

75th Anniversary Shriners Hospitals

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Major Celebrities & Sports Figures Lend Support To Shriners Hospitals' 75th Anniversary

Over two dozen celebrities, a former U.S. President, and the world's most recognizable sports figure, Michael Jordan, are lending their talents during 1997 to help Shriners Hospitals for Children celebrate 75 years of providing free medical care to children in need.

As part of a year-long celebration, the nation's largest pediatric orthopedic hospital system has enlisted the talents of Jordan, former President Gerald Ford, Burt Reynolds, Ernest Borgnine, Barbara Mandrell, Dick Clark, Sandy Duncan and a host of other celebrities and sports figures, as part of a multifaceted campaign.

The campaign is not only informing viewers about the unique charity, but is attempting to locate more families with children who need but cannot afford the type of specialized medical care available, at no charge, in all 22 Shriners Hospitals in the United States, Canada and Mexico. In the network, there are 18 orthopedic hospitals, three Shriners Burns Institutes, and one (the new Northern California Shriners Hospital in Sacramento that opened in April 1997) that provides orthopedic, burn and spinal cord injury care.

Serving as the cornerstone for the year's activities was a first of its kind "untelethon," which, according to Imperial Potentate John D. VerMaas, was a television special aimed not at raising funds, but at locating even more children that Shriners Hospitals can help. To date, Shriners Hospitals have helped over a half-million children and currently lists more than 160,000 active patients. "Lots of charities hold telethons to raise funds, but we dubbed ours an 'untelethon,' since people were not asked to call a toll-free number with pledges or donations, but instead to call if they knew of a child who could benefit from treatment at a Shriners Hospital," VerMass explained.

"Our whole purpose in having this TV special was to get families with kids who need help in touch with the Shriners Hospital nearest to them," he said.

The one-hour special, hosted by actors Pat Morita and Peter Graves, was taped at EPCOT in Disney World, and was aired in early April in 21 of the 22 television markets in which Shriners Hospitals are located – excluding only Mexico City, due to the language difference. The 21 television markets represented a potential audience of 21 million TV households, and focused on helping people learn more about the Shriners Hospitals system.

In addition to the television special, Shriners Hospitals are launching two major television and radio public service campaigns this year, featuring celebrities Morgan Fairchild, Loni Anderson, Dick Clark, Erik Estrada, Charles Grodin, and Martin Sheen, among others. A multi-part video news release was produced and distributed, along with an extensive international awareness campaign, including such items as billboards, bus cards, airport and mall dioramas, and promotion in movie theaters across North America.

According to Shriners Hospitals Chairman of the Board Everett M. Evans, "This is the most comprehensive and extensive campaign that we have ever undertaken, and even though our hospital system's budget this year will top \$425 million, the entire focus of the year-long anniversary campaign is simply to find more families with children who need our help."

Why the Shriners Hospitals' name change?

Less than a year ago, during the Shrine's 122nd Imperial Council Session in New Orleans, Shrine representatives voted to officially change the name of Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Representatives decided to remove the word "crippled" from the organization's corporate name in an effort to have the name better reflect the mission of Shriners Hospitals, which have a 75-year history of providing free, specialized medical care to children.

"When we opened the first Shriners Hospital in 1922, polio was common and most of our patients were children with polio. The term 'crippled' was widely accepted to describe their conditions," said Everett M. Evans, chairman of the Board of Trustees of Shriners Hospitals.

"But today, that term is not an accurate description of either our patients or our mission," he explained. "Since we opened the Shriners Burns Institutes in the 1960s, we have treated children with burn injuries. and in our orthopedic hospitals we treat some problems that are not strictly orthopedic. With this change, we believe our corporate name more accurately reflects the expansion of services that we've added over the years."

Interesting facts & figures on Shriners Hospitals

Since 1922, when the first Shriners Hospital opened in Shreveport, La., the "World's Greatest Philanthropy" – is the world-renowned hospital system is known today – has treated more than a half million children who have gone on to lead successful and happy lives.

Over three-quarters of a century, Shriners Hospitals have spent more than \$3.4 billion operating their 22 Shriners Hospitals. During that same period, construction and renovation costs have totaled nearly \$770 million.

The orthopedic Shriners Hospitals are expertly staffed and equipped to treat orthopedic disorders such as curvature of the spine (scoliosis), brittle bone disease (osteogenesis imperfecta), hand and back problems, club foot, limb deficiencies, and growth problems.

The Shriners Burns Institutes, internationally recognized as pioneers in burn treatment, were the first burns hospitals in America dedicated solely to the treatment of children with severe burns.

Another area of need the Shrine took an interest in a number of years ago is treating children with spinal cord injuries. Today, the Chicago, Philadelphia, and new Northern California Shriners Hospitals are the only national network offering spinal cord injury care to children and adolescents.

One of the extraordinary aspects of Shriners Hospitals is that all medical services they provide are totally without charge, and no insurance or U.S. government funds (federal, state or local) are sought or accepted for any of the medical care or services Shriners Hospitals offer.

Remarkable, too, is that Shriners Hospitals presently make the single largest contribution, on a continuing basis, to the care of disabled children of any organization or private healthcare system in the United States.

For 75 years, Shriners Hospitals have combined to compile a number of patient statistics, including the following:

- 559,009 operations performed
- 6.7 million X-rays taken
- 791,978 braces and prostheses applied
- 5 million outpatient and outreach clinic visits
- 11.3 million physical therapy treatments

With Shriners Hospitals approving 24,979 new applications for treatment during 1996, Shriners Hospitals began 1997 with an active patient roster of 162,126.

1997 budget tops \$1.16 million per day

For the current year, the overall budget for the 22 Shriners Hospitals totals \$425 million – nearly \$1.16 million per day to operate Shriners Hospitals, conduct research and continue the ambitious reconstruction program begun in the early 1980s.

Included in the \$425 million budget is \$359 million allocated for operating expenses (including \$21 million for research) and \$66 million for buildings and equipment expenditures.

Nearly 25 years ago, Shriners Hospitals Boards of Directors and Trustees saw the need for an aggressive rebuilding program if the hospitals were to continue offering the most advanced orthopedic and burn care well into the 21st century.

That program is coming to a close, with just two hospitals still under construction – the Philadelphia Hospital, which is slated to be completed late this year, and the Shriners Burns Institute in Boston, which will be the last of the Shriners Hospitals to be completed – in late spring 1998.

The new Northern California Hospital, which replaced the San Francisco Shriners Hospital, is now the Shrine's largest, as well as the first to incorporate all four specialties for which Shriners Hospitals are noted: pediatric orthopedics, spinal cord injuries, acute burns, and research. With a total of 80 beds, 50 are for orthopedic care, including spinal cord injuries, and 30 for burn care.

This new, eight-story, state-of-the-art facility serves as the Shrine's flagship hospital and its primary burns center in the west, reducing the need for severely burned children to travel across the country to receive care at one of the other three Shriners Burns Institutes.

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