



# SMILE CONNECTION

FALL NEWSLETTER 2024

## BRIGHT DAYS AHEAD THANKS TO JOYFUL GENEROSITY



**S**iblings Camryn and Logan Heister have had the unique opportunity to experience the Clinic's care from two angles – Camryn as a staff member and Logan as a patient.

Logan, 23, was born with a cleft lip and has been a patient of the Clinic since birth. He had his first surgery when he was three months old. Over the years, the

Clinic was a familiar part of life for Logan, as he underwent more surgeries and also received dental and orthodontic care.

**“The Clinic is the best,” Logan shared. “They make you feel part of a big family.”**

And perhaps it was Logan's exceptional care and the countless hours spent at the Clinic that first piqued Camryn's interest. “I was in high school and trying to decide what I wanted to do for a career,” Camryn remembered. “I went to the Clinic to shadow Maureen, who was the speech-language pathologist at the time.”

Watching Maureen interact with patients stirred Camryn's passion and after graduating high school, Camryn attended Ithaca College where she majored in speech-language pathology and audiology. Even on breaks, whenever she returned to Lancaster, she stopped by the Clinic and continued to observe as much as she could.

By the time she graduated from Ithaca and was considering graduate degrees, the Clinic's speech-language pathologist was Brittany Bilitzo, who encouraged Camryn to look into East Carolina University. Camryn decided to attend ECU for her master's degree, particularly because of the school's cleft imaging lab and a specific cleft graduate course offered that a lot of other schools didn't provide. Her final semester, Camryn relocated to the Center for Cleft and Craniofacial Disorders at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta for her full-time internship placement. After graduating with her master's from ECU, Camryn returned to Atlanta to complete a year-long craniofacial speech fellowship. During her year in the

fellowship, her plans for the next step of her career were already forming, as she was engaged in talks with the Clinic about an opening on their staff. “It can be difficult to find a job working on a cleft team following your fellowship,” Camryn shared, “so I was really lucky to be in talks with LCPC early on regarding their open position!”

After completing the year-long fellowship, Camryn returned home to Lancaster and to the family that Logan had been a part of for so many years – the Clinic. She joined the Clinic team in August as the speech-language pathologist.

It felt like she'd come full-circle because though she'd never been a patient herself, Camryn had become more interested in the care Logan received once she'd started learning about clefts in college. That had inspired her to become more interested in the Clinic itself too.

“It's an honor to work there,” Camryn said. “I love how its multi-disciplinary and collaborative and it's historic as the very first cleft clinic. It's a family. I feel so connected and supported.” Camryn works with patients and assesses their palate function from their first visit to the Clinic until their last.

Logan hasn't been a patient at the Clinic since he was 18 but though he's currently working in the car industry, he would welcome the opportunity to work at the Clinic one day too. “The Clinic provides the best care,” he said. “Everyone works together.”

He believes his sister is a great fit for the team. **“She's dedicated and hardworking. She's always happy to go to work and do what she loves to do.”**

Camryn and Logan have both witnessed the impact that early intervention can have for children and the effect it has on their lives well into adulthood. In true family fashion, the staff and supporters share in the impact and hope the Clinic offers. The commitment of the team and the generosity of donors ensure that that impact and hope are lasting.

**“At the Clinic, patients know they're not alone,” Logan said. “There's support. And there are brighter days ahead.”**

# GRATEFUL for Life-Changing Generosity

The weather has turned a bit chilly, and we are starting to look forward to the 2024 holiday season! As we move toward the end of this year, we have so many reasons to be thankful. The Clinic recently learned that it will receive an \$873,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to support technology needs and research. We are grateful for the leadership of our Pennsylvania House of Representative members from Lancaster County for connecting the Clinic with this incredible opportunity.



The Clinic is also working hard to engage in research and collaborative projects with other cleft teams in the United States and Canada. We recently submitted seven abstracts for presentation at the 2025 American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association meeting in Palm Springs, California. These abstracts represent many areas of study, including feeding, growth and development, dentistry, the transition from pediatric to adult care, health disparities, and anesthesia.

Finally – and most importantly – we are thankful for the families who trust our staff and craniofacial team members to provide care for their loved ones. There is no greater honor than having their faith in the care that we provide.

Please consider being a part of our team and sharing your generosity this fall and winter with the Clinic as we continue our hard work to rehabilitate cleft and craniofacial conditions.



Sincerely,

Liz Prada, DMD, MPH  
Executive Director and  
Pediatric Dentist



## JOYFUL Giving Ensures Continued Impact

When people are asked why they support causes important to them, they often share that it is because the action brings them joy. They feel joy in knowing they are helping others, demonstrating to their family, friends, and community how important a cause is to them, and in feeling more connected to those around them. I certainly hope everyone feels this joy when giving to the Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic. Our patients directly benefit from your generosity. Their current and future success in life is connected to the care we are able to provide with your help.

Have you read about how giving is down? Overall, fewer people are giving and, when they give, it is in smaller amounts. We have been experiencing this trend. Inflation and global uncertainty impact all of us, even the first clinic in the world dedicated to helping children with cleft lip, palate, and other craniofacial differences.



