



# Kerry's Kids

Newsletter | Winter 2017–2018

[www.kerrykids.org](http://www.kerrykids.org)

## Waiting for Health Insurance This Year

By Christine Ma, MD, Medical Director

For the past nineteen years, Kerry's Kids has provided a safety net ensuring that children have access to health care when they need it especially in times of a housing crisis or when insurance coverage was unavailable, lapsed or disappeared. Kerry's Kids will continue to provide critical services to families in these challenging times.

I feel like I've been holding my breath all year, waiting on the outcome of the multiple attempts to overhaul our health care insurance industry. There's been attempts to repeal or change key parts of the Affordable Care Act, the end of funding without renewal yet for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and risks for decreased funding for Medicaid. Since the work that we do at Kerry's Kids is 100% with children who are homeless or living in poverty, the reality of all our patients is their health insurance is a giant black box. These are families who wonder if the next time their child needs it, will they or won't they have insurance. When the 4 year old has pneumonia, will she be able to see a doctor and get antibiotics. When the 7 year old has an asthma attack, will he be able to get his life-saving medicines and emergency treatment to be able to breathe better.

Research has shown what common sense already knows, that children who are homeless and living in poverty are more likely to lack health insurance, and if they have insurance but lose it, they are off insurance for longer periods of time. When a child shows up at a doctor's appointment and learns they have lost their insurance, the parents are always surprised and don't know what happened.

When the parents try to contact their Medicaid worker, it takes months to get it reinstated.

This is where Kerry's Kids plays a critical role. While children have no insurance, this also means they have nowhere to go for their health care needs without having to pay out of pocket for vaccines, medications, or ending up in emergency rooms, all of which can cost hundreds of dollars. Like the 5 year old we saw in August that needed to start Kindergarten but wasn't allowed to enroll unless he had his vaccines, and a check-up with a doctor. Like the 6 year old who was feeling tired, and we found she had anemia and got her started on treatment. As an aside, children living in poverty have a higher rate of anemia, likely due to inadequate access to a healthy diet. For every child we see in our clinics, we are providing a medication, a needed vaccine, a check-up, a preventive treatment against dental cavities, an opportunity to answer all a parent's questions about their child's health, and much more.

We will continue to watch what unfolds in the following months to come as the politicians decide the fate of the healthcare industry, and we will stay here as a safety net for those individual children whose future health and well-being hang in the balance.



### Did You Know...

Kerry's Kids has grown over the past 15 years in terms of total volunteers, number of locations served, patient counts, and variety of services provided. Over the past 4 years Kerry's Kids provided 315 vaccinations, 1780 patient visits, and 456 lab tests. Lab tests include TB tests, anemia screens, lead screens, and hearing/vision testing. Dental services have been added to the original focus on medical services. Hundreds of schools backpacks and supplies, and thousands of hygiene and educational kits have been provided at local clinics, asthma camps, and health fairs.



As our medical director,  
Christine Ma, describes  
in her message we  
are in a time of great  
uncertainty with regards  
to healthcare coverage  
and access to care for  
children. I find that again,  
I feel grateful that Kerry's  
Kids services continue  
to be available.

## Letter from President of the Board

Diane Halberg, MD

I believe in gratitude. I mean that I try to take the time to think about all the things in my life that I am so fortunate to have. I try to remember to do this at all times of year, not just in the holiday season.

I often think about how unexpected it would have been to me if 19 years ago someone had told me that our small non-profit to help vulnerable children would still be going strong.

I am grateful that I get to be one of our physician volunteers and am, therefore, lucky enough to receive the gratitude back when I am seeing a child that has an ear infection or who has a rash that is worrying the parents and I am able to provide the needed treatment or reassurance.

As we move towards the coming year, we continue as always to assess where and how our services are the most needed. Our dental programs remain highly popular and necessary for the families we care for and we continue to adjust the locations of our medical clinics to target areas where children are left without adequate access to basic pediatric care.

