

A PUBLICATION  
FOR THE FRIENDS OF  
MEMORIAL HERMANN

.....  
Memorial Hermann Foundation  
Fall 2022

ADVANCING THE

# VISIONS

**RAZZLE DAZZLE HONOREE**

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## DEAR FRIENDS,

As we welcome the seasonal changes in the air, we also appreciate recent seasonal events. The *Razzle Dazzle* “Reunited” luncheon, honoring our dear friend Nina Hendee, was spectacular this year, inspiring a record-breaking \$1 million in gifts from generous supporters under the leadership of our co-chairs Caroline and Will Brown and Lisa and Jerry Simon, along with our honorary chair Dr. Yvonne Cormier. I couldn’t agree more with Tony Bradfield’s description of the event as “a room filled with love and kindness.”



Our annual In the Pink of Health luncheon finally returned to the ballroom of The Woodlands Waterway Marriott, thanks to the gracious leadership of co-chairs Debra Cooper and Dee Gelsomini over the last three years. How nice it is to see everyone in person again these days!

The Center for Advanced Heart Failure at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center turns 10 this year. We are fortunate to have such an extraordinary resource here in our community, and personally, we are honored to work with Drs. Kar and Gregoric.

In this issue, we also present two moving stories from grateful patients—one, a toddler whose progress after a traumatic fall is nothing short of a miracle; the other, a young girl’s remarkable progress after her eighth-grade school nurse discovered a lump that turned out to be scoliosis.

Of course, none of the progress, the success stories and the happy endings we see here would be possible without the incredible generosity of our donors. We are sincerely grateful.

Anne E. Neeson  
Executive Vice President & CEO  
Memorial Hermann Foundation

# TEXAS TREASURE NINA HENDEE

An aficionado of all things Texas, she spends her life and boundless energy supporting its history and its people.

**N**ina Hendee is perfect proof: good things come in small packages. Petite though she may be, she is a powerhouse of energy, kindness, faith, humor and business savvy. The twinkle in her eyes is your first giveaway.

Nina and her husband, Edd, fell in love in college in Dallas while working at a Steak and Ale restaurant. They married in 1975 and moved to Houston. When their Steak and Ale employer here asked them to move to Kansas, Nina didn't entertain the idea for a second. *"Kansas is not Texas,"* she says simply. Decision made. Instead, the young couple stayed right here and opened the now famous Taste of Texas restaurant in the Memorial City area.

#### A dining experience as unique as Texas

The sprawling restaurant seats 500 and houses Nina's pride and joy, the Texas History Museum, featuring a fascinating collection of rare Texas artifacts and treasures. Visitors come from far and wide for perfectly aged steaks and their signature crab cakes, but they leave with a healthy dose of Texas history, thanks to Nina.

Houston-area fourth graders do, too. For over 40 years, Nina has hosted tours for students every school day. Some 400,000 students have enjoyed her history lessons over the years, along with a chance to see a working kitchen in action and spend some time in the walk-in freezer. *"And 20 years later, you know what they remember?"* Nina asks. *"It's not Davy Crockett. It's not Sam Houston. It's not Jane Long. It's the freezer,"* she says.



*You can't just take up space. Wherever you are, you have to serve your community to make it a better place.*

Nina Hendee

#### Generosity at every opportunity

The Hendees run their business and their lives with a generous spirit, always looking to support and improve the community they serve. That includes the people in their extended family—their staff of 200. Among many special incentives they offer, they encourage their employees to continue their educations, offering them each \$4,500 per semester, including summer sessions. When disaster strikes, they mobilize those same teams and get to work helping others in need.

During Hurricane Harvey, for example, they cleaned out houses, provided meals and water and helped people find shelter. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nina and her team delivered meals to frontline heroes at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center—every day.

For Nina, such work comes naturally. Her father required community service. *"You can't just take up space,"* Nina says. *"Wherever you are, you have to serve your community to make it a better place."*

#### A family connection to Memorial Hermann Health System

Nina and Edd have a special fondness for Memorial Hermann. With a family that includes four children and 12 grandchildren and a restaurant full of potential emergency-room hazards, they've come to know the emergency room quite well.

