

Your Commitment In Action At Nicklaus Children's Hospital

Sofia, Age 7
Nicklaus Children's Hospital
Patient



2025 Annual Update
Nicklaus Children's Young Ambassadors



How Your Support Is Making A Difference

We're deeply grateful to have you as part of the Nicklaus Children's Hospital community. Your generous commitment and philanthropic support through Nicklaus Children's Young Ambassadors (NCYA) is making a meaningful difference for the children and families we serve. Thank you for being an essential partner—helping raise awareness and critical funds in support of our patients and their families. Through NCYA, members have helped raise more than \$3 million dollars, providing resources for programs and services that directly enhance the care and comfort of those who rely on Nicklaus Children's.

Impact Of Your Generosity

In 2025, 44 members of the Nicklaus Children's Young Ambassadors (NCYA) generated \$336,577.34 through memberships and the Fashion Gives Back fundraiser. Of the total raised, \$235,391.38 was directed to support 16 Shark Tank projects taking place in 2025 - fueling innovative ideas and programs that enhance care and comfort for our patients and families.

Fashion Gives Back also delivered a milestone year, raising more than \$305,000 with the support of 370 attendees and 50 sponsors. This record-breaking event provided critical funding for Nicklaus Children's Hospital and demonstrated the extraordinary impact of the NCYA community.



2025 NCYA Co-Chairs Ariana Fodera
Ojeda and Jose Zubillaga.



Your Efforts At Work

Thank you for your engagement with NCYA. In 2025, your involvement created meaningful opportunities to connect with one another, elevate awareness, and champion Nicklaus Children's Hospital. Your dedication to philanthropic support and fundraising for projects and initiatives that improve the lives of the children and families we serve is truly inspiring. This impact report is a reflection of what you've helped accomplish—and a reminder of the difference you continue to make in our community.

2025 Snapshot

- 10 NCYA Leadership Committee Meetings
- 3 NCYA Mixers
- 1 NCYA Leadership Retreat
- 4 Patient Activities
- Gold Ribbon Parade Volunteer Opportunity
- Fashion Gives Back – 11/13/25
- NCYA Shark Tank
- NCYA Leadership Holiday dinner
- Coach Spo 5k Team







Fashion Gives Back

Thank you for everything you did to help make Fashion Gives Back such an unforgettable success. Hosted at the Bass Museum in South Beach, the evening truly came to life thanks to our title sponsor ALEXIS, the outstanding support of co-founder Jonathan Barbara, our generous sponsors, and the incredible philanthropic community that showed up in a big way - including all of you.

Because of your time, energy, and commitment, the night was filled with purpose and style in support of the children and families served at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. One of the most moving moments was hearing from Madison, who shared her story of hope and joy as she continues to thrive while receiving ongoing treatment for a congenital heart condition. **Together, we raised more than \$305,000 - a record-breaking total for Fashion Gives Back.**

Thank you again for helping prove that when fashion meets purpose, the impact is powerful. Your support is helping create a healthier future for the children who need us most.



[Watch the Recap Video](#)



Madison's Story of Hope, Expert Care, and Compassion shared at Fashion Gives Back

Nicklaus Children's Hospital patient Madison shared her story at the 2025 Fashion Gives Back event. Born with a birth defect of the heart called truncus arteriosus, at just 4-days old she had an open-heart surgery at Nicklaus Children's followed by numerous procedures and surgeries throughout her childhood. But that didn't stop Madison from being an active child. In fact, Madison danced from the time she was 4 until 17, when her delicate heart didn't allow her to continue the rigorous demands that competitive dancing brings. Today, Madison is following her dreams of the stage where she is now competing for the title of Miss Florida to advocate for others like her. Madison also wants to follow her passion of becoming a pediatric cardiac ICU nurse one day to care for children going through a similar medical journey.



[Watch Madison's Story](#)





Shark Tank

The Nicklaus Children's Young Ambassadors (NCYA) program allows service lines at the Hospital to submit proposals for approved projects or initiatives that are outside the scope of current funding at Nicklaus Children's Hospital that would benefit from philanthropic dollars. Due to fundraising efforts in 2024, a total of \$84,697.06 was allocated towards nine Shark Tank projects that took place in 2025.

The following nine projects were selected in December of 2024 by NCYA to receive funding allocations for projects in 2025. Details about the funding requests and project outcomes are in the subsequent pages of this annual update.

