

Cottage Children's Medical Center: Family Assistance Fund

When a child is hospitalized due to an acute illness or injury, parents often need to stop working so they can be at the bedside while their child is undergoing medical treatment. For some families, this loss of income can create tremendous financial stress at a time when parents are trying to focus on the well-being of their child.

Through charitable contributions, the not-for-profit Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital Foundation (SBCHF) established a special fund to help families facing this type of financial crisis. During the past seven years, the Cottage Children's Medical Center Family Assistance Fund has supported more than 200 families who could not qualify for other forms of assistance. Short-term help with rent, utilities, grocery gift cards, gasoline gift cards, and other forms of support keeps these families afloat as they weather the financial storms that can accompany their child's illness. The Family Assistance Fund is sustained entirely by gifts from generous individuals. SBCHF seeks ongoing charitable support to help continue to offer this vital resource for children and families facing medical and financial challenges.

Examples of family support provided by the fund *(Patient names have been changed to assure their privacy)*

- Jenny, a teenager with Down Syndrome living with her parents in Santa Barbara, was recently diagnosed with leukemia. Jenny's mother was unemployed due to her own health issues. Her father lost significant work income in order to be with his daughter during her hospital treatments. Due to the interruption in their income, the family was facing eviction. **The Family Assistance Fund was able to support Jenny's family through the crisis by providing a short-term rental assistance grant.**
- Newly born Anthony arrived three weeks early. Following a complicated labor and delivery, he developed life-threatening medical conditions and was transferred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Cottage Children's Medical Center. Because they were unable to work their usual schedules during this period, his parents faced a cash flow crisis and needed assistance to cover the costs of transportation for their daily drives between their home in Nipomo and Cottage. **The Family Assistance Fund provided gasoline gift cards to support Anthony's family.**
- Eleven-year-old Michael was diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer that required ongoing radiation treatment. He lives with his single mother and two siblings. His mother's primary source of support was disability insurance and social security survivorship benefits. Michael's dentist recommended customized mouth guards for the severe teeth grinding associated with his condition. His insurance would not cover this, and his mother could not afford the \$475 cost. **The Family Assistance Fund provided funding for Michael's mouth guards.**
- Seventeen year old Daniel was recently diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a cancer that develops in the cells of the lymphatic system. He lives with his mother, father, and siblings in an apartment in Santa Maria. Daniel's mother is currently not working because she is caring for him most of the time. Daniel's father is a mechanic and he missed many days of work since his son's diagnosis. Daniel's ongoing care involves 6-8 months of weekly visits to Cottage's Grotenhuis Pediatric Clinics, and several

hospitalizations for chemotherapy and other related procedures. The family fell behind with their rent and needed financial assistance to avoid eviction. **The Family Assistance Fund provided two months of rental assistance to help Daniel's family through the financial crisis.**

The SBCH Foundation is very grateful to be a beneficiary of the **Santa Barbara 100**. All funds generated through the event will support children and families in need through the Family Assistance Fund at Cottage Children's Medical Center. For more information about the Fund, please call 805.879.8980.