



SHRINERS
INTERNATIONAL

Alee Shriners
2026

ALEE SHRINERS

**Shriners Children's:
Our Patients Inspire
Us to Provide the Most
Amazing Care
Anywhere—LOVE to
the Rescue!**

**The donations from
this paper crusade go
directly to Shriners
Children's .**



**Shriners Children's
celebrated 100 years of
changing children's lives,
in 2022 and Alee Shriners
has proudly supported
this great philanthropy
from the very beginning.**

**Did you know that in 1922,
Imperial Sir Ernest Allen
Cutts of Alee Shriners,
Savannah, GA laid the
cornerstone for the first
Shriners Children's
Hospital in Shreveport,
Louisiana?**

MEMORIES ♦ THAT LIVE ON! ♦



— A L E E — SHRINERS LEGACY

For some children, awareness of Shriners starts early as they see the dad, granddad,
uncle, or brother donning a Fez going to a meeting, raising money for Shriners Children's,
or riding a funny car in a parade.

Such memories are often the seeds that can begin a **Shriners Legacy!**

MEMORIES THAT LIVE ON
The Many Faces of Shriners Legacies

A Legacy of Service

Since 1922, Alee Shriners has been part of the proud legacy of Shriners serving children. That year, Ill. Sir Ernest Cutts, Potentate of Alee Shriners, participated in the dedication of the first Shriners Children's in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Ever since, Alee Shriners Nobles and Ladies have continued that tradition of giving, raising millions of dollars to support Shriners Children's and helping ensure that children receive the care they need. But the legacy is about more than fundraising. It is about family, brotherhood, and generations of service.

That tradition continues today with Ill. Sir Dave Armstrong II, 2026 Potentate of Alee Shriners, who proudly follows in the footsteps of his father, P.P. Ill. Sir Dave Armstrong Sr., 2016 Potentate and current Recorder, as well as his father-in-law, Noble Jim Hood.

Fathers have brought their sons. Brothers have served side by side. Uncles have introduced nephews. Sons have followed in their fathers' footsteps and families have continued to serve together.

Generation after generation, Alee Shriners have joined this fraternity with a shared commitment: to serve, to give, and to make a difference in the lives of children.

A legacy that began in 1896 when Alee Shriners began and continues today—and the best chapters are still being written.



Shriners
Children's™

the most
AMAZING
CARE
anywhere™

**ALEE SHRINERS
Official Publication**

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Monday – Friday

2026 DIVAN

Potentate..... David Armstrong, II
Chief Rabban..... Ray Christian, Jr.
Assistant Rabban... Andrew Watt, Sr.
High Priest &
Prophet..... John Willis
Oriental Guide..... Greg Spell
Treasurer..... Johnny K. Farley
Recorder..... David W. Armstrong, Sr,
P.P.

**REPRESENTATIVE TO
IMPERIAL COUNCIL**

Illustrious Potentate...David Armstrong, II
Elected.....James L. Johns, Sr., P.P.
Elected.....David Armstrong, Sr, P.P.
Elected.....Steve Lingle, P.P.
Emeritus.....Lester A. Claxton, P.P.
Emeritus.....Calvin Hodges, P.P.

**ALEE WEBSITE:
aleeshriners.org**

**FACEBOOK: Alee Shriners and
Alee Shrine Temple**

**Hospital Chairman:
Freddie Humphries, Jr., P.P.**

**Paper Sale Editor
Lady Colleen Humphries**

**Proof Readers
David W. Armstrong, Sr, P. P.**



From clubfoot casts to surfing and soccer

Kia'i was born with talipes equinovarus, commonly known as clubfoot. His *tūtū* (grandmother in the Hawaiian language), Napua, knew just where to turn. "My cousin was treated at Shriners Children's and I witnessed her exceptional care," she recalled. "I wanted the best for Kia'i, so I called Shriners Children's for an appointment."

At only 20 days old, Kia'i received his first gentle manipulation and cast to straighten his tiny feet. For the next several weeks, he and Napua traveled more than 200 miles from Hilo to Honolulu for new casts at Shriners Children's Hawai'i.

