

the Star

The Children's Inn at NIH



Family Newsletter



Spring 2019



Meet May

We are so excited to share that The Children's Inn family has a new member. May joined the team as our Resident Services Operations Manager in December. Prior to coming to The Children's Inn, May served as the Director of Housing for a homeless services provider in Orange County, California. She recently moved back to the Washington, DC Metro area and discovered The Inn. May has always had a passion for working with children, diverse populations and serving people, and is looking forward to getting to know the families that come to The Inn. Outside of work, May loves to travel to see the richness and beauty of our world. Next time you are at The Children's Inn, we invite you to meet May!

Have you heard?

Aisha Campbell, Associate Director of Programs and Services

As we say goodbye to the colder weather, we look forward to an exciting Spring at The Children's Inn. We are now preparing to regain access to the North Side of the building in the spring, following its closure in August of 2018. Along with roof repairs, we will see the ongoing progress of the "Building Envelope Project", which will bring about new window installations, stone work, and weather-resistant roof shingles. In preparation of the grand reopening of the North Side, the Resident Services Team will continue to work closely with families, residents and their clinical teams on upcoming reservations, occupancy and the smooth transition back to the North Side. Thank you to all Children's Inn residents, both onsite and within the community, for your continued patience and support. If there is anything our team can do to make your stay more comfortable during this time of construction, please be sure to let us know.

Zilly's Corner

Woof Woof! I had a lot of fun with my friends at The Children's Inn this winter. We got a over a foot of snow, and I loved to roll around and play in it. There were always plenty of fun indoor events at The Inn to stay warm too. The Inn has had so many fun events and activities, like my birthday party! We had to reschedule my party because of the snow, but it just made everyone more excited for it to finally come! At my party, friends from National Capital Therapy Dogs came, and my



friends at The Inn even gave me a decorated treat jar. While I've had fun, I'm looking forward to warmer weather and the chance to play on the playground again.

I have some exciting news to share! I recently passed the National Capital Therapy Dog test again, which means I can visit the Clinical Center with my friend, Holly. I am so excited to see some familiar faces while I am up there, too.

Happily Hungry Cooking

Danielle Cook, Happily Hungry Director

Tropical Breeze Smoothie

- 1 cup pineapple chunks, frozen
- 1 cup mango chunks, frozen
- ½ cup canned coconut milk, unsweetened (light is fine)
- ½ cup soy or almond vanilla milk, or regular milk
- 1-2 tablespoons honey, to taste

Combine all the ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Makes 3 (8-ounce) smoothies.

Nutritional information: Calories: 209; Protein: 2.5gr; Carbohydrates: 34.6gr.; Sugars: 25g; Fat: 8.8gr; Fiber: 2.2gr.

One of the popular programs featured at The Children's Inn is Happily Hungry, an interactive nutrition and cooking class, created and directed by Danielle Cook. Launched at the Inn in 2015, the monthly program includes a hands-on cooking class that emphasizes seasonal, local ingredients from area farmers. The program emphasizes the nutritional benefits of the chosen ingredients, as well as introducing the sensory experience of creating meals by engaging taste, smell, and the presentation of the finished dish.

Since 2011, Danielle's unique program has served over 100 families annually in the metropolitan area, and she has taught over 1000 interactive cooking classes since the program began. Danielle's expertise in the field of holistic nutrition and her personal connection as the mother and caregiver of a cancer survivor, brings a special focus to the program. The purpose of Happily Hungry, besides the fun it offers the families at the Inn, is to provide an integrative approach to support families going through medical treatments, as well as the children being seen for other conditions. "The Children's Inn is such a special place," said Danielle, "it really has the feel of a place like home. Every time I come, I'm excited to meet new kids and their caregivers. Every cooking class is totally different and yet every group of children who come together are some of the most resilient, smart, outgoing kids."

What's HappenINN in the Community

Stephanie Feinberg, Family Program Assistant

As we roll into Spring, the Family Programming Team is excited to expand our programs further into the community to reach more residents. We currently have 15 apartments for families at The Brody in downtown Bethesda. Although families have the opportunity to take our shuttle from The Brody to The Children's Inn to participate in programs, we want to ensure that all families can participate in programs within the comfort of their apartment building. Once a week, a fun program is held in The Brody's beautiful penthouse. Under the Stars with board games, snacks, and music, Santa's rooftop, which included a catered meal, cookie making, and gifts, mug decorating, movie screenings and more. Starting in February, programs have consistently been held on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. We cannot wait for warmer weather to be able to hold more activities in the outdoor rooftop area! The Children's Inn staff continues to work with the NIH Clinical Center's Recreational Therapy Section of the Rehabilitation Medicine Department to bring fun activities directly to pediatric patients. Once a month, a fun and interactive activity is held at the Clinical Center in the 1NW Playroom. This past fall, pediatric patients were able to enjoy pumpkin decorating and mask making. Most recently, patients got to decorate their own hot chocolate mug to keep warm this cold season and marble painting hearts to celebrate Valentine's Day. We look forward to bringing more activities once a month. Be sure to check out our programming calendar for the date and time and join us!



