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MMA Insider



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Flying the Desk: A Word from President Ed Boyer

Four Men and a Plane Mark MMA Beginning



PROGRAM REPORT
July 2008—February 2009
Clients Served.....14,208
Public Benefit.....\$2,427,733

This year is a milestone in Mercy Medical Airlift's history, marking our 25th anniversary.

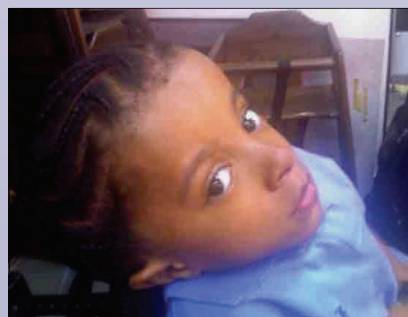
We look back to our early beginnings of four men, a plane, and a vision of helping patients who had to travel long distances for medical treatment.

I thank God for growing the vision and giving us the means to help thousands of people each year through a variety of programs, including MMA's charitable airline ticket plan; Angel Flight and Airlift Hope flights in small, private aircraft; and discounted air ambulance flights through Air Compassion America. All this is possible because of your generous contributions. We are so grateful for your continued support.

If you haven't read *Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic* (Arcadia Publishing) by Suzanne Rhodes, you are missing out on a fascinating pictorial journey of our history. Email suzanne@mercymedicalairlift.org to order your autographed copy for \$20 plus \$5 for shipping and handling.

We hope to continue serving for another 25 years...and another 25 and another...

No More 'Scary' Train Rides



Surviving brittle bone disease is 'incredible feat'

For a week every three months, Crystal held her breath. She held it as she bundled her son Armondre up into a train car, took him from their home in Ohio to Montreal where she watched him endure painful tests and IV treatments, and then

returned home.

She moved in fear because her son has brittle bone disease, or osteogenesis imperfecta (OI), and his only treatment option was over the border into Canada. The train provided the only financially feasible solution...until she discovered Mercy Medical Airlift.

(See 'No More Scary Train Rides,' page 2)

No More ‘Scary’ Train Rides *(from p.1)*

Like any mother, Crystal wants the best for her son. When he was diagnosed with OI during her pregnancy, she immediately began researching treatments. And when he was categorized with Type II OI, the most severe type bearing the shortest life expectancy, Crystal still maintained hope and continued searching for treatment.

Finally, she discovered Shriner’s Hospital in Montreal where an experimental bisphosphonates drug was being used to treat those with OI.

She found Mercy Medical online while researching alternative transportation for her son.

“That train ride [to Canada] was just scary, and it was a long two days every trip,” Crystal said.

She learned that MMA was the only service that would provide transportation out of the state and into Canada as she needed.

“Like the IV treatment, the rods for his legs are not approved in the U.S., either,” she said. “So I had no option but to go to Canada for his treatment, and Mercy Medical Airlift was the only way to get there.”

Armondre has reached the age of eight, which is an incredible feat for a child with Type II OI. This means he has received treatments 32 times in his life, and, until recently, he has had to endure a long, painful train ride to get there.

“We worked with Dannie Ducksworth [MMA’s director of commercial airlines], and he was absolutely great,” Crystal said. “We didn’t have to move Armondre around too much—he was comfortable, and it was all very convenient. Mercy Medical Airlift was just a real blessing.”

“Mercy Medical Airlift was the only way to get there.”

‘We Had to Get to Texas’



Packing a winning attitude counts in cancer fight.

Over a 1,000-mile telephone line, Helen speaks in a weary, yet hopeful voice, in the same tone of all families who support a loved one who has been diagnosed with cancer. Her husband, Patrick, has acute leukemia and is fighting an exhausting battle.

Patrick was diagnosed in October and treated locally at the Johnson City Medical Center in Tennessee. As the hospital’s treatment regimen ran its course to entirety, however, the cancer remained. Doctors gave the family the option of beginning transfusions as a complacent treatment or entering a clinical trial at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

“Taking transfusions just wasn’t an option for us,” Helen said. “We knew we had to get to Texas for that treatment.”

Thus the problem of transportation arose. Through the American Cancer Society, Helen was introduced to Mercy Medical Airlift, and she got on the phone immediately.

“We have to fly to Texas for a little more than a month initially, and then return once a month for quite a while after that,” she said. “Mercy Medical really helped us.”

Helen finds more than the obvious logistics to consider. She notes that she recently packed winter clothes to travel to Texas, but when they arrived it was 80 degrees. Somehow, the mundane act of checking the weather forecast gets lost when a loved one is seriously ill.

Helen has now packed the correct clothes, however, and is also packing her winning attitude to carry with her to Texas. She remains extraordinarily grateful to Mercy Medical Airlift.

“There is nothing that can compare to the service and relief—there’s just no way to describe it,” she said, adding after a tearful pause, “They’re just the greatest people in the whole world.”

Seals Ensure Integrity

MMA is pleased to announce that we have been awarded Charity Navigator’s highest four-star rating for the sixth consecutive year. The watchdog group rates charities based on performance in organizational efficiency, capacity, leadership, and finances. Learn more at www.CharityNavigator.org. Search for Mercy Medical Airlift.



The other seal we proudly display is that of the Independent Charities of America. We receive the Seal of Excellence each year because the ICA has been able to certify that we meet the highest standards of public accountability and program and cost effectiveness.



MMA Insider is published quarterly by Mercy Medical Airlift, 4620 Haygood Rd., Ste.1, Virginia Beach, VA 23455. Editor: Suzanne Rhodes. Sign up today for the email version at admin@mercymedical.org.

For information on making a donation or to learn more about MMA, please visit our website: www.MercyMedical.org. Phone: (757) 318-9174.

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