



The Children's Dream Foundation

Dedicated to improving children's health care in the Hudson Valley

Spring 2006

Helping a Busy Health Center

A recipient of two Children's Dream Foundation grants, The Greenburgh Health Center sees 10,000 children a year with over 17,000 medical visits and 1,900 dental visits. The Health Center provides comprehensive primary health care to needy families in Greenburgh and the eight surrounding villages and towns. Patients include the underinsured and uninsured.

The first Children's Dream Foundation grant was for pediatric medical equipment. CDF provided equipment for screening children for hearing and vision so that prompt intervention can be provided when needed. Also contributed were three computers to be used to help Greenburgh participate in a data base program which maintains a lifetime record of all immunizations a child receives.

to New York City. Immediately following Hurricane Katrina, at the request of the National Disaster Medical System, he served as Medical Director at a temporary emergency medical center that was established at the New Orleans International Airport. Following this assignment he was called to Florida where he was appointed Statewide Medical Coordinator for Florida's emergency after Hurricane Wilma. Early this Spring found Dr. Larsen in Pakistan assisting in the response to the recent earthquake.

Currently Dr. Larsen serves as Associate Medical Director for Emergency Medicine at White Plains Hospital Center. Nationally recognized as an expert in aero-medical services, he frequently lectures on wilderness medicine.

The Children's Dream Foundation is proud to honor an individual who has brought his medical skills to so many families in dire need both locally and internationally.

Our Latest Grants

The Children's Dream Foundation was founded in 1992 with a mission of improving pediatric care in the region. We provide grants to a wide variety of health care organizations with special attention to improving children's emergency care.

Recent Grants:

- **Blythedale Children's Hospital**
Purchase of the second phase of a ventilator management system which enables patients on respirators to be continuously monitored
- **Children's Rehabilitation Center**
Purchase of blood pressure monitoring equipment
- **Greenburgh Health Center**

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save the date

The Children's Dream Foundation's annual benefit will be held on Friday, June 2nd at The Shenorock Shore Club, Rye, New York at 7 PM. This year we will honor Dr. Erik Larsen, Chief Medical Officer, Westchester's Disaster Medical Assistance Team. The early summer evening will include a barbecue buffet and auction on the water-side veranda. Tickets for the evening are \$200 per person. Ads can be placed in the evening's journal. Please join us as we raise money to provide better pediatric services for our children. Call 763-0409 for tickets and information.

Nebulizers for treating asthmatic patients were provided. According to the Center, asthma is the most common chronic medical condition of the Greenburgh population and nationwide is the leading cause of hospitalization and school absenteeism in children.

Shortly after the Westchester County Department of Health closed dental clinics county wide, CDF made a second grant to Greenburgh for the purchase of pediatric dental equipment. As in many parts of our area, there is a major shortage of quality, affordable dental care in Greenburgh.

When Disaster Strikes

Dr. Erik Larsen is an outstanding humanitarian who selflessly volunteers his medical expertise whenever emergencies strike. Responding to the 9/11 cri-

- **Open Door Family Medical Center**
Construction of pediatric area in new Port Chester facility
- **St. Francis Hospital (Poughkeepsie, NY)**
Towards construction of a pediatric area in new ER

Video Games by David Rauch, MD

Director, Pediatric Hospitalist Program, NYU School of Medicine

Video games have become an omnipresent part of our children's lives and our culture. This has happened over the last generation as games became more sophisticated and portable. Today, it is hard to go almost anywhere without seeing some evidence of their influence. If it is not the games themselves, it is their associated merchandise, spin-off movies, and influence on pop-culture.

Video games have been accused of many detrimental effects on children that fall into two basic categories. The first is the influence of game content, specifically violence and misogyny. The second is the contribution to the sedentary lifestyle of our youth that is a contributing factor to the obesity epidemic.

Video game violence comes in many forms. There is the sensationalistic, fantasy violence, the realistic, war/crime type violence, and the first-person shooter type violence amongst the choices creating desensitization that results in increasing aggression and hostility. The two teens responsible for the Columbine shootings had spent considerable time with Doom, a first-person shooter fantasy violence game. Moreover, studies have shown that, because in the games women are often portrayed as victims or sexual objects, their use can negatively influence a boy's attitudes towards women.

Many parents are unaware of the content of the games their children are using. The same diligence that should be applied to what their children are viewing is due to what they are playing. It needs to be recognized of course that studies of this issue are methodologically difficult

because of the difficulty in isolating the effects of the video games from the other influences of our culture.

The obesity epidemic, however, is getting increasing attention. Hospital admissions for type 2 diabetes in children doubled from 1997 to 2000 and then doubled again by 2003. Amongst children a leading culprit of obesity is a sedentary lifestyle. Contributing to the lack of physical activity by our children is television and video game time. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting television and gaming time to less than one hour per day. However, some studies have shown average television and gaming time to be more than twice that, and that data probably underestimates the real amount. A positive correlation between video gaming time and weight has been demonstrated.

This is not to say that video games are unequivocally bad. In fact there are many potential benefits to video game play when content is appropriate and the amount of play is limited. We live in an increasingly digital world. Video simulations are used as training exercises in many fields, including medicine. Introduction to the use and enjoyment of technology at an early age may give children an advantage in utilizing new technologies in their life. One study has demonstrated improved attainment of preschool concepts and cognition when preschoolers were exposed to computers.

Video games can also provide stimulating and educational content. They can provide safe environments to face new concepts or experiences. Games have been utilized to educate children about diseases and help children with Attention Deficit Disorder. Skills can be practiced. Moreover, the games are interactive and stimulating. Although physically undemanding, gaming can require increasing levels of mental dexterity and hone hand-eye coordination.

In summary, video games present the same challenge to parenting today that television has for years. In moderation, there appears to be no harm from their use and some potential benefits. Extensive use and

