

Caring for Kids

HASBRO CHILDREN'S • 2025

Hasbro Children's Transforms Care Amid Pediatric IBD Surge

High school is a time of milestones and discovery, but for Aiden Pearce, it was also a journey of resilience and hope. Diagnosed with ulcerative colitis at a young age, Aiden's teenage years were shaped by multiple hospitalizations and surgeries. Despite these challenges, he flourished with the compassionate care of Hasbro Children's, proving that life's moments can shine through even in the face of adversity.

Ulcerative colitis—one of two major types of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)—affects the colon and rectum, causing inflammation and ulcers. The condition is often marked by excruciating pain that Aiden described as “feeling like knives cutting through my stomach.” Other debilitating symptoms included severe diarrhea, fatigue, and unintended weight loss. Crohn's disease, the other major type of IBD, can affect any part of the gastrointestinal tract and often involves deeper layers of the bowel wall. Both conditions have a profound impact on quality of life.

“It was like my body was constantly fighting against me,” Aiden shared, recalling his most challenging days.

The prevalence of pediatric IBD has been rising steadily, with cases of Crohn's disease increasing by 22% and ulcerative colitis by 29% over the past decade. Recent estimates suggest over 100,000 American youth under the age of 20 live with IBD.

The Pediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center at Hasbro Children's is pioneering care for children with IBD, bringing together cutting-edge medical treatments and holistic support to help patients like Aiden thrive. The IBD Center offers advanced biologic therapies and access to clinical trials alongside a dedicated multidisciplinary team, including pediatric surgery, nutrition, and psychology, ensuring a comprehensive approach to care.



Pearce family celebrates Aiden's graduation

“Our goal is to help kids [like Aiden] not just manage their disease but truly thrive,” explains Jason Shapiro, MD, director of the center.

Aiden's treatment was a true team effort, combining advanced biologic therapies with surgical interventions, nutritional guidance, and psychological support.

“Managing a life-altering disease like ulcerative colitis means caring for both the patient and their family, who play a key role in support, care, and post-surgery recovery,” says Elizabeth Renaud, MD, a pediatric surgeon deeply involved in Aiden's care.

Hasbro Children's is actively participating in clinical trials for new medications, ensuring that families have access to the latest advancements in care.

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Aiden Pearce during a hospital stay at Hasbro Children's

Today, Aiden is a freshman at the Savannah College of Art and Design, pursuing his dreams with confidence. With his condition under control, he has embraced milestones like prom, graduation, and now college life—experiences he once feared missing. “When I’m with my friends and doing the things I love, I feel like I can forget I’m sick,” he says. “Hasbro Children’s helped me see that I can still live the life I want.”

The Pearce family’s gratitude is boundless. “Hasbro Children’s didn’t just treat Aiden—they enabled him to live fully and joyfully,” Michele reflects. “Their care changed all our lives.”

IBD SURGE STATISTICS

100,000+

AMERICAN CHILDREN UNDER AGE 20

live with IBD common neurological disorders.

22%

INCREASE IN CROHN'S DISEASE

among pediatric patients since 2009

29%

INCREASE IN ULCERATIVE COLITIS

among pediatric patients since 2009

For more information or to make an appointment,
please contact the Pediatric IBD Center
at 401-444-8306.

[brownhealth.org/centers-services/
pediatric-inflammatory-bowel-disease-center](http://brownhealth.org/centers-services/pediatric-inflammatory-bowel-disease-center)

Leave a Lasting Legacy



Planned giving provides donors, like you, with a meaningful opportunity to leave a lasting legacy by supporting Hasbro Children's and positively impacting the future of patient care for generations to come. This type of philanthropy—whether you designate Hasbro Children's as a beneficiary of your estate, retirement account, donor advised fund, or life insurance policy—enables the hospital to remain focused, in the long term, on its unyielding pursuit of excellence in the delivery of healthcare, pioneering research, medical education, and technology.

For more information visit us at brownhealth.org/HCLegacy or contact **Chris Josephson, Senior Philanthropy Officer**, at 401-444-6412 or email chris.josephson@brownhealth.org.



Brave and Strong, and Now the Hasbro Children's 2025 Champion Child

Born with Severe Hemophilia A < 1%, 9-year-old Cullen Dailey has rightfully been called brave and strong for the way he's faced the challenges that accompany living with a rare bleeding disorder for which there is no cure. Now, he also can be called the Hasbro Children's 2025 Champion Child.

On January 27, the Cranston boy was celebrated by the hospital during a special event at his elementary school and joined by classmates, teachers, and members of his care team.

Since his diagnosis at the age of 8 months, Cullen has been treated regularly at Hasbro Children's and its Tomorrow Fund Clinic. Because his blood contains less than one percent of the necessary blood clotting factor, Cullen is at risk of spontaneous bleeding—without cause—throughout his body and within any major organ.

Living with the potentially life-threatening condition is not easy, but thanks to the expertise of Hasbro Children's and its dedicated hemophilia team, Cullen is no different than any other third grader. Monthly, he receives a revolutionary clotting factor replacement therapy in the form of an injection that has drastically improved his quality of life.

