

January 2007

Children's Hospital Celebrates 100 Years

by Linda Thomas

The Seattle institution that became one of the nation's foremost children's hospitals began a century ago with a mother's determination, born of grief.

Anna Clise and her husband James arrived in Seattle a day after the Great Fire of 1889 destroyed 29 square blocks of the city. They were undaunted and soon bought land and started a prosperous real-estate business.

For all their wealth and connections, both were helpless when their 5-year-old son Willis became seriously ill with inflammatory rheumatism – an acute swelling of his body's joints. At the time, there were only six pediatricians in the whole country. The closest children's hospital was in San Francisco. The Clise's best hope would have been to see specialists at the more established Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 2,800 miles away.

Willis died from an infection March 19, 1898.

Anna Clise mourned her son's death for several years. Then she went to work. She founded Seattle's first hospital dedicated to treating children – a facility now known as Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center.

"There are very few pictures of Anna, but in the images that do exist she looks very solid, very business-like and very smart," says Walt Crowley, a local historian and president of HistoryLink.org. "She had to be all of those things to pull off this truly incredible feat in 1907."

Although the first settlers arrived in Seattle in 1851, Crowley says it became a "true city" 100 years ago. In 1907, it doubled its land area by annexing Ballard, West Seattle and some smaller communities. The population went from about 80,000 to more than 240,000. That year residents shopped in the first public market at Pike Place. United Parcel Service launched its business. St. James Cathedral opened. The Moore Theater produced its first show.

An Idea Is Born

1907 was also the year Anna Clise gathered almost two dozen of her high-society friends and asked each of them to donate \$20 for an association to provide medical care for children.

"Advanced medical specialization was only starting to develop at the turn of the century," Crowley explains. "Think back to Victorian and Edwardian times. Their attitude about children was that they were small adults. They didn't perceive them as having very distinct medical needs."

Clise understood children had their own medical issues. She also believed they should receive care even if their parents couldn't pay for medical attention. One hundred years ago, most Seattle residents couldn't afford a doctor's visit. A typical hospital bill was \$10 a week. That was about \$3 more than the average worker's weekly wage.

After she collected donations from wealthy Seattle women, Clise formed the Children's Orthopedic Hospital Association. Months later, they rented seven beds in Seattle General Hospital (which later merged with Swedish Medical Center) where 11 physicians treated young patients for free.

"It might have been around that time that Clise realized her son's death wasn't just an act of God," says Crowley. "She became more and more determined to have something positive come from the tragic death of her son."

She investigated opening an autonomous children's hospital, and discovered that the cost of fully functional hospital was about \$50,000 (equivalent to \$1 million today). Clise's grand dream of a hospital had to be scaled back because the nation went into a deep recession in the early 1900s. The association drew up plans for a small cottage where children would go to recover from surgeries at local hospitals.

The Children's Hospital Association purchased land on Queen Anne Hill at Warren Avenue N. and Crockett Street. Queen Anne was chosen because they believed fresh air was a key to recovery and health. The location was considered a "safe distance" from Seattle's smoky and unsanitary downtown.

"Fresh Air Cottage," as it was called, opened in 1908, despite complaints from neighbors who worried about having such a facility in their backyards. Crowley says many thought the presence of "deformed children would depress their property values."

The facility attracted skilled doctors who performed surgeries, while the Children's Hospital Association paid all the bills. They treated 39 children in the first year.

A three-story building was added to the cottage in 1911 and the hospital moved to a larger building on Queen Anne in 1916. As Seattle grew, demand for medical services for children increased also. The Association spent three decades raising money for a new, larger hospital.

In 1946, hospital trustees purchased 22 acres of land along Sand Point Way in Seattle's Laurelhurst neighborhood, and construction started on the current home of Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. By April 11, 1953, the new hospital was ready to open. Relocating children and equipment from the facility on Queen Anne to the hospital eight miles away became a city event. The Far West Cab Company transported children and staff for free. And at no charge, the Teamsters Union moved equipment to the new facility.

Clise's dream had finally been realized, although she was not around to see it. She died in 1936.

Golden Guilds

In her drive to create a children's hospital where every patient's care would be guaranteed, even if their family had no money, Clise gave rise to another lasting organization.

The Children's Orthopedic Hospital Association has become the longest-running volunteer fundraising organization for any hospital in the nation. It is also the largest, with 7,500 members and more than 500 guilds today.

Two of Clise's trustees and friends, Olive Roberts and Bessie Wilson, established 10

"neighborhood fundraising societies" or guilds. Participants paid \$5 per year as nonvoting members of the Children's Association. Many women didn't have cash to give to the guilds. Instead they sewed bandages, donated books or cleaned and cooked meals for patients.

"Since her time, there have been maybe a thousand women like Anna Clise and her friends," says Crowley, who is writing a book about the hospital to be published later this year. "Children's has an incredible legion of dedicated, smart, tough, hard-working, compassionate women."

