



Children's in the Community Summer 2020 Newsletter

Children's in the Community is a quarterly newsletter highlighting the work of UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's [Division of Community Health](#), and the successes of UPMC Children's community partners.

Children's Community Health Division works together with health care and community partners to ensure equity, reduce health disparities, and elevate quality of life for children and families in the communities where they live, learn, work, and play.

If you have questions about UPMC Children's Hospital's Division of Community Health or any of the articles in this newsletter, contact Anne Marie Kuchera at annemarie.kuchera@chp.edu.

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Bringing Necessary Vaccinations to the Community

As a response to missed well-child visits and immunizations due to COVID-19, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, in collaboration with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh and Morgantown, has been offering immunization clinics in Allegheny County neighborhoods. From June through August, the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile has visited 16 neighborhoods — offering vaccinations, physicals, and WIC form assistance for children at no cost to families. In addition to medical services, information and resources provided at all clinics include kindergarten registration information, food and infant formula resources and summertime activity bags provided by United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. As an exciting bonus for families, UPMC Children's Hospital Injury Prevention and Vision to Learn were present at several locations providing free bike helmets, vision screenings, and glasses for children.

Follow this [link](#) to view the remaining summer immunization dates Care Mobile Summer Immunization Clinic schedule.



Promoting Safe Outdoor Play

UPMC Children's [Injury Prevention](#) team is excited to be back out in the community, masked and socially distant. Working with the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, the Allegheny County Health Department, Pittsburgh Emergency Medical Services and River Rescue, Pittsburgh Public Schools Summer Dreamers Academy, and Citiparks Summer Food Program, the team has been providing education and resources to keep kids safe this summer. The Gismondi Foundation mobile safety van is providing home safety education and the injury prevention team is providing helmet safety education and free helmets to kids through the Kohl's Hard Head Program. This summer we participated in more than 30 events and distribute 4,000 bike helmets to children ages one to 18 years old. Over this summer, we quickly learned to adapt to safely meet the needs of our neighbors.



Connecting Families to Housing and Utility Assistance

UPMC Children's Family Care Connection (FCC) centers have expanded their services to offer public benefits enrollment in addition to community resource navigation . FCC staff assist families in the community and families of Children's Hospital patients in applying for benefits, the first of which is Allegheny County Cares Rent Relief Program. Allegheny County Cares Rent Relief program helps renters and landlords in Allegheny County apply for rental assistance and limited utility assistance. This program was created by the state of Pennsylvania in May by Act 24 and is administered by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). Managed locally by the county, FCC is one of the partners outreaching to families and facilitating application to benefits.

Sharing Reliable and Evidence-based Information

The [Pediatric Education Series](#) is a monthly, free webinar series sponsored by the Division of Community Health and the Professional Development and Education Committee of UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Nurses earn free continuing education credits.

Earlier this summer, Megan Culler Freeman, MD, PhD, Pediatric Infectious Diseases Fellow and virologist at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

discussed SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. You can tune in to the recording [here](#).

In our most recent [Community Partner Spotlight](#), clinical providers learned about key community resources to support their patients and families – United Way's 2-1-1, Allegheny County Family Support Network, UPMC Children's Family Care Connection, Just Harvest, and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Tune in to the recording to learn about support services and resources for patients and families.

Identifying Family Strengths

The [Family Strengths Survey](#) is an anonymous survey launched by the University of Pittsburgh Department of Pediatrics, in collaboration with several community partners, that recognizes and responds to family needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The information from this survey improves COVID-19 response efforts. A new version of the survey launches every Friday. People are encouraged to take the survey weekly to show how their needs are changing as the pandemic progresses.

From April 3-June 26, 6,533 responses to the survey were recorded. While some needs change from week to week, others, like help needed to support children and parents' mental and emotional health remain steady.

[Results](#) from the past 16 weeks are available online in a variety of formats, including topic sheets and infographics. The survey website also includes access to [relevant resources](#). Families can participate and continue to participate in the survey at <https://www.pediatrics.pitt.edu/family-strengths-survey>.

