



33rd Annual Garden of
Dreams
Foundation Gala



Imagine the Possibilities
In Our Garden of Dreams



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
Foundation



Imagine the Possibilities in our Garden of Dreams.

Wishes are made, dreams are within reach, and hope is renewed at night in our garden. The sparkle of the stars and the soft sounds of a garden listening to a child's simple wish to feel better, to have more time to heal, and to know they are loved and supported every day of their journey.

— Melissa Koss, Co-Chair

Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Highlights



Tonight, we celebrate you and the vital role you play in ensuring Loma Linda University Children's Hospital provides exceptional care to children and families across our region.

Our Community.

Together, we are creating a brighter future for children and families. In 2026, we will celebrate the opening of our new Children's Hospital Specialty Clinic, a five-story, 105,000-square-foot facility. This centralized space will bring nearly 30 pediatric specialties under one roof, transforming how we deliver care to the youngest members of our community.

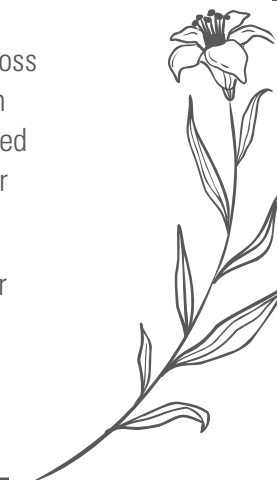
Our Mission.

Together, we are continuing the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ by advancing innovations in pediatric oncology and delivering leading-edge treatments that offer renewed hope to children and their families. Your generosity fuels the research, technology, and expertise that make these life-saving treatments possible.

Our Next Steps.

Together, we are expanding access to care for the 1.2 million children across San Bernardino, Riverside, Inyo, and Mono counties. Each year, more than 90,000 children rely on our hospitals and clinics, benefiting from specialized treatments, including more than 200 pediatric heart surgeries and care for dozens of conditions.

We are shaping a healthier, happier tomorrow for all of the children in our communities, and we are proving that we are, indeed, Stronger Together.





" A life without
dreams, is
like a garden
without flowers."

- Unknown

Presenting Sponsor

Letter from Stater Bros. Charities

Good evening,

As the Presenting Sponsor of the 33rd Annual Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation Gala, Garden of Dreams, Stater Bros. Charities is proud to stand alongside this incredible community in support of children and families throughout the Inland Empire.

At Stater Bros. Charities, giving back is at the heart of who we are and what we do — a value instilled in us by Stater Bros. Markets' late Executive Chairman Jack H. Brown. Supporting this evening's gala is our way of honoring his enduring legacy and reflects our commitment to uplifting the communities Stater Bros. Markets proudly serves, while supporting families who rely on compassionate, life-changing care during some of life's most challenging moments.

Tonight, your generosity will transform hope into healing — fueling innovative pediatric programs, advanced medical care, and vital services that make a lasting difference for children and families when they need it most.

When we come together as neighbors united by a shared purpose, our impact extends far beyond this evening. Together, we are helping to build a healthier, brighter future — one child, one family, and one act of kindness at a time.

Thank you for your support and for being part of something truly meaningful!





Letter From the Foundation Chair

Welcome to the 33rd Annual Foundation Gala, Garden of Dreams, benefiting Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

Tonight, we come together in a setting that reflects what we work for every day — a place where hope can grow and where the simple wishes of our young patients are heard. In our

Garden of Dreams, we are reminded that even the smallest moments of support can help a child feel cared for, encouraged, and ready to keep moving forward.

Your presence and generosity make a real difference. Because of you, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital continues to provide exceptional care, advanced treatments, and a healing environment for every child who walks through our doors. Your help ensures that each child has the chance to heal, grow, and reach for a brighter future.

This evening, we honor the resilience of our patients and the shared dedication of the teams and the donors united in their care. Together, we help create a place where dreams are not only imagined, but nurtured.

Thank you for joining us and for helping our garden continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Ernie Hwang
2026 Chair
Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation Board



Letter From the Administrator

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 33rd Annual Foundation Gala, Garden of Dreams. Thank you for joining us tonight as we support the children and families who rely on the care we provide and imagine the possibilities of what we can achieve together.

In this garden, we are reminded that hope often begins with a simple wish — a wish for healing, for strength, and for brighter days ahead. Your generosity helps make those wishes possible and allows us to continue delivering exceptional care and expanding the services our community depends on.

Through our Stronger Together campaign, we remain focused on strengthening pediatric outpatient care, including plans for our Children's Health Specialty Clinic that will bring critical services together in one place. We are also advancing important work in pediatric oncology, embracing new technologies and treatments that offer real promise for our young patients.

We remain committed to providing world-class, compassionate care. The recognition we have received — including being named among the best children's hospitals by U.S. News & World Report and the Leapfrog Group — reflects the dedication of our teams and the strength of your support.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are imagining the possibilities.

Warm regards,

J. Peter Baker, JD, MBA
Senior Vice President and Administrator
Loma Linda University Children's Hospital

Entertainment



Imagination Entertainment



Imagination Entertainment was founded to bring lavish, theatrical productions to the corporate world, with standout early shows like iL CiRCo and On Broadway. The company gained international recognition after creating Samsung's headline show at the 1999 Sydney Olympics and developing SeaWorld San Diego's longtime hit Cirque de la Mer (now Cirque Electric).

