



# SMILE CONNECTION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

## GRATEFUL FOR TWO SMILES TO TREASURE



**K**aitlyn Bain vividly recalls the day her unborn child received a surprising diagnosis. She visited May-Grant Obstetrics & Gynecology for her 20-week anatomy scan, anticipating discovering her baby's gender, only to grow uneasy as she and her husband, Christopher, waited to speak with a doctor following the ultrasound.

"I knew something was wrong," she remembers. "Three doctors came in. They told us our daughter had a bilateral cleft lip with palate involvement."

The doctors recommended the Clinic as a great resource and within days, Kaitlyn received a phone call from the Clinic. "That initial phone call helped reassure me that we would have support."

When Myla was born at Women's and Babies Hospital, someone from the Clinic was there to help them learn to feed her. "Feeding Myla was the biggest challenge so it was great to have that support in the hospital," Kaitlyn reflects. The Clinic saw her right away.

At three months old, Myla had her first surgery – a bilateral cleft lip repair. She was hospitalized afterwards due to swelling in her airway but she made a full recovery. Dr. Samson performed the surgery and checked in on her often. "Dr. Samson says they're his kids back in the operating room," Kaitlyn says. "He treats them as such."

Myla has had many surgeries and procedures already and is only four years old. She has had several sets of ear tubes, lip repair, and palate repair performed the day after her first birthday. Eventually she will have bone graph surgery.

"Her name means 'soldier,'" Kaitlyn shares, her voice filling with emotion as she speaks about her daughter's courage. "Christopher chose it. We named her that because we knew she'd undergo multiple surgeries. She's so resilient. Before her most recent surgery, the doctor asked her if she was scared and she said, 'No. I'm brave.'"

"I'm so grateful we live in Lancaster," Kaitlyn says. "I'm so grateful that the Clinic is here."

But Myla isn't the only Bain child benefiting from the Clinic's expertise. Kaitlyn gave birth to Myla's brother, Hayden, five months ago. She was told that after Myla's diagnosis, her chance of having a baby with another cleft increased to 10%, and sure enough, Hayden

was born needing a bilateral lip repair. It wasn't easy to send yet another child back to the OR for such an extensive surgery. "Christopher showed incredible strength as a two-time cleft dad," Kaitlyn says. "He was the rock our family needed. And the Clinic has supported us every step of the way."

Now the Bains visit the Clinic every three to six months for Team Day, in which they meet with 8-10 specialists. "We see dental, pediatrics, plastic surgery – everything," Kaitlyn says. "They mail you a detailed report from each specialist. They've been so helpful."

Myla was excited her brother had a cleft as well and eagerly showed him off at the Clinic on his first Team Day. She says Hayden's

smile is beautiful. Kaitlyn agrees and, feeling blessed with a special privilege – she's fallen in love with not just one smile but two for both of her children.

Cleft parents need to take pictures," she says. Your children's smiles are beautiful before and after repair." The family celebrates Myla and Hayden's "smileversary" annually on the date they had their lip repairs. "Thank you to the Clinic, all the care providers, and Dr. Samson for performing three surgeries for our family!" Kaitlyn says.

"And there aren't enough words to thank the donors. They ensure the children get the care they need to be able to hear, to speak, to eat. These special children deserve to have their forever smiles."



# GRATITUDE

## in Uncertainty, Committed to Care

Like many nonprofit organizations, we have felt a significant amount of uncertainty the past few months. I have been asked on several occasions whether changes at the federal level of the government are affecting our Clinic. To be honest, the answer is unclear as of the writing of this piece. What I can share is that approximately 40% of our annual budget originates from federal sources. Approximately 75% of our pediatric patients with craniofacial needs have Medicaid medical and dental insurance. Medicaid is a healthcare plan, funded by state and federal money, that provides coverage for children and adults with special healthcare needs or who have financial needs. Some of our patients fall into both categories. Pennsylvania is unique in that any child born with a craniofacial condition is eligible for Medicaid as their health insurance. Medicaid may act as a primary insurance or as a supplemental plan to cover services that a private plan may not cover. This includes speech therapy, comprehensive dental coverage, orthodontics, hearing aids, hospital visits, emergency room visits, and surgical care. Without Medicaid, many of the families we serve would face catastrophic healthcare costs. Cleft and craniofacial care can cost several hundred thousand dollars over a person's lifetime.

Our Clinic also receives federal and state funding to supplement our cost to provide patient care that insurance does not fully cover. Only 50% of our care costs are covered by health insurance reimbursement.

The final bucket of our budget that is federally-supported is clinical research from the National Institutes of Health. Two of our research grants fall into this category, supporting advances in surgical care techniques and speech therapy.

We are closely monitoring the cost of our medical and dental supplies as market conditions change.

In order to remain nimble, we are evaluating fiscally-responsible options to make sure that we can continue to provide high quality patient care without interruption. We are deeply committed to keeping our financial health strong as we look to the future.

As always, we are grateful for your ongoing support of our patients.



