



SMILE CONNECTION

FALL NEWSLETTER 2025



Stages of a Perfect Smile

Tristan Bond recalls a glow in the room on the August morning after his daughter, Juniper, was born to him and his wife Jette.

She was a perfect baby,” he says, remembering how he gazed at Jette and Juniper lit by the light of the sun and felt as though all his life had led him to that divine moment.

Every stage of Juniper’s life has been uniquely sweet, despite the fact that Tristan and Jette received a surprising diagnosis while Jette was pregnant. Doctors were suspicious that, based on ultrasound photos, Juniper had a cleft lip and palate. “When you hear something like that from your doctors, you think the worst,” Tristan says. “But we did research and talked to our friends and family members and we found out about people who had had clefts too that we didn’t even know about. That gave us hope.”

A few months later, Juniper entered the world, proving doctors’ predictions correct. Tristan and Jette were in contact with Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic right away and learned to feed her.

Dr. Thomas Samson performed Juniper’s first surgery – her lip repair – before she was even a year old and Tristan recalls a seamless recovery. “Dr. Samson is phenomenal,” Tristan shares. Juniper was 16 months old when she underwent another surgery – her palate repair. That recovery was also quick and her healing perfect. “No one has ever asked about her face since she was a baby,” Tristan says.

And Juniper’s cleft has never dampened her confidence or dimmed her brightness. She’s passionate about music, painting, karate and has been taking boxing classes for a year and a half. “When I hit the mitts really, really hard, I feel strong and I just can’t stop!” Juniper says.

“Juniper is such a happy, smart and nurturing little girl. She is so creative and is always willing to help whoever and whatever she can,” says Jette.



Juniper has been a patient at the Clinic for five years and will continue to see specialists, as her next procedure will be her bone graft surgery and in years to come, she will have braces. “Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic has been an amazing place to guide us as a family through her journey,” Jette says.

“The team is amazing,” Tristan shares. “The staff is professional but personal. They’re welcoming and warm. You grow to trust them with your very heart – your child.”

One of the things Tristan and Jette appreciate the most is communication from the Clinic. “You don’t want to be confused,” Tristan says. “They communicate so clearly. It provides reassurance and a sense of safety. It empowers you, especially as a first-time parent.”

The Clinic’s care has empowered Juniper too. “Now my dream for her is that she will fulfill her dreams,” Tristan says.

“We’re forever thankful for having LCPC,” Jette reflects.

“It wasn’t an ideal situation,” Tristan says, referring to Juniper’s initial diagnosis. “But we embraced it. We loved her smile then and now. We’ve loved every stage.”

WE'RE CELEBRATING Team Growth and Your Giving!

We hope you are having an enjoyable autumn as the weather cools down and we head into the holiday season. The Clinic has been busy with many fall activities this year. We are honored to report that we were selected for a “Bright Blue Futures Award” and grant from the Highmark Foundation. This prestigious award is given to nonprofit organizations in the Mid-Atlantic that increase access to care, reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes. It was thrilling to represent the Clinic among several other prestigious nonprofit organizations that do incredible work in caring for people with complex health care needs and who often face multiple barriers to care. We also sat on a panel to discuss our success and challenges in navigating a complicated and uncertain world that seems to change by the day.

In September, our entire staff held its second annual retreat at the Gretna Glen Retreat Center in Lebanon, PA. We focused on the factors that allow us to thrive as a team and spent time reflecting on areas for growth. We took a deep dive into our performance over the last year in an attempt to create a better version of ourselves going forward. Later in the month, our team providers and doctors held a separate retreat to brainstorm ideas to improve our clinical care and patient education materials. We look forward to introducing these soon, including videos that will help our patients and families prepare for upcoming surgeries.

Outside the Clinic, we were excited to participate in the Kitchen Kettle Scarecrow Contest and the Kiwanis Chocolate Walk. Many thanks to our community partners for their continued support and hard work to raise funds in support of our mission.

Elizabeth K Prada

Liz Prada, DMD, MPH
Executive Director and Pediatric Dentist



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FALL FUN AND GENEROUS GIVING

The Clinic is abuzz with all the fun fall activities - activities that bring smiles to our patients, volunteers, and staff while also ensuring we can continue to provide the very best patient care.

We were honored to kick off fall with participation in the annual Kitchen Kettle Village Scarecrow Fundraiser event. Our scarecrow received over 1,000 votes and we raised over \$1,100 to support patient care! A wonderful patient family nominated us to participate and two creative patient families built a tooth fairy visiting a patient scarecrow.

In October, we began to accept original art donations for our March 6 Celebrating Smiles event. Several paintings, sets of earrings, a reading nook, and more have already been donated. Donate your masterpiece through January 15 and help make sure we continue to accept every patient for care. We can't wait to see your masterpiece!

November is all about the ExtraGive! On November 21, the Lancaster County Community Foundation holds its annual 24-hour fundraiser for nonprofits supporting the county. Will you help us raise \$50,000 to provide life-transforming care to all children with a craniofacial difference? Make sure the date is in your calendar with a reminder to give AND please set up your own fundraiser! Through the same website, you can create your own fundraiser for the Clinic and encourage your friends and family to give. Each person who gives, no matter the size of the gift, opens cash prizes to support patient care. The first \$5,000 donated will be matched by Capital Blue Cross. We can't wait to share the day with you!