Since then, Imagination Entertainment has performed for over 10 million audience members worldwide and collaborated with major partners including the NBA, NFL, Cirque du Soleil, and Live Nation. Now led by Steve and Amy Gale, the company continues its mission to inspire audiences with innovative, seamless, world-class entertainment experiences.



Chris Daub

Chris Daub is a Southern California-based vocalist, songwriter, and worship leader from Yucaipa. He leads worship at churches from Redlands to Fallbrook, bringing authenticity and warmth to every setting. Most recently, he starred as Joseph in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat at the Redlands Bowl, earning praise for his dynamic and heartfelt performance.

Above all, Chris is a devoted husband and father. His family's journey — including the critical care both of his sons received at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital — has deepened his faith and strengthened his commitment to using music as a source of hope and encouragement.

EMCEE



Heather Froglear

A 2021 Country Radio Hall of Fame Inductee, Heather Froglear has been a beloved voice on K-FROG for over 32 years. As Brand Manager and Afternoon Drive host, she is a staple in Southern California's country music scene. Heather is the mother to a Children's Hospital patient and a Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation board member. Heather Froglear is an enthusiastic advocate for pediatric healthcare. Combining her talent and passion, Heather has helped K-FROG raise more than \$7 million to benefit young patients at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.



Wi-Fi

Connect to the Gala Wi-Fi using the QR code.

Network name: LLUCH2026

Password: gala2026

Connect with us on social media!



LLUChildrens

Use **#FoundationGala** for this year's Gala photo fun!

lomalindagala.org



Dinner Menu

Salad

Watermelon Arugula Salad

Endive and baby arugula, diced watermelon, feta cheese, pickled onions, candied pecans, served with a white balsamic dressing.

Entrée Duo

Braised Beef Short Rib and Pistachio Crusted Mahi

Braised beef short ribs in a brandy, dried cherry demi-glace, pine nut and pistachio herb crusted mahi with a citrus caper cream served with a farro medley and broccolini.

Vegetarian Entrée

Thai Quinoa Soy Drumstick

Quinoa soy drumstick resting on a bed of sweet, nutty red rice, roasted brussels sprout, and tri-color baby carrots, finished with a sweet and spicy thai chili sauce.


Desserts

Lemon Dome

Lemon mousse covered in a marbled-lemon white chocolate with a raspberry sauce.
Vegetarian

Banana Manifesto

Banana cake with a salted caramel sauce.
Dietary option for vegan and gluten-free guests.



Program

National Anthem

Chris Daub

Prayer

Lyndon Edwards

Chief Operating Officer, Loma Linda University Health Hospitals

Administration Welcome

Peter Baker, JD, MBA

Senior Vice President, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital

Presenting Sponsor Welcome

Nancy Negrette

Chairman and President, Stater Bros. Charities

Dash

Jim Nye, Auctioneer

Shirley N. Pettis Award

Dona Nixon

*Presented by Richard H. Hart, MD, DrPH, President, Loma Linda University Health
Rachelle Bussell, MA, RN, CFRE, Senior Vice President, Advancement,
Loma Linda University Health*

Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award

Karen Scott

Presented by Peter Baker, JD, MBA

Alaina Mathews

Daniel Penrod, Chief Executive Officer, La Loma Federal Credit Union

Dr. Leonard L. Bailey Outstanding Clinician Award

Yvonne Fanous, MD

*Presented by Francis Chan, MD, FAAP, FACP
Chair, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics
Glenn Moss, President and Chief Executive Officer, Moss Bros. Auto Group
Joe Mascari, Principal, Mascari Dinh Architects*

Hometown Hero Award

Dorothy Clark Brooks

Ulysses Hsu

Presented by Rachelle Bussell, MA, RN, CFRE

Live Auction

Heather Froglear, Emcee

Member, Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation Board

Jim Nye, Auctioneer

Abraham's Story

Video Presentation

Musical performance by Chris Daub

Fund a Miracle

Anthony Alan Hilliard, MD

Chief Executive Officer, Loma Linda University Health Hospitals

Jim Nye and friends

Musical performance by Chris Daub

Check Presentation



Sponsors

Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award

La Loma Federal Credit Union
Alaina Mathews

Dr. Leonard L. Bailey Outstanding Clinician Award

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Dreamweaver

Big Hearts for Little Hearts Loma Linda Guild
Loma Linda University Children's Health
Department of Pediatrics

Trailblazer

Caroll Shelby Foundation

Starlight

Anthem Blue Cross
Mark and Rachelle Bussell
Cain Brothers, a division of
KeyBanc Capital Markets
Cintas
Tim and Tonia Dutton
Empire Strykers
Farmer Boys
Michael Gentry

HDU and Sandwick Family
Chris and Zina Johnston
JTEC

Loma Linda University Children's Hospital
Department of Neurosurgery

Loma Linda University Department of
Cardiothoracic Surgery

Loma Linda University Department of
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Loma Linda University Eye Institute

Loma Linda University School of Medicine
and Loma Linda University Faculty Group

Loma Linda University School of Nursing

National CORE

Porsche - Audi Ontario and
Walter's Auto Group

Riverside University Health System

Barbara Robinson and Family,
and Tom and Candace Spiel

SAC Health

Soren McAdam

Tovey/Schultz Construction Inc.

