

SECURING THE PROMISE

SUMMER 2024

Our Next Chapter



Le Bonheur Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., treats more than 500,000 children each year through community programs, in regional clinics and 311 beds that feature state-of-the-art technology and family-friendly resources. Our medical staff of more than 240 physicians provide care in 45 subspecialties.

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Support Le Bonheur

For more information about ways to support Le Bonheur Children's by volunteering, attending events, developing partnerships and giving financially, please visit www.lebonheur.org/ways-to-help or call 901-287-6308.

www.lebonheur.org/secure



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

More than 70 years ago, Le Bonheur Children's opened its doors and made a commitment to provide expert care to every child in the community.

As Memphis and the surrounding region have grown, so have the number of kids seen annually at Le Bonheur. We treated more than 500,000 kids last year alone.

For several years, many of our critical care units have operated at or near capacity. In order to meet the demand, we broke ground in 2021 on the largest building expansion since the new hospital opened in 2010. The four-story, \$95.4-million addition allows us to continue our sustainable, long-term growth trajectory.

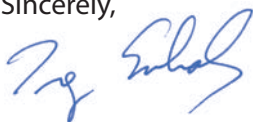
With additional critical care beds on our cardiovascular and neonatal floors and a new state-of-the-art hybrid MRI-guided catheterization lab, we are growing to meet the needs of children and their families.

As a father to five and grandfather to four, I understand the importance of having quality children's health care readily available here in Memphis and the surrounding region. Families count on Le Bonheur and expanding the hospital ensures kids can receive specialized pediatric care close to home for generations to come.

In this issue, I hope you'll enjoy reading stories about the difference we are making for children and their families.

Because of your support, more children will be able to receive the expert critical care only Le Bonheur can provide.

Sincerely,



Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS
President and Surgeon-in-Chief
Le Bonheur Children's Hospital



Even re Heart

Le Bonheur expands cardiac care

Each year, hundreds of families from Memphis — and some from across the country — turn to Le Bonheur’s Heart Institute to receive expert care.

Recognized as a top program by *U.S. News & World Report*, and as an elite pediatric cardiac surgical program by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the Heart Institute cared for 433 inpatients, completed 11 heart transplants and implanted 11 ventricular assist devices in 2023.

Le Bonheur’s Heart Institute has experienced significant growth in the past five years. To meet the growing need for pediatric cardiac care, Le Bonheur has created a 31-bed dedicated Cardiovascular Unit, adding 10 Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit beds to the existing 10-bed unit, and creating room for an 11-bed stepdown cardiac unit.

The Heart Institute expansion also includes a new hybrid Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and cardiac catheterization (cath) lab. This suite allows experts in Le Bonheur’s Heart Institute to access highly efficient quality imaging, allowing them to better make diagnoses more quickly.

Le Bonheur’s interventional cardiac MRI suite is the first in the state of Tennessee and is only the eighth in the country.

The Heart Institute expansion enables Le Bonheur medical staff to care for even more kids and continue to be at the forefront of the latest technology as they constantly find new and improved ways to treat patients safely and efficiently.



The four-floor hospital expansion includes 128,575 square feet of total construction with more than 104,000 square feet of new construction.



Turner Construction senior project manager, Blake Tyler, demonstrates state-of-the-art features in the new CVICU room, including a special ceiling constellation panel that patients can change from their bed.

Winn Fowler

Winn Fowler's oxygen level was extremely low following birth. Doctors thought he had inhaled meconium during delivery, and he was taken to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at his birth hospital.

During her pregnancy, Winn's mom, Jessy, underwent a high-risk scan with a specialist to ensure her baby did not have the same cardiac condition as her husband, Jeff. The scan was normal and while Jeff's congenital heart condition — total anomalous pulmonary venous return (TAPVR) — is not genetic, Jeff still shared his TAPVR diagnosis with Winn's care team.

The day after he was born, doctors discovered that Winn also had TAPVR. Winn was immediately transferred via ambulance to Le Bonheur and admitted to the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU).

At just 2 days old, Winn underwent open heart surgery to reconstruct his veins and get more oxygen to his lungs. His sternum was left open for 24 hours in case doctors needed to operate further. After 10 days in Le Bonheur's CVICU and seven days in a stepdown unit, Winn was discharged.

In order to prepare his parents for life at home, doctors and nurses provided resources and education on

how to administer Winn's medicine and feed him.

"As new parents, you think of your child as very fragile," Jessy said. "With a baby who has just had open

heart surgery, we especially felt that way. Whatever questions or concerns we had, Winn's care team at Le Bonheur was there. We never felt alone and always had resources and support in the hospital."

Winn returned every week for checkups and echocardiograms to make sure his heart was functioning properly. At a routine appointment a few weeks after discharge, the echocardiogram revealed an issue with Winn's heart.

His care team ordered a heart catheterization in Le Bonheur's Cath Lab to better understand his heart pressure. Winn's oxygenated blood was restricted and he had pulmonary stenosis — a condition that causes the heart's right ventricle to pump harder to get blood to the lungs and can strain the heart.

Winn spent the next eight days in the CVICU and was briefly discharged. At another weekly checkup, doctors determined that 2-month-old Winn would need a second open heart surgery to fix a vein that had been narrowed from scar tissue.

The surgery was a success and



At 2 days old, Winn Fowler underwent his first open heart surgery, after he was diagnosed at birth with a congenital heart condition called total anomalous pulmonary venous return (TAPVR).

"As new parents, you think of your child as very fragile. With a baby who has just had open heart surgery, we especially felt that way. Whatever questions or concerns we had, Winn's care team at Le Bonheur was there. We never felt alone and always had resources and support in the hospital."

Jessy Fowler, Winn's mom



Jeff Fowler and his wife, Jessy, have received support and education at Le Bonheur as they navigate their son, Winn's, congenital heart diagnosis.



Winn has undergone two open heart surgeries and three heart catheterizations at Le Bonheur.

for the next six months, Winn received good news at his regular cardiac checkups.

One morning, Jessy went in the nursery to comfort 8-month-old Winn who had woken up crying. She was terrified

to discover her son was unconscious. Paramedics were able to stabilize Winn and upon examination, his doctor determined that his heart was failing. Winn needed an emergency heart catheterization and a stent placed immediately.



During Winn's stays in Le Bonheur's CVICU, he received expert critical care. Thanks to an expansion of the Unit and the addition of beds, more kids like Winn will have access to treatment.

Hybrid Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)-guided cardiac catheterization (cath) lab opens

Le Bonheur is at the forefront of innovation with the opening of the hybrid Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)-guided cardiac catheterization (cath) lab.

As discussion of expanding the Heart Institute took place, the radiology and cardiology teams identified the need for a hybrid MRI-cath lab at Le Bonheur as they have conducted many shared cases in the last few years.

According to Le Bonheur Cardiovascular Services director, Crystal Thomas, cath lab cases at Le Bonheur have significantly increased in the past decade growing from 400 per year to more than 650 performed last year. With the addition of more beds in the NICU and CVICU, where 40% of cath lab volume comes from, Thomas expects the

number of cath lab procedures to continue to increase.

As case volume grows, the hybrid MRI-cath lab enables more efficient safer patient care.



Le Bonheur's interventional cardiac MRI suite is the first in the state of Tennessee and only the eighth in the country.

When using the MRI for imaging instead of a traditional chest X-ray, the patient is not exposed to dye contrast or radiation as the MRI utilizes a magnet. The MRI also provides real-time, functional imaging for providers during cath lab procedures, making the patient's heart and its anatomic structure easier to visualize leading to improved accuracy.

"This new hybrid MRI-guided cardiac catheterization lab at Le Bonheur is a game changer for us. We will be able to perform heart catheterizations in the MRI environment that will avoid the harmful effects of radiation for our patients," said Jason

Johnson, MD, associate chief of Cardiology and director of Cardiac MRI at Le Bonheur. "Our partnership and collaboration with national leaders in technology will provide new diagnostic and interventional procedures for children with heart disease in Memphis and the Mid-South."

The set up of the hybrid MRI-cath lab suite also leads to patients being under anesthesia for a shorter period of time as they no longer have to travel between floors for imaging.

"Having the MRI connected to the cath lab creates a safer environment for a patient under anesthesia," Thomas said. "It also creates a whole new world of opportunities for patient care and procedures in the future."

There will be a ramping

Following the procedure, Winn's body did not respond well as fluid built up in his lungs and his heart pressure went back up. Winn's lungs were shutting down. Jessy and Jeff endured the darkest 24 hours of their lives as doctors worked hard to determine the next best steps for their son.

Winn was diagnosed with a reprofusion injury as his surgically opened-veins pumped more oxygenated blood than his body was used to. Fortunately, doctors had a solution, and they were able to alleviate Winn's condition with steroids.



