



SMILE CONNECTION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024

A FUTURE AS BRIGHT AS HIS SMILE

Jaden Costales may only be 13, but his future is already bright.

He is an A student, a flutist, and a self-taught pianist who is particularly passionate about math and art. He has no shortage of ambition, and he has never felt hindered by anything – especially his cleft lip and palate.

“It didn’t bother him,” shared his mother, Waleska Rivera, who works as a RN. “He’s confident. I think he teaches me more than I teach him.”

She received the news that Jaden had a cleft cleft lip and palate following an ultrasound while she was pregnant. York Hospital immediately connected Waleska to the Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic.

“Jaden wasn’t gaining weight when he was born and I didn’t have the right bottles for him,” Waleska remembered. “The feeding specialist at the Clinic gave me the correct bottles, and guided me through his feedings. She was a lifesaver.”

“We’ve always been very fortunate to have the Clinic helping us through it all,” Waleska said. “They’re like family. We’ve been there for 13 years after all.”

Dr. Samson has been with Jaden from his very first surgery when he was three months old. He’s been a constant for Jaden for over a decade, through both surgeries during his first year of life to his last major bone graft surgery. Dr. Samson also helped allay Waleska’s concerns that her son would be made fun of by offering to do surgeries sooner rather than later if they so desired – but that’s a route they’ve never needed to take.

“I’ve never been bullied or made fun of,” Jaden said. “Most of the time, no one even notices.”

Jaden has finished the first phase of braces which included a palate expander and braces on his top teeth. The Clinic has also provided auditory care for Jaden through three tube insertion surgeries, one of which was to address sudden loss of hearing which he did eventually regain, thanks to the Clinic’s intervention. Later, if desired, Jaden may have nasal revision surgery.”

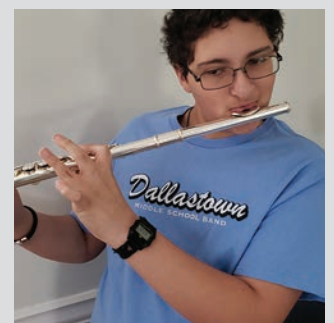
“It’s absolutely wonderful,” Waleska said of the care they’ve received.

“My wish for Jaden is to give back what people have given to him,” Waleska said. “Be compassionate and pay it forward.” Because of generous gifts from Clinic donors, patients like Jaden are spared from hefty medical bills and are able to receive the care they need worry free and debt free.

“It gives children a chance to thrive,” Waleska said. And it’s part of what makes the Clinic so special to patients and their families.

“I thank everybody that has helped me, especially Dr. Samson,” Jaden shared. “I feel like family there and they always explained the surgeries beforehand so I was never scared. I really appreciate everyone.”

Jaden’s future is brighter than ever and he and Waleska are grateful for all the ways that the Clinic has educated and empowered them over the years.



LOTS TO BE THANKFUL FOR AT UPCOMING DAY OF GRATITUDE

Our team just returned from the annual meeting of the American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association in Denver, CO. It was an invigorating experience where we had the opportunity to learn and network with other craniofacial professionals across the country and abroad. For the first time, every one of our team members attending the meeting participated in a lecture in their field. Several of us also participated in national committees supporting subspecialty care. We are proud to be the oldest cleft and craniofacial team in the United States – if not the world – and strive to share lessons about our work and opportunities for growth and improvement.

Back in Pennsylvania, we have been hard at work advocating for our patients’ needs and funding for the Clinic. Each spring, team members visit with legislators at the Capitol building in Harrisburg to share updates about the Clinic and lobby for continued state and federal funding to support our clinical care. Locally, we work directly with foundation,

county, and city officials to make sure LCPC has the resources it needs to provide the highest quality of treatment.

We are thrilled to announce several grant awards that will fund medical and dental care integration at the Clinic. Three grants, totaling \$425,000 over three years, will provide sustainability for clinical care and work to improve clinical outcomes.

Later this spring, we will share our thanks in person during our first “Day of Gratitude.” This is a picnic where Clinic patients, supporters, and staff will have the opportunity to enjoy a beautiful day in celebration of the Clinic and those we serve. Please join us and bring your family and friends!

Sincerely,



Liz Prada, DMD, MPH
Executive Director and Pediatric Dentist



PA CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE CLINIC’S WORK

Dr. Prada and Dr. Meyler with Mark Richards of Wojdak Government Relations at the state capitol.

Generous Grants and Donations Will Enhance Care and Equipment



We are thrilled to share that we have been awarded **TWO \$100,000 two-year grants** from the **Highmark Foundation** and the **United Concordia Dental Charitable Fund**. These generous gifts, totaling **\$200,000**, will support our Dental Home program through 2025. Thank you from all our patients, volunteers, and staff!

We are also excited to share that we have raised all the funds needed for our new **i-CAT and digital scanner**. This project is funded in part through an ARPA grant from the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners who awarded us **\$40,000** for its purchase.