"The serial (progressive) casting process is the biggest hurdle for any child with clubfoot," explained pediatric orthopedic surgeon Jonathan Pellett, M.D. "But Kia'i tolerated it remarkably well."

After graduating to a boot-and-bar brace, which he wore for two years, Kia'i embraced an active lifestyle. Napua encouraged activities that would build discipline, foster individuality and keep him connected to his Native Hawaiian roots — including learning *'Olelo Hawai'i*, the Hawaiian language. Kia'i developed a passion for the ukulele, surfing, fishing, swimming, *wa'a* (canoeing) and Kajukenbo, a martial art created in Hawai'i. "Without Shriners Children's, Kia'i wouldn't be as independent as he is today," Napua said.

When Kia'i was 7 and learning soccer, Napua noticed his legs turning inward again. She quickly contacted Dr. Pellett, who reapplied casts for five weeks, followed by physical therapy with Michele Chee, DPT, to strengthen his legs and ankles. Thanks to early intervention, Kia'i avoided surgery, which is rare, as most children with clubfoot need it. "As a surgeon, it's almost a contradiction to say the best treatment for clubfoot is to avoid surgery through casting and bracing," Dr. Pellett notes. "But in Kia'i's case, that was true."

Now 10, Kia'i continues to add new interests while dreaming big. "He loves swimming and wants to become a firefighter," says Napua. "Nothing holds him back — I know he can achieve anything he desires."



A Message from the Potentate...

As Potentate of Alee Shriners and our more than 1,100 Nobles, it is my privilege and honor to serve our Shrine and our community. I would like to sincerely thank you for your generous support of Shriners Children's.

In 2022, Shriners Children's celebrated 100 years of providing life-changing care to children. For more than a century, the generosity of individuals and communities like yours has helped support Shriners Children's locations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Together, we have helped more than 2 million children receive the specialized care they need to live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Through the dedication of our doctors, nurses, researchers, and staff—and with the continued generosity of supporters like you—Shriner Kids receive exceptional care for conditions including burns, orthopedic conditions, cleft lip and palate, and spinal cord injuries.

In 2025 alone, the generosity of our community helped Alee Shriners raise more than \$400,000 for Shriners Children's. That remarkable achievement was made possible because of people like YOU who believe every child deserves the opportunity for a better quality of life.

Please know that your donation makes a difference. Your generosity helps support patient care, medical research, and the specialized programs that give children hope and brighter futures.

If you know of a child who may benefit from the services provided by Shriners Children's, please have their parent or guardian contact a Shriner in their area or call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.

As one Shriners Children's nurse so beautifully said, *"We members of the staff work for the kids. Without your support and that of the community, such work would not be possible."*

As you read the inspiring stories of these remarkable children, remember that you helped make their stories possible.

On behalf of the Nobles and Ladies of Alee Shriners, thank you for believing in our mission, supporting our children, and helping us make a difference.

Sincerely,

David W. Armstrong, II
Potentate
Alee Shriners, 2026



Alee Road Runners working their Magic! BEEP BEEP

Alee Road Runners — Going the Extra Mile for Our Kids

Every Shriners Temple has a dedicated group of volunteers known as Road Runners. These special Nobles have driven millions of miles to help children and their families reach Shriners Children's for the care they need.

For each journey, a Road Runner picks up a child and their family, drives them safely to the hospital for treatment, and brings them home again. There is never a cost to the family. When asked why they give so generously of their time, the Road Runners simply say they are rewarded with something far more valuable—the smiles of the children they serve.

Alee Shriners is blessed with some of the most dedicated Road Runners anywhere. Our drivers have traveled to Shriners Children's hospitals in Greenville, Dayton, Shreveport, Chicago, and Philadelphia, making countless miles and memories along the way.

Thank you to our Alee Road Runners for going the extra mile!

They truly live the Shriners Creed:

"As Shriners, we look beyond ourselves to serve the needs of others—especially children who cannot help themselves."

Through their **time, talent, and compassion**, our Road Runners demonstrate what it truly means to be a Shriner.

