

Spirit of Children Gives Major Gift to Child Life/SHC - Chicago



Since 2007, Spirit of Children has been a major contributor to the Child Life programs of SHC. In 2016, the organization donated \$763,363 to SHC across North America.

The total giving by Spencer Gifts/Spirit of Halloween Superstores in 2016 was \$7.4 million to 139 hospitals in the U.S. and Canada.

Gifts to SHC - Chicago by Spirit of Children since 2007 totals \$336,000. These funds are generated in 29

Halloween Superstores in the Chicago area between Labor Day and Halloween annually. That's a remarkable philanthropic endeavor, and, as one of the beneficiaries of their generosity, we say a hearty **Thank You!**

Barb Gorski, Zone Manager for Spirit of Halloween Superstores, and her two colleagues, Nick Utech and Mike Cross, visited our hospital recently to present their 2016 gift of \$102,762 to our Child Life program. In the photo above, Yours Truly; Allison Weiss, Child Life Specialist; our Spirit of Children guests; Darlene Kelly, Director of Recreation Therapy and Child Life, and Administrator Mark Niederpruem receive the gift.

Darlene Kelly reports that some of the things Child Life plans to do with the gift include: To provide for music therapy interventions; provide yoga sessions; maintain aquariums for patients' enjoyment and relaxation; make available medical play materials to ease the anxiety of procedures, as well as additional apps, such as interactive games, music, and movies so patients can get their minds off difficult procedures; replenish arts and crafts materials; update the modular train to make more interactive; purchase games to provide for interaction with peers and make friends; and to purchase toys and dolls to use for medical teaching.

We will, as well, offer community outings to decrease anxiety of long-term hospitalization and give patients the opportunity to enjoy a favorite meal and practice/apply in a real-life setting all of the skills that they have been working on in the hospital; provide airport trips, lunch/dinner downtown, movies, sporting events; replenish sports supplies, keeping equipment up-dated to provide a variety of recreational activities for patients to try and acquire all of the adaptations needed to do so independently; renovate the garden for patients and families to enjoy our backyard facilities during difficult hospitalizations; purchase garden supplies and plants and offer horticultural therapy for patients and parents (Our award-winning garden is a place for kids and parents to escape the stresses of hospitalization. We grow vegetables, flowers, and perennials in accessible, raised beds, which are cared for by patients, family, and staff.); purchase Lekotek toys for diversional play experiences, and so much more.

We thank our loyal and generous friends at Spirit of Children for, year after year, providing us with resources to make life for our children diverse, educational, wholesome, and complete.

Spirit of Chicago is indeed a vital, important partner with us in the care of children.

