



MIAMI  
CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL®

THE MARY ANN KNIGHT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PEDIATRICS  
FOUNDED AS VARIETY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

We're here for the children

# CHILDREN'S HEALTH TALK

A Miami Children's Hospital Community Update, January 2006

## SOFIA'S SECOND CHANCE

Marta and Carlos Blanco rang in 2006 with happy memories of a dramatic New Year's morning just two years before. The dawn of the first day of 2004 marked the end of a dark chapter in the life of the Miami family. It was then that little Sofia Blanco, then 4, awoke after a battle with an aggressive cancer that threatened to claim the now carefree 6-year-old.

The life and death drama began in December of 2003 when Marta noted an enlarged lymph node in Sofia's groin during bath time. The child's pediatrician indicated that the lump was caused by an infection. But days later, Sofia's health was rapidly declining as antibiotic treatments failed to curb the apparent infection. Sofia was admitted to an area hospital, lethargic and with a high fever and labored breathing.

While hospitalized, Sofia's condition worsened dramatically and doctors began to suspect they were battling a very different foe: cancer. But time was needed to obtain a definitive diagnosis and Sofia's hours were clearly numbered. In late December 2003 the critically ill child was transferred to Miami Children's Hospital where she could receive extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a heart and lung bypass therapy that would enable Sofia's failing heart and lungs to rest and recuperate while a diagnosis was made.

At Miami Children's, Dr. Enrique Escalon, Director of the hospital's Cancer Center suspected the culprit was Non-



Sofia Blanco with Dr. Enrique Escalon,  
Director of Miami Children's Cancer Center

Hodgkin's lymphoma, a difficult-to-diagnose cancer of the lymph system. Concerned by the aggressive nature of the cancer, Dr. Escalon persuaded Marta and her father, a New Orleans-based physician, to permit the team to give Sofia chemotherapy while the child was still on ECMO. This treatment seemed the only hope for a little girl in such rapid decline.

"He asked us to take a leap of faith and we are so glad that we did," said Marta. Within days of the start of chemotherapy, Sofia was rallying. Today, she is a happy and healthy first grader who visits the Cancer Center for regular check ups.

The Cancer Center at Miami Children's Hospital – the

region's largest provider of pediatric cancer care services – matches families confronting a child's critical illness with a team of physicians, nurses and caregivers who share in their passion to restore the child's health. The doctors and other specialists understand the special needs of critically ill children and the families whose lives revolve around them, and work to create individual care plans to meet each family's needs.

"We have the experience to treat all serious hematological and oncological conditions," said Enrique A. Escalon, MD, Director of the Cancer Center and the MCH Division of Hematology/Oncology.

The Cancer Center is also active in clinical research, with more than 100 active clinical research protocols now underway. These ensure that MCH patients receive the most current treatments available.

For inpatient care, Miami Children's has a 30-bed dedicated Hematology/Oncology Unit, with colorful patient rooms specially designed to decrease the risk of infection. The hospital's ambulatory infusion center, The Living Room, provides a family-oriented, comfortable space where children can play, relax and even nap while receiving infusions.

The center also features a number of multidisciplinary teams to meet the needs of children, including a Sickle Cell Comprehensive Care Clinic, Neuro-Oncology Program, and a Bone Marrow Transplant Program.

For more information about the Cancer Center, please call 305-662-8360.

## IN MEMORY OF EVE RUTHFIELD, FRIEND OF MCH CANCER CENTER



Eve Ruthfield, devoted friend of Miami Children's Hospital

Miami Children's Hospital lost one of its most devoted friends in the first days of 2006 with the passing of Eve Ruthfield, who served for more than 20 years as President of the local chapter of the philanthropic group United Order True Sisters (UOTS). Over the years UOTS – Miami #43 has given millions of dollars to support the work of the hospital's pediatric cancer care program.

"Eve was 89 years old, but she lived life with the boundless energy of a young woman," said Robin Reiter, President of the Miami Children's Hospital Foundation. "The staffs of the foundation and the hospital have lost a true friend and our community is smaller for her passing."

Over its 47-year affiliation with Miami Children's, UOTS has provided funding to support direct patient care, equipment and facilities for the hospital's cancer program. UOTS also established a research and fellowship fund, and assisted with the funding for the hospital's Bone Marrow Transplant Center.

Mrs. Ruthfield's most enduring legacy is the hospital's annual week-long Cancer Camp, which was established under her leadership in 1991. "It was Eve's vision that children with cancer have an opportunity for fun and fellowship in a medically supervised setting. Hundreds of children with cancer enjoy a week of joyous activity each year because of her commitment," said Dr. Enrique Escalon, Director of the MCH Cancer Center.

"Eve was a staunch friend to the children and the hospital that we serve. She was one of those rare people who demonstrate how one individual can make a tremendous difference in the world. She will be truly missed by all of us at Miami Children's," said Dr. Athena Pefkarou, Associate Director of the Cancer Center and Director of UOTS Cancer Camp.

For a referral to a Miami Children's Hospital physician, please call 888-MCH-DOCS (624-3627).

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION CALENDAR

### Infant Massage (4 week series)

Wednesdays beginning on January 18

6 pm to 7:30 pm

Infant massage is designed for children ages 0 – 15 months. Our hands-on method insures that 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.

### CPR Class

Tuesday, January 31

6 pm to 8 pm

This course in Pediatric CPR teaches parents, grandparents and caregivers how to administer CPR to infants and children. Please call 305-662-8282 for further information.

### Sibshops

Monthly fun-filled sessions for siblings of children with special needs. The program provides opportunities for children to share personal feelings, experiences and concerns, while taking part in fun activities. For more information, call 305-669-7142.

### Child Passenger Safety

Child safety is our priority. Child passenger safety technicians will check your child's seat for defects, recalls, installation and fit. For more information please call the Division of Preventive Medicine at 305-663-6800.

### Emergent Language Group for Children with Autism

Thursdays

4 pm to 4:45 pm

Music therapy is used to promote language development in children with autism. For more information, call 305-666-6511 ext. 2434.

### Social Skills Group for Adolescents with Autism

Wednesdays

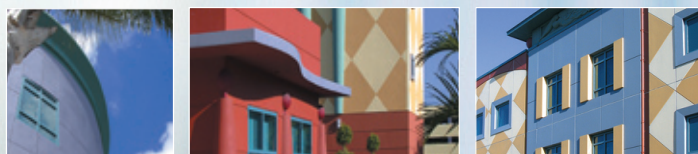
4 pm to 4:45 pm

Music therapy is used to enhance social skills among teens with autism. For more information call 305-666-6511 ext. 2434.

## THE BEST CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL INSIDE AND OUT.



Miami Children's Hospital has a new look, brighter, more colorful, and more child-friendly. We're providing true family-centered care. We're expanding our ambulatory care services, community education program and are building the largest research program in South Florida, all to help us continue to be the best. It's why we've received Magnet Designation for nursing care excellence and high scores for customer service.



We're South Florida's only licensed specialty hospital *exclusively* for children. And we have an understanding of children that no other hospital can offer. No one knows children like Miami Children's.



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