

Fundraising to help critically ill children

By Madeline Zuckerman

Over the past 20 years, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital (LLUCH) has helped kids with many life-threatening medical emergencies, having served 1.2 million children in Southern California, including critically ill or injured children from the Coachella Valley.

Approximately 5,000 Coachella Valley children received life-saving medical care at LLUCH in 2012. The hospital partners with Coachella Valley hospitals, transporting children by ambulance and helicopter for specialized services not available at local hospitals.

Almost 15,000 children are admitted to Children's Hospital each year. An additional 120,000 receive care through the Pediatric Emergency Department and its Outpatient Clinics. More than 30 percent of children transported to the Pediatric Intensive Care

Unit at Children's Hospital are residents of desert communities, a statistic that many people are not aware of, with the exception of parents of these critically ill children.

This is due in part because Loma Linda's Pediatric Emergency Department is the only Level 1 Trauma Center in the region. This Level 1 Trauma Center helps kids with the most serious, life-threatening medical emergencies, and also offers one of the biggest and most advanced neonatal centers in the world, taking care of the tiniest babies.

Big hearts for little kids

The Desert Guild of Big Hearts for Little Hearts, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital's fundraising arm, was founded in 2002 to raise awareness of and support for the hospital. Over the past 12 years, Big Hearts for Little Hearts has served this community and its children through action

and leadership, emphasizing children's healthcare needs.

The Desert Guild is committed to educating the public that LLUCH is the best place for their children when they are critically sick or injured and their needs cannot be met at community hospitals. Big Hearts for Little Hearts supports the children of the Coachella Valley by developing projects that address the critical needs of hospitalized children and their families.

"The Desert Guild was formed in 2002 by two incredibly visionary women, former U.S. Rep. Shirley Pettis Thompson and Jane Woolley, M.D.," said Joyce Engel, president of Big Hearts for Little Hearts. "Their goal was to build a support base for the hundreds of Coachella Valley children who seek treatment for serious inpatient and outpatient medical issues at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital each year.

"Big Hearts for Little Hearts Desert Guild has raised \$1.5 million since its inception. Through our guild members' vision, these funds have provided an array of medical equipment for the Children's Hospital, pharmacies for the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, as well as comfortable family waiting rooms."

To continue its mission of raising funds to help the valley's children, plans are well underway for the Desert Guild's Feb. 3 major luncheon and shopping boutique, "Backed with Love...Packed with Care" at the Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort and Spa in Rancho Mirage.

Honorees are Desert Guild Founders Woolley and Pettis-Thompson. Keynote speaker is the nationally recognized Children's Hospital critical care pediatrician Cynthia Tinsley. Jenifer Daniels, morning news anchor of CBS Local2, will emcee.

"This is the third year that I have been able to chair this event, and I had people calling me for tables even before our invitations had gone out," said event chairwoman Nancy Volk. "It is very rewarding, because I am working with a wonderful group of women who give so much of their time and talents to put this event on."

If you go

What: Big Hearts for Little Hearts luncheon, shopping boutique

When: Monday, Feb. 3

Where: Omni Rancho Las Palmas Resort and Spa, Rancho Mirage

Tickets: \$100 members, \$125 nonmembers

Event information: Chairwoman Nancy Volk, (760) 409-3028, volk.nancy@gmail.com

Desert Guild information: President Joyce Engel, (760) 413-4469, www.bigheartsforlittlehearts.org



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Jan. 24

SEE ALZHEIMER'S DIFFERENTLY

Author, photographer

and sociologist Cathy Greenblat, Ph.D., will show in photos and text examples of high-quality treatment of people with Alzheimer's in the U.S. and other countries in "Love, Loss and Laughter" from 9:30 to 11 a.m., Friday, Jan. 24. The free seminar, hosted by Eisenhower Medical Center, Joslyn Center and Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage, will be held at the Joslyn Center, 73-750 Catalina Way, Palm Desert. A light breakfast will be served. Information and RSVP at (760) 834-7956.

Jan. 29

HEEL, FIDO!

Have a question about your dog's behavior? Ask dog

trainer Rosemary Caputo from 5 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 29 at Pioneer Dog Park, 45-130 Seeley Dr., La Quinta. The session is free.