



Press Release

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**Health Care District's Board of Directors Approves
\$100,000 Grant for Local Children's Palliative Care**
Grant Ensures Unique Children's Organization Continues Operations

Fremont, Calif. -- The Washington Township Health Care District Board of Directors announced at its July 8, meeting the approval of a \$100,000 grant to George Mark Children's House, a pediatric palliative care facility.

"Services like those provided by the George Mark Children's House are unique," said William Nicholson, MD, president of the Washington Township Health Care District Board of Directors. "We are making this grant to ensure that children and their families in our District can continue to benefit from this valuable and much needed community resource well into the future."

The much-needed funding will support George Mark's mission to provide children with limited lifespans and their families with medical and emotional care regardless of their financial situation.

"We are grateful for the support of Washington Hospital and hope this grant becomes a model that encourages other hospitals to support our mission," said Julie Brewer, George Mark Children's House executive director. "To have an organization like Washington Hospital actively support us will benefit our children and our families directly."

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As the only freestanding pediatric palliative-care facility of its kind in the United States, George Mark Children's House's mission is to relieve the suffering associated with chronic, lifespan limiting and end-of-life illnesses by focusing on preserving the dignity and integrity of the child, providing expert pain and symptom management and achieving the best possible quality of life as defined by the child and family.

With medical and psychosocial services on-site, highly qualified and trained pediatric program staff members provide pain and symptom management; play, music, and arts therapies; and intensive practical and emotional support for the child and his or her entire family. Grief and bereavement counseling are provided for siblings and parents and are not time limited.

Executives from Washington Hospital, including CEO Nancy Farber, who had viewed a report about the House on a local news broadcast, toured George Mark Children's House with former California State Senator Liz Figueroa, who sits on the Advisory Council for the facility. They were able to see first hand the important mission that the George Mark Children's House was servicing for the children and families dealing with such difficult circumstances as a child's end-of-life illness. As a result, the Hospital invited representatives from George Mark Children's House to provide a briefing at an open board meeting.

The grant money approved by the Board not only provides needed funding but also offers needed inspiration and anticipation for a bright future for George Mark Children's House and the families it serves, according to Brewer.

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“We are so grateful for the support Washington Hospital has shown, and we have been very inspired by the community-based model that Washington Hospital represents,” Brewer remarked.

George Mark is confident it will continue to raise more funds by the end of 2009 to meet operating costs. Washington Hospital's grant has been crucial in helping the organization, Brewer said, indicating she hopes that others in the local and health care communities will follow Washington Hospital's lead.

A majority – 86 percent – of the operating costs of George Mark Children's House is funded by donations, which makes community support more important than ever, according to Brewer.

To learn more about the services provided through George Mark Children's House, visit www.georgemark.org.

Washington Hospital Healthcare System includes a 359-bed acute-care hospital; the Taylor McAdam Bell Neuroscience Institute; The Gamma Knife® Center; Washington Radiation Oncology Center; Washington Outpatient Surgery Center; Washington Outpatient Rehabilitation Center; Washington Outpatient Catheterization Laboratory; Washington Center for Joint Replacement; the Institute for Minimally Invasive and Robotic Surgery; and Washington West, a complex which houses Washington Women's Center, Outpatient Imaging Center and additional outpatient hospital services and administrative facilities.

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(For more information, please contact Christopher Brown, director of Community Relations, Washington Hospital Healthcare System, (510) 791-3417.)