The Fowler family has found a second home at Le Bonheur throughout Winn's treatment at the Heart Institute.

Winn stabilized and was discharged home on an immune suppression drug to stop his body from scarring the inside of his heart.

Since that stay, Winn had a third successful heart catheterization and doctors hope he will be able to go a full year prior to his next catheterization. Winn returns every month for an echocardiogram to ensure his heart is functioning properly and a check-up with his Le Bonheur cardiologist. Thanks to the care he has received at Le Bonheur, 18-month-old Winn is hitting developmental milestones and thriving.

up period as the radiology and cardiology teams work together to identify cases to utilize the cath lab and MRI at the same time in order to maximize technology to best meet patient needs. The new cath lab and MRI will be used separately most of the time but the hope down the road is to use them in tandem for 30% of cases.

Plans are also in place to transition all cardiac patients to

this MRI rather than one on a different floor of the hospital, said Stevie Lee, director of Radiology at Le Bonheur.

As Le Bonheur establishes new standards and protocols for the shared space, and with future plans to test new devices and catheters, extensive research will be conducted and eventually published.

Not only will patients benefit from the space, but physicians will be able to showcase their technique and expertise with children's hospitals around the world. With the capability to live stream from the cath lab, physicians

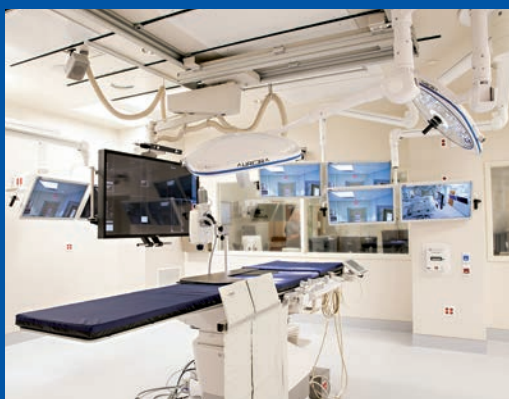


Blake Tyler, senior project manager of Turner Construction, Stevie Lee, director of Radiology at Le Bonheur, Shyam Sathanandam, MD, medical director of Le Bonheur's Interventional Cardiac Imaging and Interventional Catheterization Laboratory, Crystal Thomas, director of Cardiovascular Services at Le Bonheur, Jason Johnson, MD, associate chief of Cardiology and director of Cardiac MRI at Le Bonheur, and Le Bonheur President Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS, cut the ribbon for Le Bonheur's new hybrid MRI-guided cardiac catheterization lab on April 2.

will be able to teach and share information.

Le Bonheur's hybrid MRI-guided cardiac cath lab continues the Heart Institute's tradition of excellence and leadership,

paving the way for other pediatric cardiology programs. Most importantly, it will allow more kids like Winn and Lawson to receive safe and effective care when they need it most.



The cardiology and radiology departments will work in tandem to provide efficient and coordinated care to patients in Le Bonheur's new hybrid MRI-guided cardiac catheterization lab.

Lawson Nichols

“Your baby is missing half of his heart.”

Emily and Martin Nichols were shocked to receive this news the day after their third son, Lawson, was born in a hospital near their Mississippi home. Emily’s pregnancy had been healthy and uneventful with normal routine testing and diagnostics.

Lawson needed immediate critical care from a pediatric heart specialist. Despite being several hours from home, Lawson was flown via helicopter to Le Bonheur where he was admitted to the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit.

That same day, a failed congenital heart screening and an echocardiogram revealed Lawson’s condition.

“From the moment we got to Le Bonheur, they took care of us and made us feel reassured,” Emily said. “Lawson was not just another patient and his doctors made us feel heard.”

Lawson was diagnosed with four congenital heart defects, including hypoplastic left heart syndrome.



Lawson is missing half of his heart and has undergone two cardiac surgeries at Le Bonheur.

Following rounds of testing and imaging, doctors determined Lawson was stable enough to go home after 10 days in the CVICU.

At a scheduled catheterization procedure a few months later, doctors discovered his heart function had decreased. Lawson needed surgery to reroute his blood flow and improve his heart function. Lawson’s care team prepared his parents for the surgery and explained what to expect. For two days, a ventricular assist device (VAD) helped Lawson’s heart pump blood.

“We are so grateful for Le Bonheur. They saved our son’s life and Lawson’s care team feels like family. Whatever challenges present themselves in the future, we know Lawson will receive the very best care at Le Bonheur.”

Emily Nichols, Lawson’s mom



Lawson Nichols was born with four congenital heart defects and spent 10 days after his birth in Le Bonheur’s Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit.

Lawson slowly improved and a week after surgery, he was extubated and weaned off oxygen. Lawson grew stronger as he underwent physical therapy sessions and received nutrition via an NG tube in his nose while he recovered. While doctors initially thought Lawson might need to remain at Le Bonheur until his next surgery, he was able to go home from the CVICU after one month.

Initially, Lawson was on an external pacemaker to regulate his heart rate, but he no longer requires it or any other equipment. Lawson is able to control his heart function with several medications and his parents are able to feed him via a bottle.

For now, the Nichols family returns to Le Bonheur



Emily and Martin Nichols come to Le Bonheur's high-risk cardiac care clinic with their son, Lawson, every other week for an echocardiogram and monitoring. They check in daily via an app with Lawson's care team to ensure he is receiving adequate oxygen and gaining weight appropriately.




The expansion of Le Bonheur's Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit will enable more kids like Lawson to have access to heart treatment.

every other week so Lawson can be monitored at the high-risk cardiac clinic and undergo an echocardiogram. Emily and Martin check in daily with Lawson's care team

via an app and submit his oxygen levels, which they monitor at home with a pulse oximeter, and his weight. These statistics are monitored closely as weight loss or a decline in heart function are indications that another cardiac surgery is needed.

Lawson will receive long-term care at Le Bonheur's Heart Institute and doctors anticipate he will need another surgery in the next few years. Emily and Martin know when that day comes, their son will be in the best hands.

"We are so grateful for Le Bonheur," Emily said. "They saved our son's life and Lawson's care team feels like family. Whatever challenges present themselves in the future, we know Lawson will receive the very best care at Le Bonheur." 

We Need Your Help

Thanks to the support of generous donors like you, Le Bonheur recently added more beds to the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU). Nationally recognized as a top pediatric cardiology and heart surgery program, the Heart Institute provides expert critical care for patients. **We can't do it without you.** Our heart patients are counting on your gift today. Will you give from your heart so Le Bonheur can continue to heal patients' hearts?



Scan the QR to give.

Le Bonheur Interventional Cardiologist Neil Taylor, MD, founded the Le Bonheur Heart Institute Virtual Reality Program, which uses virtual reality to build a 3D model of a patient's heart, place devices and create a precise plan for procedures and surgeries.



Virtual Blueprints

Le Bonheur Heart Institute launches virtual reality program to plan surgeries, cath lab procedures

Le Bonheur Interventional Cardiologist Neil Tailor, MD, and Cardiovascular Surgeon Umar Boston, MD, faced an obstacle. A patient had developed a clot in a recently placed bioprosthetic valve and urgently needed another valve replacement. But the patient was in such poor condition that further surgery was not an option. Instead, Boston requested that Tailor perform a cardiac catheterization and place a valve inside of the patient.

ASC
School of Medicine
Pediatrics
Neil Tailor, MD

This technique is known as a percutaneous mitral valve-in-valve replacement and is not commonly performed in children. But Boston and Tailor had one major advantage for the smoothest and safest possible procedure — virtual reality (VR).

“Positioning and placement of the valve was critical, and we needed to think outside of the box for this case,” said Boston. “The VR technology provided another option for planning and precise placement of the implant that avoided another open heart surgery.”

Tailor, who founded the Le Bonheur Heart Institute Virtual Reality Program, created a 3D model of the patient’s heart and the valve to be implanted. Using VR technology, he planned the procedure by placing the 3D model of the valve in the 3D model of the heart in a virtual space to determine the best position for the valve and to see how this placement related to other structures in the heart.

“VR allows us to get inside the heart defect and create a more precise plan ahead of surgeries and procedures.”

Le Bonheur Interventional Cardiologist Neil Tailor, MD

This VR planning led to a straightforward, successful percutaneous valve-in-valve replacement that was completed within 30 minutes.

“Thanks to VR we can grab and hold the simulated heart, place devices and position them where needed,” said Tailor. “VR allows us to get inside the heart defect and create a more precise plan ahead of surgeries and procedures.”

Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital is one of only a few pediatric centers in the world using VR to plan heart surgeries and cath lab procedures. This precise planning leads

to safer and faster surgeries and procedures for patients at Le Bonheur’s Heart Institute.

