



2022

ANNUAL REPORT | JULY 2021-JUNE 2022







Lisa Carter, NE-BC, FABC

A note from Lisa Carter

President, Southern Region, Ballad Health

Despite all the challenges posed throughout the past few years, Niswonger Children's Hospital remained resilient by continuing to care for children and families across the Appalachian Highlands.

There is no doubt the COVID-19 disease 2019 pandemic made the jobs of our team members and caregivers more difficult, but they all rose to the occasion. They met the moment and did what was necessary to ensure children in need could still come to Niswonger Children's Hospital and receive the same high-quality care we are known for delivering.

From working extra shifts to learning new safety protocols, our team members stepped up. And for that, I am so grateful. I continue to be inspired each day by their dedication and commitment to serving the children and families in our region.

While life outside the hospital seemed to be put on pause as COVID-19 quickly spread through our communities, the important work at Niswonger Children's Hospital continued uninterrupted.

We treated more than 15,000 pediatric patients in our emergency room, and we cared for more than 700 infants in the NICU and 640 pediatric ICU patients. Our team performed more than 2,500 pediatric surgeries and 4,500 outpatient cancer treatments. Niswonger Children's Hospital saw patient numbers roughly equal to — and sometimes even exceeding — the 2019 fiscal year.

I know those might sound just like numbers, but each one represents a child in need. And because of Niswonger Children's Hospital, those children and their families were able to receive care close to home rather than traveling outside the region. That is something we can all be proud of.

As we have always done, Niswonger Children's Hospital treats all children regardless of their families' ability to pay, but that also means we rely on the support of donors and community partners to continue our mission. Because the pandemic forced us to cancel our normal in-person events during 2020, we had to rethink our approach to fundraising,

and our team at Ballad Health Foundation has done a tremendous job of adapting to the situation. Our community has continued to faithfully support Niswonger Children's Hospital through their generous donations, and for that, we are so thankful!

Finally, I want to share some of our exciting plans for the future. Since our goal is to meet our region's children where they are, Ballad Health has committed to developing a regional pediatric network of care.

In October 2020, we took a huge step towards that goal by opening the J.D. Nicewonder Family Pediatric Emergency Department at Bristol Regional Medical Center. In October 2022, we opened the pediatric emergency department at Indian Path Community Hospital in Kingsport. We are also working on an expansion of our Level III NICU at our main campus in Johnson City.

This past year, we also recruited two new pediatric surgeons to the region and welcomed the new CEO of Niswonger Children's Network, Mr. Chris Jett, as I moved into a new leadership role. When we began the search for the next CEO for the Niswonger Children's Network, we knew we wanted to find someone who would help us grow and develop the network across the Appalachian Highlands, and Chris has every qualification we were searching for. We were so impressed with his previous achievements, and we know his knowledge and expertise will help us reach our goals to provide quality healthcare to every child and family in our region.

There is truly no greater gift than being able to help a child in need, and I am so grateful to be part of a health system committed to supporting the future of children's healthcare in the Appalachian Highlands.

Lisa Carter, NE-BC, FABC
President, Southern Region, Ballad Health



Welcome CEO Chris Jett!

Christopher Jett, CEO

Christopher Jett, an experienced healthcare executive with more than 14 years of experience, has been named chief executive officer of the Ballad Health Niswonger Children's Network. He began his role in July.

Jett comes to Ballad Health from USA Health Children's and Women's Hospital in Mobile, Alabama, where he has spent the past 13 years of his career. For the past six years, he served as hospital administrator at the facility, heading several projects during his tenure, including the creation of an OB/GYN Evaluation Center and Women's Complex Care Unit.

Additionally, Jett oversaw the construction of a pediatric emergency department and postpartum unit, while consistently recruiting physicians and optimizing operations across the facility.

"I'm very proud of the work I've done so far in my career and am thankful that I've gotten to work with some incredible teams over the years," Jett said. "I'm excited to get to work in the Appalachian Highlands, because what the Niswonger Children's Network is doing aligns with my personal values of ensuring access to quality healthcare for every child. I believe the future is definitely bright for our children - which means it's brighter for us all."



Welcome CMO Seth Brown!