YORK COUNTY'S GENEROSITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Give Local York was May 2 and 3 this year. Similar to the Lancaster ExtraGive that happens annually in November, Give Local York facilitates donations to nonprofit organizations that support York County residents. Our Clinic supports 45 of the 67 Pennsylvania counties and 10% of our patients live in York County. We are honored to have once again participated in this community fundraising event and humbled by the generosity shared in support of our patients. We don't yet know the total amount raised, and we are grateful.

Giving events like Give Local York bring critical funds to our life-changing work. On average, only 50% of our care costs are covered by insurance reimbursement. Our supportive communities ensure we can continue to care for our patients.

Thank you to York County residents and everyone who gives of themselves to support our patients. We couldn't help so many Pennsylvania infants, children, and young adults without you. You make our mission to never turn away a child for care possible. Please join us for our "Day of Gratitude" picnic on June 1!



Deanna Meyler, PhD
Director of Development

COLLABORATION on Cleft and Craniofacial Care INSPIRES Mutual Learning

Seven Team members attended the annual American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association (ACPA) meeting in April to present a panel discussion, participate on various committees, give solo presentations, network, and learn from other cleft and craniofacial teams. "It is important to hear what other teams are doing and stay updated on current practices while also showcasing how we support our patients." – Lexi Stauffer, Director of Team Services

A Team panel discussion, "The Role of Advocacy to Improve Access to Care, Community Awareness and Access to Resources in Improving Cleft and Craniofacial Care," was well received as it reviewed elements of advocacy, communication, and government relations that support craniofacial care. Lexi said, "Our team felt empowered after our panel from the great feedback we received from other teams."

Pictured from left to right: Dr. Cathy Henry, Pediatric Plastic Surgeon; Lexi Stauffer, Director of Team Services; Suzanne Woodard, Social Worker; Dr. Elizabeth Prada, Executive Director and Pediatric Dentist; Dr. Lauren Madhoun, Feeding Specialist; and Rachel Sharnetzka, Audiologist.



MEET OUR NEWEST TEAM MEMBERS



Dr. Irada Lahnemann,
Pediatric Dentist

Dr. Irada is a board-certified pediatric dentist. She studied Microbiology and Cell Science at the University of Florida before earning her DMD at the University of Pennsylvania as a four-year Dean's Scholar, with dual honors in clinical dentistry and community oral health. When Dr. Irada isn't busy chasing after sugar bugs, a blend of outdoor escapades and cozy cat cuddles keep her off-duty moments lively and magical.



**Molly Maples, Scheduler
and Administrative
Assistant**

Molly worked as a Procedure Scheduler for a GI office before finding her way into the dental field where she has worked for the last 2.5 years as a Treatment Coordinator. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, puzzling, and spending time with her family; most importantly her fur children and husband.



Amisha Hehnlly,
**Orthodontic Technician
and Dental Assistant**

Amisha has been in the dental field for 25+ years. She graduated from Willow Street Vo-tech School in their Dental Assisting Program and has held almost every position in a dental practice. Amisha loves being with family and being outdoors. Her favorite spot, by far, is the beach.



Jessica Erb,
Orthodontic Technician

Jess completed her dental assisting and radiology certification at YTI in 2017. She enjoys the orthodontic specialty and has been an orthodontic assistant since graduation. Jess loves seeing her patients' smiles transform and the happiness it brings. When not in the office, she enjoys spending time with her family and reading.



Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic

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SMILE CONNECTION

LET'S CONNECT!

Family Event Encourages Mutual Support and Fosters Community

On **APRIL 7** the LCPC Parent Council hosted a Cleft Team Family event at the Science Factory in Lancaster. Thirteen families came together to play and share time. These events help families know they are not alone in their care journeys.



Day of Gratitude

Join us as we thank you, patients, supporters, and staff for making our work possible. On **JUNE 1**, noon to 2 p.m., there will be games, food, and fun for all ages! RSVP by following this QR Code or visiting our website cleftclinic.org/events.



Lancaster Stormers

Watch our website for the link to get your ticket and join us on **JULY 21** at Clipper Magazine Stadium as we celebrate Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month. We will have a dedicated section of the stadium. 40% of ticket sales in our section will be donated back to the Clinic. cleftclinic.org/events



Celebrating Smiles

Sip and stroll through Clinic art. We are accepting art donations from anyone who cares about our mission June 1 through August 1. All original art is welcome, including woodworking, poetry, finger painting, knitting, photography, and more. A silent auction of donated art will accompany the display on **OCT. 4** from 4:30 – 8 p.m. at Prince Street Café.



[Art Submissions Form](#)



EXTRAGIVE

The Lancaster County Community Foundation ExtraGive will be held **NOVEMBER 22, 2024**. We hope you will join us in giving on this special day. Grab logo from here: <https://www.extragive.org/info/downloads>.



ARE YOU ON SOCIAL MEDIA? We have an active Facebook page and are building our Instagram following. Please join us at facebook.com/lancastercleftpalateclinic and [@lancastercleftpalateclinic](https://instagram.com/lancastercleftpalateclinic).