

A Bigger World

For many years, Mr. Robin Hood has served as a foster parent

for some of the area's most vulnerable children. However, when asked by the local social services agency if he was interested in taking on a boy with Muscular Dystrophy, Robin hesitated: he'd never worked with a child with a handicap and was not sure he was up for the additional challenges it might create. That opinion changed the moment Robin had lunch with William "JL" Perry, then age 10. Robin told the agency on the spot, "I've got to have this child."



It was love at first sight for JL and his foster father, Robin Hood.

The arrangements were made, and Robin was ecstatic. It was mid December, so Robin bought a Christmas tree for the two of them to decorate. At the last minute, however, the agency called and said they were placing JL with another family. Devastated and hurt,

Robin threw the Christmas tree out the back door. JL was equally upset and spent the next two days crying until the agency called Robin back and asked if he still wanted JL.

Finally, on December 22, 2000, JL came to live with Robin, and as he remembers it, "It was like he'd always been with me." JL shared the home with a foster brother and his beloved dog, Jasmine. "He was a sweet, sweet child," said Robin. "Everyone who ever met him fell in love with him. His personality and smile instantly drew him to others."

Although confined to a wheelchair, JL had an adventuresome spirit which Robin happily obliged.

"I wanted to introduce JL to the bigger world – to show him things and take him places so that he could learn and be happy." So they took numerous excursions to places like Alabama, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Busch Gardens and even a Caribbean cruise. The Make-a-Wish Foundation also sent JL on a trip to Disney



JL, at the keyboard, was a passionate musician.

World. His teachers thought traveling was a great idea, and they gave JL assignments to complete while he was away, such as keeping a journal, collecting coins and taking pictures with the locals.

Like most teenagers, JL loved playing video games with his friends and was seriously into music; his living room wall was lined with three electric keyboards, and he could play songs just by listening to them. In addition, JL loved church and sang in its youth choir, which was named in his honor.

Robin wanted his son to be independent, but he was also protective. A few years ago, for example, JL wanted to participate in a talent show being planned by the Virginia Youth Advisory Council (on which JL served).

(Continued on next page)



Save the Date!

forty one
A benefit for
Noah's Children

Friday, October 23, 2009
7:00 p.m.

The Country Club of Virginia

*Live music, wine pairings, heavy hors
d'oeuvres, and silent and live auctions*
\$100 per person

For more information, please contact
Peggy Wilson, Bon Secours Richmond
Foundation, at (804) 287-7309
or peggy_wilson@bshsi.org or visit
www.fortyoneevent.org.



Hope

**From the Medical Director:
Bob Archuleta, MD, FAAP, FAAHPM**

Children with life-threatening conditions and their families hold hope as a guiding principle in their decision making and daily living. The vast majority of parents of critically ill children feel it is unacceptable for physicians to avoid discussions about a poor prognosis as a way to maintain hope. Parents view timely discussions about prognosis as a key step in beginning to prepare emotionally, existentially and practically for the possibility that their child will die. Talking about prognosis and palliative treatment options does not steal hope from children and parents. In fact, research suggests there is a direct benefit between early disclosure about a child's prognosis and families' initiation of preparatory processes to help better guide them through the bereavement process.

Hope is the one thing that every child and family embrace until the very end. Determining what a child and family hope for is an essential initial step for the Noah's Children Interdisciplinary Team and a key principal of the palliative care approach, which focuses on preventing and relieving suffering and supporting the best possible quality of life. From the initial visit to see a family, we assess the existing hopes and embrace the opportunity to join the child and family in trying to realize them.

As the child's illness progresses, hopes change, and we as a team move with the family on their journey and support their changing hopes as they are redefined. The key to remember is that it is the child and family's hope. Noah's Children is simply

“Hope is the one thing that every child and family embrace until the very end.”

the champion of their hopes, and we try to build trusting relationships grounded in compassionate listening and honest sharing of difficult information.

Many parents hope for a miracle. Noah's Children hopes for the miracle as well, but we also pursue a realistic definition of hope by eliciting and establishing goals of care. An essential consideration in incorporating these inquiries is to assess where the family exists in their continuum of hope. Compassionate inquiries that help to build trust and redefine hope include: “As you think about your child's illness, what are your hopes? What are your worries? What are your fears? What are your needs? What are your wishes? What is most important to you right now?”

Although Noah's Children cannot predict the exact course a child's illness will take, we can discuss with families what we know about the end of life. We can discuss the goals of care that will foster hope for keeping a child as comfortable as possible. Noah's Children believes that hope has a very important role when life is nearing its end, and maintaining that hope is directly related to a better quality of life.

A BIGGER WORLD *(Continued from first page)*

Robin didn't want to prevent his son from doing something he loved, but he also didn't want anyone to laugh at him. Robin needn't have worried. JL took to the stage, played three songs and received three standing ovations!

JL was not only a gifted musician but also excelled in school. An honor roll student and popular with classmates and teachers, JL was named “Student of the Year” at Carter G. Woodson Middle School in 2004. When he passed away on April 1, 2008, JL was a graduating senior at Hopewell High School where again, he

made the honor roll.

