

application, and will help put the work of all Children's researchers on the national map."

One example of CORPH's research involves the study of families and patients with cystic fibrosis. "With any highly complex, chronic disease, it's important to recognize all the elements that either help us deliver quality care or stand in the way," explained Michael Schechter, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Children's Cystic Fibrosis Center. For example, there's a lack of data about the prevalence and effect of mental health problems on the outcome of CF. "We know that when parents have difficulty coping with their child's disease, there is a negative impact on the child's outcome," said Dr. Schechter, who is also Section Chief of Pulmonology, Children's at Egleston. "Right now, we're studying the prevalence of mental health issues in CF patients and their parents, which will lead us to causes and help reveal interventions to improve patient outcomes."

Other recipients of CORPH seed grants are studying the use of health information technology (HIT) to help childhood cancer survivors transition from adolescence into adulthood; the use of web technology to integrate newborn screening data; and the impact of air quality on patients with asthma—one of the top reasons for admissions into Children's.

"As we identify the most effective strategies, we not only improve care, but become more cost effective," said Dr. Mertens. "The results of this type of research are highly practical. In just a few years, it will be fascinating to see what revelations our researchers have uncovered."

Positioned for success

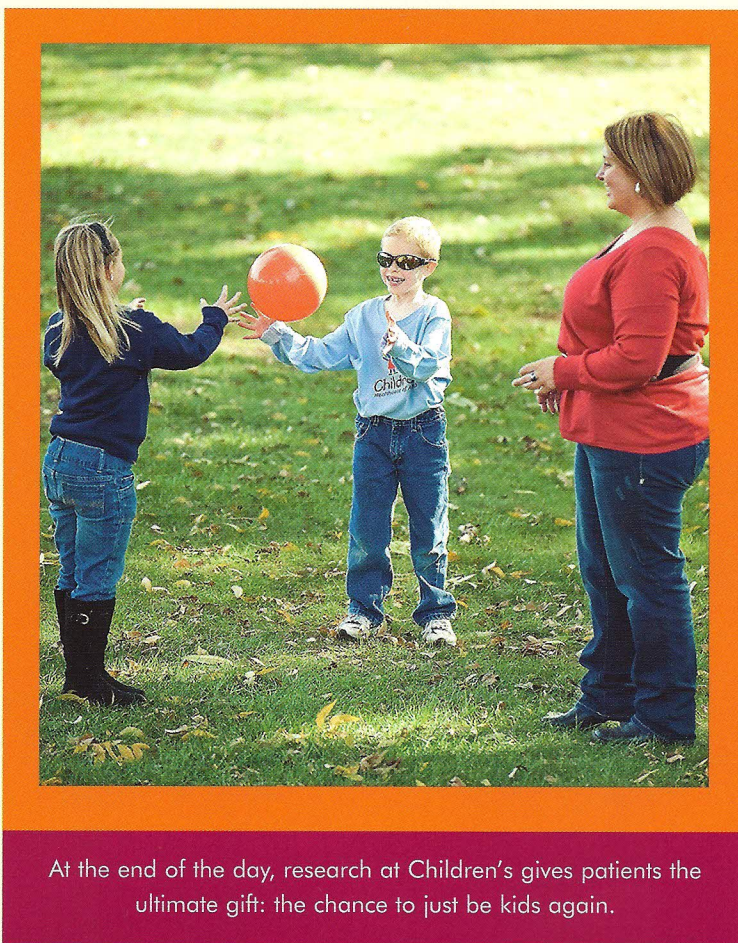
As the country's largest pediatric medical center, Children's is well-positioned to become a leading research center. "With our three campuses combined, we offer researchers larger patient volumes than any other U.S. hospital," said Kristine Rogers, Director, Clinical Research. "Investigators can study a tremendous volume of children here, so their studies can be larger and more effective. And our outcomes data is rich enough to yield meaningful results. Most importantly, high volumes mean researchers can find answers faster."

Also attractive to researchers: Children's is equipped to perform high quality clinical trials, with some of the best protection for patients. And we have top-notch electronic medical record technology to support data collection and analysis. Additionally, our relationships with other research organizations, like the Centers for Disease Control and the Georgia Institute of Technology biomedical engineering program, are a real draw.

"As we use our resources and relationships to energize the larger medical community, our stature as a well-respected research leader is growing," said Dr. Spearman. "And as momentum increases in each area of research, we'll attract the critical mass of people needed to successfully attack the problems we're trying solve. Of course, ultimately, the real beneficiaries are our patients."

For Mitchell, research at Children's has given him the ultimate gift: the chance to be a kid again. "It lets me play more!" he said.

And that's what really matters. ☪



At the end of the day, research at Children's gives patients the ultimate gift: the chance to just be kids again.