



What's New in Erie!

August 2017

Local Erie Patient, Emily Mellish, Named National Ambassador

Every year, Shriners Hospitals for Children® selects two National Patient Ambassadors to represent the health care system's patients. The ambassadors spend the year telling their stories of perseverance in the face of adversity and the ways Shriners Hospitals for Children has made a dramatic, life-changing difference. The new national patient ambassadors, including local patient, Emily Mellish, were introduced during the premiere of their documentary called 'Free to be Me' as part of Imperial Session.

Here are just a few highlights of Emily's story:

Emily's mother, Joy, did not experience significant issues during pregnancy,



but moments after Emily was born, that changed. Emily was rushed by ambulance to a hospital in a larger city only hours after birth, and spent her first two weeks in the NICU, where doctors gave her a complete assessment.

Emily was born with spina bifida, as well as severe scoliosis (missing eight ribs on her left side) a leg-length discrepancy, additional orthopaedic conditions, bladder and kidney problems and other issues. When she was 6 weeks old, Emily had surgery to close the defect over her spinal cord. The following day, a long list of serious complications began, keeping her in the hospital for 28 days. During this time, the Mellish's learned about Shriners Hospitals for Children from a close friend. "It



Shriners Hospitals
for Children®— Erie

What's New in Erie! — Page 2

was comforting to know that even before I needed to worry about a place to take her orthopaedically, that someone had come forward and said there was a place where Emily would be taken care of," said Joy.

Finding the Right Team

Emily was first seen at Shriners Hospitals for Children – Erie when she was approximately 6 months old. There, she has undergone several surgeries. Other surgeries, including a VEPTR (Vertical Expandable Prosthetic Titanium Rib) procedure, which stabilizes the spinal curve and levels growth, were done through a collaboration between Shriners Hospitals for Children and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Emily has also been seen at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Philadelphia, where external fixators were used to straighten Emily's leg at the knee, and increase leg length. After this, she was able to ride a bicycle for the very first time. Emily always amazes her doctors with her "no limits" attitude.

Giving Back with Beads for Needs

Today, Emily is an energetic and sociable 11-year-old. She loves dancing, swimming, painting pottery and public speaking. In 2012, she started Beads for Need, an organization dedicated to raising funds for Shriners Hospitals for Children through bracelet and photograph print sales, and has raised more than \$80,000 for Shriners Hospitals for Children. Without Shriners Hospitals for Children Emily would not be Emily, she would be forced into a box," said Joy. "With Shriners Hospitals there are no limits to what she can do."

Timmy's Day Out Program Encourages Fun, Independence

Since 2004, the Timmy's Day Out program at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Erie has provided many children with opportunities to participate in local and regional recreational events throughout the summer. This summer was no different!

The program was started with funds raised by Candy Bollin, whose son Timmy was born with spina bifida. It introduces children with spina bifida to experiences and outings within the community.

The group kicked off the summer by attending an Erie Seawolves baseball game. They also visited



Shriners Hospitals
for Children®— Erie



Wagon Trails Animal Park for a safari with 350 animals. They held a cooking contest using ingredients that were grown by the patients themselves in Timmy's Garden, and the final activity of the summer will be a visit to Splash Lagoon Water Park, scheduled for August 17. Although Candy Bollin, the driving force behind the creation of the program, passed away in June 2017, her legacy will live on through the families who participate in Timmy's Day Out.

Save the Date!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16—Shredding for Shriners

Time to clean out the files before winter! Not sure how to dispose of documents containing private information? Mark your calendar for the fall edition of Shredding for Shriners. Bring your confidential documents to Shriners Hospitals for Children — Erie's parking lot (1645 W. Eighth St.) between 10am—2pm and with a donation, your papers will be professionally shredded by Shred-X of Erie.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19—Fourth Annual Telethon

In cooperation with JET 24 (local ABC affiliate) and FOX 66 (local FOX affiliate), Shriners Hospitals for Children — Erie will host the fourth annual TV telethon. The telethon will air from 5—8pm. A phone bank of volunteers will be taking donations in support of the Erie medical center. The annual telethon not only provides a chance to raise funds, but also a chance to connect with the community and share stories of the hope and healing that take place at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Erie.

For additional information contact: Micheal Widrig 814-875-8780.



Shriners Hospitals
for Children®— Erie