

CREDIT UNIONS FOR KIDS
WINE AUCTION



My adventure began in 2009, when I was born two and a half months early at a tiny two and a half pounds. My internal plumbing was all over the place – I wouldn't have been able to breathe or eat without the surgeries I had at two days old. This, of course, was all during a little pandemic called Swine flu, and we all know how tricky life can be during a pandemic.

Over the next several years, my life became a series of appointments, treatments, and surgeries as a team of over 20 specialists attempted to diagnose

and repair all the unique pieces of me that weren't working quite right. I don't remember much about everything my body has been through. I only know bits and pieces from listening to my family's stories and seeing pictures and videos.

While it is hard for me to remember everything – something that I'm currently seeing Neurology for – one thing is certain. The way that Rady Children's Hospital continues to make both me and my family feel will never be forgotten. Everyone on campus does their best to ease your nerves and care for you, and the most important thing is that they listen. I have been to other local hospitals during an emergency, and there is no comparison. This is why my family takes me to San Diego for my care, and I have met kids that have traveled much farther than I do!

Without the care I've received at Rady Children's Hospital, I wouldn't exist to drive my family crazy! I've been a patient at almost every department on campus. I was even the very first patient when they opened the Aerodigestive Clinic for kids with "weird stuff" happening between all of these organs (points to thoracic trunk and abdomen). While there isn't a clear diagnosis for all my unique qualities, I can 100% say that I wouldn't be talking to you tonight without the care I've gotten at this hospital. Rady Children's Hospital has cared for my heart, lungs, kidney, limbs, guts, brain...you name the part, and I've probably seen a doctor for it.

I do get nervous every time I step on campus, something my doctors have identified as "White Coat Syndrome". My palms get sweaty, my heart starts to race, and my blood pressure goes up. This is normal for the 32 million kids per year that are treated across all Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, and that's okay! We're allowed to worry about what comes next because most of us don't know. What we do know is that all of us will receive the best possible care coming to any one of these hospitals, and that provides relief for us patients and our families.

During my short twelve years on this planet, I know that my life has been different than most. I haven't been able to attend a normal school since I was in kindergarten, I've had to travel with medical equipment to and from anywhere I go, and I don't have all the answers for what exactly made me...me. I do know that I have been able to play in the rain, feel the sand between my toes, and go on little adventures with my family. Although I'm still a bit of a mystery to everyone who's cared for me, I believe that with your support, answers could be found for me and the quarter of a million kids that are seen each year at Rady Children's Hospital.

Thank you everyone and please enjoy the rest of your evening!

Mina Longo

Miracle Child Speaker, Credit Unions for Kids Wine Auction 2022