Seth Brown, CMO

Dr. Seth Brown, a Mountain City, Tennessee, native joined the team at Niswonger Children's Hospital 14 years ago and has since provided life-saving treatment as a pediatric emergency physician. This past year, Dr. Brown was named chief medical officer at Niswonger Children's Hospital.

The fact that he lives and works here in Northeast Tennessee near his hometown, though, wasn't a difficult decision for him to make.

"During my training my wife and I left the area for my residency and fellowship, but it was always in our hearts to come back home," says Dr. Brown. "It's a great area where we are able to do a lot of good for kids and their families. We love it here."

Though he sees children in serious situations every day, Dr. Brown says he will never forget the reaction of the mother of one patient who he was able to diagnose and treat, confirming that this is the job he was meant to do.

"When we told the mom we found what was wrong, she broke down in tears," he recalls. "Then she hugged me, all because she was so thankful we were able to find out what was wrong with her child."

Seeing relief on parents' and kids' faces is what makes it all worthwhile. "To be able to be there for these families is truly a blessing," he says.

We are blessed to have Dr. Brown take on this new role for Niswonger Children's Hospital and the Ballad Health Niswonger Children's Network. He will continue to lead our team and make an incredible impact in health care for the children in our region.

Niswonger Children's Hospital welcomes two distinguished pediatric surgeons



Brad Feltis, MD, PhD



Michael Allshouse, DO

To enhance pediatric surgery and trauma capability for the Appalachian Highlands, Niswonger Children's Hospital and East Tennessee State University successfully recruited two distinguished pediatric surgeons to the region this past year.

Michael Allshouse, DO, and Brad Feltis, MD, PhD, joined the team at Niswonger Children's Hospital and the faculty at ETSU's Quillen College of Medicine in May 2020. Together, the pair has extensive experience in pediatric trauma care, pediatric general surgery and fetal surgery.

Having Allshouse and Feltis on the team also marks the first time the Appalachian Highlands region will benefit from having three pediatric surgeons, providing the capability to enhance surgical programs and trauma services for children. They joined Dr. Lesli Taylor in the Division of Pediatric Surgery at ETSU, and Feltis was selected to serve as the division director of the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine's Division of Pediatric Surgery.

The physicians were recruited through a joint effort between ETSU and Ballad Health in an ongoing effort to attract highly qualified specialists to support and enhance current programs, as well as to provide previously unavailable pediatric surgical services to the Appalachian Highlands.

The recruitment is also part of an effort to enhance the training of physicians and clinical professionals in the field of children's healthcare, which is supported by Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee and the Tennessee Legislature's proposed budget to create additional faculty positions at the Quillen College of Medicine.

Allshouse most recently served as the medical director of the pediatric surgery and trauma programs at Valley Children's Hospital in Madera, California. During that time, he also served as an associate clinical professor for the Department of Pediatrics at the University of California San Francisco.

Allshouse, who lived in the region previously, earned his undergraduate degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his residency in surgery at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Oakland, California.

Feltis most recently served as a pediatric surgeon and a partner of Pediatric Surgical Associates in Minneapolis. He also served as the Carol Ann Wells Chair in Fetal Surgery and director of the Midwest Fetal Care Center in Minneapolis. Feltis earned his undergraduate degree, his medical degree and his doctorate degree in surgical science from the University of Minnesota.

Both Feltis and Allshouse began practicing at Niswonger Children's Hospital and ETSU in July 2020.



“It’s been like a roller-coaster—the ups and downs, the twists and turns, flips and rolls—but we got through the storm and got to the end of the rainbow. Our faith and Niswonger Children’s Hospital got us through it.”

Paul Mullins

Father of Niswonger Children’s Hospital patient
Hadleigh, 5



Mykah



Mykah

Kingsport, Tennessee

Brain tumor - polycystic astrocytoma

In 2019, 6-foot, 2-inch, 220-pound Mykah was an athletic football and lacrosse player five weeks into his sophomore year in high school when his world stopped.

His mom Miranda recalls he was in the process of healing from a recent knee surgery to repair a football injury when she noticed that Mykah seemed uncoordinated and started dropping things. His left hand was falling asleep often, his left side seemed weak and his left eye wasn't following.