Dynamic Perspectives

When Tailor was searching for his niche in the cardiology field, VR modeling immediately stood out. While the software used was initially created for planning otolaryngology (ENT) and skull surgeries, it also has proved to offer opportunities in treating congenital heart disease.

In 2022, Tailor established the Le Bonheur Heart Institute Virtual Reality Program.

“VR allows us to model procedures in the cath lab and surgical operating room in a more dynamic way. Existing imaging gives, at best, a 3D reconstruction of a heart that is similar to looking at drawings in a book. With VR, we can move around inside the heart as if we are holding it in our hands,” said Tailor.

To build these 3D models, Tailor uses raw data from a patient’s CT scan, MRI or 3D echocardiogram. And to create the most accurate models, Tailor does not rely completely on computer algorithms. He segments the data himself taking the patient’s 2D scan and turning it into a 3D model for the highest level of accuracy. With time, he has also built a library of 3D models of every device that Le Bonheur interventional cardiologists and surgeons might use by scanning them with a fluoroscopy machine.

Tailor and Boston work together to discuss cases and determine which ones might benefit from VR planning. In the cath lab, Tailor uses VR for every patient who already has a CT scan. For surgical cases, Boston finds that VR planning is useful in more

challenging surgeries, such as partitioning ventricles, redirecting systemic veins or heart transplants.

The Virtual Advantage

Tailor and Boston have discovered that the use of VR in surgery planning is



providing myriad benefits — for themselves as physicians but also for their patients.

“Previously, we had limits on planning before cath lab procedures. We would look at an ECHO and CT scans, but have to figure out many details of the procedure as we went along,” said Tailor. “With VR,

we’re moving away from that and can plan substantially more beforehand.”

The planning capabilities that VR provides before a cath lab procedure means shorter procedure time, as well as less high-radiation imaging and contrast for the patient. Plus, the VR plan provides

a reference for correct device placement cardiologists can use in the cath lab to verify the device’s correct location.

Boston sees similar benefits for his heart surgeries that can be planned with VR. The extensive planning that VR allows means his patients have less time under



Le Bonheur Interventional Cardiologist Neil Taylor, MD, (left) and Cardiovascular Surgeon Umar Boston, MD, (right) work together to use virtual reality (VR) technology to plan heart surgeries. An expansion to the Heart Institute will incorporate a VR station for families to better see their child's heart defect and how physicians will repair it.

anesthesia and less time on heart-lung bypass during surgery.

“If you have a well-orchestrated plan, it’s better over time and down the road for patients,” said Boston. “VR gives us another way to fine tune our management strategy from a preoperative standpoint.”

A New Dimension

A key focus for expansion of this program is further developing the use of VR for heart transplants — even when determining whether a donor heart will fit a recipient’s chest cavity. While Boston can currently use VR to plan parts of the heart transplant surgery, the hope is that soon he will be able to use a 3D scan of the donor’s heart and a 3D scan of the recipient’s chest cavity to virtually place the donor heart into the recipient’s chest.

This builds upon work already

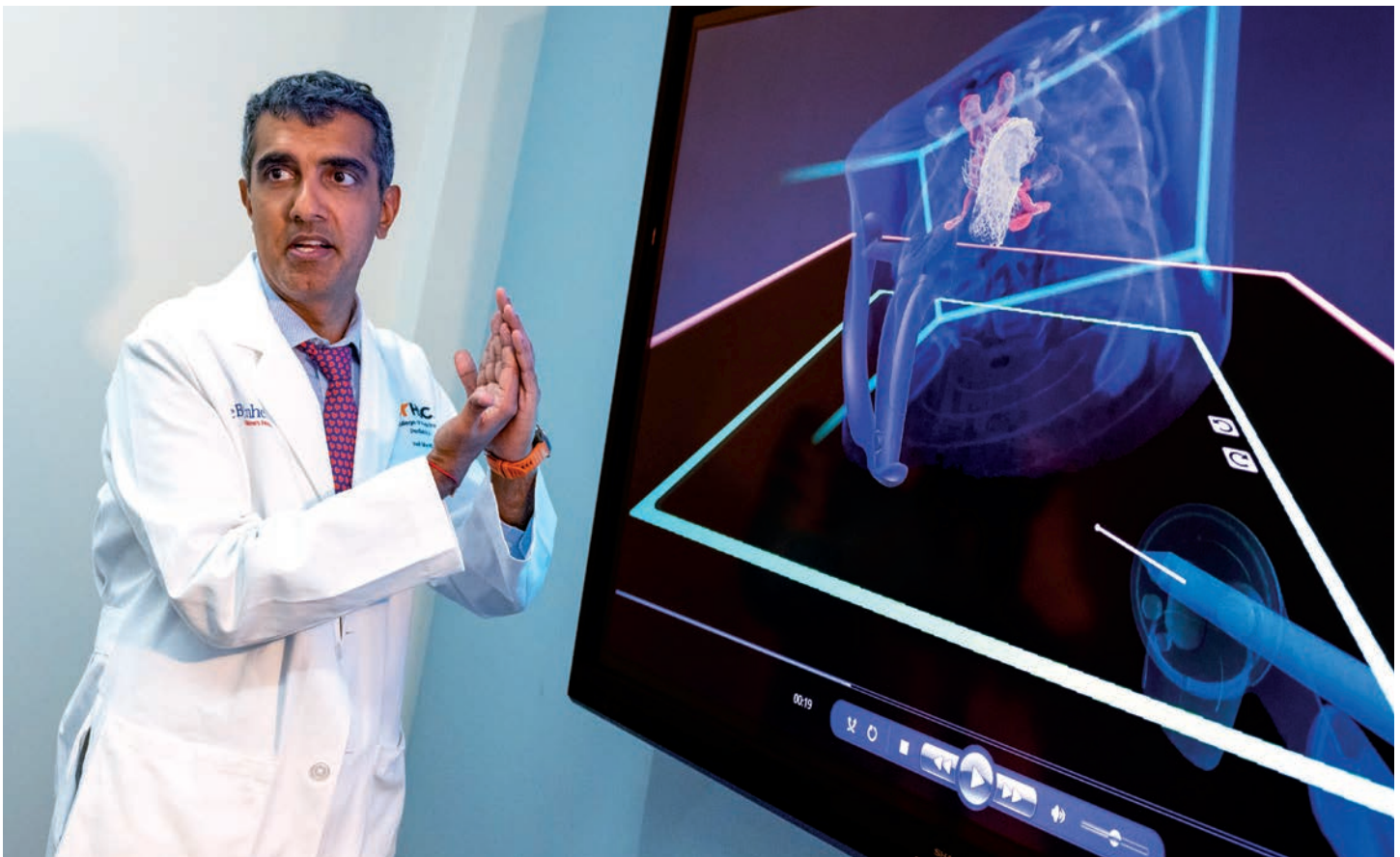
underway in Le Bonheur’s Heart Transplant Program to better match recipients with the proper donor heart. Working with radiologists, Boston and his team have developed a database of chest cavity volumes and associated weights to help surgeons determine the appropriate donor weight range for patients waiting for a heart. VR would take this a step further, providing another checkpoint for accurately matching a donor and recipient.

VR has implications for the education of the next generation of physicians, too, says Tailor. Currently, cardiologists in training learn in 2D, but the ability to view the heart through VR means 3D perspectives as well as the ability to see specific slices of the heart and overlay different areas.

Tailor and Boston feel so strongly about the potential for VR that Le Bonheur is

incorporating a VR lab into the recently opened Heart Institute expansion. This expansion adds a hybrid cardiac MRI and cath lab to the two existing cath labs, all on the same floor as the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit and CV Operating Room. The VR station will allow families the opportunity to see their child’s heart defect and cath lab procedure plan to better understand exactly what’s going on with their child’s heart.

“For families, it’s helpful to see their child’s heart in 3D, and with the dedicated cardiac MRI, we’ll be able to use that imaging to build our 3D models with no radiation for the patient,” said Tailor. “Eventually we hope to use VR for 4D modeling — allowing us to plan surgeries and procedures on a VR heart that is pumping blood and beating.” ❤️



Le Bonheur Interventional Cardiologist Neil Tailor, MD, uses virtual reality (VR) to build 3D models of patient hearts and devices. The precise planning afforded by VR leads to safer and faster surgeries and procedures for patients.

A Growing Green

Donors provide outdoor space for respite

A weary mother needs a breath of fresh air.

A child awaiting a life-saving heart transplant wants to feel the sun on his skin. An overwhelmed physician on a particularly hard day just wants to step outside and see the bright blue sky.