Varner & Brandt LLP

Neal and Joyce Waner

Whelks Building and Aday Construction

The Woolen Family



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Dewdrop

Loma Linda University Global Health Institute

Nym Health

Paradise Chevrolet



Shirley N. Pettis Award

The **Shirley N. Pettis Award** recognizes outstanding dedication and distinguished service to children. Through their volunteerism and community service, award recipients have demonstrated the desire and motivation to improve the lives of children throughout the Inland Empire. Throughout her career, The Honorable Shirley N. Pettis Thompson was dedicated to improving the status of children, both nationally and in California. After her husband's passing, she was elected to his seat and served the 37th Congressional District of California in the 94th and 95th Congress. Her commitment was underscored by six years of service as founding chair of the Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation Board. Under her leadership, the Foundation expanded its membership and increased awareness of children's issues and needs.

In recognition of her commitment and service to Loma Linda University Children's Hospital and in appreciation for her lifelong dedication to improving the quality of life for children, we acknowledge and remember the late Honorable Shirley N. Pettis Thompson through this award.

Previous Recipients

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Leona Aronoff-Sadacca | Alaina Mathews and Family |
| Leonard L. Bailey, MD | Martin and Evelyn Matich |
| Neal and Carol Baker | J. David Moorhead, MD |
| Big Hearts for Little Hearts Guilds | The Honorable Patrick J. Morris |
| Jack H. Brown | Ken and Sean Ramirez |
| Richard E. Chinnock, MD | James and Rowena Ramos |
| Robert Fisher Chinnock, MD | Riverside Community Health Foundation |
| Farmer Boys | Clare Sheridan-Matney, MD |
| I.M. (Bud) and Pam Feldkamp III | Tom and Candace Spiel |
| K-FROG 95.1 FM | Stater Bros. Markets and Stater Bros. Charities |
| Steven and Cathy Kienle | Dennis and Carol Troesh |
| Arlene Willis Lewis | Bruce and Nancy B. Varner |
| The Honorable Jerry Lewis | Donald and Lois Verleur |
| Ralph and Goldy Lewis | Walter's Children's Charity Classic |
| Jeanne and Lou Mace | |
| John Mace, MD | |



2026 Recipient of the Shirley N. Pettis Award



Dona Nixon

Dona Nixon is a tireless advocate for under resourced and underserved children, dedicating more than 50 years to advancing children's causes. After retiring to Rancho Mirage, she and her late husband, Jack, became deeply involved with the Big Hearts for Little Hearts Desert Guild, a remarkable volunteer group supporting Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

Over the past 22 years, the Guild has raised over \$12 million to benefit children from the Coachella Valley and beyond, receiving care at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

Known for her servant leadership, strategic vision, and innovative fundraising approaches, Dona serves on the Guild's board of directors and previously contributed to the Children's Hospital Foundation Board. During her tenure as Guild President, she successfully relaunched the Lifetime Membership program, inspiring board members and their spouses to each pledge \$10,000. Always thinking creatively, Dona also introduced the pet membership program, which raised more than \$10,000 by enrolling pets — including dogs, cats, horses, llamas, and even a chinchilla.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dona launched the Build Joy with Legos Campaign, raising an impressive \$85,000 in just three months to provide hospitalized children with therapeutic Lego sets. Her unwavering commitment to the well-being of children has earned her widespread admiration, with many describing her as an angel who brings hope and joy to countless lives.

In September 2024, Dona was honored with the "Angel on Earth" award by Angel Light Academy, recognizing her extraordinary compassion and dedication. Today, we proudly celebrate Dona Nixon as our 2026 Shirley N. Pettis award recipient.



Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award

Nancy B. Varner was one of the founding board members of the Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital Foundation in 1992. Her active involvement with the Children’s Hospital included a term as the Foundation’s chair and chairing the inaugural Children’s Hospital Foundation Gala. In recognition of Nancy’s outstanding dedication and distinguished service to children through volunteerism and community service, the Lifetime Achievement Award is now known as the Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award.

The **Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award** recognizes outstanding dedication and lifetime distinguished service. Through both personal and professional service, the award winner has demonstrated desire, motivation, and devotion to improve the lives of others.

Previous Recipients

- | | |
|--|--|
| Leonard L. Bailey, MD | Tim and Carol Rochford |
| B. Lyn Behrens, MBBS | San Manuel Band of Mission Indians |
| BIGHORN Cares | The Honorable Shirley N. Pettis Thompson |
| Debbie Brown | Zareh Sarrafian |
| LeeAnne Garman | Clare Sheridan-Matney, MD |
| Pete and Patsy Gillies | Dixie Watkins and Eloise Habekost |
| Loma Linda University Health Frontline Workers | Morton and Jane Woolley, MDs |
| James and Rowena Ramos | Frank and Mary Ann Xavier |
| Barbara Robinson | |



Nancy, who passed away in 2019 following a battle with cancer, co-founded the Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital Foundation, the Big Hearts for Little Hearts Guild, the Inland Women Fighting Cancer Committee, and the annual Believe Walk in Redlands.



2026 Recipient of the Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award



Karen Scott

Karen Scott is a fearless public servant whose career has been defined by her commitment to improving the health and well-being of the Inland Empire’s youngest residents. With more than four decades of distinguished service in San Bernardino County Human Services, Karen has dedicated her professional life to ensuring that every child — no matter their circumstances — has the opportunity to flourish.

For the past 15 years, Karen has served as the Executive Director of the Children and Families Commission – First 5 San Bernardino. Under her leadership, First 5 San Bernardino has strengthened systems of care supporting children from birth to age five. Her work has expanded access to vital early childhood development resources, ensuring thousands of children receive the support and stability essential during their foundational years.

Her leadership significantly deepened the collaboration between First 5 San Bernardino and Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital, helping advance programs, investments, and services for the region’s most vulnerable families.

Karen Scott leads with heart, serves with integrity, and inspires with her unshakable belief in what is possible for children and families. Her lifelong dedication has strengthened families across San Bernardino County and uplifted partners across the region.

For her remarkable leadership, extraordinary partnership, and tireless service to children and families, it is our honor to recognize Karen Scott as the 2026 Nancy B. Varner Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.



Dr. Leonard L. Bailey Outstanding Clinician Award

Dr. Leonard L. Bailey was a world-renowned pediatric heart surgeon whose work has given hope to children everywhere. His research and innovations in infant cardiology have helped save thousands of lives around the world. For 42 years, Dr. Bailey guided patients and their families at Loma Linda University Health through some of their most trying times. In honor of his legacy, we renamed our Outstanding Clinician Award to recognize Dr. Bailey's lifetime of contributions.

The **Dr. Leonard L. Bailey Outstanding Clinician Award** recognizes lifelong dedication and distinguished service provided to children by a clinician at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. Through their professional career and advocacy, award recipients have demonstrated the desire and motivation to improve the lives of children throughout the Inland Empire.

Previous Recipients

Stephen Ashwal, MD

Antranik Bedros, MD

Richard E. Chinnock, MD

Douglas Deming, MD

Dr. Albert Kheradpour

Donald Moores, MD

Ricardo Peverini, MD

Anees Razzouk, MD

Helen Staples-Evans, DNP, RN

Cynthia H. Tinsley, MD



1942-2019 — Dr. Leonard L. Bailey's most enduring legacy lives in the qualities he demonstrated and inspired in others every day. These qualities rekindle our spirits, and in turn, the spirits of those we serve. For these reasons and many others, we cannot thank Dr. Bailey enough.



2026 Recipient of the Dr. Leonard L. Bailey Outstanding Clinician Award



Yvonne Fanous, MD

For more than four decades, Dr. Yvonne Fanous has built an enduring legacy in pediatric medicine — a healer, a visionary program builder, and an educator whose influence spans generations. Her journey with Loma Linda University Health began in 1981, marking the start of a career that helped define pediatric allergy, immunology, and pulmonary care across the region.

Dr. Fanous earned her medical degree and completed residency at Cairo University Hospital, followed by pediatric residencies at Loma Linda University Health and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. She later completed a fellowship at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine and achieved board certifications from the American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Allergy and Immunology.

In 1997, she became Division Chief of Pediatric Allergy and Pulmonary Medicine at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, a position she held for nearly 20 years. Her leadership advanced specialized services for chronic and complex conditions, including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, and a wide range of respiratory and immunologic disorders. The comprehensive subspecialty care available today reflects her vision, strategic guidance, and unwavering advocacy for children's health.

Dr. Fanous is equally celebrated as an educator who helped shape the careers of more than 1,000 pediatricians and another 1,000 medical students. She taught not only clinical knowledge but also compassion, practicality, and grace. Her influence is carried forward by physicians serving in hospitals and communities around the world.

Today, we honor Dr. Yvonne Fanous with the Dr. Leonard L. Bailey Outstanding Clinician Award — for the programs she built, the young lives she helped heal, and the lasting legacy she leaves in every clinician she trained and every patient she served.



Hometown Hero Award

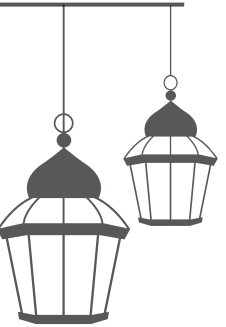
The **Hometown Hero Award** recognizes the contributions of individuals who share our passion for children and help enrich the quality of life in our communities. The Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital Foundation is grateful to those individuals whose commitment means a brighter future for the children’s lives they have touched.

Previous Recipients

Alane Allbee, RN	Betty Grant	Bonnie O’Connor
A. Gary Anderson	Martha Green-Garrett	Jodee Palmer
Brent Bailey	Cheri Gruenfeld	Kent Paxton
Patricia Baker	Ward Haas	Suzie Prado-Cardozo
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Bob Burt	Peggy Howard	Tom M. Rivera
Tony and Sandy Cappelli	Thomas Kaney	Sandra Robertson
Kim Carter	Gwen Knotts	Joseph Rodriguez
Linda Cavola	Larry Kositsin	Eric Sandoval
Brian Christensen	Michael Kuhn, MD	Charlie Seymour
Nina Coake	James M. Lally, MD	Jerilyn Simpson
Jim and Jeannie Durbin	Carla Lidner-Baum, DDS	Tom and Candace Spiel
Jerry Eaves	Alicia Lopez	Nila Stein
Emerson Fine Jewelry	Juan Carlos Luna	George Tedeschi
Robert Erikson	Josh Maldonado	Robin Diamond-Ward (Heather Froglear)
Debi Faris-Cifelli	Heidi Mayer	Trudy Wittaker
Bernadette Gallagher	David and Donna Miller	Crystal and Bill Wyatt
Hilda Garcia	Dr. Donald and Penny Moores	Elna Yates
Mercedes Garcia	Patricia and Jerry Negus	



2026 Recipient of the Hometown Hero Award



Dorothy Clark Brooks

For more than 40 years, Dorothy Clark Brooks has been a guiding light for children and families at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital. She began her service in 1983 as a child life specialist, where she discovered a deep calling to walk alongside families experiencing grief and loss. This led her to become LLUCH’s Bereavement and Community Education Specialist, a role she held for 21 years and through which she helped establish the hospital’s foundational bereavement programs.