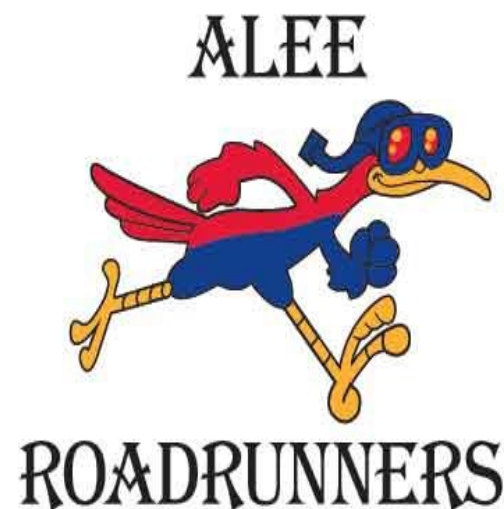
**They don't just drive miles. They deliver hope.
GREAT JOB and Thank you!**

President:

Noble Tim Mercer

Trip Coordinator:

Noble Tim Mercer



UNITS:

- CLOWNS
- DIRECTOR'S STAFF
- DRIFTERS
- DUNE CATS
- HILLBILLYS
- IRON KNIGHTS
- KEYSTONE KOPS
- LEGION OF HONOR
- MOBILE UNIT
- CLASSICS
- ORIENTAL BAND
- PATROL
- PIRATES
- ROAD RUNNERS

SHRINE CLUBS:

- AUGUSTA SHRINE
- BRUNSWICK SHRINE
- BRYAN COUNTY SHRINE
- CLAXTON SHRINE
- EFFINGHAM SHRINE
- HINESVILLE/FT. STEWART SHRINE
- JESUP SHRINE
- KNIGHTS OF MECCA
- METTER SHRINE
- QUINT SHRINE
- SCREVEN COUNTY SHRINE
- STATESBORO SHRINE
- SWAINSBORO SHRINE
- TATTNALL SHRINE
- THOMSON SHRINE
- TYBEE LITE SHRINE
- WAYNESBORO SHRINE

Alee Iron Knights Ride for Bella!



Shriners Children's Chicago

Each Spring since 2013, Alee Shriners Potentates, Divan, Nobles and Ladies pray for safe travels, fair weather and a decent wind behind all of the riders as they commence to drive 1000 miles in 24 hours, better known as the Iron Knights Alee Butt Ride.

Fun Facts: The route is always different. A team drives the route a week or two before to map out rest spots, food and gas. The 2026 ride, they left from Snazzy's in Richmond Hill and arrived in New Orleans the next day. Last year's ride proceeds benefitted the Shriners Children's Chicago hospital as a THANK YOU for all the outstanding work they have done for Bella - one of our patients. Thanks to their team of doctors, nurses and hospital staff, Bella is now cleared for all activities after surgery 2 years ago and constant monitoring the curvature of her back. Bella is definitely a "Super Hero"!



This ride has been held annually beginning in 2013 and has raised over \$300,000 benefitting Shriners Children's. In addition to donating to the hospitals, the proceeds were used to purchase vans to transport patients to and from their hospital visits.



Taken off of Facebook with permission

In April of 2026, the Iron Knights made the 1000 mile Iron Butt Ride to New Orleans in 24 hours and donated over \$50,000 towards the purchase of a new van for the Roadrunners to take our precious cargo.

Thank you to Ms. Connie for her generous donation of cute, handmade stuffed animals - for years, she has made monthly donations to Shriners Children's! And the Ronald McDonald House in Greenville, SC



TO ALL SUPPORTERS OF OUR SHRINERS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Clyde V. Bowie, Past Potentate of Alee Shriners 2018 and Noble Tommy Nix respectively, are proud to represent Alee Shriners on the Board of Directors for Shriners Children's Greenville, in South Carolina. We want to take this opportunity to say **"THANK YOU"** to the supporters of our mission to treat children in our Shriners Children's locations throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada. We accept children from birth to age 18 for treatment if their needs are in the scope of our specialized service lines of pediatric orthopedic conditions, burn injuries, spinal cord injuries and cleft lip and palate.