Edd himself has had two Memorial Hermann Life Flight® trips; the first, years ago, when the engines on the plane he was piloting failed, forcing him to make what he calls

*I've lost dear friends to breast cancer. I also have friends who are survivors, and my hope is with advancing technology, they'll continue to stay healthy.*

Nina Hendee



Nina Hendee, Edd Hendee

a *"hard landing"* from 2,000 feet. His second Life Flight experience was due to a serious staph infection that was resistant to antibiotic treatments. *"He was in very critical condition. Memorial Hermann saved his life,"* Nina says.

On the flip side, Nina especially loves the spa-like experience of the Bobetta C. Lindig Breast Care Center at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center for her annual mammograms.

Luckily for us, Nina has been a part of *Razzle Dazzle* from the beginning. She asked to sponsor a table at this year's event in memory of those lost to breast cancer. *"I've lost dear friends to this dreadful disease,"* she says. *"I also have friends who are survivors, and my hope is with advancing technology, they'll continue to stay healthy."*



MEMORIAL HERMANN  
**RAZZLE  
DAZZLE**  
REUNITED

Our annual luncheon in support of early detection of breast cancer raises a record-breaking \$1 million.



With music legend Gladys Knight on hand to share her thoughts on life and a few of her classic hits, this year's annual *Razzle Dazzle* "Reunited" Luncheon hit some very high notes. Co-chairs Caroline and Will Brown and Lisa and Jerry Simon deserve recognition for arranging this special event honoring longtime *Razzle*

*Dazzle* supporter Nina Hendee—and raising \$1 million to benefit early detection and outreach programs at Memorial Hermann, including at the Bobetta C. Lindig Breast Care Center at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center. We'd also like to thank our honorary chair, Dr. Yvonne Cormier, for her gracious support.



Edd Hendee, Nina Hendee



In memoriam tribute table



Roslyn Bazzelle Mitchell, Amalia Stanton, Alice Mosing



Phyllis Williams, Dr. Yvonne Cormier, Merele Yarborough



Bobetta Lindig, Jona Lindig



Lisa Simon, Jerry Simon



Hallie Vanderhider, Jennifer Allison



Adele Hartland, Hannah McNair, Joanna Marks, Claudine Hartland



Virginia Williams, Leslie Simmons, Tara English, Alyssa Skarke



Caroline Brown, Will Brown



Valerie Golden, Sam Golden, Carol Smith



Jordan Seff, Amy Pierce



Mary Theresa Derr, Patricia Herrera, Trini Mendenhall, Lynn Mathre, Regina Garcia



Anne Neeson, Erin Asprec



Dr. David Callender, Sherry Smith, Jim Smith



Rachel Regan, Tony Bradfield



# BACK FROM THE BRINK

A brain injury sent an infant to the brink of death.  
Today, he's a happy miracle.

**T**here's been an accident. The words echoed in Lindsey Hicks's ears as the new mom rushed to pick up 4-month-old Walker from daycare. He had fallen from a seat, which then fell on his head. When paramedics arrived and made the call to summon Memorial Hermann Life Flight, Lindsey and Cole, Walker's father, knew their son's injuries were serious.

*"Seeing our son loaded into that big helicopter was scary," Cole said. "But we knew it was the best and quickest way to get him the care he needed."*

Walker's injury caused blood to pool around his brain. Teams were ready for him the moment he touched down on the helipad at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital. Affiliated pediatric neurosurgeon Stephen Fletcher, DO, and plastic surgeon Phuong Nguyen, MD, prepared for surgery to alleviate swelling around his brain, while Walker's parents prepared for the worst.

The infant went into cardiac arrest as the doctors removed part of his skull. Dr. Fletcher immediately started CPR, with anesthesiologists in the room taking over in shifts. For 43 minutes, chest compressions kept Walker's blood circulating long enough for Fletcher to remove a fist-sized portion of the skull. Unfortunately, what the team saw inside was not good.

*"I thought he was brain dead,"* Dr. Fletcher said.

#### **Saying goodbyes to their new, precious baby**

Doctors and specialists led Lindsey and Cole to the Tranquility Room to explain that Walker was unlikely

to make it through the night, asking if they wanted to see him one last time. One by one, their family members took their turns saying goodbye.

*"It was such an out-of-body experience,"* said Lindsey. *"It felt surreal that this was even happening."*

Just as suddenly as the nightmare began, things turned around. Walker began to breathe on his own, and everyone wondered if they dared to hope for more. With so much of his motor function lost, he might never walk again. Lindsey was undeterred.

*"We need to fight,"* she thought. *"He has a chance."*

#### **Baby steps lead to incredible progress**

Little Walker took that chance, with his parents by his side night after night in the ICU. On Halloween, four days after his accident and dressed in a monkey costume, he wiggled his right foot for the first time. A couple of days after that, he opened his eyes. Ten days later, he was able to lift his head and his arms and legs. Ultimately, he spent a little over a month in the hospital getting the special care he needed to make his miraculous recovery.

*"The doctors and staff always had his best interest in mind,"* said Lindsey. *"They fought for our boy like he was their own."*

Once Walker was stable, he earned the distinction of becoming the youngest rehabilitation patient at TIRR Memorial Hermann. Doctors there diagnosed him with cerebral palsy, a congenital brain disorder that affects movement and posture.



The doctors and staff always had his best interest in mind. They fought for our boy like he was their own.

Lindsey Hicks

Lindsey quit working to stay with Walker at TIRR Memorial Hermann, where physical therapists helped him gain the strength and mobility to hold up his head, sit up and push himself off the floor. By Christmas Eve, he had improved enough to go home. From there, he continued rehab as an outpatient, racking up mini milestones over the next few months.

*“Literally, this kid gives me chills,”* said one of the TIRR Memorial Hermann’s specialists about Walker’s progress.

**The long road ahead**

The next major hurdle for Walker involved replacing the piece of his skull that doctors had removed to relieve the original swelling in his brain. Would it still fit in place on this growing baby’s head? Drs. Nguyen and Fletcher were prepared to make cuts and adjustments as needed. They were relieved to find that the pink sliver of skull they had so carefully saved still fit just fine. Lindsey and Cole were able to take Walker home within a couple of days.

The brain remains such a mystery, it’s impossible to predict Walker’s future, but the Hickses are optimistic. “The doctors believe that with hard work, he’ll be able to walk and live a very full, normal life,” said Lindsey.

If Walker’s resilience so far is any indication, the road ahead looks good.

*TIRR is a registered trademark of TIRR Foundation.*



# THE STATE OF HEALTH CARE

Dr. David Callender moderated a panel of trauma professionals, Dr. Jamie McCarthy, Dr. Michelle McNutt and Tom Flanagan, to shine a light on the state of trauma care. They spoke about the latest advances at Memorial Hermann, including an enhanced protocol in patient care—two minutes from Memorial Hermann Life Flight landing to the operating room—as well as the alarming rise in trauma cases and the critical need for expanded resources and trauma centers to ensure ongoing readiness to serve the community.



1 Rick Figueroa, Marty Beirne, Shawn Taylor • 2 Christi and George Kolva • 3 Jim Postl, Gary Petersen, John Eads, Scott Holstead, Jerry Simon • 4 Deborah Cannon, Jim Postl • 5 Nina Hendee, Dr. Michelle McNutt, Lisa Simon • 6 Sam Golden, Dr. David Callender, Walter Johnson • 7 Ed Emmett, Anne Neeson • **Top banner** Dr. David L. Callender, president and CEO • Dr. Michelle K. McNutt, professor at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston and trauma director at Red Duke Trauma Institute at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center • Dr. Jamie McCarthy; executive vice president and chief physician executive • Tom Flanagan, vice president, System Trauma Services.



# INNOVATION WITH HEART

**It** was 10 years ago that Igor D. Gregoric, MD, and Biswajit Kar, MD, came to Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center to build the Center for Advanced Heart Failure from the ground up. Affiliated with McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston, these specialists are recognized around the globe as leading experts in diagnosis and the latest treatments, devices, procedures and research for advanced heart failure.

Dr. Gregoric, affiliated cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon, is chief and program director of the Center for Advanced Heart Failure's Surgical Division. Dr. Kar, affiliated cardiovascular disease specialist, is chief of its Medical Division.

Together, they built a center that provides many levels of service, from early preventive cardiac care to heart transplantation. As co-chairs, they take an innovative approach, pushing and challenging one another as they care for patients. The tight collaboration and team decision-making has led to many new treatments.

**The Center for Advanced Heart Failure 2012-2022 Highlights**

**315+** heart transplants

**500+** LVADs

**950+** ECMO procedures

**2,500+** cases of cardiogenic shock

Being unconventional is nothing new for them. Before establishing the Center for Advanced Heart Failure, Drs. Gregoric and Kar would drive themselves or take Memorial Hermann Life Flight to care for patients in remote areas, teaching physicians there to do what they do. To this day, they still make these trips when necessary to ensure a patient can be safely transported to the Texas Medical Center.