I am grateful for Kerry's Kids; grateful for our committed staff, volunteers and our donors. Thank you for allowing us to continue our work and to be able to help children whose families who are already struggling with so much.

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## OTHER HAPPENINGS

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This October, while most children were planning out their Halloween costumes, the 5th graders from Black Pine Circle wanted to share the fun of this season with other children in their community. So they collected a wide variety of small toys, books and toiletries and put together about 100 gift bags

to donate to the children at the shelters where Kerry's Kids operate clinics. We were able to bring them to our clinics and distribute to all the children staying in each of them. The children were all very excited with this kick-off to the holiday season. Thank you very much to the Black Pine Circle 5th grade students.



## GuideStar Gold Seal Press Release

Kerry's Kids was recently recognized for our transparency with a Gold Seal on our GuideStar Nonprofit Profile! GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. More than 8 million visitors per year and a network of 200+ partners use GuideStar data to grow support for nonprofits.

In order to get the Gold Seal, Kerry's Kids shared important information with the public using our profile on [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org). Now our community members and potential donors can find in-depth information about our goals, strategies, capabilities, and progress.

Check out our GuideStar Nonprofit Profile and tell us what you think: <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/02-0569175> (or simply search "Kerry's Kids" at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)).

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## A 5 Year Partnership with Head Start

During this time, our Berkeley office has had the pleasure of hosting both medical and dental clinics on site to serve both children enrolled in our Head Start/ Early Head Start programs, as well as the children in our community. This clinic is open to the public and sees children from birth to age eighteen. Kerry's Kids has become a staple program for our agency as we partner together to address the needs of families without a source of medical insurance or a stable medical home. One YMCA staff noted, "I love how the Kerry's Kids staff are caring

and thorough in their work, and they always treat everyone in a friendly and courteous manner!" In addition, as the Health Coordinator for our program, I can also add that Kerry's Kids never turns an uninsured child away, and always does their best to see every child who needs access to their services. They absolutely go above and beyond in their service to children and families. We are very grateful for this community partnership and feel that Kerry's Kids makes a direct impact in providing direct service to families in need every month.

—Shannon Edwards



## Make your Amazon purchases generate donations for Kerry's Kids

If you shop on Amazon, we encourage you to sign up for Amazon Smile at <http://smile.amazon.com/about> and designate Kerry's Kids as the recipient of the donations from any purchases you make. Amazon donates 0.5% of the cost of items purchased through Amazon Smile to the nonprofit organization of your choice.

When you go online to purchase items be sure to use the Amazon Smile link at <http://smile.amazon.com> instead of using the regular Amazon website.

With the holidays coming, online shopping will spike, so this is a great time to sign up and help generate donations for Kerry's Kids to support the work that we do. It's easy and at no cost to you. So please consider this for yourself and encourage your friends and family to do so too.

## A Thank You From the Spooner Family

Someone once said "Whatever we possess becomes of double value when we share it with others". When we see the difference that the support of the staff and volunteers and your financial gifts have made, we know that to be true.

Our hearts are full because of your gifts to Kerry and her dream of Kerry's Kids. Thank you for remembering her and for the impact you have on the lives of the children she serves.

We wish you peace and blessings in the coming year.

~ Kerry's family ~

Herb and Mary Spooner, Erin,  
Rick, Ellie and Lane Mayes

## Kerry's Kids Board of Directors

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## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**"Kerry's Kids** provides free health care and education to underserved children in **their neighborhoods** and seeks to facilitate that **each child** ultimately receives care in a permanent **medical home."**

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### **Kerry's Kids relies on donations from corporations and individuals**

Thank you to the many volunteers who generously donated their time, and a special thank you to everyone who gives to Kerry's Kids.

Please consider a contribution using the enclosed envelope or online through [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org). More information about online giving can be found at [www.kerrysids.org](http://www.kerrysids.org).

We also accept in-kind gifts of new or like-new items for the children and families that we serve. We are a 501(c) 3 organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible.