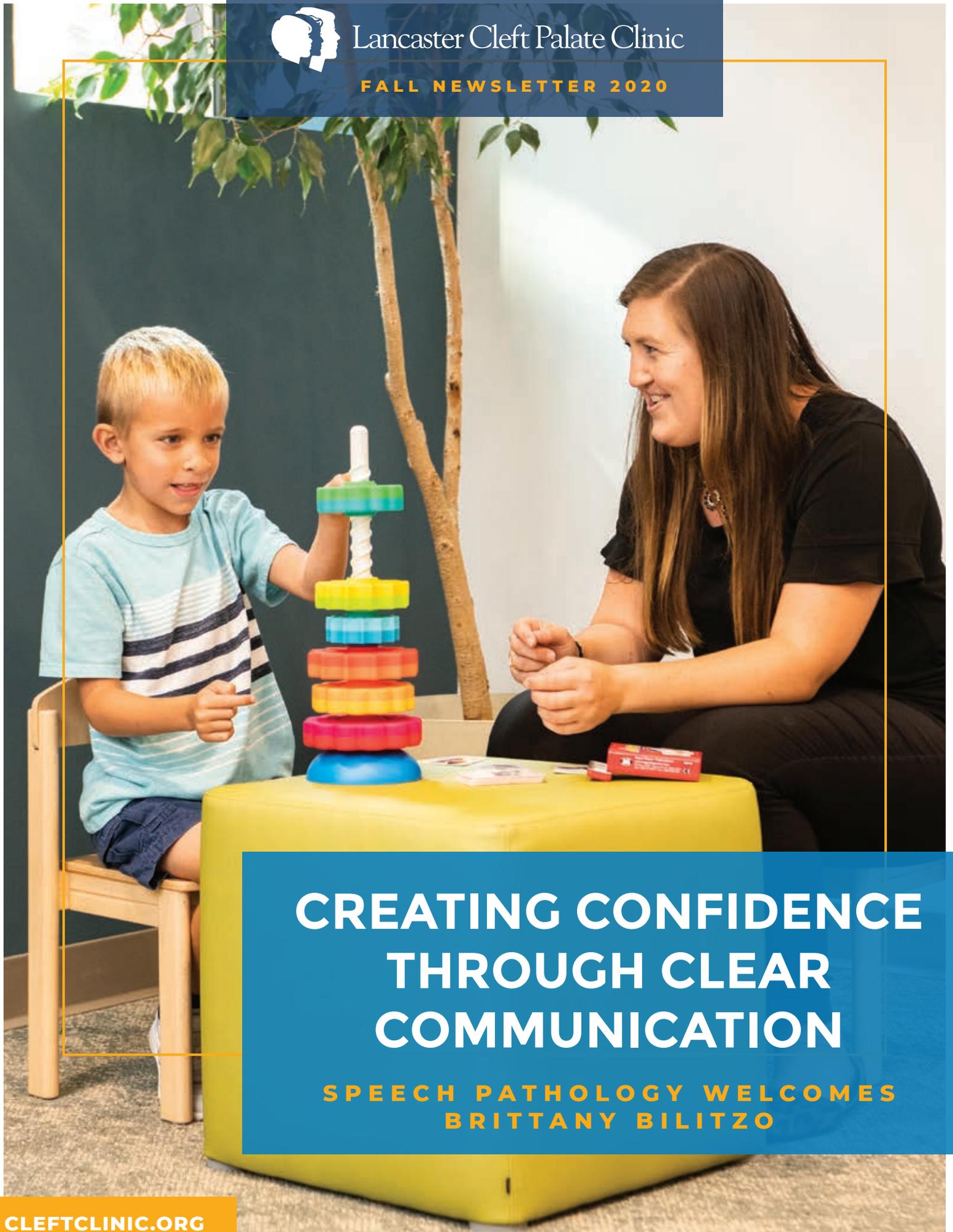




Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic

FALL NEWSLETTER 2020



# CREATING CONFIDENCE THROUGH CLEAR COMMUNICATION

SPEECH PATHOLOGY WELCOMES  
BRITTANY BILITZO

# THE DAY EVERYTHING CHANGED

DR. LIZ PRADA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Sharon Swierczewski, Dental Hygienist,  
Liz Prada, Executive Director,  
Neishma Tudor, Dental Hygienist*

**W**e can all point to a day that changed our lives. For my parents' generation, it was the day that JFK was assassinated. For many of us, 9/11 was a turning point.

In March of this year, I caught up with an old friend and dental school classmate who had recently taken a job as a state dental director. Her words foreshadowed how all of our lives were about to be flipped upside down. We were chatting about the coronavirus and whether we thought it would affect our work – there were so many unknowns at the time. What she told me stopped me cold – “The virus is likely transmitted by aerosols, and as dentists, we generate aerosols in almost every procedure that we do,” she said. “Aerosols can linger in the air for hours. Kids are the most likely age group to carry the virus but show no symptoms.” Aerosols are microscopic droplets of liquid that

are created with speaking, coughing, sneezing, laughing and the use of any medical or dental instrument that sprays air, water or spins. Those little droplets – invisible to the naked eye – have taken the lives of 200,000 Americans and countless others worldwide. As I processed her words, I realized that things at our clinic and in our daily lives would need to profoundly change moving forward.

By Friday, March 13th, local hospitals were starting the process of cancelling all elective surgeries as COVID-19 cases began to surge. By March 16th, the field of dentistry was shut down across the country except for emergency care. Medical offices and businesses closed or drastically cut back on their hours. That's when the really hard work started. Our leadership team at LCPC immediately launched into researching and planning for next steps. We would need to emerge on the other end of the crisis ready and able to serve a huge backlog of patients' needs, but how could we do that safely?

It's been six months since dental offices closed across the nation. Countless sleepless nights and herculean effort have gone into establishing our new normal at the clinic. We installed air purifiers, updated our HVAC system, invested in enhanced PPE, implemented universal mask wearing and re-designed our entire facility with patient and staff safety in mind. We also implemented enhanced cleaning efforts throughout the day. Our new bathrooms have touchless faucets and soap dispensers. Hand dryers that create aerosol have been removed in favor of paper towel dispensers. The list goes on and on. We believe that we have an enormous responsibility to keep everyone who enters our building safe - particularly new babies, children with special health care needs, and our senior patients and staff who are most vulnerable to the coronavirus.

Despite the long hours of preparation and strategic planning, we take solace in the fact that it is an honor to serve our patients, and our duty to keep them safe. We have exciting times ahead as we proceed with fully renovating our building and continuing our life-changing work. **A bright future lies before us.**

With hope,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth K. Prada".

Liz Prada, DMD, MPH  
Executive Director

**It's been six months since dental offices closed across the nation. Countless sleepless nights and herculean effort have gone into establishing our new normal at the clinic.**

# Young Physicians Bring New Life Into the World, Amidst COVID

Six weeks early, Rohann Saleem made his entrance into the world, with big brown eyes, a contagious smile, and a cleft lip. Parents Saddiq and Tabinda had been informed of their son's cleft and shown the condition on his ultrasounds, but Tabinda said that the first thing she noticed were Rohann's "big, bright eyes." And in spite of Rohann's cleft, Tabinda says, "He always has a smile."



Tabinda was scheduled for a pre-natal consult at LCPC in March with feeding specialist Abbie Ellis, but because Rohann made an early appearance on February 28th, Abbie came to the NICU to meet the family. "Tabinda was a ball of nerves when I arrived," said Abbie. "I spent an hour talking with her. I showed her the bottle and explained where Rohann was at that point. She looked so much more peaceful when I left."

Tabinda and Saddiq are both internal medicine resident physicians at UPMC Harrisburg, and both worked the COVID wards in the early days of the pandemic. Neither of them were strangers to caring for medical conditions, but as brand new parents to a preemie with a cleft, they were in uncharted waters.

Because of Rohann's cleft and his unique situation, no one in the NICU seemed to know how to feed him. That is why Abbie is so passionate about her work. "I love what I do because I help parents tackle some of the scariest moments of their lives," she said. Feeding a child with a cleft can be a challenge because babies with clefts lack the ability to form the seal with their lips that is necessary to draw milk from the source. Abbie helps teach and instruct parents on what to expect and what methods to utilize, from starting them out

with a Dr. Brown's Specialty Feeding System bottle, to how to experiment with purees later on to find a good system for their individual child.

"When I meet with families, you can physically see the release," Abbie said. "Some mothers are wound so tight, that they start bawling the minute they come in. They think their child's cleft lip is their fault. But by the time they leave our meeting, parents have a plan and phone number."

So, when Abbie arrived at the hospital, Tabinda was relieved. "We walked through everything," Tabinda said. "Abbie taught us how to do it. My biggest concern was feeding him, and that he would aspirate, but she helped us so much."