The pediatrician ordered an MRI, and the news was devastating: Mykah had a cancerous orange-sized tumor in his brain. He was immediately airlifted to Memphis where he had surgery to remove the tumor. While the surgery was successful, it left him with complications, including speech, vision and mobility issues along with violent tremors in his left arm and leg.

After 11 days in critical care, he returned to East Tennessee where he spent another 52 days in the hospital before he could go home.

"The great thing for us was having a St. Jude Children's Research Hospital affiliate at Niswonger Children's Hospital, because they could do the scans and bloodwork and send them in instead of us having to drive nine hours to Memphis," says Miranda.

It also was helpful that Mykah could begin speech, occupational and physical therapy at Indian Path Rehabilitation Center, part of the Niswonger Children's Network, just 15 minutes from his home in Kingsport.

"His therapists have become family to us, and the relationship with them is amazing," says Miranda. "They bring Mykah joy and laughter and show him he's still in there, strong and mighty, and will one day walk again."

"They help me as mom, too, and teach me how to navigate a new normal with a child who is sick. They just walk with me and say, 'We're going to hold your hand; we're not going to let you fail.'"

Mykah was excited to be chosen as the first Children's Miracle Network Ambassador for Niswonger Children's Hospital. As the Champion Child, Mykah helped raise money for hospitals and medical equipment and awareness for the Children's Miracle Network efforts. Miranda says he also hopes to share his faith through the story of his journey, as she does on the Facebook page she created called "Prayers for Mykah."

Mykah's journey is far from over, but Miranda says she prays daily that God will heal him, and thanks Him that all along the way He has put the right people in place to help her son.

Harper and Kennedy

Johnson City, Tennessee

NICU twins

“From the first day we found out we were pregnant, my husband and I were in complete shock,” their mother, Jill says. “Twins do not run in either of our families. I thought to myself, ‘How am I going to be able to care for two babies at one time?’”

Around the time Jill discovered she was pregnant with twins, her mother was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and had 18 to 24 months to live. The family went with her to her first chemo treatment on Jan. 16, 2018, and the next day, Jill went into labor at 28 weeks.

“I was rushed to Niswonger Children’s Hospital, and I didn’t know what was going on,” she says. “I didn’t even know what Niswonger Children’s Hospital was until that day. That’s when our lives changed.”

Harper was born at 2 ½ pounds, and Kennedy weighed only 2 pounds. As a first-time mom of twins, Jill was scared to death.

“That’s when I met the amazing staff at Niswonger Children’s Hospital. The nurses told me it was okay to cry and that they were there for me. The occupational therapist assured me the babies wouldn’t break if I touched them. We spent 56 days in the neonatal intensive care unit. It was our home away from home.

“The doctors listened to us and answered any questions we had. The occupational therapist, speech therapist, dietitian and right down to the people who filled out the paperwork for us, went above and beyond to make us feel at home. The staff became our family.”

Jill says she treasures the fact that she was able to spend time with the babies every day while they were in the NICU. It even gave her own mom more time with her granddaughters.

“She got to hold them, and they showed their grandma how strong they were going to be,” Jill says. “I can’t express enough how grateful I am for everyone at this hospital. Even after we left the hospital, they told us we could call anytime, day or night, if we had questions. The girls are now 3 years old, and I still keep in touch with some of the nurses who cared for us all.”

To show their appreciation, every year, the Fox family donates toys at Christmas and Easter baskets in spring. Jill also has the volleyball team she coaches collect items for the hospital’s treasure box.

“I’m so glad we have the opportunity to give back,” Jill says. “I couldn’t ask for a better experience than we had at Niswonger Children’s Hospital.”





Harper and Kennedy



Ballad Health

Niswonger Children's Network

Pediatric Emergency
Department





Pediatric emergency department

in Kingsport

The Ballad Health Niswonger Children's Network Pediatric Emergency Department at Indian Path Community Hospital opened in October 2022. It features a shared entrance with the regular emergency department, a separate waiting area for families of patients and four pediatric exam rooms, as well as a dedicated pediatric-trained staff at Indian Path and telemedicine capabilities with the Ballad Health Niswonger Children's Network to provide increased access to specialized pediatric care.