Although his condition will require lifelong management, Cullen is thriving, which surprises no one who knows him. He plays soccer and golf, takes guitar lessons, and loves to play board and video games. As the 2025 Children's Miracle Network Hospital's Rhode Island Champion for Hasbro Children's, he'll spend the year as an ambassador, highlighting the importance of funding pediatric care and research.



L-R: Salley G. Pels, MD, Cullen Dailey and Cheryl Linsky, RN.

Birbs at Brown are a Flock of Fun and Fellowship

At Brown University's Warren Alpert Medical School, students juggle demanding coursework and intense clinical training. But through Birbs at Brown, they've created a fun way to take a break, build community, and now support young patients at Hasbro Children's Lawrence A. Aubin, Sr. Child Protection Center (Aubin Center)

Yes, you read that right—"birbs," not birds. "Birb" is a playful term for small, fluffy birds—especially ones that look round, cute, or silly. These hand-crocheted birbs are hidden across campus in a student-run scavenger hunt, with clues posted on the group's Instagram page (@birbsatbrown). This year, Birbs at Brown added a new mission: giving back.

Instead of a traditional fundraiser, the group raffled ten birbs, using the proceeds to buy gifts from the Aubin Center's Amazon wish list. Founded in 1996, the Aubin Center is Rhode Island's only specialized clinic for evaluating and treating child maltreatment cases. Its trauma-informed care helps children heal and is a resource for child protection agencies and law enforcement.

"Support from the community, especially from students who will go on to be the next generation of caregivers, means so much to our team and, most importantly, to the children we serve," says Christine E. Barron, MD, Director of the Lawrence A. Aubin, Sr. Child Protection Center. "These generous efforts comfort children and families in crisis, reminding them that they are not alone." Have an idea for a creative fundraiser? From bake sales to fun runs, any effort counts. Learn more at giving.brownhealth.org/hasbro/fundraise.



Play it Forward: Turn Game Night into Support for Kids

For many families, game night is a cherished tradition—filled with laughter, friendly competition, and a little strategy. What if those moments could do more than bring people together—what if they could support patients and families at Hasbro Children's?

Extra Life, a program of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, gives gamers and game lovers a way to do what they love while making a real difference for kids. Since 2008, the Extra Life community has raised over \$130 million to fund lifesaving treatments, pediatric equipment, research, and child life services that help kids cope with hospital stays.

Every dollar stays local, directly supporting Hasbro Children's and the kids who need it most. Longtime Extra Life participant Adam "bread4kids" Slesinger has raised over \$120,000 for Hasbro Children's by livestreaming his playing of video games and board games in front of an audience. But you don't need to be a famous gamer to make an impact.

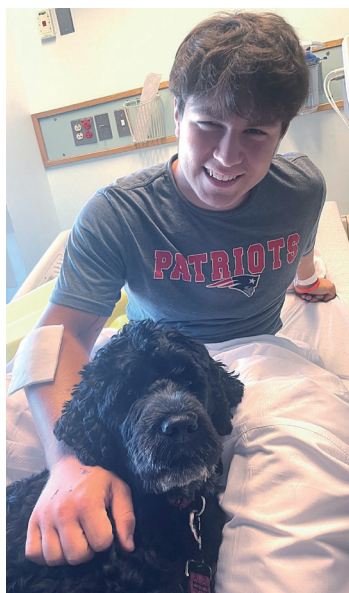
"Before I started streaming, I simply played games and asked my friends, family, and local community for support," says Adam. "Every amount raised adds up to make a real difference for kids and their families."

Want to turn your love of gaming into a way to help patients at Hasbro Children's? Join Team Hasbro or create your own. Whether you're playing solo, part of a school or community group, or rallying friends, you'll be part of a dedicated team raising funds for local kids.

Sign up at extra-life.org to make a real difference—one game at a time.



Meet Cora, Our Newest—and Furriest—Staff Member



Dylan Cicchitelli, one of the first patients to enjoy time with Cora.

Wearing a hospital badge on her harness to identify herself as an employee, Cora is nearly impossible to miss as she trots through Hasbro Children's. The 18-month-old Portuguese Water Dog is incredibly cute, but more importantly, she's highly trained and a significant part of the hospital experience for patients and families.

"Cora is an active participant in the healthcare process and here to help children cope with their hospitalization," says Micaela Materne, Hasbro Children's Manager of Child Life Services and one of Cora's certified handlers.

Made possible by a grant from the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation's "Dogs for Joy" program, Cora is Hasbro Children's new in-residence facility comfort dog. Thanks to her specialized training, Cora can be present to provide comfort during sensitive medical conversations, sit calmly so a child working on their motor skills can brush her, demonstrate what patients can expect during their medical test or procedure, and much more. At the end of each work day, Cora leaves her hospital pager behind and goes home with Micaela, or with Child Life Specialist Karen Swartz, her other handler.

"The hospital can be a difficult place, especially for children, which is why Cora makes such a tremendous difference by making kids and families more comfortable," adds Karen. "Cora is a very special part of our care teams and of the healing journey for our patients. We are so grateful to Dunkin' and to our local franchisees for their incredible generosity."

Caring for Kids, a publication of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation, is published for the friends and supporters of Hasbro Children's. For more information, please contact the Development Office at 401-444-0394.

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