2025 Projects	Amount Allocated (FY24)
ACL Return to Sports Program	\$6,750.00
Camp Roaring Sun	\$12,000.00
Children Experiences Activities	\$6,000.00
Earlpoint Autism Detection Tool Enhancing Developmental Delay/Autism Program	\$23,000.00
Early Screening to Detect Diabetes in Pediatric Patients	\$5,000.00
ENRICH Story Time	\$4,400.00
Mental Health First Aid Kits	\$5,200.00
Rehab: Heart and Lungs, Monitoring, For All	\$6,347.06
*Outpatient Rehabilitation - Main Campus Sensory Room	\$16,000.00
Totals	\$84,697.06

*The Main Campus Sensory Room, awarded in 2024 for implementation in 2025, is on hold due to an upcoming relocation. The Rehabilitation team is moving to the Batchelor Research & Academic Pavilion, with construction expected to be completed in 2027. Once the new space is ready, the funds will be used to build a dedicated sensory room and purchase equipment to support patients' needs.



ACL Return to Sports Program

Since 2014, Nicklaus Children's Hospital orthopedic surgeons have been determining Return to Sport clearance after Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) reconstruction surgery by using the results of the ACL Return to Sports (RTS) test administered by the sports physical therapists. This successful collaboration has led to hundreds of South Florida adolescent athletes returning to sports safely and successfully. However, current research has identified a missing component in late-stage rehabilitation and return to sport testing for ACL-R athletes. In these athletes, simple tasks require more brain power, known as neural compensation. If an athlete heavily relies on high brain activity during unplanned movements, they are at an increased risk for coordination errors and therefore noncontact ACL injuries. This Shark Tank project allowed all nine sports physical therapy outpatient centers to provide the gold standard in neurocognition rehabilitation in order to safely return adolescent athletes back to sport while minimizing future injury risk.

Funding Utilization

This project funding allowed for nine BlazePod PT Bundles purchases to supply each of the Sports Physical Therapy outpatient centers. Each bundle included 6 pods with 4 different attachment options which is ideal for unique placements within the clinic. The pods can be placed in multiple positions to challenge the patient effectively and successfully.





Camp Roaring Sun

Camp Roaring Sun is the only camp for children in South Florida with TD1 (Type 1 Diabetes). Type 1 diabetes is a chronic condition affecting how the body metabolizes carbohydrates. People with T1DM do not make enough insulin and therefore need to be injected with it. Camp Roaring Sun is a place for children with diabetes to meet other children just like them, and this program is offered at no-cost to families. Funding was requested from NCYA to help continue to keep this program free for families to participate.

Funding Utilization

Camp Roaring Sun helps children living with diabetes thrive by making a safe, supportive camp experience possible - one that strengthened both confidence and community. Through hands-on activities and shared experiences, campers built stronger coping skills, gained greater knowledge of diabetes management, and practiced more independent self-care, all while experiencing reduced isolation and increased peer support from being surrounded by kids who understand what they face every day. NCYA Shark Tank funding directly covered essential camp costs, including park rentals, field trips, transportation to and from camp, meals and snacks, medications, additional park activities, and camp/staff T-shirts, ensuring every child could participate fully in a memorable, well-supported week.



Camp Roaring Sun



“Thank you for including Jacob in this year’s camp. It was the first time in 365 days that I was able to breathe and feel safe walking away from him. He felt seen, like he belonged to a community, and most importantly - he felt alive.

You don’t realize the impact of being the only one in your community with a pod on, constantly being asked questions, and never seeing anyone else like you. He walked away from camp with a sad but full heart - sad that it was over, but full because he left with friends, new group chats, and people who understand without needing to say a word.

You all are magic. I know the work that went into making this such a joyful experience for all the campers. Your efforts are seen and so appreciated.

This mommy is recharged and reset, ready to face the long nights and uncertainty that may come our way.

Thank you, thank you, thank you - to you and the entire team. We are endlessly grateful.”

– Message from a grateful parent

Children's Experiences Activities

In 2025, NCYA proudly sponsored four patient activities through Children's Experiences, helping bring moments of joy, creativity, and connection to children receiving care at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. Engaging activities are an important part of the hospital experience - they can ease stress and anxiety, provide healthy distraction during challenging treatments, and help children feel more like kids while they heal. By supporting opportunities for play and positive engagement, NCYA helped create a more comforting environment for patients and families and reinforces the whole-child approach to care.