Life inside a hospital, no matter the reason for a visit, can be frightening and at times chaotic. Imagine walking through the hospital doors and instead of hearing machines beeping and whirring, elevators opening and shutting, or phones ringing you hear birds cheerfully chirping or better yet, a welcomed silence.

This transformation from chaos to calm is happening every day at Le Bonheur, thanks to Le Bonheur Green, an interactive outdoor space for children and their families.

“As a Certified Child Life specialist at Le Bonheur, the motto of ‘kids need more than medicine to get well’ became engrained in my way of thinking,” said Jessica Liles, director of Volunteer & Family Support at Le Bonheur. “Before Le Bonheur Green,



The Child Life team utilizes Le Bonheur Green to help get kids outside the four walls of the hospital, when possible. Special events for patients, like a visit from the Easter Bunny, often take place in the space.

families often expressed how they wished we had a safe and relaxing outdoor space.”

Le Bonheur Art director Linda Hill echoes this sentiment.

“It’s been a dream to provide the ability for kids to go outside the hospital walls,” said Hill.

This dream became a reality when the first donor family stepped up. The family’s son had received a transplant, and they had remained in the hospital for quite some time. With the financial support of this family, Le Bonheur was able to start the project with the addition of a labyrinth — with an 8-foot butterfly in the center — in a park-like setting.

Soon after, more donors felt compelled to help, including Mid-South Transplant Foundation, who provided support with the addition of a reflective pavilion.

Phase 1, which debuted at a May 2022 ribbon cutting, is a serene place for children and their families to find peace and tranquility for prayer, meditation and reflection, or simply a safe space to take a deep breath and release stress they’ve held for far too long.



Le Bonheur Green is used daily by patients, families, friends and Associates. An interactive outdoor space, Le Bonheur Green provides a calming space mere steps from the hospital.

Serene gardens feature sculptures, benches and fragrant flowers. The center area showcases a walking path in the shape of Le Bonheur's famous heart. Patients can look out the hospital windows and see the heart path — a reminder of the whole-hearted and compassionate care they're receiving. As parents enjoy a short break on the Green, siblings find an empty area to run off steam.

"When the weather has been nice and allowed for outdoor sessions, my patients and I have enjoyed our 'instrument picnics' where we set a blanket down to lay out instruments and play music together," said Courtney Rosewall, Board Certified Music Therapist. "There was also a time when a patient and I played in the snow and sang as many songs as we could think of about snow and cold weather."

"Le Bonheur Green is used daily by patients, families, friends and Associates. I've witnessed strolls, picnics, birthday parties and community celebrations. Each phase of the project brings a blend of whimsy and function, ensuring that Le Bonheur continues to meet the holistic needs of patients and families."

Jessica Liles, director of Volunteer & Family Support at Le Bonheur

Thanks to a generous gift from Dave North of Sedgwick, Phase 2 is currently being planned and will be closer to the hospital itself with more whimsy and playfulness. It will feature an art installation created by Yvonne Bobo to honor Sid Wilroy, MD, a beloved




On May 24, 2022, the first phase of Le Bonheur Green was officially opened with a ribbon cutting celebration.

long-time Le Bonheur physician and artist. Commissioned by the Wilroy family, the piece honors Dr. Wilroy who offered so much to the world around him. Also planned for Le Bonheur Green is a rehab garden — donated by Le Bonheur Club — specifically for patients and their care teams. The garden will be badge-accessed and offer children a private area where they can play or complete rehab exercises without being confined to the hospital.

"This project is truly for the well-being of everyone involved," said Hill. "Nature and being outside feeds the soul and renews strength in a way that can be lost sitting inside of a hospital."

Although Le Bonheur Green has already met many needs and wishes of those who dreamed up the project, the dreamers aren't finished yet. The team envisions chimes and music and even more engaging activities.

"Le Bonheur Green is used daily by patients, families, friends and Associates," said Liles. "I've witnessed strolls, picnics, birthday parties and community celebrations. Each phase of the project brings a blend of whimsy and function, ensuring that Le Bonheur continues to meet the holistic needs of patients and families."

This massive project's positive impact will be felt by patients, their loved ones and Le Bonheur staff for decades to come, said Hill. The first seed couldn't have been planted without the generosity of donors. This multi-million dollar project will be 100% donor-funded, a true testament to the compassionate support found in Le Bonheur donors. 



Children can enjoy the outdoor space on Le Bonheur Green as well as the walking path that features an 8-foot butterfly, mere steps from the hospital.

Meeting the Need

NICU expansion gives growing room for more babies

Each year, Le Bonheur's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit treats hundreds of babies in the 60-bed unit. Le Bonheur serves as the region's only Level IV Neonatal Intensive Care Unit – the highest level of neonatal care, handling the most complex medical cases – and Shelby County has the highest number of preterm babies in the state of Tennessee.

Most Le Bonheur patients are transferred from another NICU because they need the coordinated care of multiple specialists. Many patients come to the NICU for surgery, chronic lung disease, genetic disorders or other complex illness.

Founded in 2004, the unit has provided that highest level of care to thousands of tiny infants throughout the years and for the last several years has operated at capacity.

In order to treat more babies in need of life-saving care, Le Bonheur recently completed an expansion of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit bringing 14 additional beds to the current 60-bed unit. On March 28, the NICU expansion officially opened with a joyous ribbon cutting ceremony that signified an important



The Goodfellow family joined Le Bonheur President, Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS, for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit ribbon cutting on March 28.

milestone in access to care for babies across the region.

“Advancements in fetal medicine and NICU care have increased survival rates for babies born preterm or with complex congenital anomalies. As a result, NICU use and demand have increased across the region and nationally,” said Le Bonheur

President Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS.

“This expansion will provide us space and support for this special and unique program that children from throughout the region depend on Le Bonheur for this level of care.”

Included in the NICU expansion is the special Center for Lung Development

devoted to babies with pulmonary conditions such as bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD). The average length of stay for a baby in Le Bonheur's NICU is six weeks, but babies with BPD are often in the NICU for several months and in some cases a year or more.

Mark Weems, MD, medical director of Le Bonheur's NICU, and his team are hard at work to ensure adequate staff are hired and trained to support the new NICU beds.

"With the NICU expansion, I'm most excited to be able to provide improved access to care for patients," said Weems. "When we get a call for a Level IV NICU bed, we will be able to provide it faster and more reliably. I'm also excited for BPD patients to have a dedicated space and care team."

Tre Howell

Cala Taylor was diagnosed with preeclampsia that caused her to go into labor extremely preterm. At 26 weeks gestation in February 2023, Cala and Terry Howell, Jr., welcomed their son, Terry "Tre" Howell, III, who weighed 1lb 10 oz.

Tre was intubated to help him breathe and spent the first four months of his life at his birth hospital, but he needed the expert care only Le Bonheur's Level IV NICU could provide.

Once 4-month-old Tre arrived at Le Bonheur, he was given non-invasive oxygen and steroids to treat his floppy airway.

"When we first got to



Tre Howell was diagnosed with bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), a chronic lung disease often seen in premature babies without fully developed lungs. With the addition of more beds and a dedicated Center for Lung Development, Le Bonheur is able to help more babies like Tre.

Le Bonheur, Dr. Weems made me feel comfortable and did a great job explaining Tre's care and what to expect," Cala said.

Tre was diagnosed with

bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), a chronic lung disease often seen in premature babies without fully developed lungs, which is one of the most common

conditions for babies in Le Bonheur's NICU.

To best meet the needs of BPD patients like Tre, a dedicated Center for Lung Development is part of the NICU expansion. Patients receive care from a multi-disciplinary team to optimize their growth and development.

Le Bonheur also joined more than 25 other health



Tre Howell was born at 26 weeks gestation on Feb. 24, 2023. He weighed less than 2 pounds.

centers last year as a member of The BPD Collaborative, which focuses on improving the outcomes of infants and children with BPD, and fostering a culture of collaboration around research and practices.

During Tre's time at Le Bonheur, Cala worked with a case management team to help her understand and process what was happening with her baby, including when he needed surgery to have a G-tube placed so he could eat.

Cala was also able to attend a G-tube class at Le Bonheur and receive specialized training from nurses so she was better prepared to care for Tre at home upon discharge.

After spending the first 13 months

of his life in the hospital — nine of those months at Le Bonheur — Tre reached an important milestone that his family had been looking forward to for months. Tre was able to go home for the first time in March 2024.

"We are so grateful for the care Tre received," Cala said. "Le Bonheur has helped him reach so many milestones that I never thought would be possible. I'm looking forward to seeing him meet many more developmental milestones in the future."

Tre's Le Bonheur journey does not end with his discharge. He will receive follow up care from a pulmonologist and a G-tube specialist to ensure he continues to thrive.