We are in our 99th year of operating Shriners Children's Greenville. Through research, we continue to develop new ways to care for children and make it possible for children to "defy the odds" and have a typical childhood and later adulthood which otherwise may not have been possible. We have the finest doctors, nurses and support staff dedicated to our mission of treating children.

Our campaign Love is shown to each and every patient in our hospitals and clinics without regard for their ability to pay for services or their insurance status.

If you know of a child that might need our services, please have his/her parent or guardian call the Alee Shrine temple office at **912-355-2422 ext 4**. If you know of an opportunity for us to present a program or speak to a group about our hospitals, please contact any Shriner or contact Clyde Bowie at 706-945-7377. Thanks again for your support of the world's greatest philanthropy, Shriners Children's.



Clyde Bowie, P.P.
Board of Directors
Shriners Children's—
Greenville



Tommy Nix
Associate Board of Directors
Shriners Children's—
Greenville

As Shriners, we look beyond ourselves to serve the needs of

TATTNALL SHRINE CLUB

**Since 2009, OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS
DONATED to Shriners Hospitals**

"Beginning in January 2023, we coined this is the year of the *"March To A Million"*! It is an honor and privilege to represent the Tattnall Shrine Club and our community. Our goal is to work hard as Nobles representing Alee Shriners while honoring our commitment to the world's greatest philanthropy. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that the children in need of our hospital's services get the care they need. This goal could only be accomplished through the hard work of our Nobles and Ladies with a great deal of teamwork and the unparalleled support of our community. We receive a great deal of support from our community and we are proud to represent the hard-working men, women, and children."

- 2023 President Richie Waters



Congratulations to the Tattnall Shrine Club, their leadership, the Nobles and Ladies and their community for supporting the greatest Philanthropy Shriners Children's.

others, especially children who cannot help themselves. We believe Shriners Children's

to be the world's greatest philanthropy, and we covenant with

each other to support its "temple of mercy" with spirit, time, talent, and means.

Morris Slotin Fund

This fund is named in honor of one of our Past Potentates, **Ill. Sir Morris Slotin**. All donations to the fund are used exclusively to help transport children to and from our Shriners Children's.

The **Morris Slotin Transportation Fund** is supported through generous contributions from our Nobles, friends, and others who wish to make a difference in the lives of children. Donations may be made **in memory or in honor of a friend, relative, or loved one**.

Every contribution helps ensure that a child can get to the care they need—and safely back home.

To Make a Donation
Alee Shriners
Morris Slotin Fund
P.O. Box 14147
Savannah, GA 31416

OR

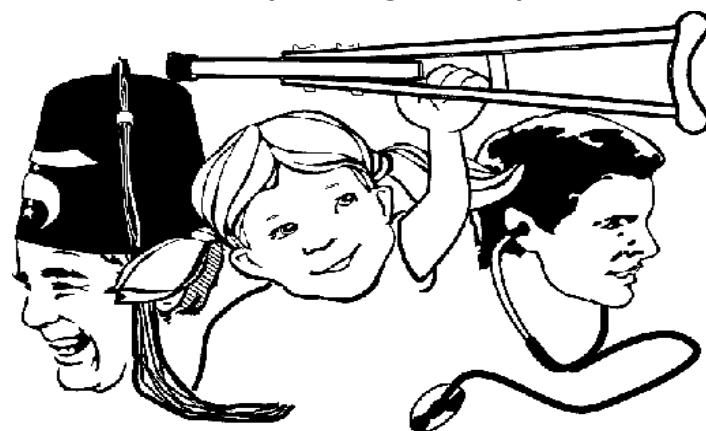
aleeshriners.org

Helping a Child is Just a Phone Call Away

Determining whether a child is eligible for care at Shriners Children's is as simple as calling **800-237-5055** (toll free in the U.S.), or **800-361-7256** (in Canada) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time Monday through Friday.