Deanna Meyler, PhD,
Director of Development





GROWING in Care is the REASON TO SMILE

Clinic Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) Krista Kirchner, PhD, CCC-SLP is on a mission to help all SLPs utilize the best insights to support their patients.

In addition to working directly with Clinic patients, Krista trains other SLPs to utilize implementation science to personalize their practice and benefit our community. She provides a day-long course to help SLPs and is presenting the course at the annual American Speech-Language-Hearing Association meeting in November. The course helps everyone understand the theories and evaluation frameworks of implementation science and how to utilize it in their practice right away. Process models, determinant frameworks, implementation theories, and evaluation frameworks all help SLPs map what will be most supportive for patients. Then barriers and facilitators are explored to understand sustaining a program or adjusting as helpful. All these skills are learned with application exercises to bring the learning directly into each practice.

Krista says: “It is clear that there is a significant need in our field to bring evidence-based practice to our clinicians more quickly and efficiently. My goal is to teach SLPs how to easily implement evidence-based practice into their everyday clinical flow by walking them through the process of implementation and problem-solving, using scenarios that fit with their clinical practice. My hope is that the task of implementing new research is a bit easier after my session as they continue their clinical work.”

Did you know your change can support patient care?

Sign up through our partner Elev8 and round up every credit card purchase to make a difference. PCI compliant and always encrypted, your data remains safe. Together, our change makes brighter smiles!

Follow the QR code to sign up today.



Generous Grants Support Our Commitment to Care

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has awarded the Clinic a \$872,000 biotechnology in medicine grant through the Department of Health. This grant will help us upgrade much of our hardware and software to be the best Clinic for our patients into the future. Representative Bryan Cutler nominated us to be considered for the grant. “The Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic does incredible work for their patients. As a big supporter of expanding biotechnology in medicine, I couldn’t be happier to see them awarded this grant.” – Representative Bryan Cutler

A generous \$30,000 grant has been provided for the care of patients from Lebanon County from the **Francis J. Dixon Foundation Fund**, a charitable fund of the Greater Harrisburg Community Foundation, a regional foundation of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC).

The **Gamber Foundation** has generously awarded the Clinic \$10,000 to support under-insured and uninsured patient care.

The Clinic has been awarded a **2025 Highmark Bright Blue Futures Signature Award** which honors organizations demonstrating a measurable, lasting impact in expanding access to quality care. Our \$60,000 prize will help us continue to provide quality care for our patients. We share the honor with nonprofit organizations across Highmark Health’s footprint. Other awardees are Beacon Clinic for Health and Hope (Harrisburg, Pa.), Ebenezer Medical Outreach, Inc. (Huntington, W.Va.), Gerard Place (Buffalo, N.Y.), and Squirrel Hill Health Center (Pittsburgh, Pa.).

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING PATIENT CARE!

The Kitchen Kettle Village included the Clinic in their annual Scarecrow Fundraiser. With your help, we raised over \$1,100 to support patient care.

Thank you!



Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic

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A FALL FULL OF
GRATITUDE

Looking Forward to a Fall Full of Fun



Celebrating Smiles Accepting Art Through JANUARY 15

Celebrating Smiles, a FREE event, is **March 6 4:00-8:00pm** at the Sehner-Ellicott-von Hess House at 123 North Prince Street in Lancaster. WE ARE ACCEPTING ORIGINAL ART DONATIONS THROUGH JANUARY 15. Share your talent and help us raise funds for patient care. All original art is appreciated and children's art encouraged.

Scan the QR code for the Art Submission Form.

ExtraGive NOVEMBER 21

On **November 21, for 24 hours**, help us raise critical funds that support patient care through this community fundraiser. Make a gift and open additional prizes for the Clinic, encourage others to give, and be a champion by setting your own fundraising goal among your friends and family. Your gift could be matched by Capital Blue Cross! **Visit our page to learn more.**



EXTRA GIVE

COMMUNITY HIGH MURRY
FOUNDATION FOUNDATION FOUNDATION



GIFTS THAT GIVE HOPE

Gifts That Give Hope NOVEMBER 30, 11:00AM-3:00PM

Visit us at the 18th annual gift fair on **Sunday, November 30** at the Farm & Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road Lancaster, PA from **11:00am-3:00pm** for a FREE, festive, and family-friendly event where holiday shoppers can find meaningful gifts for everyone on their shopping lists! The fair will have carolers, food trucks, games, and more for all attendees!

Christmas Tree Lane DECEMBER 5-23, Voting through December 31

We had such fun participating in Christmas Tree Lane at Penn Medicine Park last year that we are doing it again! Make sure to visit our tree on the concourse, a free family-friendly activity, and vote for us online through the event website. Every \$2 vote is a donation supporting patient care and the trees that raise the most will win a generous Stormers donation. Thank you, GES Automation Technology, for sponsoring our participation!



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).