Cala Taylor and Terry Howell, Jr., are grateful for the care their son, Tre, has received in Le Bonheur's NICU. After spending nine months in the hospital, Tre was able to go home for the first time in March.



Jadence Woods was born at 26 weeks gestation at a hospital near her Mississippi home. She needed expert critical care and was transferred to Le Bonheur's Level IV NICU via ambulance.

— Jadence Woods —

Lata Woods was shocked when her water broke at only 26 weeks pregnant. She began experiencing contractions two to three minutes apart. Lata contacted her doctor in Memphis, but she was nearly two hours away and went to a local hospital near her Mississippi home.

At the hospital, Lata and her husband, Jeremy, were told she was four centimeters dilated and the baby was in a breach position. Labor was progressing and Lata needed an emergency C-section.

A few hours later, Lata and Jeremy welcomed their daughter, Jadence, who weighed less than 2 pounds. Following her birth, Jadence was unresponsive for several minutes and was immediately transferred to Le Bonheur via ambulance.

In order to save her life, Jadence needed critical care, but due to her C-section delivery, Lata had to remain at the hospital in Mississippi. Lata was scared as her baby left the hospital without her.

At 2 days, Jadence experienced a life-threatening medical event when she had a pulmonary hemorrhage. Thankfully,

Angel Eye: Webcam keeps families closer to their babies during NICU stays



Every new room in Le Bonheur's NICU has Angel Eye, a webcam that allows families to observe their hospitalized babies when they can't be at their bedside.

Welcoming a new baby is a joyous event for a family, yet when a baby has complex medical needs that require time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, families are faced with a host of stressors. Will their baby be ok? Are they able to take time off from work or be away from other children to be at their baby's bedside? Do they have transportation to get to and from the hospital?

Babies from across the region who are born prematurely or with serious medical needs are often transferred to the only Level IV NICU in the region at Le Bonheur Children's. Patients can spend several weeks or even months in Le Bonheur's NICU receiving the critical care they need to survive. While some families of NICU patients live locally in Memphis, many live a few hours or more away.

Thanks to an initial gift from the Manat Foundation, NICU families at Le Bonheur have been able to keep a close watch on their babies even when they can't be at the hospital.

A NICU webcam called Angel Eye serves parents and families of babies hospitalized in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) by using technology to improve communication and

collaboration of families and providers. Angel Eye allows for a continual video feed from the baby's bed through a password protected, HIPAA-compliant website.

With the addition of 14 beds to Le Bonheur's NICU, the Vinson family wanted to ensure every room in the NICU had Angel Eye because they know firsthand the hardship of having a hospitalized newborn and the difference bedside technology can make.

Jessica and Jason Vinson's oldest daughter, Rylee, spent time in a local NICU before Le Bonheur's NICU opened. The Vinsons rarely left Rylee's bedside, making quick trips to the restroom or to get food.



The Vinsons' ties to Le Bonheur run deep as their younger daughter, Kayden, receives expert care for a rare seizure disorder in Le Bonheur's Neuroscience Institute and Jason is a pharmacist at the hospital. Yet their strong connection doesn't end there. Le Bonheur NICU medical director, Ajay Talati, MD, was part of Rylee's care team. L-R: Jason Vinson, Jessica Vinson, Kayden Vinson, Ajay Talati, MD, and Rylee's Run committee member, Misty Boone.

"When you have a baby in the NICU and can't be there, you are always worried you will miss something or lose an opportunity to see their doctor," Jessica said. "By having this Angel Eye technology available, parents can see exactly what is happening and count every breath their child is taking."

Thanks to a generous gift of funds raised by the Vinson family through their non-profit organization, RIBS/ Rylee's Run, all 14 new rooms in Le Bonheur's NICU are equipped with Angel Eye.

doctors were able to stabilize her.

“When I got to Le Bonheur, everyone was helpful and understanding,” Lata said. “Having such a small baby is a scary situation, but the nurses and care team made me feel comfortable and got me oriented to the floor and NICU.”

Extremely preterm neonates like Jadence often face multiple complex medical issues that require coordinated care from specialists across several disciplines. In Le Bonheur’s NICU, babies are able to receive that critical care they require. With the opening of additional beds with the new expansion, Le Bonheur will be able to provide even more care to babies in need.

When Mary Gaston, Le Bonheur NICU clinical director, started at the hospital in 2011, there were 35 dedicated NICU beds. With the expansion, the NICU now has 74 beds with room to add more.

“We have a lot of need in our community and region for specialized critical care for babies that as a Level IV NICU only we can provide,” said Gaston. “Technological advances and surgical corrections are available now that provide



Lata Woods has found support and resources at Le Bonheur while her daughter, Jadence, receives medical care.

more options to families for positive outcomes for babies. We are thrilled to be able to care for even more babies that need us.”

For the first 19 days of Jadence’s life, Lata and Jeremy were unable to hold their baby as doctors worked to stabilize her and find the best way to administer critical oxygen.


Jadence was diagnosed with a Grade 4 intraventricular hemorrhage (IVH), a brain bleed, that was confirmed by ultrasound. Doctors put a device in Jadence’s head to pull fluid off her head every other day and the blood clot dissolved.

She was also diagnosed with a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA), a congenital heart defect that is common in extremely premature babies, which doctors are hopeful will close on its own.

Once Jadence is big enough, she will have a shunt put in her head to drain fluid in her brain.

In addition to medical care given to patients, Le Bonheur also provides

resources for parents like Lata and Jeremy. They have been able to attend support groups for parents of NICU patients and Lata is part of a meal voucher program for mothers pumping breast milk.

“There are a lot of highs and lows with having a NICU baby,” Lata said. “There is a lot of holding your breath and sometimes when we feel like we are headed in the right direction, something else seems to happen. Everyone at Le Bonheur has been really supportive and has made a stressful situation more bearable.” 




Le Bonheur NICU staff require specialized training to care for their patients. In order to staff the recently added NICU beds, Le Bonheur is recruiting additional medical team members.

We Need Your Help

Thanks to the support of generous donors like you, Le Bonheur recently added more beds to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Le Bonheur is the only Level IV NICU in the region, the singular resource for babies who need critical care. **We can’t do it without you.** Our tiniest patients are counting on your gift today. Will you help Le Bonheur can continue to provide life-saving care?

Scan the QR to give.





Leading Le Bonheur

*New President
leads with a
servant's heart*

Eubanks was named President of Le Bonheur Children's in December 2023 after serving in the role in an interim capacity for several months.

When Le Bonheur needed a new president, the hospital didn't have to look far to find the perfect fit for the role: Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS.

A pediatric surgeon at Le Bonheur for more than 20 years, Eubanks has seen lots of changes at the hospital, yet one thing has remained the same — Le Bonheur's commitment to provide expert care to every child in the community. A devoted father to five and grandfather to four, Eubanks recognizes the importance of having quality children's health care readily available in Memphis and the Mid-South.

"We have an obligation as Le Bonheur to provide excellent care to the kids of our region," Eubanks said. "Families count on us, and that is a commitment I take very seriously. I am honored and humbled to ensure that commitment is fulfilled

in my role of President."

The son of two pharmacists, Eubanks grew up in Tunica, Miss. During his junior year of high school, Eubanks dislocated his elbow in a high school football game. Luckily, a local doctor was able to pop his joint back in place and provide pain relief — a moment that solidified Eubanks' passion for medicine.

Eubanks went on to medical school and pharmacy school at the University of Mississippi. He completed a pediatric surgery residency at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, including a rotation at Le Bonheur Children's, before leaving Memphis to complete a pediatric surgery fellowship at the University of Texas Southwestern in Children's Medical Center of Dallas.

After completing his training, Eubanks jumped at the chance to return to Memphis, his wife Angela's hometown,

and accepted a surgical position at Le Bonheur.

“I interviewed with five or six groups after training, but I always had a high level of respect and loyalty for people here at Le Bonheur, and I knew I wanted to come back,” Eubanks said. “There is something special about Le Bonheur and the spirit of the people inside the building. The devotion of everyone at Le Bonheur to patient and family-centered care is unparalleled.”

At Le Bonheur, Eubanks was quickly identified as a natural-born leader and tapped for several leadership positions, including Trauma Medical Director from 2004 to 2018 and Surgeon-in-Chief from 2015 to 2023. Among his many accomplishments, Eubanks was instrumental in Le Bonheur earning the American College of Surgeons Level I Pediatric Trauma designation.

Along the way, Eubanks has relied on his faith to serve as his guiding foundation as he makes decisions and leads with a servant’s heart. During his career, he has further honed his leadership skills on medical mission trips across the globe from Nigeria to Honduras and Belize.