Helping Families Meet their Basic Needs

The [Basic Needs Fund](#) of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation was established to address families' basic needs that can be remedied with modest grants to improve life circumstances that affect children's health. It has helped families receive emergency food resources, transportation

access, and more. Now, more than ever, this fund is helping families to stretch their means, and to help them meet basic needs for items such as food, infant formula and diapers. Learn more and donate [here](#).

Vaccine Trials Coming to Pittsburgh

Hundreds of people in Western Pennsylvania will have the opportunity to participate in phase III clinical trials for vaccines against COVID-19. The trials will be led by Dr. Judy Martin, director of the Pittsburgh Vaccine Clinical Trials Unit at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and Dr. Sharon Riddler, director of clinical research at the University of Pittsburgh Division of Infectious Diseases. Adults ages 18+ can participate in the trials.

To help prepare, recruit, and retain participants and promote equity in these trials, the vaccine trial study teams have activated a Community Vaccine Collaborative. The Community Vaccine Collaborative is led by Casa San Jose, Neighborhood Resilience Project, UrbanKind Institute, and Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and a wide variety of individuals representing nonprofit organizations and agencies. The Collaborative will promote equity and help guide the vaccine trials in Pittsburgh.

A registry to receive more information about the vaccine trial is located here: <https://www.chp.edu/research/clinical-studies/general-academic-pediatrics/pittsburgh-vaccine-unit-registry>

For general information about the COVID-19 vaccine trials, please visit: <https://www.coronaviruspreventionnetwork.org/>



Community Partner Spotlight – Vision To Learn

Vision To Learn (VTL) is a non-profit organization that provides free eye exams and free glasses to kids in low-income communities through their mobile vision clinic. Since 2012, VTL has helped over 280,000 kids nationally, and nearly 5,000 kids across Western PA since late 2018. An estimated 30,000 kids in Western PA need glasses and don't have them, impacting them in school and in life. A licensed optometrist completes a non-contact eye exam, and if the child needs glasses, they will select a frame from a wide selection of styles and colors. Should the glasses get lost or broken, VTL will replace them for free at any point over the next year. VTL partners with school districts, community organizations, summer camps, and libraries across the region, and will be visiting locations throughout Western PA this summer. We are proud to partner with Vision to Learn.



***Community Health Staff Spotlight – Cheryl Krause,
Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Manager (Reprinted
with permission from Ronald McDonald House
Charities Newsletter)***

After 20 years of ensuring children in the Greater Pittsburgh Region are able to receive the health care they need, Cheryl Krause, Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Manager, is retiring.

Cheryl has worked in health care for more than 30 years. At UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, she worked as a Respiratory therapist where she was on both the transport and trauma teams as well the educator of the hospital for Respiratory Care. But she always knew she wanted to work out in the community. And that opportunity came along when the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile arrived in Pittsburgh in 2000. The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile program is a partnership between RMHC Pittsburgh and Morgantown and UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh that brings vital medical services to children in underserved communities.

As manager, Cheryl has served in many roles. In addition to overseeing the staff and medical services, she scheduled all of the community sites, handled all of the vehicle maintenance and even drove the 40-foot vehicle. Providing services to more than 1,000 kids each year, Cheryl has been instrumental in the growth of this program. Under her guidance, the

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile has increased the number of sites that it visits as well as the services it provides. In addition to offering medical services such as wellness and sick visits, it also includes health education on asthma, nutrition and injury prevention.

Before retiring, it was Cheryl's mission that the program acquires a new vehicle. In 2019, that dream became a reality. With the help of the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, the program received a new, state-of-the-art vehicle with many new features.

"Working in the community on the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile was the highlight of my career," said Cheryl. Since the "doctor's office on wheels" rolled into Pittsburgh two decades ago, Cheryl has been the only manager of the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile. "Cheryl has been the heart and soul of this program since its beginning," said Eleanor Reigel, Executive Director, RMHC Pittsburgh and Morgantown. "Her leadership has made the difference in the lives of so many children and families who are in need of these essential services."

"I am honored to be a part of this program all of these years," said Cheryl. "It was the best decision I ever made."