Thank you for your generosity,

*Elizabeth X Prada*

Liz Prada, DMD, MPH  
Executive Director and  
Pediatric Dentist



## A Spring Full of CELEBRATION

Spring is full of things for which we are grateful at the Clinic. Our Celebrating Smiles event was a wonderful success. About 250 people, many less familiar with our work, came through our art show and we raised over \$2,000 in art sales! All the art was donated by patients and their family members, Clinic staff, and other community members who care about our patients. We are incredibly grateful for everyone who came and contributed. The art and the event continue to bring great joy to all participants.

We want to say thank you to YOU! Our Day of Gratitude picnic is June 7 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Overlook Park Destination Playground Pavilion and YOU ARE INVITED! We have several things planned for kids to enjoy, but you, our supporters, are the stars. We will have gifts for our supporters and hope you can join us in gratitude, meet some of our patients, and have great fun. Come pick out a book to take home, enjoy games for all ages, popcorn, a K9 demonstration, cotton candy, and more. If you have kids, or are a kid at heart, we will also have face painting, balloon twisting, a bounce house, a firetruck, an obstacle course, and a Boy Scout camping demonstration. It was a great day with you!

Many are asking about federal funding changes. Today we remain unsure of how changes will impact the Clinic. There will be changes, but until decisions are finalized, we are unsure what they mean for our work. We remain committed to providing the very best care to our patients

and accepting every child, which has been our mission since our founding in 1938. Thank you for caring about our patients!



Deanna Meyler, PhD  
Director of Development



# SMILE in BLOOM!

## Bringing Early Smiles to Our Infant Patients

L-R: Dr. Barry Greyson, Dr. Liz Prada, Dr. Kristin Connors, Dr. Pedro Santiago

This spring, two of our orthodontic and pediatric dental team members, Dr. Kristin Connors and Dr. Liz Prada, joined physicians and dentists from around the world at Duke University. Everyone received training on pre-surgical orthopedic treatment for babies born with both unilateral and bilateral cleft lips and palates, called Nasal Alveolar Molding (NAM). NAM involves the use of an oral retainer and nose stent to improve jaw, lip and nasal anatomy prior to surgical repair. The retainer and stent are taped to a baby's face and adjusted approximately once a week to guide



the cleft-affected jaw, tip of the nose, and lip into more favorable positions, similar to moving crooked teeth into place during orthodontic care.

NAM treatment is usually started in the first few days after birth and continues until approximately 12 weeks of age.

NAM is not without controversy as the treatment can be intensive and may temporarily make feeding more difficult. There are clear short term benefits for facial appearance in early childhood; however, there is conflicting evidence whether the benefits affect long term growth or facial appearance.

Our team is actively working toward making this treatment option available. We look forward to sharing more updates.



## AWARDS

### GRATEFUL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Kiwanis Club of Lititz Area has generously gifted the Clinic \$25,000 to support patient care. Their Pretzel Fest and Chocolate Walk raise funds for local charities that support children, including the Clinic.

The Kenneth Bankert Foundation, Inc., in Camp Hill, PA has generously awarded the Clinic \$5,000 to support patient care.

## CELEBRATING our Newest Team Member!

### Nevaeh Shafer, Dental Assistant

Nevaeh was born in Harrisburg and raised in Middletown, PA. She became a dental assistant through the Dental Assistant program at Dauphin County Technical School in 2024. Nevaeh enjoyed being an orthodontic assistant/technician for about two years in Hershey, PA, during and after schooling. At the Clinic, she assists in pediatric and general restorative procedures.

Outside of work, Nevaeh enjoys finding new trails and experiences with her partner and puppy. She also enjoys spending relaxing quality time with friends and family.



## Celebrating a NEW CHAPTER

Our Treatment Suite has been dedicated to Ann B. Barshinger and we are thrilled to honor her legacy of patient support. Ann always felt a strong affinity for our patients and their journeys and, as a prominent local philanthropist, ensured they could continue to receive the very best care. Anne Friedman, Elaine Kowalski, and Lucia Sanchez, who all worked with Ann, joined our Executive Director, Dr. Liz Prada, in celebration of Ann's generosity.



Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic

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## SMILE CONNECTION

# So Many Reasons to Celebrate



### Gainer-Race Memorial Softball Weekend | May 30-June 1

Play ball, donate, or volunteer and make a real difference in the lives of children across Lancaster County, including our patients. Follow their Facebook page for more information at Gainer-Race Memorial Softball Weekend.

### Day of Gratitude June 7, 3 to 5 pm

RSVP to join us during our Day of Gratitude picnic at the Overlook Park Destination Playground Pavilion! We have special gifts for our supporters, as well as games and goodies for all. This is a free event. Our patients receive the care they need because of your support.



RSVP Here



### Lancaster Stormers Baseball Game July 19 at 6:15 pm



July is Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month. Join us at Penn Medicine Stadium on July 19 to help raise awareness and enjoy a Lancaster Stormers game together. A patient will throw the first pitch,

we will have a behind-the-scenes tour, and there are fireworks after the game. Tickets are \$12 and a portion of sales in our section will come back to the Clinic to support patient care.

Scan QR code  
for ticket  
purchase



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