Eubanks brings a unique perspective to his role as president with a surgeon’s leadership, knack for detail and commitment to hands-on patient care.

“Being a frontline



Eubanks and his surgical patient, Elizabeth Lasley, take a break in Le Bonheur’s hallway.

“We have an obligation as Le Bonheur to provide excellent care to the kids of our region. Families count on us, and that is a commitment I take very seriously. I am honored and humbled to ensure that commitment is fulfilled in my role of President.”

Trey Eubanks, MD, FACS, President and Surgeon-in-Chief
Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital



Eubanks celebrated Le Bonheur’s verification as a Level I Children’s Surgery Center by the American College of Surgeons Children’s Surgery Verification Quality Improvement Program (ACS CSV) with clinical staff last spring. Le Bonheur is the first hospital in Tennessee to achieve this designation.

person, I have cut my teeth in health care,” Eubanks said. “I have been at Le Bonheur for my whole career and have built relationships with key stakeholders, so I understand how to lead and get things done.”

During his brief tenure as president thus far, Le Bonheur has already experienced phenomenal growth including the completion of a \$95-million expansion that provides needed space, technology and infrastructure for the nationally-renowned Le Bonheur Heart Institute and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. While Eubanks served as interim president from March to December 2023, Le Bonheur raised more than \$12 million in new funding, opened the new Seacrest Studio at Le Bonheur, and became the first and only hospital in Tennessee to achieve the Children’s Surgical Center Level I Verification.

While excited about the new additions to Le Bonheur, Eubanks has more goals in mind.

Eubanks’ vision for the future includes growing the services provided at Le Bonheur, continuing the tradition of being a great place to work and ensuring every child has access to care regardless of their ability to pay. 

Seacrest Supporters

Former patient family helps bring broadcast studio to Le Bonheur

Ten-year-old George Brewer was rarely sick.

But the headaches he had started to experience were so severe that he could not stop vomiting.

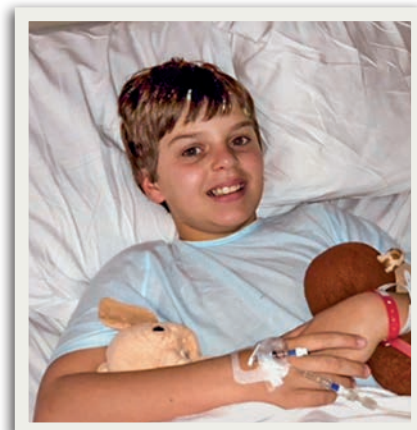
George's concerned parents, Kevin and Cindy Brewer, rushed their son to Le Bonheur Children's Emergency Department, where he underwent a series of tests and MRIs.

His diagnosis: a brain tumor that needed to be removed. The tumor was caught early, and surgery was successful. Le Bonheur had helped save their son during one of the scariest times of their lives.

And it left the Brewers with a question: what could they do to give back to the hospital that had given so much to their family?

The answer came unexpectedly.

Cindy and Kevin Brewer along with Kent Underwood, co-owners of LEO Events, a Memphis-based events management agency, were approached by one of their employees with an idea: She had been researching the Ryan



George Brewer was diagnosed with a brain tumor and underwent a successful operation at Le Bonheur to remove it.



Cindy and Kevin Brewer, co-owners of LEO Events, nominated Le Bonheur to receive a Seacrest Studios. The Brewers are also members of Le Bonheur's National Leadership Council.

Seacrest Foundation, a nonprofit started by American Idol's Ryan Seacrest. Seacrest was building state-of-the-art broadcast studios in children's hospitals across the country — allowing patients to get away from the burdens of being hospitalized for a while to be entertained.

What if they tried to get one for Le Bonheur?

"We just absolutely loved it," said Kevin Brewer. "It was a perfect marriage of what we do with entertainment and engagement — and we loved the idea of bringing that into the hospital."

The Brewers brought the idea to Le Bonheur and the Ryan Seacrest Foundation eventually chose Le Bonheur for its 12th studio.

"We had been there with our kids, with George as a patient and with his sibling, Benjamin," Kevin said. "The thought of having that as a distraction and just being able to play bingo on TV for a while was so cool."

Le Bonheur partnered with the Foundation to fund the studio, in addition

MUSIC, GAMES AND CELEBRITIES:





Kevin Brewer shares his family's Le Bonheur experience as his son, George, looks on. The care that George received at Le Bonheur inspired his parents to give back to the hospital.

to a generous gift from the Brewers.

"We invest because we obviously want to see it succeed," Kevin said. "Le Bonheur has always meant so much to us, and its mission resonates not just with us but also with our staff."

Seacrest Studios at Le Bonheur Children's opened in May 2023 and provides a variety of programming to patients, whether they are physically in the studio or watching through a closed-circuit network in their rooms. Its staff of three provide live shows every day, allowing patients to host their own radio and television shows, play games, watch live musical performances and interview celebrity guests.

The studio is encased in glass, allowing staff, patients

and visitors to view the daily programming happening inside.

The Brewers and LEO Events have continued to support the studio, giving again in 2024 to establish a Patient Engagement Fund that helps provide staff with the day-to-day tools they need to give kids an even better experience in the studio.

George, tumor free, is now volunteering at the Le Bonheur Seacrest Studios.

"We love that they are having a chance to see servant leadership," Kevin said. "They remember how scared they were when George was in the hospital, and Benjamin was worried about his brother. This opportunity brought it back to how they can make a difference." ❤️

PATIENTS ENJOY SEACREST STUDIOS AT LE BONHEUR



Life-Changing Potential

First clinical trial for SCN2A treatment held at Le Bonheur Children's Neuroscience Institute

Just like other 4-year-olds, Sophia Cope enjoys being outside and watching Elmo. Her favorite colors are red, blue and green. But in one crucial way, she is one of a kind.

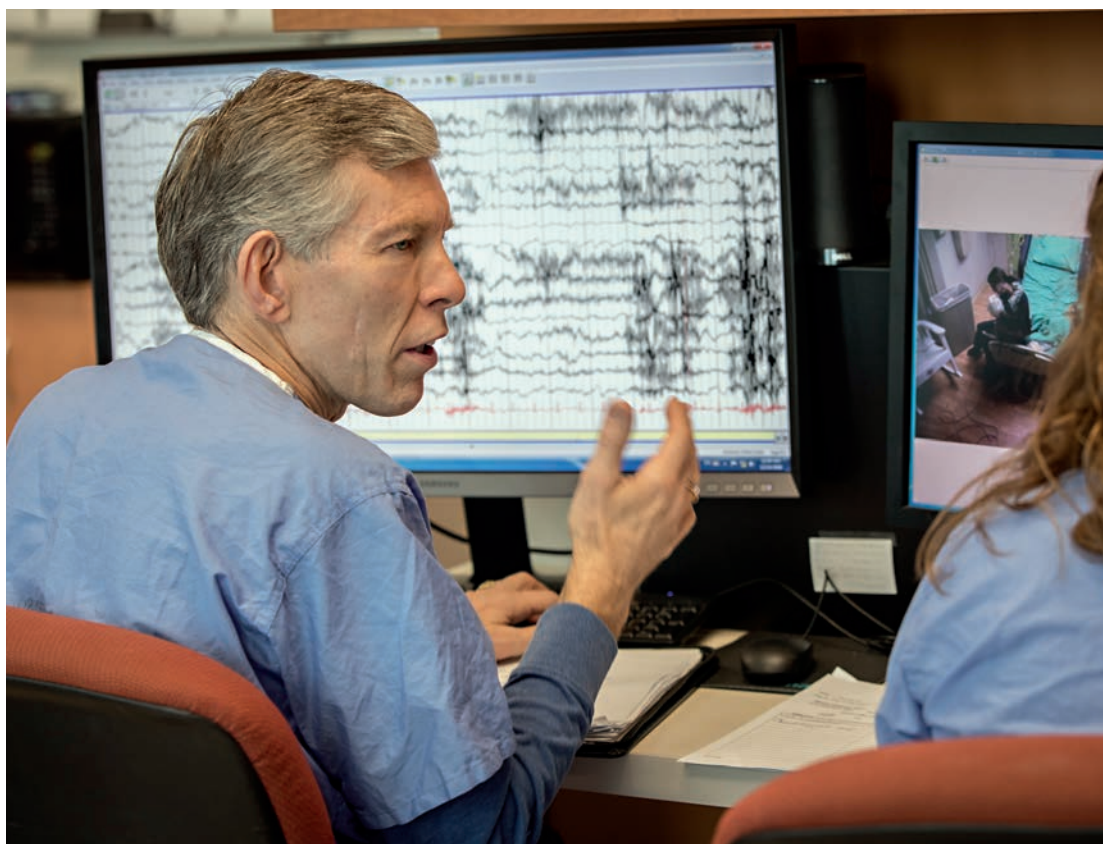
Sophia is one of about 1,000 known cases of epilepsy — a disorder that causes seizures — caused by a mutation in the SCN2A gene. And now she is a participant in a clinical trial of the first medication to target this gene directly.