"Our focus is to provide the best possible care to children in this region, right where they need it," said Chris Jett, chief executive officer of the Niswonger Children's Network. "An emergency department focusing on pediatric care ensures our clinical experts are ready to serve local families and children the moment the need arises.

"This warm and compassionate setting, designed specifically for children, will help reduce anxiety for families during an already difficult time, and the medical professionals working in this department are an ideal team, delivering quality care that is a hallmark of the Ballad Health Niswonger Children's Network."

The new space is kid-friendly with bright colors and patterns. Patients in the pediatric emergency department also have access to child life specialists to support their care and promote normalcy in an unfamiliar or potentially stressful environment by teaching through medical play and therapy.

"Visiting an emergency department can be an intimidating experience for children," said Lauren Py, MD, emergency department medical director at Ballad Health's Kingsport hospitals. "They're not just little adults - they have unique needs, which means we need medical professionals who specialize in children's health and care, as well as equipment designed for young people of all sizes, from babies to young adults."

If emergency services are needed outside pediatric emergency department hours, patients can be seen in the regular emergency department at Indian Path, as well as at the 24/7 pediatric emergency department at Niswonger Children's Hospital in Johnson City. In the event a child requires advanced care, the pediatric emergency staff has access to the full services and providers of Ballad Health and the Niswonger Children's Network, including a roster of pediatric specialists, advanced diagnostic capabilities and regionwide resources for further care.

"With the addition of this new pediatric emergency department, we're bringing a whole new level of care to Kingsport, and we're so excited to offer this service."

Strong Starts

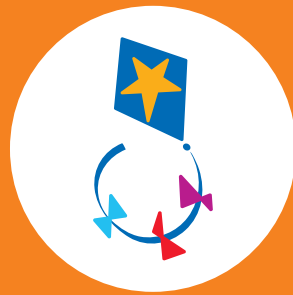
The early years in a child's life are crucial for their development, so our Strong Starts teams are committed to providing resources that will help set up new mothers, children and families for success. Each family is connected with a community health navigator who will work with them on an individual basis to ensure they are connected with the necessary resources to experience pregnancy, delivery, infancy and childhood at the optimum level of health and well-being.

The Strong Starts program is **free** and connect families with resources based on their specific needs. The program begins support with expectant mothers who are in need during pregnancy and follows the mother and child until the child's 5th birthday or until they begin kindergarten. Families can enroll in the program at any time. Strong Starts support families residing in the 21-county Ballad Health and Niswonger Children's Hospital service area in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

Resources include, but are not limited to:

- Booking doctor's appointments
- Childcare
- Early intervention
- Food assistance
- Government assistance programs
- Housing insecurity
- Postpartum support
- Referrals to therapists and specialists
- Transportation





We believe that seeing a kite lift from the ground and flutter in the breeze is a sign of hope and healing. The children and teens we serve at Niswonger Children's Hospital are the future of this region. We work every day to be the place that makes kites fly, to help and heal the young people of this region – and, ultimately, to make hope rise.





Strong Futures

At Strong Futures, we're bringing a life-changing, healing approach to addiction and mental healthcare for families. Our highly skilled Strong Futures team provides a broad array of multi-generational outpatient services and resources for families in the Northeast Tennessee region.

Our staff is driven to foster lifelong independent living for current and future generations of families in the Appalachian Highlands.

Our services and resources include:

- Collaborative provider partnerships
- Community engagement and enrichment activities
- Educational opportunities
- Family and relationship counseling
- Financial stability counseling
- Health and well-being counseling
- Independent Living Center for expectant mothers or mothers with children 9 or younger
- Individual and group counseling
- Intensive case management
- Judicial advocate
- Literacy improvement
- Now accepting: commercial insurance and cash pay
- Nurse practitioner on site
- Parenting skill education
- Referral services
- Relapse prevention services
- Two-generational, family-centered treatment
- Workforce development services

Patient eligibility

We are now accepting applications and referrals for our services. To be eligible for Strong Futures, applicants must:

- Be 18 years of age or older and be either an expectant mother, mother, or father with children under 18 at home or a parent trying to regain custody of children younger than 18
- Be able to adequately focus and fully participate in all aspects of treatment and learning objectives
- Be willing and receptive to participating in a family centered, holistic care environment that embraces a two-generation, entire-family approach
- Be willing to undergo a complete medical and psychiatric screening
- Have a substance-abuse issue, which can be combined with a behavioral-health issue





Face coverings required in this area.