Dorothy’s leadership shaped meaningful initiatives such as Children’s Day, now in its 41st year of helping children understand health and hospital experiences through interactive play. She also played a key role in Camp Good Grief, which has provided thousands of children with a safe, supportive environment to process loss and find healing, including specialized programs for children affected by violence through the Special Victims track.

In 2005, Dorothy joined the School of Behavioral Health as adjunct faculty, teaching the “Grief and Loss” course in the Child Life Specialist MS program — work she describes as one of the greatest blessings of her career. Even after her retirement in January 2026, she will continue mentoring future child life professionals with the same compassion and wisdom that have defined her decades of service.

Known for her steady presence and gentle strength, Dorothy often shares her guiding philosophy: “One of the most important gifts we can offer a grieving person is that of fully listening. Our presence is more important than our words.”

Dorothy’s legacy lives on in the families she has supported, the students she has inspired, and the community she has strengthened. We are honored to recognize her as this year’s Hometown Hero Awardee.



Junior Hometown Hero Award

The **Junior Hometown Hero Award** recognizes the contributions of individuals under 18 years of age, who share our passion for children and help enrich the quality of life in our communities. The Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital Foundation is grateful to those individuals whose commitment means a brighter future for the children’s lives they have touched.

Previous Junior Recipients

Wyatt Caley

Brooke Jennings

Joseph Machado

Kimie Metcalf



2026 Recipient of the Junior Hometown Hero Award



Ulysses Hsu

Ulysses Hsu is an inspiring young philanthropist whose compassion, creativity, and dedication to service have made a meaningful impact on patients at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital. His journey began at the age of eight, when he donated his birthday money to help children in need — a simple act that later grew into the founding of the Children’s Hospital Birthday Club, encouraging people of all ages to support pediatric care. Through his leadership, Ulysses has personally raised more than \$11,000 and helped influence an additional \$55,000 in donations.

Guided by an entrepreneurial spirit and a love of learning, Ulysses continues to expand his mission in innovative ways. In his early years, he sold handmade candles at local farmers’ markets. More recently, he has channeled his passion for science into writing and illustrating children’s books, including a Spanish-language edition. During the pandemic, he published *Story of Science: All About Energy*, and *Story of Science: The Environment*, aiming to make science engaging and accessible for young readers. All proceeds from his four published titles benefit Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital.

Now a high school senior, Ulysses maintains a strong personal connection to the hospital, returning each year to meet with leadership, learn about current needs, and stay grounded in the purpose behind his work. He hopes to pursue a medical career, with interest in pediatrics or cardiology.

Thoughtful, driven, and service-minded, Ulysses embodies the spirit of a young changemaker. His compassion and determination continue to inspire others, and we are proud to honor him with the 2026 Junior Hometown Hero Award.

Patient Spotlight: Abraham Ochoa


Where Abraham Ochoa is, there is light.



Abraham Ochoa has a presence that fills a room. He smiles easily. He notices people. He asks how they are. "Abraham is sweet," his mom, Mara Ochoa, says. "Abraham is funny. Really, really funny." He has a way of disarming even the most rushed moments, especially in places like hospital hallways, where he greets doctors and nurses like old friends.

Abraham was born in 2005 with microtia, a condition in which the external ear is underdeveloped or absent. From the very beginning, his life required specialized care, and from the very beginning, his family learned that care is never just medical. It is personal. Early on, a nurse said something Mara would never forget: "Special kids need special parents." Over time, Mara realized the phrase worked both ways. Special kids also need special teams.

As Abraham grew, more of his story unfolded. He is autistic and has a speech delay, and his childhood was shaped by therapy, speech, physical, occupational, and behavioral therapy, layered into everyday life. At age 11, after years of careful observation and advocacy, Abraham was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, a genetic condition that causes progressive muscle weakness and affects multiple organ systems in the body.



Today, at 19, Abraham is followed closely by a multidisciplinary team at Loma Linda University Health. He is seen through the neuromuscular clinic multiple times a year, the craniofacial clinic annually, and by a coordinated network of specialists, including pulmonology, cardiology, neurology, and rehabilitation, who work together to support every part of his care. "They don't come alone," Mara says. "They come like a team."

That team has made a tangible difference. His neurologist, David Michelson, MD, has guided his care for years, helping the family navigate emerging treatments and new possibilities.

"Seeing Abraham is always a special occasion," said Michelson. "His mother understood the serious nature of his muscular dystrophy diagnosis away, and she came to every visit with a fierce determination to make sure his care plan was optimized; but no matter how serious the topic we were discussing, Abraham's cheerfulness would leave us all smiling and hopeful."

What stands out most about Abraham, though, is not his diagnosis: it is how fully he lives within the world around him. He loves music. He loves Harry Potter. He loves going to the movies and out to eat. He loves being with his family.

"As long as he's doing something social," Mara says, "especially with his family, he's happy."

Abraham's care is complex, but his joy is simple. In clinic rooms and waiting areas, he offers compliments. He remembers faces. He brings warmth into spaces that can otherwise feel heavy. "Abraham has a lot of light," Mara says. "He's always happy."