During the initial phone call, you will discuss the nature of the child's condition, age and location of residency with a patient referral coordinator. Based upon the information provided, you will be referred to a specific Shriners Children's location that can best care for the child. Additional information is available on **shrinerschildrens.org**. Shriners Children's specializes in treating orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate.

SHRINERS CHILDREN'S ARE DULY REGISTERED WITH THE STATE OF FLORIDA AS REQUIRED BY ITS SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS ACT. THEIR REGISTRATION NUMBER IS CH433. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 800-435-7352 WITHIN THE STATE, OR VISITING THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE AT WWW.FLORIDAConsumerHELP.COM. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.



A COMMITMENT TO HOPE AND HEALING



NEARLY 2 MILLION CHILDREN AND COUNTING

Shriners Children's is a renowned healthcare system whose staff is dedicated to improving the quality of life for children worldwide. Patients with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate receive care regardless of the families' ability to pay or insurance status.

What began as one hospital in 1922 has grown into a healthcare system with locations in the United States, Canada and Mexico, along with international outreach clinics, and is a leader in medical education and research. For more than 100 years, members of the Shriners fraternity have supported Shriners Children's, impacting the lives of nearly 2 million children.

THE MOST AMAZING SPECIALTY CARE The first Shriners Children's locations were established to address a need — primarily to help children affected by polio. Over time, Shriners Children's has continued to identify and meet needs in pediatric specialty care. Today, our patients receive exceptional care for orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries and cleft lip and palate. Our goal is to bring the very best compassionate, specialized care to more children, more conveniently, and closer to where they live.

LEADING THE WAY IN ORTHOPEDICS

Most of our locations offer care for orthopedic conditions, from common injuries and routine sports-related issues to the most complex cases and rare diseases, disorders and syndromes. Commonly treated conditions include club-foot, limb discrepancies, scoliosis and osteogenesis imperfecta (OI, or brittle bone disease), as well as orthopedic challenges associated with neuromuscular conditions like cerebral palsy. We are committed to providing a comprehensive program of medical and rehabilitative care to help each child become as healthy and independent as possible, including surgeries, physical, occupational and recreational therapies, and orthotic and prosthetic services.

PIONEERING BURN CARE

Shriners Children's has been a leader in pediatric burn care since the mid-1960s. At our burn care locations in California, Texas, Ohio and Massachusetts, experienced teams provide critical, surgical and rehabilitative care for all degrees of burn injuries and scars. Advances from our research include increased survival rates, methods to minimize scarring and improved wound-healing techniques.

SPINAL CORD INJURY REHABILITATION

Recognizing the need for spinal cord injury rehabilitation programs specifically for children, Shriners Children's developed programs offering innovative physical and occupational therapies, emotional support and training in independent living skills. Beyond therapy, exercise and activity-based rehabilitation are emphasized. A distinctive feature of Shriners Children's care is our comprehensive, team-based approach.

CLEFT LIP AND PALATE CARE

Sometimes a baby or child has a craniofacial (head and face) difference, affecting the smile, face shape, nose or chin. Conditions can range from mild to severe. A multidisciplinary team collaborates to address the many issues related to this complex condition, including breathing, speaking, hearing and eating. Each patient's customized treatment plan may include advanced treatments and services such as craniofacial surgery, 3D printing for jaw surgeries, facial and dental imaging, psychology, speech therapy, audiology, ear, nose and throat surgeries, and dental- and orthodontic-related services.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Shriners Children's is dedicated to discovering answers that will improve lives by conducting high-quality, innovative research. Our researchers have achieved significant breakthroughs that enhance care and quality of life for children worldwide, contributing to global medical knowledge. By maintaining ties with medical teaching facilities, Shriners Children's fosters an academic environment focused on delivering superior education for medical professionals and quality care to all patients. Many of our care providers are dedicated to helping medical professionals in other countries so more children can receive care closer to home.

Visit: shrinerschildrens.org or shrinersinternational.org |

Relief for Amelia

after years of pain



Five years ago, 15-year-old Amelia's active life took an unexpected turn.