Please keep 6 feet apart.





J.D. Nicewonder Family Pediatric Emergency Department

in Bristol

Bristol Regional Medical Center cut the ribbon and unveiled its new pediatric emergency department, a service developed in conjunction with Niswonger Children's Hospital to serve the children of Sullivan County and Southwest Virginia.

The J.D. Nicewonder Family Pediatric Emergency Department, which officially opened on Sept. 1, 2020, is part of a regional system of care for children, which includes pediatric medical, surgical and Level III NICU services at Niswonger Children's Hospital. A dedicated, pediatric-trained staff at Bristol Regional and telemedicine capabilities with the children's hospital provide increased access to specialized pediatric care.

"Our focus is to provide the best possible pediatric care for the children of this region," said Chad Couch, MD, president of Ballad Health's Northern Region. "A pediatric emergency department ensures we have the clinical experts and appropriate equipment readily available to serve this very important patient population."

The project is being supported by a \$1.2 million gift made in honor of J.D. and Lorraine Nicewonder, longtime supporters of Ballad Health hospitals and programs, as well as funding from Ballad Health.

The J.D. Nicewonder Family Pediatric Emergency Department features a separate entrance and waiting area for families of patients, a new triage area, nurses' station and four dedicated pediatric exam rooms. The new space is kid-friendly with bright colors and patterns.

"Visiting an emergency department can be an intimidating experience for children," said John Jeter, chief executive officer of Bristol Regional. "We hope offering a warm and compassionate setting designed specifically for children will help reduce anxiety for families during an already-difficult time. Patients will also have access to child life specialists to support their care and promote normalcy within an unfamiliar or potentially stressful environment."

On average, Bristol Regional treats close to 500 children in the emergency department each month.

"We are grateful to the Nicewonder family for championing this cause so generously," Jeter said. "Not only do children in our region have access to the best treatment available, they are able to receive care in a great new space designed with them in mind."

2022

Niswonger Children's Hospital

By the numbers

As the sole children's hospital in the region, Niswonger Children's Hospital is passionate about the health of the pediatric population in our community. We are proud to offer unrivaled healthcare services to our children and teens close to home.

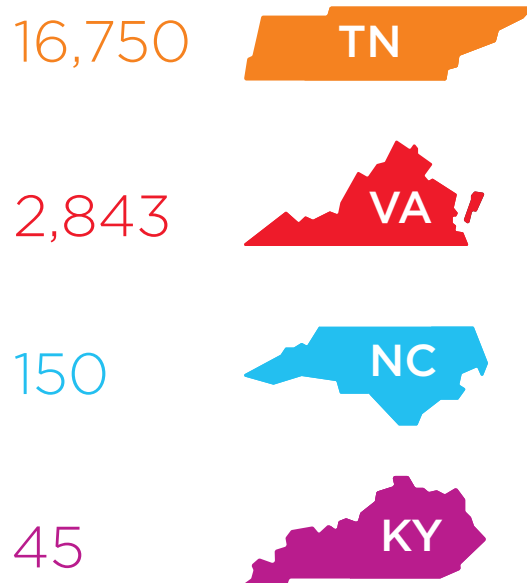
It is our goal that each patient is treated on an individual basis, based on their unique needs. We are here to help them tell their story.

Pediatric patients by age group



- 31.75% Infants
- 27.91% Little Kids
- 16.19% Big Kids
- 12.30% Tweens
- 11.85% Teens

Pediatric patients by state



18,141
Emergency Patients



36,827
Outpatient Visits



3,235
Inpatient Care Admissions



18,446
Total Inpatient Days



2,972
Pediatric Surgeries



735
NICU Patients



451
PICU Patients



3,617
Pediatric Oncology
Outpatient Treatments



5,453
Orthopedic Clinic Visits



389
Pediatric Orthopedic Surgeries



2,110
St. Jude Outpatient Visits

29 Counties served

Niswonger Children's Hospital offers more than 20 specialty services provided by pediatric-trained physicians and nurses. We serve the 29-county region in our state-of-the-art facility specifically created for the care and healing of children.