Their home in Rancho Cucamonga is built around that joy. And while the journey has been anything but easy, Mara says the greatest reward is simple: seeing her sons together, laughing, helping each other, living life side by side.

Fund A Miracle and Raise Your Paddle

Imagine the Possibilities in Our Garden of Dreams

Tonight, we invite you to embark on an extraordinary journey to support Loma Linda University Children's Hospital through the Stronger Together campaign. This visionary initiative is our commitment to transforming pediatric care for the 1.2 million children in the Inland Empire who deserve access to world-class healthcare.

Through Stronger Together, we are expanding access to specialty care, advancing pediatric cancer research and treatment, and ensuring that every child — regardless of circumstance — has the opportunity to thrive. This campaign includes the opening of our new five-story, 105,000-square-foot Children's Health Specialty Clinics Building, which will house cutting-edge technologies, multidisciplinary teams, and specialized programs designed to meet the unique needs of our youngest patients.

Your contributions tonight will propel this mission forward, funding critical advancements that will redefine care for children facing the toughest health challenges. Together, we can reduce disparities, extend hope, and provide healing where it is needed most.

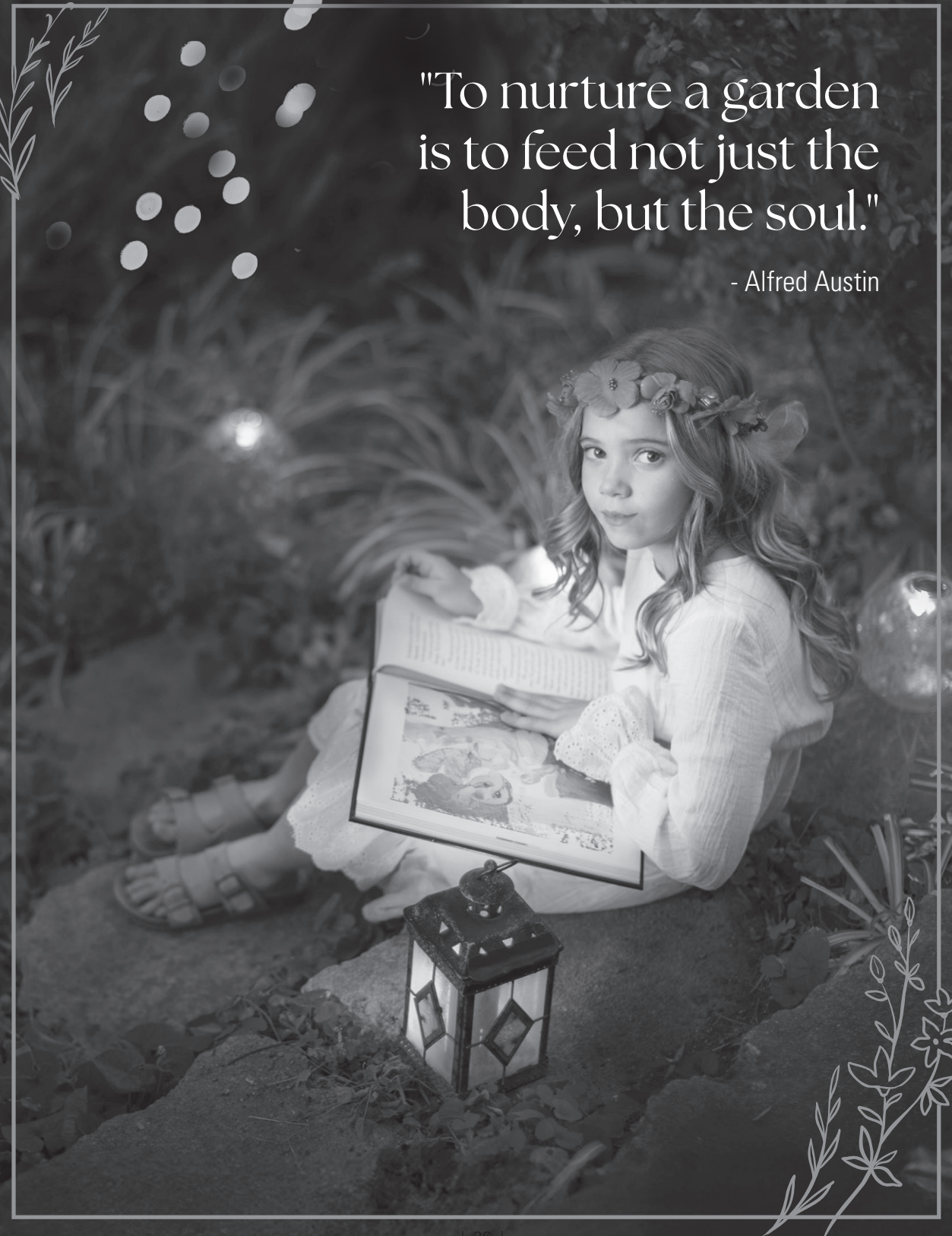
By raising your paddle, you are helping to chart a brighter future for countless children and their families. Let us soar together toward a healthier tomorrow.

Join Us and Imagine the Possibilities!



"To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."