In March 2006, JL caught a bad case of the flu and spent the next 30 days in the hospital. It was here, Robin said, he first learned of the services offered by Noah's Children. “It made things easier,” said Robin, “because I had someone to talk to and so did JL.”

The world lost this special young man last spring, but his memory and spirit continue to linger. “JL loved life and kept on pushing,” said Robin. “He would never give up. He taught people that just because someone is in a wheelchair doesn't limit them to staying cooped up in the house all the time.” Throughout his extraordinary life and travels, JL proved that anyone is able to explore and enjoy the bigger world out there.



JL especially loved to travel.



Elizabeth Minter

Volunteer Spotlight: Elizabeth Minter

We recently sat down with volunteer Elizabeth Minter to ask her a few questions about her experience working with Noah's Children.

How did you come to volunteer at Noah's Children?

After moving to the area about two years ago, I decided I wanted to get involved in my community. I researched organizations that worked with my interests – children and medicine – and found Noah's Children. I immediately began the process of becoming a sibling volunteer. It's an incredibly rewarding experience to help others, make new friends and make a difference for the families.

Tell us about your experience as a Noah's Children volunteer.

I have been working with one particular family for more than six months. Some of our recent special moments have included making Valentine's cakes with one of the siblings for each member of her family, and making cards to share how each one is special to her, going to Maymont's petting zoo on a warm spring day, and having dinner together to discuss the importance of school.

What three words would you use to describe Noah's Children?

Compassionate, understanding and giving.

What would you say to families deciding whether or not to enroll in Noah's Children?

Noah's Children is a one-of-a-kind organization which can truly help families in difficult times by offering supportive care. It provides families with emotional, physical and spiritual support.

THANK YOU DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Noah's Children has accomplished so much over the years because of friends like you.

Whether it's making a donation or volunteering your time, your support helps us provide quality care and services to families.

On behalf of the staff and families we serve,

Thank You!



Announcements

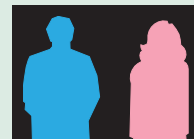
M & M (Meals and More)

Nourishment of the body through a meal that has been delivered is more than food for the body. It is a simple way to reduce the load on a family under enormous stress. If you, your church or your organization would like to be a part of this Noah's Children initiative of delivering meals to families, please contact Fran_Givens@bshsi.org or call (804) 213-0360.



Bereavement Services

Noah's Children is expanding its bereavement program to provide opportunities for those who have lost a child to come together in a compassionate environment. Losing a child is unlike any other loss, and there is a benefit for those who share this experience to spend time together. While your story is truly *your* story, sharing it with others who have lost a child can help you and your entire family. Locations and format are being finalized now so that we can begin this journey together in September. If you have thoughts about what would work best for you or your family, please contact Sallye Hardy at sallye_hardy@bshsi.org or (804) 212-6308.



Dads2Dads and Moms2Moms

Men and women often grieve differently, and now Noah's Children is able to connect dads with other dads and moms with other moms who are grieving. If you'd like to talk with someone who has lost their child in a one-on-one setting, please contact Sallye Hardy at sallye_hardy@bshsi.org or (804) 212-6308, and let her connect you with another mom or dad who has shared a similar experience.



Giving to the United Way?

If your plans include a pledge to this year's United Way campaign, please use the four-digit designation number – 3850 – to direct all or part of your gift to Noah's Children. Thank you!

Meet Our Team: Fran Givens, Volunteer Coordinator



Fran Givens

Fran Givens' personal and professional life has been one dedicated entirely to community service. When she started at Noah's Children in 2004, she assumed multiple roles that had her performing administrative duties, helping arrange funerals, transporting siblings to support groups, arranging therapy sessions and finding tutors for kids who needed extra help. As Noah's expanded its services, it became evident that many of those roles could best be met using volunteers. Together with another long-time volunteer, Peggy Graeser, Fran helped formalize the volunteer

component of Noah's Children.

Fran, who graduated from Emory and Henry College with a BA in History and English, came to Noah's Children because "I was in a place where I could look back and be grateful for all my blessings, particularly the blessing of family, good health and well-being. It seemed as if Noah's Children would be a place where I could do some serious giving back."

In addition to her current role as Noah's Volunteer Coordinator, Fran has taught school, raised two daughters and spent many years volunteering with outreach ministries and teenagers. "In the final analysis," said Fran, "my work with Noah's Children is a labor of love! I feel extremely fortunate to have been a small part of such an incredible ministry on behalf of children, young people and their families."

For more information on becoming a Noah's Children volunteer, please contact Fran at Fran_Givens@bshsi.org or (804) 213-0360.

Did You Know?

Grief and Mourning:

"Grief" or "Grieving" often is defined as the inner, deep loss or awareness that the one you love is no longer with you physically nor will they be again. "Mourning" is the outward expression of that inner pain. They accompany each other. There is no "right" or "only" way to mourn the loss of a loved one.

"The act of living is different all through. Her absence is like the sky, spread all over everything."

C.S. LEWIS, "A GRIEF OBSERVED"



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