King and her Mother, NIH Clinical Center

ACTivitiEs

Open Play - Various Weekdays at 3:30 PM:

Drop your kids off for an hour of Inn staff-supervised fun play on the sport court or Multipurpose Room.

Caregiver Gathering - Tuesday at 4:30 PM:

Join other parents and caregivers for music and conversation, build friendships and share support with Cantor Mike.

Exercise Classes - Tuesday to Thursday at 4:45 PM:

Join fitness instructors, Ashley and Stacy, for a cardio strength workout on Tuesday and Thursday and yoga on Wednesday.

Seated Massage - Tuesday at 5:00 PM:

Enjoy a 15-minute seated massage by licensed masseuse Erasmo in the Teen & Young Adult Lounge

Young Adult Night Out (YANO) - Second Tuesday and Fourth Thursday at 5:00 PM:

Young adults ages 18-30 enjoy a night out for dinner or an activity with their peers at a local restaurant. The outing is sponsored by The Children's Inn.

BINGO - Second and Fourth Tuesday at 6:00 PM:

Come eat Georgetown Cupcake's famous goodies and play BINGO to win great toys and prizes. Fun for the whole family!

Family Dinner - Sunday to Thursday at 6:00 PM:

Enjoy a meal provided by our friends in the community, meet new families and catch up with friends in the E Dining Room.

Grocery Store Run - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 6:30 PM:

Sign up at the front desk for weekly grocery shopping trips to Giant or Shoppers.

Therapy Dog Visit - Various Days:

3 furry friends from National Capital Therapy Dogs visit The Children's Inn for a relaxing hour.

My Second Home at The Children's Inn

Danielle, Children's Inn Resident

When I was 9 years old, I began developing blisters on my lips, bruises for no reason, bleeding from my nose and eyes, and a high fever. One morning, I woke up from a really bad nosebleed, so my mom took me to the Children's Hospital in Jamaica. I was diagnosed with Severe Aplastic Anemia, a rare condition where the body stops producing enough new blood cells. The doctors were unable to treat me, so my mom began doing research and talking to doctors about other opportunities. We learned about The National Institutes of Health (NIH), and my mom began raising money for our travel; she even went on television to ask for Jamaica to help! Three weeks later, we were on our way. As soon as I got to NIH, I began treatment and was able to go to The Children's Inn every day after appointments. I loved The Inn because I could play lots of video games, hang out with my friends in the game room, and go to some activities. I remember people being very nice and wanting to do anything to make me comfortable.



Danielle at a Nationals baseball game

As time went on, things started to change. My doctor talked to my mom and told her that the treatment was not working. The doctor said I was a fighter, though, and thought that I could survive getting a bone marrow transplant. I would be the first person ever to receive a bone marrow transplant - people call me an NIH celebrity! However, there was a 50% chance I would survive. A couple weeks post-transplant, I was in a coma. My family tried everything to help me wake up, they kept singing and praying for me. I eventually woke up from my coma, but I wouldn't ever talk. My mom told me that if I started talking, she would get me a phone, which I had always asked for. I began talking little by little, and my nurse got me my first phone: a shiny pink Razz!

Staying at the Clinical Center, I continued to hear people talk about The Children's Inn. Recreational Therapy and other kids would always tell me about all of the trips. One of my friends at the Clinical Center and I loved cooking, and he would always go to The Inn to make things and tell me about it. I dreamed about the day I would be able to go to The Inn too! Then, the day finally came. It took 3 years, but I was so excited to finally go back to The Children's Inn. I don't remember much because I wasn't feeling my best, but I do remember making so many friends and being happy I didn't have to stay at the Clinical Center all day.

I was eventually able to go home and periodically came back for check-ups. However, in 2017, the doctors noticed my kidney function was declining as a result of my bone marrow transplant, and I've been at The Children's Inn ever since. NIH does not perform kidney transplants, so they helped me join a local protocol to be able to receive treatment. In January 2018, I started going to dialysis when my kidney function dropped from 15% to 5%. I now have dialysis three times a week. I have to wait to find a kidney donor as none of my family members are eligible right now.