Janet Sinegal is one of them. She was the first person to serve on all three Children's Hospital boards at the same time – the Board of Trustees, the Guild Association Board, and the Foundation Board.

She started the Friends of Costco Guild after her husband, Costco co-founder and CEO Jim Sinegal, wanted his company to "give back" to the community. "At some point in time, everyone's life is touched by Children's – if not personally, then through a friend or co-worker," says Jim Sinegal.

Costco has 483 warehouses and stores, and as part of its planned giving, it contributes to 25 children's hospitals in North America. It has raised more than \$30 million for Children's Hospital in Seattle. In addition, the Sinegals personally donated \$20 million in 2004 to open the 100,000-square-foot Janet Sinegal Patient Care Building, increasing the hospital's capacity to 250 beds.

"Our support of Children's comes from feeling very grateful," Janet Sinegal explains. "We've been very fortunate because of Costco and because we have three healthy children and eight healthy grandchildren."

The Friends of Costco Guild's first event was a small luncheon in 1988 that made about \$2,000. In 2006, the Guild's annual golf tournament brought in \$5.5 million – a new record for a single fundraising event for Children's.

As significant as that amount is, it is a fraction of Children's uncompensated care costs. Last year the hospital provided about \$36 million in financial assistance to more than 57,000 families in the region – which includes all of Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. Last year, it recorded 11,600 admissions, 29,497 emergency room visits and 165,000 outpatient visits.

The Next 10 Years

Children's Hospital is now trying to raise \$300 million – the largest capital campaign in its history. The hospital started soliciting support for the "Campaign for Children's" in 2001 and has already collected \$200 million.

The hospital has also spent a lot of money recently.

In October 2006, Children's purchased two downtown Seattle buildings for \$145 million. The deal is a part of the hospital's ambitious plan to become a major player in biomedical research. It will give Children's the space it needs to create and expand research labs.

Currently the hospital has about 200 researchers, and expects to have as many as 1,500 over the coming decade. Some of the topics researchers will study include: the basic

mechanics of the immune system to enhance vaccines; the role of genetics in development; and childhood cancers.

"We want to be involved in research first and foremost because we want to save lives," says Dr. Thomas Hansen, president and CEO of Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. "We know the brightest doctors in the world want to work in the best research institutions. They want to be on the cutting edge of medicine, and so do we."

Hansen says Children's has an excellent reputation for patient care – the hospital consistently shows up on *U.S. News & World Report* and *Child* magazine's rankings for best children's hospitals – but he wants it to be known as a research facility too. At the moment it's ranked 11th and Hansen says he wants to be in the top five among children's research hospitals in the next decade.

The spirit of Children's Hospital today is very similar to the small Fresh Air Cottage that opened 100 years ago on Queen Anne. It was on the leading edge of something new called "pediatric medicine" when it began.

"Again it's on the cusp of an entirely new form of medicine; call it genomic medicine or biomedicine," Crowley, the historian, observes. "Who knows what they'll discover 10 years from now, let alone 100 years from now."

Linda Thomas is a Seattle-based freelance journalist, and is grateful she hasn't had to take her son or daughter to Children's Hospital.

Ten Defining Moments in Children's History

1. Seattle resident Anna Clise learned first hand about the city's lack of medical facilities for children when her 5-year-old son died of inflammatory rheumatism in 1898. Clise, along with several affluent friends, formed an association January 4, 1907 to provide surgical care for any child regardless of the family's ability to pay. Each member of the Children's Orthopedic Hospital Association donated \$20 to the cause. (Orthopedics relates to disorders of the bones, joints, ligaments or muscles.)
2. The Hospital Association bought land in the summer of 1908 on Queen Anne Hill and constructed a home for children who were recovering from surgeries performed at local hospitals. Total price for the 12-bed Fresh Air Cottage was \$7,800.
3. Clise's association built a three-story brick building next to the Cottage, at a cost of \$76,000. The facility opened in 1911 for nonorthopedic surgeries, such as tonsillectomies and appendectomies.
4. Association trustees purchased 22 acres on Sand Point Way in Seattle for construction of a new hospital. The new building – the current home of Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center – cost \$4.6 million and opened in 1953.
5. Dr. Dean Crystal performed Children's first heart surgery in October 1953. Later Dr. Crystal, along with Dr. Robert Tidwell, carried out the hospital's first open-heart surgery on a child.
6. Dr. Abe Bergman and a team of physicians at Children's were the first to identify Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in 1965. SIDS is the unexplained death of a child

under the age of 1. Dr. Bergman was also a catalyst for the 1967 Flammable Fabric Act Amendment that mandates flame-resistant sleepwear for children's pajamas.

7. In 1978, Children's renovated the existing hospital building and added a new wing at a cost of \$33 million. The new facility includes an intensive care unit, pharmacy, swimming pool and psychiatric ward. The latest expansion in 2004 raised the hospital's total capacity to 250 patient beds.