The Center is a leader in structural heart, minimally invasive surgery and catheter-based therapies, as well as in the development of new pumps and innovative technologies to improve health and survival. In fact, many of the techniques pioneered here are now standard procedure across the country.

We are proud to celebrate the achievements of the Center for Advanced Heart Failure over the last decade and excited about what future developments will bring.



Tom Barbour, Paula Hern and Ellis Tudzin

**In** 1996, John L. Hern spent 252 days in a hospital awaiting a heart transplant. An experience like this would change anybody. For John, it inspired him to think of other patients on the transplant list who could not afford the costs of such a hospital stay.

John wondered how others could possibly manage such costs and what their alternative would be—perhaps forgoing the opportunity for a second chance at life?

Organ transplants are not like other surgeries. To make the waiting list, patients must meet strict criteria. Once on the list, they must do all they can to keep their bodies as healthy as possible and be ready and close by for the moment a potential match becomes available. For some, that means quitting their jobs to avoid exposure to germs. For others, it means moving to Houston from places like South Texas or Louisiana for an unknowable amount of time. The pressures are great. The expenses, astronomical.

Getting to know other pre- and post-op transplant patients in the hospital gave John a sense of the challenges they faced, and he was determined to do something to help.



## JLH Foundation

**“My father’s mission was to help transplant patients have their best chance at survival. Supporting Memorial Hermann allows the JLH Foundation to touch the lives of so many and fulfill his wishes.”**

**Paula Hern, JLH Foundation**

John finally received his heart transplant, but ultimately lost his life when his antirejection medication failed. By this time, he had made his wishes clear. His daughter, Paula Hern, her husband, Tom Barbour, and Ellis Tudzin established the JLH Foundation in his memory. The JLH Foundation provides all nonprofit hospitals in the State of Texas with funds to help transplant patients cover their costs of living while waiting for and recovering from transplant surgery.

Social workers and members of the Memorial Hermann organ transplant team assist transplant patients in finding the resources necessary to aid with their nutrition, their internet access to maintain telemedicine needs, their transportation to and from appointments, their dental care to mitigate infection and prescription assistance. To make the most of every dollar, the teams are dedicated coupon clippers and deal finders, passionate about helping patients get well and stay well.

The transplant program at Memorial Hermann is growing quickly as it becomes known that the system welcomes patients other hospitals turn down. Contributing to that success is the support and financial assistance the JLH Foundation offers to the transplant patients at Memorial Hermann.



2022 In the Pink Committee

# IN THE PINK OF HEALTH 2022

Memorial Hermann Foundation celebrates our 22nd annual luncheon

Finally, In the Pink of Health, presented this year by Richie's Specialty Pharmacy, was back in the ballroom of The Woodlands Waterway Marriott. Many thanks go to co-chairs Debra Cooper and Dee Gelsomini for their flexibility and leadership over the last three years.

Despite being postponed, the 2021 event raised more than a half-million dollars, which was distributed to the

community to aid early detection, education and care. This year's event was a repeat performance, raising another \$600,000+, with plans to distribute those funds to support breast and ovarian health in Montgomery County in the coming months.

Friends and family honored longtime In the Pink supporter Melissa Preston, who lost her battle with cancer this year.



Ruth Hiller, Jennifer Griffin of Fox News, Justin Kendrick, Debra Cooper, Dee Gelsomini



The Ray Family



Jess Brice, Trey Brice and friends of Melissa Preston



Tricia Futcher, Jennifer Griffin, Jack Futcher



# COMMUNITY FOR CANOPY

On the campus of Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Medical Center, Canopy is a first-of-its-kind cancer survivorship center serving the Greater Houston area. The center operates exclusively on philanthropic funding, offering hope, healing and empowerment to individuals touched by cancer and to those who support them at no cost—no matter where they receive treatment or where they are in their cancer journey.

Many community groups hold special events to benefit Canopy this time of year. The Montgomery County

Sherriff's Department donates proceeds from their sales of pink badges and shirts in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Area auto dealerships contribute a set amount for each test drive and car service.