- Alfred Austin

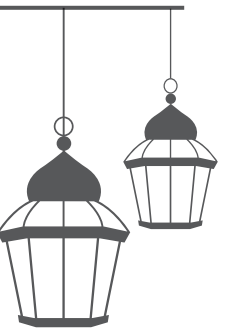




Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation

Thank you for partnering with us to care for the children and families of the Inland Empire. By participating in the 33rd Annual Foundation Gala, Garden of Dreams, you are helping to provide comprehensive healthcare for children.

Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation is a non-profit organization seeking the resources needed to provide pediatric healthcare services and programs through Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. We would like to extend a special thank you to the 2026 Foundation Board of Directors, our ambassadors of hope and healing, for ensuring healthcare for the children and families of our community.



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We're proud to support Loma Linda University Children's Hospital in their efforts to bring hope and healing to the children in our communities.

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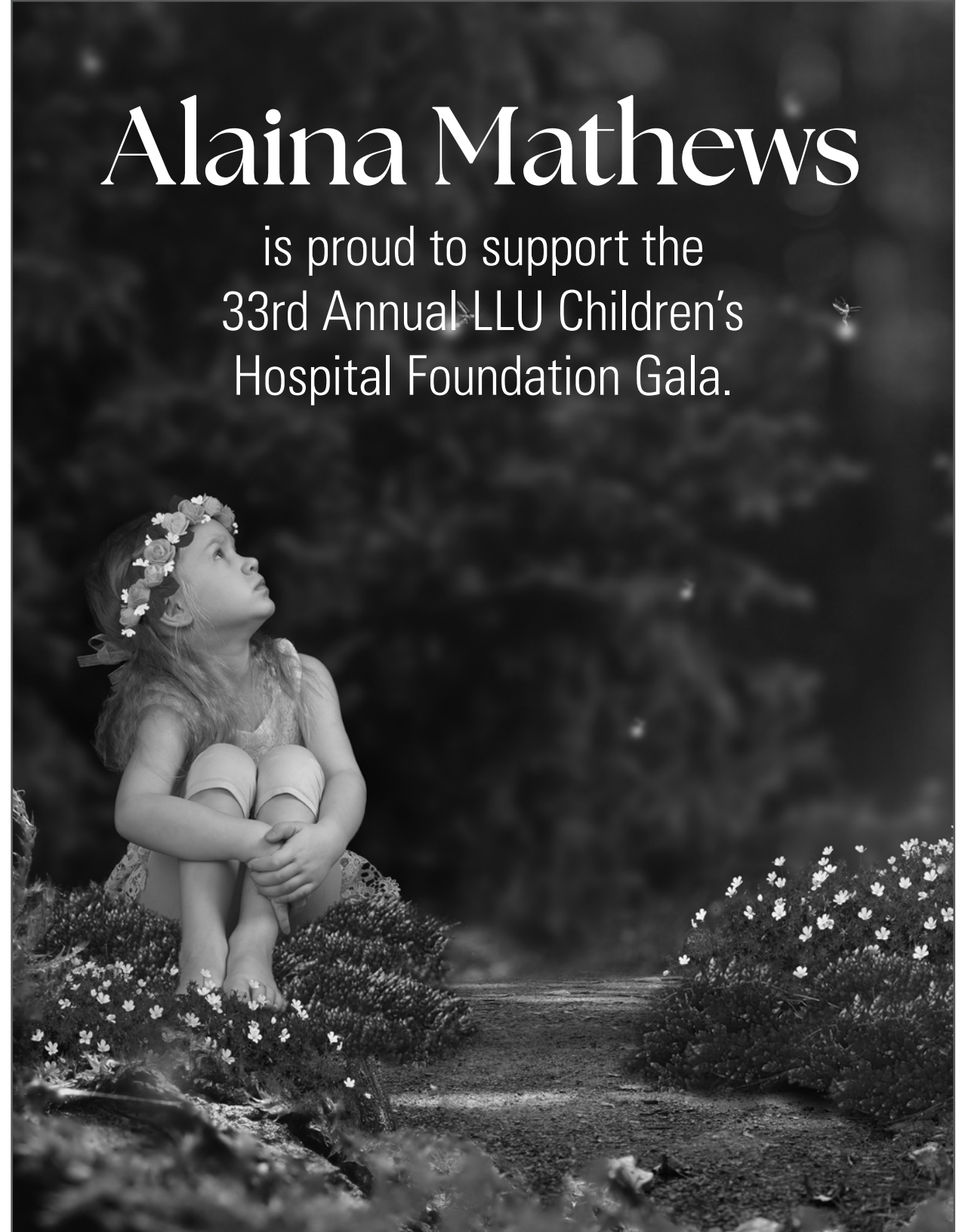


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Alaina Mathews

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We proudly commend the outstanding work of Loma Linda University Children's Hospital to impact and improve the lives of children around the world.

~ Glenn and Gigi Moss



The **Big Hearts for Little Hearts** Loma Linda Guild is committed to supporting the children at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital by developing programs and projects and purchasing equipment that address the critical needs of children and their families.

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Department of Pediatrics congratulates
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LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
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bigger - together for
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**Mark and
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With our deepest respect
and in honor of the
amazing physicians, nurses
and teams serving at
LLU Children's Hospital.