Throughout this process, I've been able to stay at The Children's Inn. Since I first started coming, I have noticed that they began having more events for young adults, including Young Adult Night Out, or "YANO". YANO is my favorite program at The Inn. We've done so many fun things, such as cooking classes and concerts. Can you believe I went to see Beyoncé and Taylor Swift on a YANO trip? The programming team has been so nice; if I tell them about a new restaurant or place I want to go on YANO, they usually make that happen. I've never been able to experience many restaurants or places in Jamaica, so YANO helps me do that. My favorite restaurant has been Bobby's Burger Palace because I love Bobby Flay! In the summer, my sister was even able to come visit and spend time with me. She loved the activities and trips just as much; whenever I call her, she always talks about wanting to come back. She's excited to come again this summer!

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LaUGHtEr



My Second Home at The Children’s Inn *(continued)*

The managers at the front desk are always so welcoming and nice. They always know how to make me laugh, which is nice after a long day of treatment. I spend a lot of time with the programming team, I always show up at their office door ready to create things and plan some activities. Aisha has become like a mom to me here, she helps keep me in-check but also gives me so much love and care. Lidia is fun and groovy. Stephanie is a sunshine – literally. She loves the sun and yellow. Stephanie always has fun projects for me. We had a donut party once, and I got to help make a sprinkle photobooth backdrop.

Javin has helped a lot with helping me find tutors and even helped me get support from The INNrichment fund. With the INNrichment fund, I am able to start Japanese classes in Bethesda soon. I love watching anime series and have always wanted to learn Japanese because of it. There’re so many other friendly faces I could say so much about, including Jen, Sonja and Cathy.

I don’t know what I would do without The Inn. I had depression because of my treatment and diagnosis, so the activities and trips help me get out and provide a good distraction. I am thankful for all the friends that I have made and been able to keep in touch with. We even have a group chat on Facebook called “NIH Teens” so we can all say hello when we’re apart. It’s always fun to see some of my friends when they come back for their check-ups. I cannot thank The Children’s Inn enough for providing a place like home for me.

Learning is Snow Much Fun!

Javin Smith, Program Operations Manager

The temperature outside is warming up, which means that Spring is upon us. Before we look at what’s ahead, let’s look back at some of the fun things we did in the Winter. We kicked off the season with our Winter Camp INNcredible. The week included fun activities such as “Trapped in Ice” Soap Making, a Winter Egg Drop and Mug Decorating. Other fun winter highlights included Movement and Music, Are you Smarter than a 5th Grader? trivia, and song-grams performed by members of the National Philharmonic. With school in full swing, The Inn also had regular educational programs such as Study4Fun, Snack and Discover and ExploreINN.

This Spring, we will have lots of fun trips, including a visit to VisArts art studio where we will create fused glass masterpieces. This program lets everyone become a master artist, as they plan how the different colors of glass will go together. This Spring families will also have the opportunity to visit Sirius XM Radio Studio to learn about how music is produced and see a live studio session. The nice weather also means that we can begin exploring the DC Monuments again and seeing the famous cherry blossoms.

For the month of March during Snack and Discover, we will be learning about different countries each week and trying activities from these places. Having guests from 94 different countries and all 50 states inspires us to learn about the rest of the world. We will also be testing our skills at engineering during the month of April as we try to become great planners and architects. While these types of programs will occur each week, keep an eye out for unique activities such as ExploreINN, Virtual Reality and Happily Hungry Cooking. There is always something new to learn, and each day brings new adventures here at The Children’s Inn.

Your participation in Programming and Events doesn’t have to end when you go back home. Check out the INNrichment Fund which can be used to help pay for new classes and activities when you are at home. More information about this program can be found at: <https://childrensinn.org/innrichment-fund/>

If you are visiting The Inn this Spring and would like to learn more about the educational services available, please email Javin, The Inn’s Program Operations Manager at javin.smith@nih.gov. You can also stop by when you get here. We love having visitors and making new friends!

PRoGRaMS

AdventureINN provides opportunities for the entire family to take field trips to Washington or other places in Maryland and Northern Virginia. Come explore museums, monuments and cultural activities. Our educational field trips take place once a month.

English Classes provide an opportunity for all non-English speaking adults and children to learn, improve or maintain English-language skills. Classes are tailored to meet the needs of each individual.

ExploreINN is The Inn’s science program that provides hands-on learning experiences for our school-aged residents. This program is often sponsored by scientists from the NIH or by other members of the community and has included experiments such as testing for acids and bases, exploring DNA, making homemade glue and much more. ExploreINN is typically held twice a month.

Snack & Discover is a time for children of all ages to bring their homework and receive support from a certified teacher. If children do not have homework, they can play educational games or do fun activities. Snack & Discover occurs once or twice a week.

Study4Fun is a time when parents are encouraged to drop off their children to do homework, read or play games. No need to preregister: just drop in any time between 3:30-4:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays.

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