Wild Safari Adventure Patient Activity – August 21, 2025



Early Screening to Detect Diabetes in Pediatric Patients

This project aims to identify children in the early stages of type 1 diabetes (T1D) and support them through a new Early-Stage Diabetes Clinic (ESDC). The ESDC will serve as a centralized hub for monitoring and care for patients identified through screening, including the use of Shark Tank funded continuous glucose monitors to track progression. The clinic also provides early interventions - such as immune-modulatory therapies, lifestyle guidance, psychological support, education, and personalized glucose monitoring - to help preserve beta-cell function as long as possible.

Funding Utilization

Phase 1 of the initiative has been launched as of January 2026. Since receiving the funds from NCYA in December of 2024, work has been done to establish an IRB approved protocol to initiate universal screening in our primary care clinic at the Nicklaus Children's Hospital main campus. Initially, Shark Tank funding from NCYA was going to be used to accomplish this. However, a grant from Breakthrough T1D was received to help expand this goal.

Therefore, the Shark Tank funds were allocated to Phase 2. Phase 2 includes providing educational resources as well as continuous glucose monitors for patients referred to the Early-Stage Clinic. At present, the team is in the process of working with Abbott to obtain these sensors, and the creation of educational materials for patients and caregivers is underway.

Phase 2 Early-Stage Clinic: (funds allocated - not yet used)

- Educational Materials (\$500)
- 50 Continuous Glucose Monitors (\$4500)





EarliPoint Autism Detection

Early diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can significantly improve outcomes for children by enabling timely interventions that address developmental challenges and promote key skills. Children with ASD often focus on objects rather than faces, a difference EarliPoint detects, indicating missed social cues.

The EarliPoint Early Autism Detection Tool utilizing eye-tracking technology offers a rapid, objective, and highly accurate method for diagnosing autism in children as young as 16 months, enhancing early intervention outcomes and reducing long-term care costs, making it an excellent offering to Nicklaus Children's Hospital patients.

Funding Utilization

\$7,500 in Shark Tank funding went towards a device for the new outpatient clinic in Davie, and \$2,500 in funding was allocated for additional tests (\$225 per test charged by the vendor).

There is no billing code or payor funding for the cost associated with this device. Billing codes are expected to be developed and approved by CMS in 2-3 years, the typically life cycle with new technology.



With more consistent and standardized use of EarliPoint, 2025 Q3 and Q4 analysis has shown an 8% increase in diagnoses of Autism (ASD) at the initial clinic visit. Furthermore, increased diagnostic certitude has been observed with reduced caregiver requests for internal second opinions. Finally, community pediatric providers are referring children to our Developmental Disorders / Autism program within the Neuroscience Institute at younger ages.



Enrich Story Time

ENRICH Story Time is a community-centered initiative that brings pediatric residents into Miami-Dade Public Libraries to deliver interactive, health-focused story sessions for children and families. Using books, songs, and hands-on activities, the program builds early health literacy on topics like anatomy, nutrition, hygiene, and emotional wellness. By creating engaging, developmentally appropriate sessions, ENRICH strengthens connections with local families while fostering a love for reading and lifelong wellness.

Funding Utilization

In collaboration with two Miami-Dade Public Library branches, bi-weekly sessions were hosted as part of the residency program's advocacy rotation. Each child who attended ENRICH Story Time received a lesson-themed book to take home. Overall, 15 structured story time programs were delivered with the support of 45 pediatric residents, reaching 264 children and their caregivers.

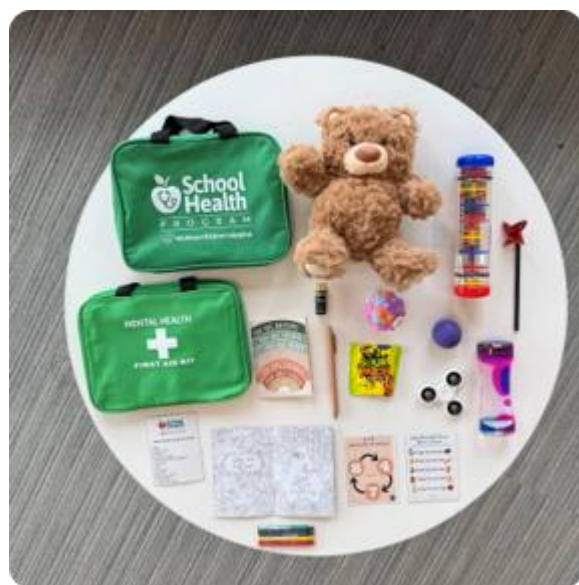


Mental Health First Aid Kits

In 2024, nursing staff identified the need for an auditory sensory tool to support grounding and calming techniques for the mental health first aid kits. In response, a rain stick was added to each kit—an item known to promote relaxation through gentle, repetitive sound. This addition strengthens the multi-sensory approach of the kits and aligns them more closely with what nurses requested.