8. Doctors at Children's were responsible for several advances in medical research. In 1979, Dr. Robert Hickman invented and patented a device that's become known as the Hickman Catheter. The simple intravenous catheter is used frequently to administer medicine, chemotherapy or transfusions.

9. Children's physicians are involved with a number of medical "firsts" in the region including: the first liver transplant involving a child (1990); the first heart transplant, performed on a 12-year-old Everett boy (1994); and the successful separation of 7-month-old conjoined twin girls (2000).

10. Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center (renamed in 1997) added more than 400,000 square feet of research space with the purchase of two downtown Seattle buildings for \$145 million. The hospital board's long-term goal is to create a one-million-square-foot research campus and become a leader in biomedical research.

– Linda Thomas

Two Mothers' Stories

Any parent would gladly trade places with a sick child in the hospital.

In the past 100 years, thousands upon thousands of mothers and fathers have given their children a kiss and turned them over to specialists at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, hoping for the best.

Every parent, patient and physician who's been through Children's has a story. Here are those of two Seattle mothers.

Not My Child

"It's no big deal." That's what Alison Manley thought when her pediatrician recommended she take her 9-month-old daughter Madeline to Children's Hospital to have a heart murmur checked.

"I have a heart murmur; so does my mother and grandmother. We're all fine," Manley says. "I scheduled an appointment before Thanksgiving of 2005 and didn't think much more about it." She and her husband Ryan made plans for the holidays even as their daughter was scheduled to undergo an echo cardiogram (an ultrasound of the heart).

They also didn't worry about their daughter because she was a very active little girl who always looked "robust."

Three words changed the family's relaxed attitude about Madeline's condition. "It's not good," Dr. Troy Johnston told them after looking at her ultrasound.

Madeline had a leaky heart valve and an atrial and ventricular septal defect. As bad as that sounds, the common translation seems even worse – holes in the heart. She needed open heart surgery. Manley remembers "losing it" at that point and crying in the doctor's office. The following week was filled with tears for the Manleys and tests for Madeline.

The Manleys remained optimistic that their little girl was going to make it through the surgery, even though doctors would have to stop her heart.

"I kept thinking, 'what if it doesn't start again?' but I was confident the doctors knew what they were doing," she says.

On the day she turned 11 months old, doctors operated on Madeline's heart. They found one hole and patched it. They also repaired the leaky heart valve, but the stitches didn't hold. Before Madeline turns 4, she'll need open-heart surgery again so that doctors can try to fix the heart valve.

Today Manley describes her daughter as "ridiculously resilient." She's a "happy, giggly" 2-year-old who's into everything.

"The surgery wasn't entirely successful, and there's more to come," says Manley. "But we are so lucky to have Children's watch over our little girl."

Almost "with the Angels"

Hana's cry was so weak that her mother thought she sounded more like a kitten than a baby girl.

She seemed like a healthy 6-pound, 6-ounce infant when she was born Nov. 12, 2004. But soon after Keiko and Carlos Rodriguez took their newborn home, they got a feeling that "something was not right."

"Even in the hospital, she wasn't eating well, but the nurse convinced me, 'she's just tired,'" Keiko Rodriguez recalls. "At home all she did was sleep. She wouldn't eat, she barely cried, and she was lifeless."

Concerned calls to nurses didn't comfort Rodriguez, who had an older child and knew how babies are supposed to behave. Nurses repeatedly told her not to compare her children. They said she should "enjoy" the quiet when her baby sleeps because that's a rare treat for new parents.

The nurses' advice didn't silence the voice in the back of Rodriguez's mind that her daughter needed help. She took Hana to the emergency room of Children's Hospital two days after she was born.

Doctors and nurses rushed around the ER like they were dancing in a frantic, but

well-choreographed ballet. Soon Hana was hooked up to intravenous and breathing tubes. Specialists suspected she had twisted intestines or perhaps a hole in her stomach. They prepared the small baby for dialysis because her kidneys were shutting down.

Rodriquez says the five months that followed were "a nightmare that kept getting worse and worse."

"Her breathing failed, her bowel was inflamed and infected, she needed constant transfusions, and her only nutrition came from the IV fluids," she says. "Still, nobody knew what was wrong with her."

After Hana's third major abdominal surgery, a doctor said something to Rodriquez that became a turning point for the family. "He told us not to give up hope," she says. "We almost had. If not for Children's, we would have had to say 'goodbye' to Hana and she might be with the angels. The hope was small, but still we didn't give up."

Finally, in January 2005, Hana had her first meal – a half teaspoon of Pedialite. Slowly she progressed and was able to digest food.

The family almost missed the hospital staff when they took Hana home three months later. "We never felt alone," says Rodriquez. "They took care of us like we were family."

Hana is now an active little girl who doesn't need any further surgery. With a relieved sigh, her mom describes Hana's health as "excellent."

– Linda Thomas