After six weeks, Rohann was released from the NICU and Saddiq and Tabinda finally brought their son home. They began visiting the clinic when it reopened in May and Rohann was one of the first babies seen by the team. On July 29, Rohann had his lip surgery. "We had good results with the surgery," Tabinda said. "Rohann is growing so well and feeding so much." Tabinda and Saddiq appreciated how the clinic worked with their schedules, when making post-op appointments. "Abbie and Dr. Henry are the greatest people," said Tabinda.

Rohann is six months old, and is confident and bright. Tabinda is grateful for the help Abbie and the clinic have provided to her and her husband. "You're afraid when you have a child with a cleft," she said, "but if you get him help with good people, he will be better for it."

# SPEECH PATHOLOGY NOW OFFERING SPEECH THERAPY



*Brittany Bilitzo*



*Pilar Tobin*

LCPC is excited to announce that our speech pathology department is growing!

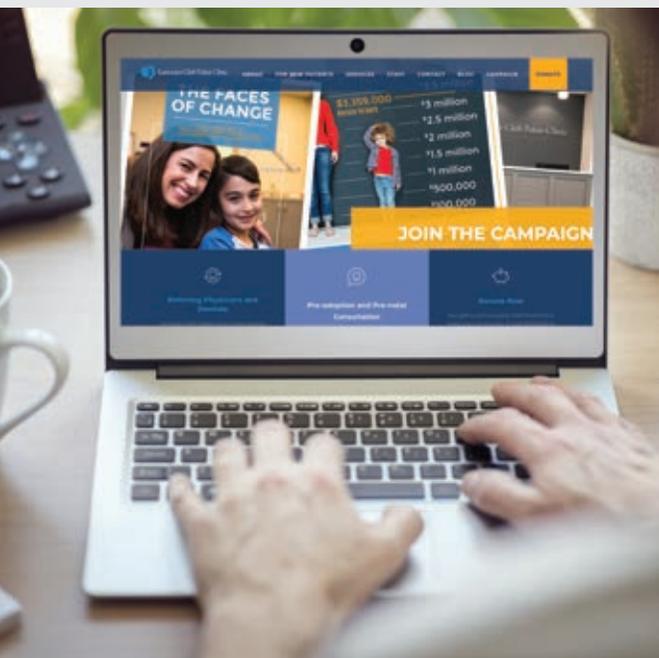
**B**rittany Bilitzo will be joining Pilar Tobin on our team of speech and language pathologists in our expanding department. Brittany, an MS CCC-SLP, comes to us from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Ohio where she completed a Craniofacial Speech Language Pathology Clinical Fellowship. Brittany was born with a cleft herself, so she has a special connection to the position. She is passionate about providing care through an interdisciplinary team from having such a great experience with team care personally.

Brittany obtained her M.S. from the University of Utah in 2019, and has a wealth of cleft/craniofacial clinical education experiences. Her certifications include her PA State Speech Pathology license, ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology, Ohio State Conditional Licensure, and Basic Life Support Certification, American Heart Association.

Speech Therapy is a service that LCPC has been unable to provide since our previous speech pathologist retired and we are thrilled to be able to make it available to our patients once again! Speech and language development is such a critical part of your child's growth. If you are concerned about your child's speech development, we can evaluate their needs in order to determine the best course of action. Our services are available from birth throughout adulthood.

The most common services we provide are evaluations of speech and language development and resonance, and the treatment of articulation and cleft-specific speech errors. Our speech language pathologists (SLPs) at the clinic will educate parents or caregivers on how to best promote speech development for their child. We will provide resources and age-appropriate activities, from as early as eight months of age throughout adolescence. As expressive language begins to develop, we will monitor the child's articulation and palate function for resonance.

The timing between the initial consult at LCPC and the beginning of service varies from child to child. It is dependent on the child's progress how long they continue to receive the service of our SLPs, but it is typical for the speech pathologist to monitor resonance and language development until the child has completed their orthognathic treatment.



# PHASE TWO OF CONSTRUCTION IN FULL SWING

## THE FACES OF CHANGE CAMPAIGN IS LIVE ON THE WEBSITE

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, renovations continue unabated on our facility as part of the \$4 million Faces of Change Capital Campaign. While the clinic has always provided state-of-the-art, innovative care and research, our facility and equipment have not kept pace with technological advancements. That's why we made the decision to elevate our facility to parallel the high level of care that our patients receive. We are adding more pediatric dental rooms, private treatment space, increased ADA accessibility, and renovations to the lower (largely unused) floor. There will also be an improved orthodontic suite and family-friendly areas.

To date, we have raised \$3,359,000 of this \$4 million project. This leaves only \$641,000 left to raise!

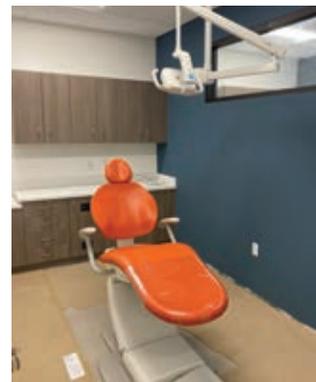
**If you would like to learn more, check out our fundraising progress or join our Faces of Change Campaign, please access our page at [www.cleftclinic.org/campaign](http://www.cleftclinic.org/campaign).**

Our building renovation is progressing quickly! We divided our project into four phases, and we are currently completing phase two. We want to thank all of our patients and staff for their patience as we work to create a better facility for the future.

**Phase one** involved the creation of a larger, brighter and friendlier waiting area and front desk. We have also unveiled a new conference room where our clinical team meets weekly for treatment planning.

**Phase two** will provide us with a new orthodontic clinic with four private operatories and three additional pediatric dental rooms. Each of these rooms will feature natural light, uplifting color schemes, sound proofing, and state of the art equipment for treatment. Each pediatric room will have its own television for patient comfort and entertainment during procedures.

We are excited to announce that our new elevator is almost ready for use! This will connect a new atrium lobby entrance to the clinic on our upper level and administrative offices on the lower level. The elevator is part of our efforts to ensure that our clinic is ADA accessible, not only for patients but for their family members as well. The new main entrance will be located at the northeast corner of our building as opposed to Lime Street. This was done to create a safer, accessible entrance that is closer and more convenient to our parking lot. In the winter and on rainy days, our patients and families will no longer need to make the long trek to Lime Street on the narrow driveway.



**Phases three and four** will feature new audiology, speech pathology, pediatric medicine, radiology, and ENT rooms. Once COVID-19 subsides, we anticipate opening a large children's play area with a playhouse and artwork that features the skyline of Lancaster city and the surrounding countryside. **If you would like to learn more about our renovation and "Faces of Change Capital Campaign," please visit our website: [www.cleftclinic.org/campaign](http://www.cleftclinic.org/campaign).**

# THE IMPACT OF AN ENGAGED BOARD

LCPC IS PLEASED TO WELCOME TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS,  
DR. FRANK CARANO AND DR. THOMAS SAMSON.

**D**r. Carano received his dental degree in 1982 from Temple University School of Dentistry. He earned appointment to the National Honorary Dental Society of Omicron Kappa Upsilon upon his graduation. He was selected for advanced training in the U.S. Navy General Dentistry Resident program where he was appointed “Outstanding Resident of the Year.” After serving in the Navy for four years, Dr. Carano returned to Lancaster where he engaged in a private practice from 1987 until 2017. He earned the Fellowship award in the Academy of General Dentistry in 1982. Currently, he is an instructor at Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry in Philadelphia.



Dr. Carano’s first memory of LCPC dates back to his childhood. “I recall their esteemed reputation in the community for the exceptional and transformational services they provided for the severe, life-altering cranio-facial conditions,” said Dr. Carano. “As I learned more about such medical conditions and the organization in the following years, I better understood the consequential comprehensive care that is rendered to all in need, regardless of means.”

Dr. Carano came to appreciate the weighty, multitudinous extent to which a medical condition impacts one’s life and the professional disciplines necessary to treat such conditions. “This organization is exceptional in meeting those many varied needs and services,” he said. “Additionally, I am impressed with the ongoing research for treatment our organization pursues in the areas of treatment and education. I could not be more honored to be part of this meritorious organization. My goals will be to support, continue, and to expand the services to the many people and their loves ones, whose lives are impacted by these conditions.”



**D**r. Samson is a pediatric plastic surgeon who graduated from California State University, Northridge (Cum Laude) with a B.A., Biology in 1997. He earned his M.D. from Creighton University School of Medicine in 2002. He was a resident in General Surgery at Mayo Clinic Arizona, then in Plastic Surgery at Penn State Hershey, Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. His fellowship in Craniomaxillofacial Surgery was at University of Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. He enjoys auto racing, basketball, football, hockey, and baseball. He has three children, one dog, two guinea pigs and a goldfish. He is also employed by Penn State. Dr. Samson works at the clinic because of the people he gets to work with and the patients he is able to serve.

“The opportunity to help children and their families is what brings me fulfillment on a daily basis,” said Dr. Samson. “This is what brought me to Penn State Health as a pediatric plastic surgeon over ten years ago. LCPC is a very special place but more importantly an amazing collection of people who share the same commitment to children that I do. When everyone is working with the same goal in mind, great things can happen.”

As part of the board, Dr. Samson hopes to further the mission of LCPC by improving the quality of life of patients from infancy to adulthood. “I hope to learn from the vast experience and dedication of other board members,” he said.

# THANK YOU FOR GIVING

UPDATES FROM DAVE FOULK,  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Greetings friends and supporters of LCPC. I hope this update finds you and yours well.



As you can imagine, it's been an unprecedented challenge for the last few months to make ends meet at the Clinic. We were mandated to stop providing patient services (except emergency care) by the PA Department of Health on March 16th. We remained shuttered until that was relaxed on May 25th and we re-opened with new safety measures in place based on CDC guidelines. So for roughly a quarter of the year we went without any earned income while still having to maintain overhead costs. As a reminder, approximately 50% of the Clinic's operations budget comes from patient/family payments and insurances; the rest is so graciously provided by our donors.

I am very thankful to report that, despite COVID-19 and all of its challenges, tried-and-true Clinic donors continue to provide dollars that directly help our patients. But we are still digging out, and continue facing a hefty back-log of deferred patients and associated costs. We are also facing the new costly need for increased personal protective equipment for our clinical staff.

Your personal support can continue to help us help those who trust our talented team for on-going treatment. If you have not made a gift yet this year, I urge you to consider doing so. **Simply use the enclosed gift envelope, or visit us online at [www.cleftclinic.org](http://www.cleftclinic.org).**

And now, for some wonderful news: the Clinic has been awarded again this year a very generous \$100,000 matching grant from the Donald B. and Dorothy L. Stabler Foundation. Any and all gifts received toward operating costs will be matched dollar-for-dollar. To date, we have raised 66% of this match! Thank you for your help in boosting us to meet—and even exceed—this wonderful challenge.

WE ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE EXTRAORDINARY GIVE AGAIN THIS YEAR. CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT?

THE EXTRA<sup>TM</sup>  
ORDINARY  
GIVE



NOVEMBER 20, 2020

– Stabler Foundation –

**\$100,000**  
MATCHING GRANT

**\$100,000**

100%

90%

80%

70%

60%

50%

40%

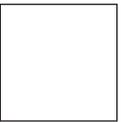
30%

20%

10%



A very special thanks to the **Steinman Foundation** for a grant to fully fund the installation of new, state-of-the-art Negative Pressure Ventilation and HEPA Filtration air systems clinic-wide to alleviate Covid 19 airborne risks based on CDC safety guidelines.



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# SHOUT-OUT TO PATIENTS GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

After an uncertain and tumultuous summer for schools across the nation, many students have now returned to some semblance of routine and normalcy. We are excited to cheer on our patients who have returned to school and wish them the best for the upcoming year!

- **Riley**, 4th grade: Riley is doing remote learning this year! She wishes school was normal so that she could see her friends but she is excited to have breaks at home with her mom and brother.
- **Delaney**, PreK, UGro Hershey: Delaney is excited that she will not have to take any more naps now that PreK has begun!
- **Austin**, 12th grade, Penn Manor: Austin is doing blended school this year!
- **R.E.**, Pre-K: R.E. is doing Pre-K at home!
- **Cheyenne**, 2nd grade: Cheyenne loves 2nd grade so far!
- **Jayden**, 10th grade, Eastern York High School: Jayden just started 10th grade!
- **Sam**, 8th grade, Central Dauphin Middle School: Sam is doing virtual learning this year! While is looking forward to returning to school in person hopefully in the near future, he is enjoying the perks of remote learning, like wearing pajamas all day!
- **Grace**, 12th grade, Lancaster County Day School: Grace is doing half virtual learning and half in-person learning! She is also beginning her third year as a Student Ambassador for Smile Train International.
- **Calvin**, Kindergarten: Calvin is excited to be at the “big school” with his two older siblings!



Riley



Delaney



Austin



R.E.



Cheyenne



Jayden