Sophia Cope was one of the first children to participate in the EMBRAVE study for a gene therapy that addresses a genetic epilepsy caused by a mutation in the SCN2A gene. She's one of about 1,000 known cases of this epilepsy.



If determined to be effective, this medication has the potential to change the lives of children with her diagnosis.

“This is the first time we have a therapy that we think can address the underlying cause to improve seizures and start seeing developmental improvement,” said James Wheless, MD, co-director of Le Bonheur’s



Le Bonheur Co-Director of the Neuroscience Institute and Chief of Pediatric Neurology James Wheless, MD, is principal investigator on the first study to address a genetic epilepsy caused by a mutation in the SCN2A gene. Le Bonheur Children’s is the only site in the world for this phase of the trial. Wheless is also the first recipient of the Tom Horton and Donna Wiener Endowed Chair in Neuroscience, thanks to a transformational donor gift from the Martha, Bowen and Tommy Horton Family and Joy Wiener.

Neuroscience Institute and

principal investigator of the study. “If we can prove that it works, we can identify children who need intervention in the first week of life to stop developmental decline as early as possible.”

Le Bonheur Children’s is the only site in the world to enroll children in this phase of the EMBRAVE study for the medication PRAX-222 from Praxis Precision Medicines, Inc., with the goal of improving seizure control and development for children with this rare genetic epilepsy. Preliminary data has already shown success for patients with a 43% median reduction in seizures vs. baseline, an increased number of days without seizures and significant seizure reduction after just one dose.

A DEVASTATING EPILEPSY

When Sophia was born in Jonesboro, Ark., her parents Aaron and Michaela knew that something was not right.

She was having trouble breathing and constantly shaking and shivering. At just hours old, she was transferred to Le Bonheur’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) where an EEG showed that Sophia’s brain was in a state of one continuous seizure.

With her brain imaging clear of brain bleeds, her geneticist at Le Bonheur, Eniko Pivnick, MD, sent off genetic testing in an attempt to find out what was going on. The results: Sophia had a rare genetic mutation to her SCN2A gene that caused a devastating form of epilepsy with no approved treatment options.

“The genetic testing showed that she was the first child to ever be documented with this specific genetic variant of SCN2A,” said Aaron. “It was causing her to have seizures all over her brain.”

SCN2A is the gene that directs the creation of sodium channel proteins in the brain, which control the flow of

sodium ions to neurons. Mutations in the gene can cause too many or too few sodium ions to flow through the channels, causing epilepsy and developmental delay. In Sophia's case, the gene caused her brain to overproduce sodium ions.

Children with an SCN2A mutation are typically born with no symptoms but start seizing within the first few days of life. Mutation of the gene can also lead to

developmental delays that are further exacerbated by the presence of drug-resistant seizures.

“This is a really tough form of epilepsy. As kids get older, not only do they continue to have seizures, but their development declines significantly,” said Wheless. “In the past we have been stuck. All we could do is use seizure medications we thought would work and try to help development with therapy. But none of that changes the

Sophia's parents, Aaron and Michaela, have already seen a reduction in the number and intensity of her seizures since entering the trial. She's also more vocal, active and alert.



underlying genetic problem.”

Sophia spent her first 81 days of life in the NICU at Le Bonheur. She returned at 4 months old for a 71-day stay where she received a gastrostomy tube and a tracheostomy. During this second stay, Sophia’s heart stopped four different times.

The Copes leaned heavily on the support of families whose children also have SCN2A mutations by

connecting with the Families SCN2A Foundation. It was through this Foundation that the Copes also heard that a new option for Sophia might be on the horizon.

“It was trial and error for treatment going down the list of sodium channel blockers and medications for infantile spasms that didn’t work,” said Michaela. “We heard about the potential for a new drug, but thought it would be 10 years coming.”

Thanks to the Families SCN2A Foundation, the Copes learned about the EMBRAVE trial that might address the underlying genetic mutation causing Sophia’s medical conditions. And the only place in the world to participate in the trial was the hospital where their current neurologist, Amy McGregor, MD, was located — Le Bonheur Children’s.

GENETIC TARGET

The EMBRAVE study is investigating the efficacy and safety of the medication PRAX-222. This drug is a novel treatment called an anti-sense oligonucleotide (ASO), which targets genes at the mRNA level to affect protein expression. In this case, the ASO hopes to target the SCN2A gene to decrease its expression, which would then decrease the sodium ions causing the symptoms.

Delivered by intrathecal injection, trial participants will receive a dose of one milligram of PRAX-222 each month for four months. Patients are observed inpatient for at least 24 hours after the injection. Once this phase of the trial is complete, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) will reevaluate PRAX-222 to determine if it can continue to the next phase of clinical trials.

For the current phase of the trial, Le Bonheur Children’s is the only hospital in the world delivering the medication.



“We have a deep track record of research in pediatric epilepsy, including intimate knowledge of taking a pre-commercial product and walking it through the regulatory phases required by the FDA,” said Wheless. “We also have a system for caring for children in a clinical trial with a very well-developed multidisciplinary program and experience delivering other ASO-based therapies for genetic epilepsies.”

If PRAX-222 is proved to impact the expression of the SCN2A gene, it has massive implications for children like Sophia. The drug could address the intractable seizures that occur multiple times a day. If diagnosed and treated early enough, the medication has the potential to drastically slow the developmental decline that is also associated with this gene’s mutation.

“We hope that it will provide enough of a fix for Sophia that she can still grow and reach what we call ‘inch-stones,’ sitting up, getting rid of her trach and becoming more active,” said Michaela. “It’s great to think about how this can impact my child, but it’s also great to be a part of something that could get answers to help others.”

FUTURE HOPE

Proving the safety and efficacy of PRAX-222 would be a major change in the lives of children and families who deal with SCN2A mutations. But this ASO delivery system continues to open the door for children with other

“We know God gave us Sophia for a reason. Of course I hope my kid excels on this medication, but this has implications for so many other diseases and children who need medication coded to specific genes, too.”

Aaron Cope, Sophia’s father



Sophia was transferred to Le Bonheur’s NICU when she was just a few hours old. An EEG showed her brain was in a state of one continuous seizure.


genetic epilepsies as well, says Wheless. While these genetic epilepsies can be individually rare, the total number of children with some form of genetic epilepsy is not insignificant, with more than 100 children with genetic epilepsies in Le Bonheur clinics alone. Wheless looks forward to the day when the same hope presented by PRAX-222 for treatment will exist for other genetic epilepsies.

“When I started practicing, we didn’t even have the genetic test to make a diagnosis for SCN2A epilepsies. Now we can tell you

exactly what’s causing it down to the gene with a tailored precise therapy to target it,” said Wheless. “It’s amazing to think of that progress compared to where we were not long ago in how we cared for these children.”

The Cope family says that they have already seen a reduction in the number and intensity of Sophia’s seizures and that she is awake more and very alert.

“Sophia has become more vocal as well — I believe that she has found her voice!” said Michaela. “She has made sounds before, but not often at all. Now we get to hear her on a daily basis and even several times a day.”

“We know God gave us Sophia for a reason,” adds Aaron. “Of course I hope my kid excels on this medication, but this has implications for so many other diseases and children who need medication coded to specific genes, too.” 



With Heartfelt Thanks

We are so thankful to donors like you who give from the heart.

Thanks to you, we are always here when children and families need us most. We take care of kids like 8-year-old Audrey Leonard.

When Audrey's mom, Barbara, was pregnant, she found out her daughter had spina bifida. Doctors advised Barbara and her husband, Guy, that their baby would unlikely walk or talk. After she was born, Audrey spent a week in Le Bonheur's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit receiving expert care. The Leonard family was provided with resources on spina bifida as well as a nurse to answer questions and help arrange appointments.

Since her initial stay, Le Bonheur has become a second home for the Leonard family as Audrey has undergone three surgeries.

Today, 8-year-old Audrey returns to Le Bonheur every six months for regular checkups. Audrey's assigned nurse helps her family coordinate appointments so she is able to see all of her specialists — neurology, orthopedics, urology, occupational therapy and physical therapy — in one day instead of having to make multiple trips to the hospital.

"Receiving Audrey's spina bifida diagnosis was scary, but Le Bonheur was with us from the beginning and has provided the resources we need to help Audrey thrive," Barbara said. "Le Bonheur is our second home, and we are so grateful for the care that Audrey receives."



