



Dear Friends,

In my role at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC as a physician in the Paul C. Gaffney Diagnostic Referral Service, I work every day to help patients and their families and support primary care physicians identify the various specialized needs of children. My group is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of children, not just through medical intervention but also through emotional support, community outreach and much more.

Similarly, the Miracle League of Southwestern Pennsylvania is dedicated to providing an avenue for children and teens with special needs to realize their fullest potential. Whether that is through socialization, play, sports, or education, they too, are concerned with the well-being of a very special group of children.

That is one of the reasons why I wanted to support their efforts to bring a Miracle League to the children of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

For children with physical disabilities, the challenge of developing friendships can be significant, especially if there is limited access to a range of social activities. Research* has shown that special needs children are at risk for social isolation as a result of the stigma that society often attaches to a disability and the lack of understanding about disabilities. And, research* has shown that children who do well in a social environment in their elementary school years will have better social skills later in life.

Simply put: Social isolation can contribute to a lower quality of life for children with disabilities. Social integration can significantly improve a child's quality of life.

As one of the few organized activity options available for kids with disabilities, the Miracle League is open to kids with any mental or physical disability and no one is ever turned away. Through positive programs like the Miracle League, the community can help promote the well-being of children and young people with special needs.

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