Several neighborhood golf associations join the cause as well. The Carlton Woods Women's Golf Association has become a longtime partner, contributing the proceeds and gifts from their annual Chip in for a Cure event to Canopy since Canopy's inception. The tournament always features fun costumes, decorated carts, silent auctions—and generous golfers.



# HEROES IN HEALTH FAMILY EVENT

Celebrating Life Flight with our giving society friends and families

Memorial Hermann Foundation hosted the Heroes in Health Family Event at the Houston Polo Club one fine Sunday afternoon in October. Heroes in Health members and their families came together for a day of fun and a celebration of Memorial Hermann Life Flight, highlighted by a visit from a Life Flight helicopter and crew landing

directly on the polo grounds. Children enjoyed face painting, a bounce house and a Polo 101 lesson from a professional jockey. Ruth's Chris Steak House catered the event as guests stayed on to watch the polo match from an exclusive tent on the sidelines.



Stacey DallePezze and family



Susie Stankowski, Gary Stankowski



Michelle Varma, Rishi Varma



Jim Montague, Vicki Montague, daughter Brittany and grandson Trevor



April McGee, Claire McGee



Anne Neeson, Stacy Methvin, Dee Methvin, Monica Benton, Fox Benton

# HIDDEN CURVES

In a wonderful surprise encounter at Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, Mya Aguilar recently ran into Lindsay M. Crawford, MD, who performed her life-changing spine surgery eight years ago.

**A**t 14, Mya Aguilar was an active eighth grader, playing on her school's volleyball, tennis and basketball teams. So it came as quite a shock to Mya and her mother, Geneva Aguilar, when the school nurse said she noticed a small lump on Mya's back during an annual checkup.

Mya's pediatrician confirmed the abnormality, and after visits to three separate doctors and numerous X-rays, Mya learned she had scoliosis, an S-shaped curvature of the spine that can be difficult to detect. The doctors recommended surgery, but Geneva refused to approve it until she had done her own research. That's where she came across positive reviews about Dr. Lindsay Crawford, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon affiliated with Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.

#### Trust wins the day

She made an appointment and instantly clicked with Dr. Crawford, appreciating her straightforward explanations about Mya's condition and the journey ahead.

The following month, Mya underwent an MRI scan at Children's Memorial Hermann. Recommended treatments for scoliosis vary depending on a child's age, level of growth and the degree of the curvature. Curved at a 50-degree angle, the high end of the scale, Mya's spine clearly required surgery.

*"At that point, the curve is very likely to progress even when she is an adult, and that increases the risk for back pain or disk problems in the future,"* says Dr. Crawford.

The diagnosis explained a lot. While Mya had never felt any discomfort during physical activities, she very often experienced shortness of breath, backaches and pain when she was seated or standing.

*"I would get done washing the dishes, then go to my room and breathe in deep before I could catch my breath,"* she recalls. Despite many trips to the doctor, no one detected scoliosis, leaving her mom to believe there was nothing wrong. *"I just figured it was something with her growth,"* she says.

#### Setting her backbone straight

Once she understood the problem, Geneva agreed to surgical treatment and scheduled it for the summer before Mya entered high school. Dr. Crawford and her team spent roughly seven hours on the operation, using two rods and 19 screws to straighten her back.

*"We want all those bones to fuse together,"* Dr. Crawford says. *"We connect the screws with the rods and do a slow correction of the curve. Patients wake up significantly taller and straighter than when they went to sleep."*