Scan the QR code to see a list of all the donors who made a difference for kids this year. Don't be left out! Give today and add your name to next year's list.

The Blessing of FedExFamilyHouse

A cozy place to recharge and find comfort



FedExFamilyHouse

Like many expectant mothers, Haley Sharp of Harmontown, Miss., was thrilled about her bundle of joy, but also experiencing some fears and concerns. Haley discussed them with her doctor, but despite her unborn daughter measuring small, they weren't overly worried.

To be on the safe side, however, her doctor sent her to a specialist. During her appointment with the specialist, Haley received devastating news. Her daughter was measuring severely small, and the chance of a stillbirth was heartbreakingly high. In addition to her size, there was not enough blood and oxygen getting from the placenta to the baby, only increasing the chance of critical issues.

While doctors felt the baby's chance of survival was very low, Haley was determined to fight for her little girl. After discussing options and potential outcomes, Haley was admitted to the hospital for monitoring, expecting to remain hospitalized until closer to her due date on Feb. 27, 2023.

However, just a week later in November 2022, little Taylor was born at 25 weeks gestation. Taylor had survived her birth and with that, she had already beaten the odds.

Taylor's birth began quite a journey for her mother, Haley, and father, Brady. In December, she was transferred to Le Bonheur

for a procedure to close a hole in her heart. After this procedure, Taylor was transferred back to the hospital where she was born and diagnosed with bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), a respiratory condition often seen in newborns whose lungs weren't fully developed before birth.

In April 2023, Taylor came back to Le Bonheur for a catheterization lab procedure on her heart. After this procedure, she remained in the Le Bonheur Neonatal Intensive Care Unit until Jan. 5, 2024, and she eventually received the additional diagnosis of pulmonary hypertension.

During her months at Le Bonheur, the family experienced a roller coaster of emotions. Progress brought tears of joy, but setbacks brought Haley to her knees in prayer.

When rhinovirus took a toll on Taylor's body, Haley said, "After everything we'd been through, it was turmoil for me to see my baby so sick from this virus. I had to take breaks, and I would pray, 'Please God, don't take my baby'."

Little Taylor celebrated her first birthday and first Christmas in her hospital room before she was able to go home for the first time in January 2024.

Throughout Taylor's first year, Haley and Brady were thankful for the blessing of FedExFamilyHouse. A family member had stayed at FedExFamilyHouse in the past, so

the parents had heard positive things about the accommodations before visiting for the first time.

"I couldn't believe it when we first went to FedExFamilyHouse,"



Taylor was born at 25 weeks gestation and required complex medical care only Le Bonheur could provide.

"I could say so many things. But the main thing is we would not have been able to be there with Taylor every day without the blessing of FedExFamilyHouse."

Haley Sharp, Taylor's mom



Taylor Anderson spent months as a patient at Le Bonheur and her mom, Haley, credits FedExFamilyHouse as an integral part of their experience. FedExFamilyHouse enabled Haley and Brady to be by Taylor's side in the hospital by providing a place to stay.

said Haley. "It just left me speechless."

From the comfort of a clean bed and bathroom to the kindness of the staff, Haley felt incredibly grateful for a place to relax and recharge during such a grueling year of her life.

"I could say so many things," said Haley, "But the main thing is we would not have been able to be there with Taylor every day without the blessing of FedExFamilyHouse."

Taylor still requires 24/7 oxygen, as well as regular trips to Le Bonheur for cath lab procedures. Down the road she'll require more surgeries for heart stents, but she has steadily developed and achieved many milestones much to the amazement of her family and care team.

It's easier to plan for these trips back to Le Bonheur knowing the stress of finding a place to stay is not an issue. Haley and Brady can count on FedExFamilyHouse to offer their family a cozy, safe place to recharge each time they make the trip to Memphis.

"I wish I could heal Taylor's pain and take this all away," said Haley, "But I know God gave us this journey for a reason. I am so thankful for the many blessings and miracles along the way."



Thanks to FedExFamilyHouse, Taylor and her parents, Haley and Brady, have a clean and convenient place to stay for free when they travel to Memphis for medical treatment at Le Bonheur Children's.

Recent Events



CMN Champions Kick-Off

On Feb. 19, our 2024 Le Bonheur Champions gathered together to kick off the year. These Le Bonheur patients had the opportunity to meet some of our Children's Miracle Network Hospital partners. Throughout this upcoming year, these champion kids will be able to share their stories and participate in activities hosted by different fundraising partners. A special thanks to our CMNH partners who participated at the event: Extra Life, Walmart, Panda Express, FedEx Employee Credit Association, and Love's Travel Stops.

Pictured from left to right are Aspen White, Payton Avery Childress, Mary Michael Kimbrough, AJ Burgess, Audrey Leonard, Broderick Webster Jr., Henry Grimes, RJ McCain.



FedExFamilyHouse Gala

The annual FedExFamilyHouse Gala is one of the Mid-South's most prestigious events. This philanthropic occasion strives to raise more than half of the FedExFamilyHouse operational funds advancing the mission of providing free lodging to families who travel from around the world to Memphis, Tenn., for treatment at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. This year's event was a success and raised more than \$1.4 million to ensure families at FedExFamilyHouse never feel far from home.



Upcoming Events

Le Bon Appetit



Join hosts Chef Kelly English, Chef Phillip Dewayne and Le Bonheur Club at The Kent on Saturday, June 8, 2024 for Le Bon Appetit, from 6-9 p.m. The culinary event brings more than 30 award winning chefs from Memphis and across the country. This

year, guests have the opportunity to kick up the party at Le Bon Appetit Late Night from 9-11 p.m. This Late Night event will include four additional chefs and featured cocktails by local mixologists. Le Bon Appetit has raised more than \$1 million for specialized medical equipment, child-specific programming and technology for Le Bonheur.

To purchase tickets and learn more visit lebonappetit.org or call 901-287-6308. Hurry! The event is expected to sell out.



Gurus of Golf

Join Le Bonheur Children's Hospital on Monday, Aug. 19, for the most unique golf outing you'll ever experience. Sign up to play TPC Southwind in Memphis with championship pin placements from Memphis' FedExCup Playoffs event and receive instruction from some of the top teaching professionals in the world.



Contact Joanie Taylor at joanie.taylor@lebonheur.org to learn more.



William B. “Billy” Dunavant Jr. Foundation Gives Back

Family’s gift helps bring Seacrest Studios to Le Bonheur



The William B. “Billy” Dunavant Jr. Foundation is a Diamond Level Founding Donor of Seacrest Studios at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital in honor of Billy’s daughter, Kelli Dunavant.

Billy passed away in September 2021, but was inspired by the work Kelli performed as an intern in Le Bonheur’s Child Life department in 2003 and her subsequent philanthropic contributions to Le Bonheur. During Kelli’s internship she saw the need for more activities for teen patients at Le Bonheur. She raised money to fund the project and in 2004 Le Bonheur opened a Teen Room in the hospital. Billy was so proud that Kelli identified an important way to improve the patient experience at the hospital and helped create this special room at Le Bonheur.



Billy Dunavant’s daughter, Kelli, spent time as an intern in Le Bonheur’s Child Life department. Kelli’s work inspired Billy to give back to Le Bonheur.

Billy left instructions for his Foundation to make a gift to Le Bonheur in honor of Kelli. When Le Bonheur presented Billy’s widow, Tommie, with the opportunity to help bring Seacrest Studios to the hospital, she knew this was the perfect project. When Tommie mentioned this prospect to Kelli, she was thrilled because she knows the positive impact Seacrest Studios would have on patients, families and Associates at Le Bonheur. Tommie prayed over every gift she made from Billy’s foundation, and she just knew that this gift to Le Bonheur for Seacrest Studios was the perfect project.

If you would like information about how you also can support Le Bonheur through a gift from your estate plan, please contact Cathy Wilson at 901-287-5575 or catherine.wilson@lebonheur.org or go to <https://lebonheur.planmygift.org/>.



848 Adams Avenue
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Address Service Requested



Save these dates to participate in the Le Bonheur Pumpkin Run 5k & Family Walk!

Pumpkin Run is in its 20th year, with events to be held in Memphis, Tenn., Tupelo, Miss., and Jackson, Tenn. Participate in all three for a special award! Virtual options will also be available. There will be a post-race family friendly party with a kids' costume contest, food and entertainment at each event.

Jackson, Tenn. – Saturday, Oct. 5
Tupelo, Miss. – Saturday, Oct. 12
Memphis, Tenn. – Saturday, Oct. 19



Le Bonheur
PUMPKIN RUN
MEMPHIS - TUPELO - JACKSON 5K



For more details and to register, run to PumpkinRun.org.