16,750 Tennessee



Pediatric Patients by County

Inpatient/Outpatient

Carter	188/1,910
Greene	215/1,648
Hawkins	129/831
Johnson	66/251
Sullivan	518/3,474
Unicoi	62/455
Washington	517/6,037
Other areas	40/409

2,843 Virginia



Pediatric Patients by County

Inpatient/Outpatient

Bristol	54/149
Buchanan	34/33
Dickenson	35/70
Lee	54/205
Norton	10/44
Russell	76/298
Scott	44/355
Smyth	79/159
Tazewell	35/68
Washington	127/428
Wise	114/288
Wythe	10/17
Other areas	15/42

150 North Carolina



Pediatric Patients by County

Inpatient/Outpatient

Ashe	2/3
Avery	7/30
Buncombe	5/7
Mitchell	4/30
Yancey	2/21
Other areas	8/31

45 Kentucky



Pediatric Patients by County

Inpatient/Outpatient

Harlan	11/16
Letcher	1/3
Pike	0/3
Other areas	3/8

Through Children's Miracle Network and Ballad Health Foundation campaigns and events, the people of the Appalachian Highlands region helped raise more than

\$11,600,000

3,266 Donors during fiscal year 2022.

1,147 Ballad Health team members supported Niswonger Children's Network.

241 Heroes of Hope members who contribute \$1,000 or more a year to Niswonger Children's Network.

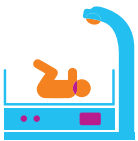
Funds were used for the following programs:



Niswonger Children's Hospital fourth and fifth floor expansion



Mama Roo



Infant radiant warmers



Giraffe OmniBeds



Child Life program



Children's Resource Center



Pediatric oncology patient assistance



Fetal monitors

Community events

We rely on the generosity of our community to help provide specialty services for the children of our region. Throughout the year, Ballad Health Foundation, in conjunction with Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, hosts a number of fundraising events to help support Niswonger Children's Hospital.