**The annual ExtraGive community fundraising event is November 22 and we hope you will give joyfully to the Clinic on this day.** Your gift will support patient care AND enable additional monetary prizes. The critical funds raised during ExtraGive are a major contributor to our financial stability. Please help us have a successful fundraising day and give joyfully.



Deanna Meyler, PhD  
Director of Development

# GENEROUS GRANTS CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNGEST PATIENTS



## Hearing Aid Lending Library

With generous support from the Josiah W. and Bessie H. Kline Foundation and a technology grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Clinic is excited to provide a new bone conduction hearing aid lending library for our youngest patients. Bone conduction hearing aids will help infants hear while they get ready for cleft palate surgery.

Many young patients struggle to hear with fluid in their middle ear due to a dysfunction from a cleft palate. This condition is often improved or reversed over time with proper care. The first step in care is typically to place ear tubes and allow fluid to drain. However, there are several reasons to wait for this step. Today, many of our patients are waiting until their cleft palate repair surgery at 12 to 18 months of age and have ear tubes inserted during this surgery.

Waiting so long to address hearing loss means these children are not learning sounds and speech patterns on traditional timelines, thus experiencing developmental delays. It is stressful for families to know that hearing is compromised during early infancy, which is an important time for caregiver infant bonding. A bone conduction hearing aid is an effective and simple way to provide access to sounds and reduce the negative impacts of hearing loss. Our new lending library will support early hearing and reduce financial stress for parents.

## WELCOME to Our Newest Team Members

**Camryn Heister, MS, CCC**  
*Speech-Language Pathologist*

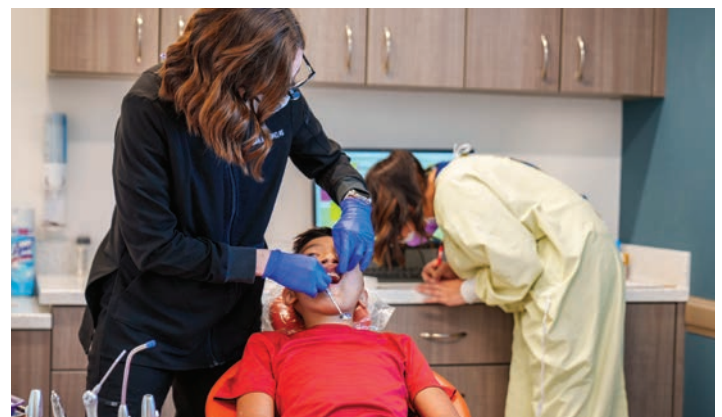
Camryn grew up here in Lancaster, PA. She received her bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and audiology from Ithaca College and later received her master's degree in communication sciences and disorders from East Carolina University. After receiving her master's degree, Camryn completed her clinical fellowship year at the Center for Cleft and Craniofacial Disorders at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. In her free time she enjoys going to the beach, reading, exercising, going to concerts, and spending time with her family and friends.



**Randi Rambo**  
*Patient Coordinator*

Randi graduated from HACC in 2020 with an associate's degree in Hospitality Management/Event Planning and knew she wanted to work around people. Being in the dental field for just over two years, Randi is

very excited to continue learning and growing with the LCPC team. Outside of work, Randi enjoys running her wedding planning business and going to the beach.



## GRANT AWARDS

The Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the **Walters/Unitarian Trust**, an endowment from Arthur and Selma Walters to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster, in supporting patient care with \$5,000 to support uncompensated hearing aid costs. In awarding this grant, the UUCL Board has acknowledged the contributions of the Clinic to achieving the vision of inclusiveness among all humans as well as respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, as promoted by the Walters Trust and UUCL.

**Ann Barshinger** made a generous donation earlier this year that supports ongoing capital needs at the Clinic. There will soon be a dedication sign in the Clinic that reads "Ann B. Barshinger Treatment Suite" in her honor.

**The Gamber Foundation** generously awarded the Clinic \$10,000 to support uncompensated patient care costs.



Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic

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# JOIN US!

## ExtraGive | November 22

On **November 22**, for 24 hours, help us raise critical funds that support patient care through this community fundraiser. Make a gift, encourage others to give, and be a champion by setting your own fundraising goal. The first \$5,000 donated will be matched by Capital Blue Cross! Visit our page to learn more.



## Gifts That Give Hope | December 1

Join us for the 17th annual gift fair on **Sunday, December 1** at the Farm & Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster PA from 11 am-4 pm for a festive, family-friendly event where holiday shoppers can find meaningful gifts for everyone on their shopping lists! The event includes opportunities to give gifts towards charitable organizations, including LCPC, shop from social enterprises, business for good, fair trade, ethically sourced products, food trucks, and more!



## Celebrating Smiles | April 4

Sip and stroll through Clinic art is moving to the spring. **April 4** we will hold our annual art display from 4:00 to 8:00 pm at the Sehner-Ellicott-von Hess House at 123 North Prince Street in Lancaster. **WE ARE ACCEPTING ORIGINAL ART DONATIONS** between December 5 and February 6. Show off your talent and help us raise funds for patient care. All original art is appreciated and children's art encouraged.

Scan QR code for Art Submission Form →



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