

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs
FRIENDS OF CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL PLEDGES \$2 MILLION
TO NEW CHILDREN'S HEART CENTER

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JACKSON, Miss. – Friends of Children's Hospital, a group of volunteers dedicated to Batson Children's Hospital at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, pledged \$2 million Saturday night toward the creation of a new Children's Heart Center at UMMC.

The pledge was announced during a gala Friends event held at the Mississippi Museum of Art, "An Enchanted Evening, Presented by BankPlus."

"Friends of Children's Hospital is proud to support the efforts of Batson Children's Hospital in providing a state-of-the-art heart center for our state's children," said Sara Ray, chairman of the Friends board. "I hope support for Friends will soar as we raise funds for this important new facility."

The cardiovascular programs at the Children's Hospital have experienced dramatic growth over the last two years with the recruitment of several highly skilled congenital heart surgeons and other pediatric specialists. Prior to their recruitment, most Mississippi children with congenital heart defects had to leave the state for medical care. Performing more than 400 operations per year, the children's heart team has rapidly outgrown existing facilities.

"The University of Mississippi Medical Center is pleased to continue our partnership with Friends of Children's Hospital as we work together to raise funds for the new Children's Heart Center," said Dr. James E. Keeton, UMMC vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine. "The Medical Center thanks Friends not only for this spectacular fundraising event but also for their ongoing commitment to the children of Mississippi."

Funds pledged by the Friends for the Children's Heart Center will be raised over five years through annual Enchanted Evening events, with BankPlus as the lead sponsor. Previously the group raised nearly \$3 million for the Eli Manning Children's Clinics at Batson Children's Hospital through a similar signature event, "An Evening with the Mannings".

"I'm delighted BankPlus can play such an integral part in raising funds for the new Children's Heart Center," said BankPlus president and CEO Bill Ray. "This event will enable Friends to help fund a premier health-care facility that will benefit all of Mississippi's children."

Cutline: The Friends of Children's Hospital announced fund-raising efforts to build a pediatric heart center at its annual Enchanted Evening event. Standing in front of a model of the center are, from left, Dr. Rick Barr, chairman of the UMMC Department of Pediatrics, Sara Ray, chairman of the Friends board, and Dr. James Keeton, UMMC vice chancellor for health affairs.

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Please forward this message to colleagues who might be interested. If you wish to be removed from this list or know of a colleague to add, send an e-mail message to: LAGriffin@umc.edu.

Friends of Children's Hospital is a nonprofit organization created to benefit Batson Children's Hospital at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. It was created by a group of dedicated members from around the state whose purpose is to support and promote the Batson Children's Hospital, Mississippi's only hospital designed and equipped specifically for the care and treatment of sick and injured children.

The Batson Hospital prioritizes children's care and places emphasis on the special needs of hospitalized children. The goal of Friends is to build a statewide base of community support in order to raise money for state-of-the-art equipment, facilities and services for all pediatric patients. Through volunteer efforts and contributions, members of Friends help the Batson Children's Hospital in its fight against childhood disease and injury.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. University of Mississippi Health Care represents the clinical programs of the Medical Center and includes University Hospitals and Health System and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's citizens. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at <http://publicaffairs.umc.edu/>
