and credentialing, among other factors.

CONTINUING IN EXCELLENCE

Miami Children's also was recognized as the only children's hospital in Florida ranked for more than one subspecialty pediatric service.

"All of us at Miami Children's are exceedingly proud of these fine subspecialty programs," says M. Narendra Kini, MD, MHA, President and CEO of Miami Children's. "This much-deserved recognition is a tribute to the leadership and dedication of the physicians, nurses

and staff who have committed their lives to enhancing the health and well-being of children."

For more information about the pediatric services available at Miami Children's, visit www.mch.com.





Talking about Money Troubles

with Your Child

Skyrocketing prices at the grocery store and high costs at the fuel pumps are forcing families across the nation to rein in their spending habits. Adjustments can be challenging for all members of the family, including children. But take heart—it's all a matter of reframing the situation and turning it into a positive experience for the entire family.

Family Fun on a Budget

Looking for something entertaining to do without breaking the bank? Try a few of these enjoyable activities that have minimal costs—and bring a camera!

- Visit a park with playgrounds, fields, basketball courts or tennis courts to enjoy an afternoon of family sports.
- Go for a family bike ride.
- Grab a board game or a deck of cards.
- Throw a potluck party.
- Attend free outdoor concerts at local parks.
- Spend a Friday night at a local high school football game.
- Cook together as a family.
- Buy some crayons and coloring books and have a coloring contest.
- Pop some popcorn, rent a DVD and have a movie night at home.
- Check out free events at art galleries and museums.
- Gather pictures from your family outings and assemble a scrapbook to remember the fun you've had.

“The way you handle the situation as a parent will greatly affect the way your children handle it,” says Allison T. Siebern, PhD, who received her doctoral training from Miami Children’s Hospital. “If you are visibly anxious, the kids will become worried as well. Just remember that it is important to discuss financial difficulties in a way that allows children to feel safe and secure.”

Older children are more observant than younger ones and may already realize money is tight. They often need money for sports or field trips, so explain that these activities cost money and encourage them to take personal responsibility by mowing lawns or walking dogs in your neighborhood to help pay for them.

“Children should be told that there are financial challenges, but it will all work out,” says Sara Rivero-Conil, PsyD, who also completed her doctoral training at Miami Children’s. “For younger children, you might consider buying a special toy at the end of the school year as opposed to

providing toys all the time as treats. In the meantime, you can reward them by playing their favorite game with them.”

DETAILS OR SUMMARIES?

Determining how much information to tell children depends heavily on age. Younger children don’t need as many details because they cannot understand the situation as well as older children will. Adolescents need more explanation, and the best way to provide it is to be as upfront as possible. For a smooth adjustment, provide examples of how their lives and routines may change. Be open to any questions they have and suggest ways they can help.

FAMILY VALUES TAKE CENTER STAGE

Now is an ideal time to teach your kids what matters most in life—enjoying time together as a family.

“Not all activities require spending lots of money,” Dr. Rivero-Conil says. “Think of an activity everyone can enjoy that doesn’t cost as much. This will help children redefine what fun is, in addition to instilling positive family values.”



A Community of Giving

While many people would like to benefit worthy causes, they often feel that providing a small contribution is not enough. However, the Miami Children's Hospital Foundation knows that every penny makes a difference.

Anyone at Miami Children's Hospital Foundation will be the first to tell you there is no such thing as an insignificant contribution. Even through small donations of time or financial assistance, you can help those in need in a way that fits your pocketbook and lifestyle while revealing what is important to you.

Miami Children's Foundation is blessed with caring people in a community that extends beyond geographical boundaries. These people always find unique ways to provide contributions of money, time and ingenuity. In honor of these individuals, we wanted to share some of their ideas with you.

- **AVENTURA MALL FOUNTAIN.**

Once a month, Joanne Bogdon-Diaz collects a trunk full of coins donated from the "wishes" of those who visit the mall fountain. After polishing and cleaning the coins, Joanne has happily announced that over the course of the last 10 months, the total amount of these coins exceeds \$5,000. We bet that's close to the Trevi Fountain's amount!

- **ZU GALERÍA.** An art exhibit was held recently at a local gallery whose management kindly offered to provide a percentage of the proceeds to the Foundation.

- **KB TOYS.** This franchise seems to deliver truck-loads of the newest and most in-demand toys to the Foundation's front door every month. When they arrive, we immediately call Miami Children's Child Life Services staff, who come

to our door with several wagons to quickly rush the new toys over to the hospital's playroom. They are always greeted by the children with glee.

- **FIU.** The annual dance marathon and canister drive hosted by FIU students continue to amaze us. The dedication and commitment of these students through months of preparation is all done to benefit the hospital and Foundation.
- **MY GYM.** The Aventura branch wanted to celebrate its 25th anniversary by giving something back, and we were thrilled to be their beneficiaries. This fantastic My Gym team offered a donation of over \$1,000.
- **HAWKES BLUFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.** The fifth graders at this

school sold "Enjoy the City" coupon books to raise money in memory of a student who passed away last year. The students unanimously decided to make Miami Children's Hospital Foundation the exclusive beneficiary of the \$5,000 raised in his honor.

