

THE INNSIDER

A PLACE LIKE HOME



INNSIDER TOPICS

ZILLY'S CORNER

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The Children's Inn at NIH



ZILLY'S CORNER

MELISSA DELL'OMO, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE CEO

Hello, dear friends of The Children's Inn! Woof, woof! I hope everyone had a wonderful winter season filled with warmth and joy. I, for one, had an absolute blast celebrating my milestone 10th birthday and cannot believe I am already a whole decade old! Our Valentine's Day/birthday bash was so much fun, filled with an abundance of love and special treats to mark the occasion.

As we say goodbye to the chilly winter days, I am eagerly anticipating the arrival of spring, with its promise of warmer weather and sunnier skies. Springtime is one of my favorite times of the year, as I look forward to frolicking outdoors while playing fetch, indulging in leisurely strolls, and basking in the sunshine whenever possible. If you happen to visit The Inn soon, please make sure you swing by the front desk and say hello. Whether it's a beautiful day for an outdoor excursion or a cozy indoor gathering, I'm always up for some tail-wagging company and perhaps showcasing a trick or two in exchange for a tasty treat :).

Your friendly therapy dog, Zilly, signing off until next time.



FAMILY PROGRAMMING UPDATES

The goal of the Resident Services Team at The Children's Inn is to promote a homelike environment of support and understanding for families of The Inn, demonstrating an ability to cope with and offer comfort to people in acute personal crises. We aim to provide customer-centered services and information to make the transition seamless for families throughout their stay at The Inn.

The S.T.E.M. Lab Experience

CRISTIAN LEMUS - FAMILY PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR EDUCATION

February 6-8, Learning Undeclared Incorporated provided a S.T.E.M mobile lab in front of The Children's Inn. This mobile lab brought an immersive science breakout experience for our families to learn about glucose and the effects of diabetes on the body system. Like an escape room, participants used their problem-solving and team-building skills to solve chemical formulas, clues, and mathematic equations to break free from the mobile box.

AFCEA Bethesda funded this unique and educational experience. Jessica Smith, who represents Leidos on the Board of Directors as the V.P. of Education, visited The Children's Inn and experienced the breakout lab with families.



**"This is so fun
and such a
great way to
learn about
diabetes."**

~C.F.

There were a total of 53 participants who immersed themselves in this unique experience. We had an extra challenge to see which group would break out from the lab with the best time.:

- Michael C. (A.Y.A. resident) with the best time of 22 minutes and 17 seconds.
- Adrian C. enjoyed the breakout lab experience so much that he completed it three times.

FAMILY PROGRAMMING UPDATES

The S.T.E.M. Lab Experience Continued

"I did not
expect it to be
such a
challenge!"
~A.M.



"I had fun
playing this
game with my
family."
~A.C.

Read more about this programming experience on our website:
<https://childrensinn.org/stories/learning-undefeated/>
We are so glad that families enjoyed themselves with this
educational experience!

FAMILY PROGRAMMING UPDATES

Valentine's Day with WINN

HAJA KUMALAH - FAMILY PROGRAM RECREATION COORDINATOR

This Valentine's Day, we celebrated Zilly's 10th birthday. In our main lobby, children and families enjoyed a Zilly card-making craft, took pictures with Zilly, and sang Happy Birthday to her.

Following Zilly's birthday celebration, families enjoyed Valentine's festivities with WINN members. At a variety of stations, families enjoyed a Zilly arts and crafts activity, a heart-shaped fruit kabob station, heart-shaped cookie decorating, and Valentine cookie houses.

Families and WINN members alike delighted in crafting together and celebrating Valentine's Day with heartfelt enthusiasm. Patiently engaging in one-on-one conversations, attendees found joy in making new connections and learning about WINN's mission. The event was filled with warmth as participants shared stories and experiences, fostering a sense of community and togetherness. Amidst the festivities, the array of Georgetown cupcakes sparked excitement as families guessed and savored various flavors.

Additionally, the Greek-themed family dinner, generously sponsored by Marathon Deli in College Park, added a delicious and culturally rich dimension to the celebration. Overall, the event was a resounding success, blending creativity, fun, and culinary delights to create lasting memories for all involved.



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: ROQAYA

AYLA WILHITE - RESIDENT SERVICES MANAGER

In June 2023, I met Roqaya and her mother, Noha. This being their first visit, traveling from Egypt to the States and residing with strangers to seek medical treatment was overwhelming enough. One afternoon, as I headed up the steps near the E wing corridor, a small voice called out, “Come here, come here!” Glancing over, I spotted Roqaya seated at the dining nook, preoccupied with crafting her gingerbread house. Approaching her, she eagerly invited me to join her and insisted that I take a seat. We engaged in conversation about the various textures of the candy, the structural ideas, and why the icing would be best to hold it together. Throughout our interaction, I chuckled at the fact that Roqaya delighted in sampling the candy herself, expressing how delicious it was as she sneaked a piece during the process.

I recall how, initially, this young girl seemed hesitant to make eye contact with me, likely due to the language barrier and the unfamiliarity of her new living environment. However, over time, she began to warmly smile and greet me whenever I entered her presence. Meeting Roqaya and her mother marked my first significant encounter, introducing a new family to the Inn. Witnessing her journey from those early days, through the numerous tests and transplant process, to her recovery and eventful enjoyment of the activities organized by the programming department was truly remarkable. It brought me immense joy to see her actively participating, and I often found myself stopping to admire her crafts, outfit, and shoes as we passed by each other.



ACTIVITIES

- **In-person/ Virtual Bingo:** Families at The Inn can log on to Zoom or meet in the multipurpose room to play BINGO, win great prizes, and meet a local Montgomery County Police Officer. Fun for the whole family!
- **Virtual Exercise Classes:** Join fitness instructors Ashley and Stacy for cardio strength workouts/yoga that you can do from the comfort of your room. All you need is a yoga mat.
- **Activities with Debra:** Every Monday you can hang out with volunteer Debra and play board games!
- **Happily Hungry:** Join the Family Programming Staff and Danielle in the E kitchen and learn how to cook quick, easy, and healthy recipes.
- **Soccer for the Future:** Join soccer instructor Hannah out on the Sport Court every Tuesday to learn and play soccer with others! No experience is needed!
- **Art Lessons with Dave:** Join Dave in the A/B Kitchen every Wednesday and learn tips and tricks on how to paint, color, and draw like a professional!
- **VisArts Field Trip:** Families can sign up to attend a field trip to VisArts to create unique fused glass art
- **Off-campus Field trips:** Be on the lookout for fun off-campus field trips, and be sure to sign up to attend!