Her knee had begun to hurt. Pediatricians recommended ice, orthopedists diagnosed tendonitis, rheumatologists found no answers and acupuncture didn't help. She underwent years of physical therapy, only to be told her pain might be all in her head.

But, fortunately, about the time her right hip began hurting, Amelia came to Shriners Children's Northern California's sports medicine clinic. She saw physician assistant Darwin Foo, PAC, PT, MMS, who reviewed Amelia's history with fresh eyes.

In an hour, he had identified the root cause: borderline hip dysplasia.

The hip is a ball-and-socket joint. Hip dysplasia occurs when the socket is too shallow, allowing the ball to slip partially or completely out. Though often painless in infants, untreated dysplasia can cause early arthritis and lifelong pain. Prompt detection is critical, but mild cases like Amelia's are easily missed without pediatric expertise.

"For years, I'd fly to Shriners Children's Ohio for treatment," he remembered. "They welcomed me with open arms, providing a room, food, video games, and continuous physical and emotional support. They cared for me like family, and I will forever be grateful."

Darvin explained how post-puberty changes amplified her subtle hip displacement, causing a tear in the labrum, which is the ring of cartilage that cushions the hip joint — the cause of her radiating knee pain.

"I don't have words to describe how it felt to get answers for my child who had been in pain for years." —
Amelia's mom, Debbi

Amelia remembers that first appointment vividly. "I cried with my mom," she said. "I was so relieved to finally have an answer."

Orthopedic surgeon Brian Haus, M.D., performed the surgery to repair Amelia's torn labrum and lengthen her tendon. After surgery, her nurse, Megan, stayed by her side to make sure she recovered. Her inpatient nurse, Wesley, kept her laughing and smiling while she healed.

"I felt like I had my best friends taking care of me." —
Amelia

After six weeks on crutches and personalized physical therapy, Amelia was approved to be active. She went on a bike ride with her brother. "He would always ask to ride together, and I would have to say no," she said. "For the first time, I could finally say yes."

Today, Amelia, now a college student, is pain-free and goes to the gym, bakes and is able to work on her feet. She enjoys science classes in school and wants to go into the healthcare field.

At Shriners Children's, our experience with children — and just children — often gives us a leg up on providing the best care for the little ones and the youth. Children are not little adults; they need specialized care.



THE Legacy Continues



★ UNITS | CLUBS ★ BROTHERHOOD | SERVICE ★ FELLOWSHIP

Most photos courtesy of Lady: Cookie Moore and Amanda Sutton! And Facebook

About the Shriners Fraternity

Founded in New York City in 1872, Shriners International is a fraternity grounded in fun, fellowship and the Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth. It is the organization that established and continues to support Shriners Children's. Today, there are more than 200 chapters located throughout the world, and Shriners can be found on six continents. Shriners love to support Shriners Children's and do so in many ways, from organizing fundraisers to benefit their official philanthropy to participating in awareness efforts for the healthcare system. Shriners also voluntarily serve on the healthcare locations' boards of governors, act as tour guides and assist patients and families however they can.

For information about joining Shriners International, please visit beashrinernow.com, or contact the fraternity's membership development office at membership@shrinenet.org or 813-281-0300.



beashrinernow.com

Barbie's Corner: Growing Stronger Every Day

It is hard to believe how quickly time has passed. Colton and Ty are now 15 years old, and although their journey with cleft lip and palate has included many surgeries over the years, they continue to amaze us with their strength, resilience, and positive attitudes.

This summer they both returned to Shriners Children's for additional surgeries. Colton and Ty underwent a bone graft, lip revision, and nasal reconstruction, as a part of their ongoing cleft care. As always, the incredible team at Shriners Children's provided outstanding care, compassion, and encouragement not only for the boys, but for our entire family.

During their recovery, we were also blessed to stay at the Ronald McDonald House. Having a warm, welcoming place to rest between hospital visits and being surrounded by other families who truly understood the journey was a gift we will never forget. It perfectly complemented the exceptional care the boys received at Shriners Children's and made a challenging time a little easier.