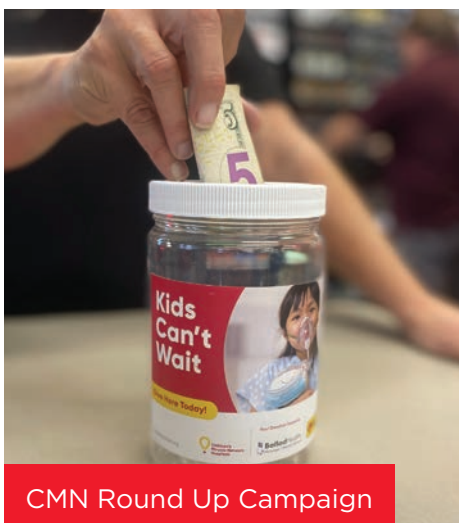
Radiothon



Play Yellow



Community Donations



CMN Round Up Campaign

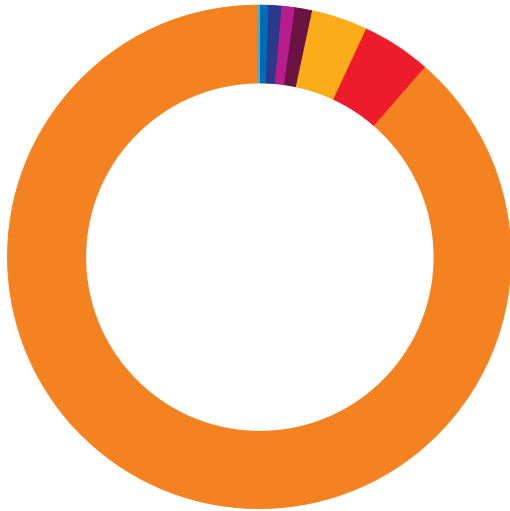


Scarecrow Skedaddle



Funds by source

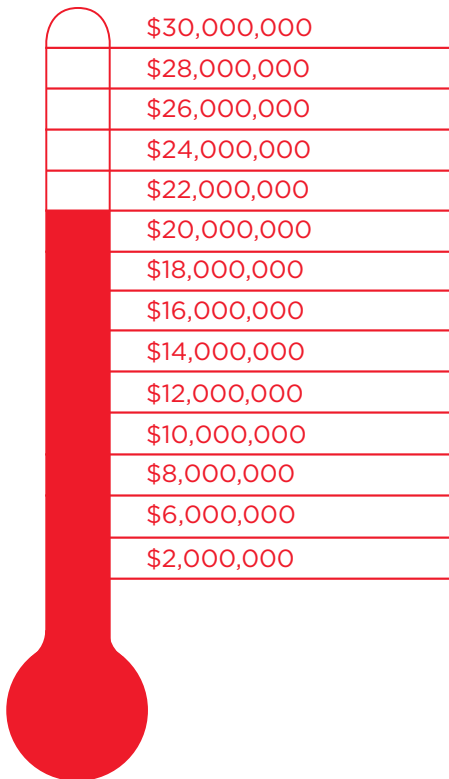
Fundraising programs by dollar amount



- \$9,655,935 Major gifts
- \$494,312 Radiothon
- \$394,372 Children's Miracle Network Campaigns
- \$114,100 Champion Chevrolet Raffle
- \$99,399 Planned giving
- \$88,555 Events
- \$50,053 Team Member Giving Campaign
- \$29,085 Direct mail

Hope Rising Campaign

As of 6/30/2022




We were able to kick off the campaign with a generous donation of \$7 million from J.D. Nicewonder.



Hope Rising Campaign

Hope Rising is a comprehensive capital campaign to raise \$30 million to expand and enhance facilities and services for children and families in the Appalachian Highlands.

- The Hope Rising campaign will provide support toward completing a vertical expansion of Niswonger Children's Hospital and provide space for a perinatal and neonatal pediatrics institute.
- The convenient clinical care space will include the newest neonatal intensive care unit in Tennessee and Virginia. With a family-friendly approach, the NICU will offer private spaces for parents and siblings, while giving parents the ability to stay continuously with their baby.
- Newly reconfigured spaces will provide convenient, coordinated care between multiple physician specialists, easing the time and stress required for parents to shuttle children with complex illnesses to various locations for medical appointments.
- Hope Rising will also benefit Children's Resource Centers, Child Life programs, telehealth services and the new Pediatric Emergency Department and the Center for Women and Babies at Indian Path Community Hospital, and it will make further investments to sustain the operations of Niswonger Children's Network programs.

Hospital events

From bedside visits to community events, we strive to engage and care for our patients, their families and our community.







Niswonger Children's Hospital is Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia's only children's hospital. This 69-bed, not-for-profit facility offers a full array of emergency, primary and specialty services. Niswonger Children's Hospital provides care, diagnostics and intervention to pediatric patients including, but not limited to, the following:

- Allergy and immunology
- Cardiology
- Children's Resource Center
- Critical care
- Dental surgery
- Dermatology
- Ear, Nose & Throat
- Emergency medicine
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- General medicine for children and adolescents
- Gynecology for adolescents
- Hematology
- Hospitalists
- Infectious disease
- Neonatology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedics
- Perinatology
- Pharmacology
- Pulmonology
- Radiation oncology
- Radiology
- Surgery
- Therapy services



The St. Jude Tri-Cities Affiliate Clinic



St. Jude Tri-Cities Affiliate Clinic

The St. Jude Tri-Cities Affiliate Clinic at Niswonger Children's Hospital is a partnership between the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, East Tennessee State University Hospital, and Niswonger Children's Hospital. It is an outpatient clinic staffed by three pediatric hematology/oncology physicians, a nurse practitioner and many other clinic support team members. The St. Jude Tri-Cities Affiliate Clinic offers children and young adults the highest quality of care with compassion and dedication. We receive more than 3,000 outpatient visits annually.







For more information, please call
423.431.6111, or visit balladhealth.org/children

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