



SPRING 2021

Connections

Bringing you closer to the lives you help change



**Gillette
Children's**
Specialty Healthcare

Your Support Relieves Financial Pressure for Families

When Sarah and Jason Pleet's daughter, Amelia, was diagnosed with a rare condition called multiple hereditary exostoses, it wasn't their first time receiving the news that their child had a complex medical condition. Their son, Isaac, had been diagnosed with craniosynostosis just after birth. While insurance covered part of Isaac's care at their local hospital and clinic, their high deductible and out-of-pocket maximum left the couple struggling with a mountain of medical debt.

"We pinched pennies for nearly three years trying to pay off our debt to the hospital and clinic," says Sarah about Isaac's care. "When Amelia arrived in 2010, we were still paying off medical debt, but were in a bit better circumstance. Still struggling, but we could manage."

Shortly after, they received news of Jason's job loss—and facing an impossible financial situation, they filed for bankruptcy. Two years later, the Pleets had just begun to regain their footing when just before Christmas, Jason felt a bump on three-year-old Amelia's shoulder, which eventually led to her diagnosis.

Multiple hereditary exostoses is a rare bone disease characterized by growths of multiple

osteochondromas—benign overgrowths of cartilage and bone. Recently, one of the tumors started wrapping around the blood supply to Amelia's brain, so the Pleets were referred to the experts at Gillette for surgery.

“Because of the Gillette Assistance Program, we can focus on being a family, enjoying our children and giving them a better childhood. Thank you for supporting such a wonderful program that gives back to families in need of support.”

— Sarah Pleet

In addition to the stress of preparing for a difficult surgery, the cost of care weighed on the Pleets. They were relieved to discover that they qualified for the donor-funded Gillette Assistance Program: “I can't even put into words how much the Gillette Assistance Program means to our family,” says Sarah. “To remove that stress of the financial burden for medical care off the shoulders of the parents means we can focus more on the recovery of our child as well as our emotional well-being.”

Continued

Although Gillette works with many private and public insurance providers, not all insurers cover all the services provided—and some families have high deductibles, high copayments or no coverage at all. Through the generosity of donors like you,

Gillette can offer assistance to help cover these costs. Each year, hundreds of families like the Pleets can be relieved of these financial pressures, so they can simply focus on caring for their child.

Your gift eases the financial burden of families, relieving stress so they can focus on their child's health. Throughout the pandemic, donor support has allowed Gillette to meet the increased need for financial assistance—a need that will continue to rise in the months ahead.

Donate today and ensure this important program continues to reach families in need.



Featuring
Tori Bahr,
MD, FAAP

In our **Three Questions** series, we ask a Gillette staff member a series of questions that give you an inside perspective on our mission and work.

1. Why is it so important that Gillette offers support to patients and families as they transition from pediatric to adult care?

Transition is a difficult time for all people—becoming an adult means there's a lot to learn and a lot of responsibility to take on. For our patients, there's an even greater hurdle as they often have to navigate a whole new system. What I think is so exciting about transition is really trying to figure out how to empower our patients to take control of their health care, be independent where it's appropriate and minimize the risk that can come along with this time.

Helping patients during this time of transition is important—first in terms of safety—but also to foster independence and support our patients in following their dreams.

2. How do you decide when an adult patient needs care at Gillette versus another provider in the community?

It's a conversation. It's a lot of between-visit discussions with their provider about where the patient will get the best possible care. For certain

conditions, because of our expertise, that may be here at Gillette. What we do know is that as they grow up, every patient will receive at least some care outside of Gillette, because we're a children's hospital that provides some adult services. Being able to partner effectively helps us ensure the best care for our patients as they age.

Because of our collective knowledge about rare diseases, we have a duty at Gillette to help educate our adult partners in the community to feel comfortable caring for our patients, and to provide a resource so they know how to ask for help if they need it.

3. What do you find most rewarding about your work and being part of the community at Gillette?

I feel so fortunate to be a storyteller for families. I get to hear about a patient's journey over their childhood, to hear their history—and then I get to share those stories with community partners to help patients find the best care. I'm grateful that I get to see patients for an extended period to make sure the transition is going well—until families really feel like they're confident with their team. It isn't a one-time visit; it's building continuity of care. I feel lucky to be able to make those connections.

The coolest thing about Gillette is that it's not just about your surgery or your diagnosis in this specific point in time, it's about thinking about you as a human being over your lifetime—what are the things you need and how can we help you be successful? It's focused on how we can help you achieve whatever it is you're working toward.

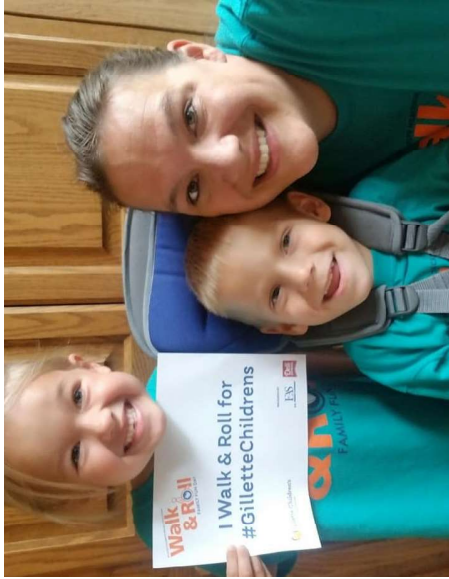
Fundraising: A Family Affair

Megan Clausnitzer remembers seeing the big smile on her son Harrison's face. They were at Gillette's annual Walk & Roll event when he saw a girl zoom by in a fancy power wheelchair and said, "Mom, someday that will be me!"

Harrison has been a Gillette patient for most of his life, since just three months. He and his family have been proud participants in the Walk & Roll event for the past three years and see their fundraising efforts as an opportunity to give back to the Gillette community. "I think as a family we've been so blessed," says Clausnitzer. "Gillette provided a Firefly Scoot mobility rider for Harrison at one point, and it's nice to have a way to give back to other families."

Team Mighty Mo and Heroic Harrison—co-led by Harrison and his cousin Molly, who is also a Gillette patient—has raised nearly \$3,000 dollars over their past three years of participating in the event. Clausnitzer credits their fundraising success to using social media and sharing their family's story online through pictures and videos.

Peer-to-peer fundraising—the kind that supports Gillette's Walk & Roll event—is an extraordinarily effective way for anyone to make a difference.



According to a study by research group YouGov, 39% of Americans say they've donated to charity based on a personal request from a friend or family member.

Sharing your connection to Gillette may just inspire someone else to give. As an experienced fundraiser, Clausnitzer encourages everyone to try it out: "Get involved! It's such a great place to be able to give back to—you're helping kids be kids!"



There are many options for you to start fundraising for Gillette!

- 1** Fundraise now for tickets and other prizes for the Mauer and Friends Kids Classic. Learn more: gillette.mn/homerun
- 2** Gather a team for the Walk & Roll: Neighborhood Edition. Learn more: gillette.mn/walkroll
- 3** Create your own fundraiser any time for a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion. Learn more: gillette.mn/fundraise

Honor or remember a loved one.

This gift is:

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please send a letter informing the honoree of my gift:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



You help Gillette patients like Amelia through your support!

View a list of all honor and tribute gifts at gilletechildrens.org/tribute