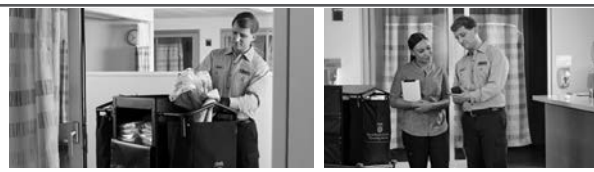
**The strength of our community
is its greatest asset.**

When people work together, anything is possible. It's why we support organizations that bring people within our community closer. They reinforce the bonds we share and help us celebrate the traditions we hold dear. It's just one part of our investment in our neighbors and the community.

Cain Brothers is proud to support the vision and mission of Loma Linda University Children's Hospital and the entire Loma Linda University Health Family.

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**BRIGHTER
TOMORROW**
TOGETHER!



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**Michael and
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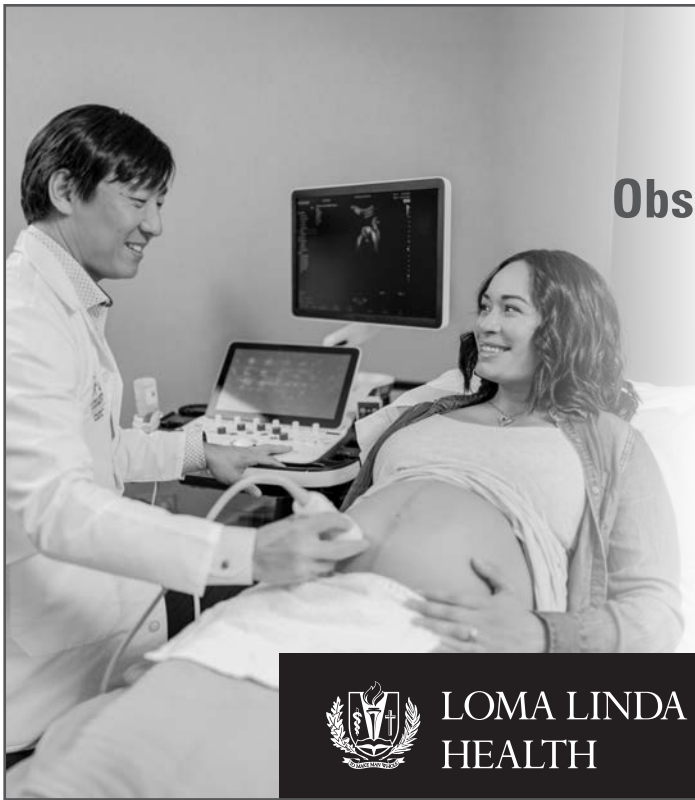
**Loma Linda University
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We are proud to support the
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and Foundation**

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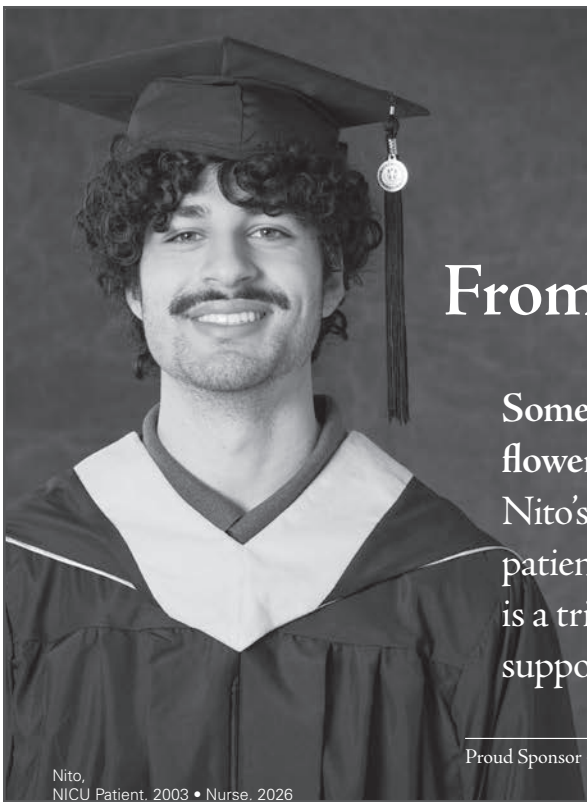



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From NICU to Nurse


Some gardens don't just grow flowers—they grow futures. Nito's journey from NICU patient (2003) to nurse (2026) is a tribute to the care you support tonight.





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Nito,
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Barbara Robinson
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ADAY | ARCHITECTS

Proud to support the 33rd annual
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"Garden of Dreams Gala"



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We're proud to work with Loma Linda University Children's Hospital Foundation.

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April 2, 2026

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Proud supporter of
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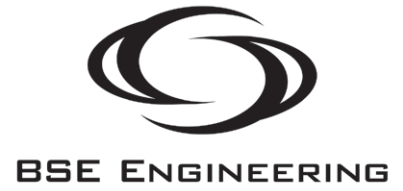
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Firefly



Dewdrop





A photographer has been commissioned by Loma Linda University Children's Hospital to take photographs at this event for use in Loma Linda University Children's Hospital publicity material.

The photographs may be used by Loma Linda University Children's Hospital in various promotional media including newsletters, leaflets, brochures, and posters as well as Loma Linda University Children's Hospital's website. Photographs may also be circulated to the media.

Photographs taken at this event might be kept on file for future use. Loma Linda University Children's Hospital will only use such photographs to promote future Loma Linda University Children's Hospital events or programs. If you feel anyone is taking inappropriate photographs, please report this to an organizer.



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"Deep in their roots,
all flowers keep the light."

- Theodore Roethke





LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

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