We would also be remiss if we didn't recognize the incredible members of ***Alee Shrine***. They have been part of our boys' journey since the very beginning and have become like family to us. Behind every hospital visit and every success story are countless Shrine members who generously give their time to organize fundraisers, volunteer at events, and work tirelessly to ensure families like ours receive the care they need. Their dedication, kindness, and unwavering support have touched our lives in more ways than we could ever express, and we will always be grateful to be part of the Alee Shrine family.

Recovery has gone well, and it has been amazing to watch them bounce back. Even during the toughest days, they somehow managed to keep us laughing. Ty had everyone smiling with his jokes shortly after surgery, proving that laughter really can be the best medicine. His sense of humor has always been one of his greatest strengths.

When they're not recovering from surgery, they're busy being active teenagers with interests and dreams that make us so proud. Both boys have developed a real passion for bowling and love spending time at the lanes.

Ty has discovered a love for cooking and dreams of one day attending culinary school. His favorite thing to cook is a perfectly grilled steak, which made it especially difficult when surgery meant he couldn't enjoy one for a while. He also recently built his very own computer from the ground up. Watching him research the parts, put everything together, and see it power on for the first time was such a proud parent moment. It reminded us that there is no limit to what he can accomplish when he sets his mind to something.

Colton has found his passion in music and has become an exceptional guitar player. Inspired by the legendary '80s hair bands, he spends hours practicing and is constantly improving. Seeing him pick up his guitar and lose himself in the music brings a smile to our faces every time.

As their parents, we cannot express enough gratitude for everything Shriners Children's has done throughout their lives. The care they have received has helped shape not only their smiles, but also their confidence, determination, and belief in themselves. Every doctor, nurse, therapist, and staff member has played a role in helping our boys become the remarkable young men they are today.

To every family just beginning this journey, we want you to know there is hope. There will be difficult days, but there will also be moments of incredible joy. Looking at Colton and Ty today, we don't first see the surgeries or the scars we see two kind, funny, talented, determined young men who are chasing their dreams. Shriners Children's has been with us every step of the way, and our family will always be grateful for the love, compassion, and life changing care we have received.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Barbie & Rod
Proud Parents of Colton and Ty



MEET THE SHRINERS CHILDREN'S 2026-2027 INTERNATIONAL PATIENT AMBASSADORS

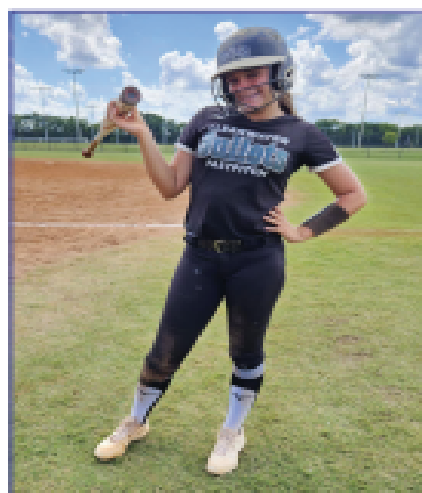
MEET MACIE AND COLTON



Every year, two patients are chosen to represent Shriners Children's as our International Patient Ambassadors, giving voice to the thousands of children and teens who receive life-changing care at Shriners Children's. They speak from experience, and their stories powerfully demonstrate the impact of our healthcare system.

These young role models show how Shriners Children's patients overcome challenges and pursue their dreams — while reflecting Shriners Children's unique spirit, nurturing atmosphere and clinical excellence.

MACIE



Macie, 15, is a high school sophomore and a talented softball pitcher from Tampa, Florida. She has played the sport since she was 7 and has long dreamed she'd play her way onto a college team. Softball isn't just an activity for her — it's her passion and greatest joy.

So, when Macie, then 10, was diagnosed with idiopathic scoliosis, a curvature of the spine, she

was worried. "When I first learned I had scoliosis, I was scared I wouldn't be able to play softball, or any sport, anymore," she remembers.

Doctors prescribed a nighttime brace, and Macie wore it faithfully, hoping it would keep her curve from progressing.