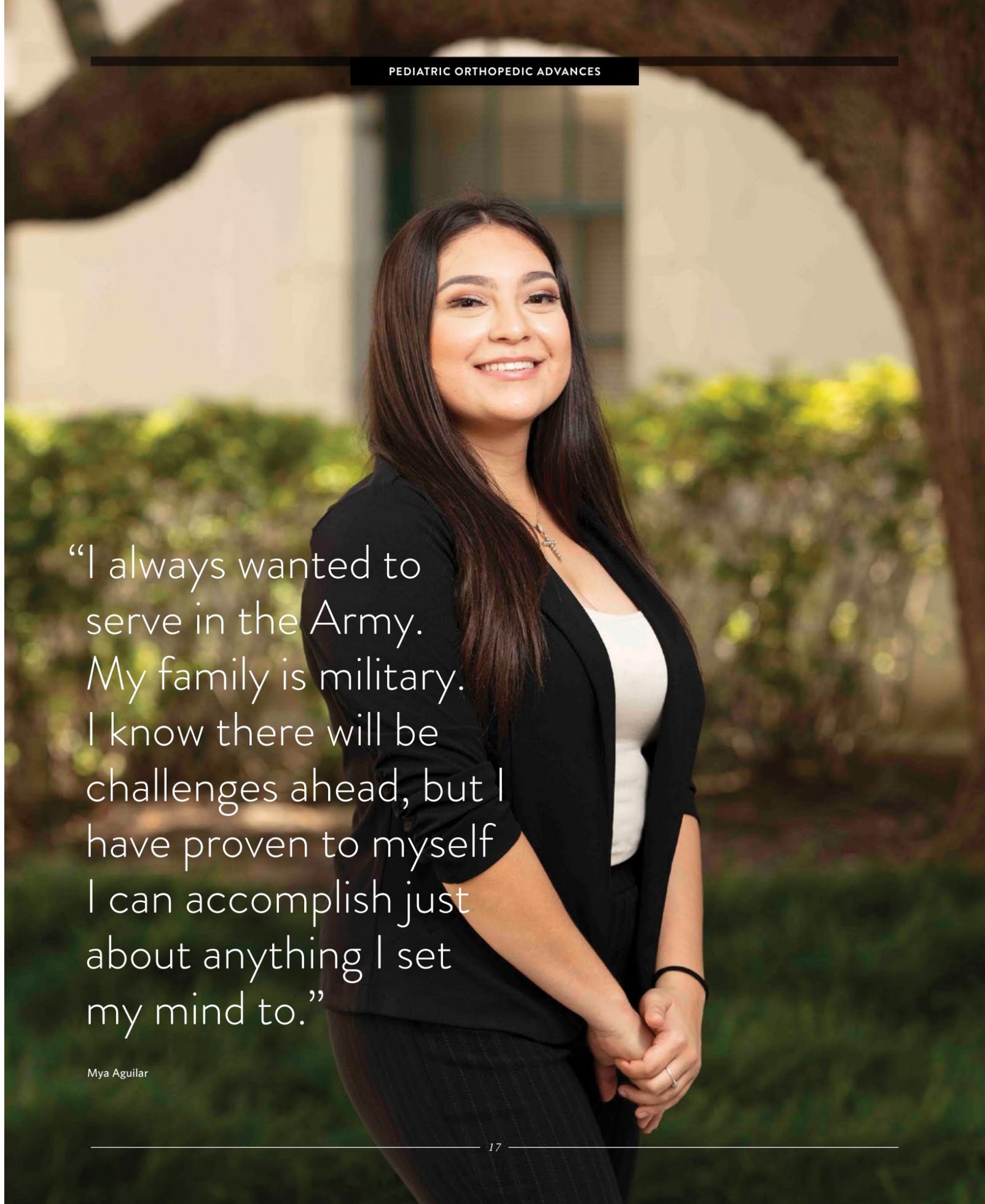
Just hours after the procedure, Mya was already able to take some small steps. Four days later, she was discharged and spent the summer recovering from home. The healing process typically takes two to three months, although patients are often up and moving normally within four to six weeks.

#### Learning to walk all over again

Mya began going to rehabilitation twice a week at Memorial Hermann Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation locations in Willowbrook and Memorial City, and through her hard work and determination, she fully recovered quickly.

Today, eight years later, it appears that all that hard work and perseverance paid off for Mya in a big way. She is now setting her sights on joining the Army National Guard, melding her love for service and country with her passion to be the best version of herself.

*"I always wanted to serve in the Army,"* she says. *"My family is military. I know there will be challenges ahead, but I have proven to myself I can accomplish just about anything I set my mind to."*



*"I always wanted to serve in the Army. My family is military. I know there will be challenges ahead, but I have proven to myself I can accomplish just about anything I set my mind to."*

Mya Aguilar



**Memorial Hermann Foundation**

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## VISION

Memorial Hermann Foundation

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## Your generosity makes a difference.

Good health is the gift that everyone hopes for. Every day, for all kinds of reasons, our community counts on Memorial Hermann Health System to be there for them. Philanthropy makes it possible to answer their call.

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We celebrate our Heroes in Health donors for their especially generous annual gifts.

LEVELS OF GIVING • \$1,000 • \$2,500 • \$5,000 • \$10,000  
\$25,000 • \$50,000 • \$75,000 • \$100,000+