Funding Utilization

Thanks to the funding provided, 70 fully stocked mental health kits were delivered to school clinics serving students from Aventura to Homestead to expand essential mental health resources across Miami Dade school clinics. These kits help school nurses respond more effectively to students experiencing anxiety, emotional distress, or moments of crisis. The additional resources for the mental health first aid kits improved confidence for nurses in addressing student mental health needs and increased access to immediate emotional-regulation tools.





Rehab: Heart and Lungs, Monitoring for All

This project expanded respiratory monitoring services, previously available only at the main hospital campus, to all Nicklaus Children's Hospital outpatient centers. Funding was requested to purchase key respiratory assessment tools, including oxygen saturation (SpO₂) monitors and respiratory trainers, and to support implementation through training. The intended outcomes were to enable clinicians across all sites to safely guide evaluations and treatments using evidence-informed care and to ensure consistent monitoring capabilities for children regardless of outpatient location.

By equipping every outpatient center and training local clinical leaders, the project enhanced patient safety and clinical decision-making, supported standardized evidence-informed care across locations, and improved access for families by delivering reliable monitoring and respiratory support closer to home, strengthening the overall quality and consistency of ambulatory care.

Funding Utilization

Project funding was used to purchase and distribute vital sign monitors and respiratory trainers for NCH outpatient centers, identify site-based clinical leaders/champions, and provide training on proper device use and integration into clinic workflows to support consistent adoption and sustainability. As a result, Nicklaus Children's Hospital can now deliver more consistent respiratory monitoring across the system and amplify high-quality care to more children in outpatient settings.





Shark Tank

In December 2025, Nicklaus Children's Shark Tank funded 16 projects - the largest cohort to date - made possible by a significant increase in funding available to service lines. Available project funding grew from \$84,697.06 (raised in 2024 to support the 2025 projects) to \$235,391.38 (raised in 2025 to support the 2026 projects), representing a 177.9% increase in funds available to bring new ideas to life to support patients and families at Nicklaus Children's Hospital.

2026 Projects	Amount Allocated (FY25)
Healthy Smiles	\$15,000
T.E.N.D to Mothers – Transition Support for Emotional Health after NICU Discharge	\$20,000
Bright Colors, Healthy choices	\$10,000
ENRICH Story Hours	\$12,000
Interactive 'Magic' Window	\$15,000
Setting the Bar Higher	\$17,950
Concussion Program	\$19,250
Camp Roaring Sun	\$15,000
Caregiver Meal Support	\$20,000
Heart to Heart	\$7,818.70
Sports Physical Therapy – Squat Rack	\$8,229.68
Rehab Feeding & Swallowing - Outcomes	\$14,325
Genomic Surveillance of Pseudomonas Infections in the NICU	\$10,818.00
Patient Activities	\$12,000.00
Center for Nursing Excellence: Research & EBP	\$20,000.00
Curly Hair Kits	\$18,000.00
Totals	\$235,391.38



TAKING ADVOCACY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Nicklaus Children's Young Ambassadors

Nicklaus Children's Young Ambassadors (NCYA) is a vital partner of Nicklaus Children's Hospital, driven by two core beliefs:

- 1) Every child deserves a healthy life, and every child should receive the best medical care when needed without having to leave South Florida.
- 2) Their collaboration with the Hospital and Foundation enables them to turn these beliefs into reality.

NCYA Membership Benefits

- Invitation to NCYA events
- Invitation to Nicklaus Children's Hospital Foundation events
- Recognition in appropriate media
- Dedicated Foundation staff liaison to respond to any needs or opportunities
- Tax deductions (according to IRS rules and regulations)
- Eligibility to serve on the NCYA Executive Leadership Committee after one year
- Opportunity to join committees within NCYA (Fashion Gives Back, Events, Social Media)
- Opportunity to volunteer at NCYA sponsored Patient Activities at the Hospital
- Opportunity to attend Shark Tank