When you feel you have nothing to offer, just think about these creative people and their ideas, none of which could be considered small by any means. These examples of a few wonderful partners—who so generously give of their time and support—hopefully give you an idea of what others are doing to help the hospital and will get your creative juices flowing.

The Foundation's grassroots event team—consisting of Ann Lyons, Vice President of Programs and Donor Relations for MCHF; Jamie Holt, Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations for MCHF; Joanne Bogdon-Diaz; and Melissa Bonafonte, Web and Research and Web Design Coordinator for Miami Children's—meets weekly to discuss the many suggestions that come our way. This team is ready and happy to help you with any ideas you may have. And remember—all ideas are good ideas.



Foundation Events Recap



2008 Diamond Ball and Private Concert

A star-studded concert following a black-tie dinner on Saturday, October 4, at the AmericanAirlines Arena featured such superstars as Beyoncé, Smokey Robinson, Gloria Gaynor and Ethan Bortnick, a 7-year old piano prodigy who has appeared on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *The Oprah Show*.

2008 Diamond Ball and Private Concert Pre-Launch Luncheon

The luncheon was held August 27 at the atelier of renowned fashion designer Rene Ruiz, in conjunction with the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce Pillar Trustees. Patricia Cornish, Vivian Mas and Bibiana Murgado, Co-Chairs of the Diamond Ball, welcomed guests as they shopped and dined. Ruiz contributed 10 percent of all of the day's sales to MCHF.



MCH Corporate Golf Invitational Raises Over \$140,000

A total of 144 golfers hit the greens at the Miccosukee Golf and Country Club on Friday, June 13. Over \$1.5 million has been raised during the 26 years this annual event has taken place with the support of many hospital vendors. Pictured here are the first-place winners from FMA Construction.

Aflac

Founded as a family business, Aflac is motivated by a strong sense of corporate citizenship and a desire to support worthy causes. What better way to convey a sense of family than by adorning Aflac's iconic mascot in holiday garb and making it available to the public to help children fight cancer? Proceeds in the amount of \$5,518.55 from the sale of the 2007 holiday ducks were presented to MCHF by Cecilia Kolstad, District Sales Coordinator for Aflac.

Veronica and Carlos Ponce visit and tour Miami Children's with Lucy Morillo, MCHF President, and Ann Lyons, Vice President of Programs and Donor Relations.



Amerigroup Visits Radio Lollipop

On June 14, Amerigroup Provider Services stopped by Radio Lollipop for a fun-filled morning of visiting and entertaining patients with activities, including a special guest appearance from Mr. Potato Head.



Enterprise Summer Car-nival

Enterprise Car Sales, a local Children's Miracle Network sponsor, hosted a used car event and raised \$500 for Children's Miracle Network. Thank you to Deborah Friday for coordinating Enterprise's fundraising activities.



UM Fraternity Raises Funds for Children's Miracle Network

The members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity at the University of Miami raised \$11,000 for Children's Miracle Network during their annual Paddy Murphy Week, which included penny wars, an auction and a concert.

My Gym

Every day, the My Gym Aventura staff works (and plays) with truly amazing children, watching their self-esteem build as they accomplish tasks they never thought possible. Since the staff members devote themselves to celebrating children and their many accomplishments, the My Gym team decided to give back to the community by partnering with MCHF to help the children who need it most. This wonderful event resulted in a donation to MCHF in the amount of \$1,001.44.

MCHF Annual Fundraising Campaign

MCHF employees have once again devoted their talent, time and treasure to raising funds for Miami Children's. The 2008 campaign raised over \$27,000, and the best news is that the funds raised by the hospital and MCHF employees totaled over \$66,600. Funds will go toward making the hospital's lobbies more child-friendly. Thanks to all!



MCHF Appreciation Week

Foundation employees were busy scooping ice cream for all MCH employees at the Foundation building and ambulatory locations. Ice cream sundaes were served to recognize and thank all MCH employees for their dedication.





**MIAMI
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL®**

We're here for the children

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BEING RECOGNIZED FOR A JOB WELL DONE
IS SOMETHING YOU NEVER OUTGROW.



In *U.S. News & World Report's* 2008 listing of "America's Best Children's Hospitals," Miami Children's Hospital's pediatric specialty services were ranked among the best in the nation. The only licensed specialty hospital in South Florida *exclusively* for children, Miami Children's was also the only children's hospital in Florida recognized in more than one subspecialty category, including our heart and heart surgery program, our neonatology program and our neurology and neurosurgery program.

With a medical staff of more than 650 physicians and over 2,400 employees, Miami Children's is renowned for excellence in all aspects of pediatric medicine. And with more than 40 pediatric specialties and subspecialties, and Florida's only free-standing pediatric trauma center, Miami Children's is the hospital more families turn to in Florida.

In other words, when it comes to being there for the children, we've really done our homework.



3100 S.W. 62nd Ave., Miami, FL | 305-666-6511 | www.mch.com

Miami Children's Hospital is a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.