Despite being diligent about wearing her brace, Macie's curve worsened. A doctor recommended a surgical procedure that would limit her spinal mobility, making pitching difficult, if not impossible. But Macie and her mother had reservations.

Macie's mother, Michelle, a pediatric nurse, began searching for alternatives. That led her to Shriners Children's Philadelphia and spine surgeon Amer Samdani, M.D., who is a pioneer of vertebral body tethering (VBT). VBT uses a flexible, belt-like tether attached to individual vertebrae. As the child grows, the tether guides the spine into a straighter position — without sacrificing flexibility. The procedure is only

possible for children who are still growing, and Macie was an ideal candidate.

In October 2023, Macie and her mother drove 17 hours from home in Tampa to Philadelphia for the surgery.

Just two months later, she was back on the mound.

"My coach started me in our first tournament of the season," she says. "I threw that first pitch and I knew this had worked. I think I struck out the first batter."

A year after surgery, a follow-up X-ray confirmed the transformation.

"It was a completely different picture," Macie says. "It showed me that my spine had completely changed — and that I'd never have to deal with this again."

In 2025, Macie was invited to throw out a ceremonial first pitch at the Shriners Children's Clearwater Invitational. She even got to meet the University of Alabama softball team. It was a dream moment for the young athlete.

As a Shriners Children's International Patient Ambassador, Macie speaks with genuine gratitude about her experience.

"I want to give back as an International Patient Ambassador because I don't think anything could ever repay Shriners Children's for what they did for me," she says.

"The Shriners are the best example of caring, giving people. It's amazing to see people with that much passion for helping children."

MACIE

COLTON



Colton, 17, is a high school senior and multisport athlete with a competitor's heart. Told his prosthetic leg could limit his activities, Colton consistently proves otherwise.

When Colton's mom, Becky, was pregnant, the ultrasound showed that his legs were measuring different lengths and he had only four toes on his left foot. But it wasn't until Colton was born that they learned he had fibular

hemimelia — the absence of the smaller of the two bones in the lower leg — along with a shorter leg, bowed tibia, malformed ankle and missing toe.

His grandfather's cousin, a Shriner, knew of Shriners Children's expertise in orthopedic conditions and advised the family to seek care at Shriners Children's St. Louis.

"We walked through those hospital doors and you could literally feel the warmth, the love and the caring before we even talked to anybody," Becky recalls.

At Shriners Children's St. Louis, orthopedic surgeon Perry Schoenecker, M.D., outlined two possible treatment paths. One involved a series of limb-lengthening surgeries beginning around age 8 or 9, together with ankle reconstruction — a long process that can take 5 to 10 years. The other was amputation at the ankle and then fitting the baby for a prosthesis.

The family chose amputation and they have never regretted that decision. Colton had his first surgery when he was 1 and received his first prosthesis shortly after that. He is currently on his tenth prosthetic.

While his prosthetic makes him different from friends and classmates, Colton knows it also provides him opportunities. He is able to show that with diligence and a dream, anything is possible, no matter the hurdles. "I'm sticking out for a reason," he says.

An accomplished student-athlete, Colton has competed in wrestling, baseball, basketball and track and currently participates in football and golf for his high school. He plays both offensive and defensive line for his high school football team and played in two high school state golf tournaments. Colton has been a patient ambassador at the Kansas Shrine Bowl many times, even serving as a manager for the West team since 2024. His goal is to return to the field — this time as a player in 2027.

Colton lives in a small Kansas town surrounded by miles of wide open wheat fields. He loves the freedom of rural life, where everything he needs — school, the coffee shop, the golf course, the football field — is close and familiar. Whether raising and showing pigs as part of his youth agricultural project or tackling daily farm work alongside his grandpa, uncle and cousin, Colton is always up for the task.

Colton speaks about Shriners Children's with deep affection and loyalty and is grateful for the opportunity to help others as he was helped.



My favorite part of being an International Patient Ambassador is being able to share how special Shriners Children's is," he said. "They're not just doctors and nurses; they're part of your family."

COLTON



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