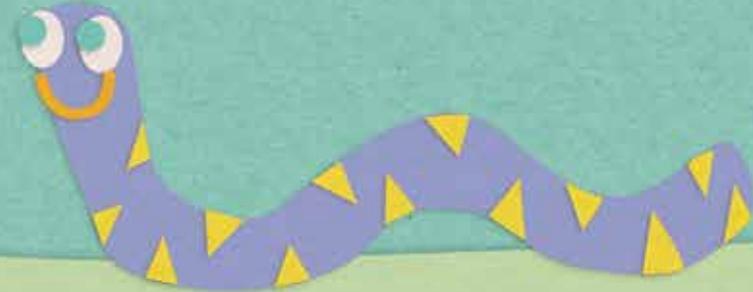




CHILD LIFE

at *GBMC*





If you're a parent, you've felt it: the anxiety because your child is sick or injured. As a father and a pediatrician, I've experienced this anxiety many times.

When families are in GBMC and feeling helpless, our Certified Child Life Specialists provide expertise to reduce emotional distress. Whether helping them focus elsewhere during an invasive exam or easing their anxiety after an accident, the Child Life Specialists improve the child's care experience.

Here is an uncomfortable reality: there are also children who don't have family support when they're hurting. It's unsettling, but some of the boys and girls who find themselves in our care are there for harm inflicted by a parent or guardian. In these heartbreaking cases, GBMC's Child Life Specialists are critical. They help children cope with the fear of a traumatic event, allowing the physicians to do their important work.

We never bill for our Child Life services; our goal is to have our young patients and families leave our hospital remembering only the compassion, comfort, and personalized experience. Your support in endowing this program will help assure we can provide this special advocacy to each child, every time.

John B Chessare MD

JOHN B CHESARE, MD, MPH
President & CEO, GBMC HealthCare System



Four-year-old Natalie* was transported to the GBMC Emergency Department directly from a crime scene where she had been sexually abused. Naturally, she was incredibly anxious and confused upon arrival. Detectives were waiting on-site to interview her, and they did not want her parents in the room for the medical-forensic examination. Imagine how scared this little girl was. She needed to submit to invasive evidentiary swabs and uncomfortable photos and videos, administered by strangers, without anyone she knew in the room. Thankfully, Child Life Specialist Amanda was there.

Using a doll to explain what would happen during the exam, Amanda immediately developed a trusting rapport with the young patient. Amanda kept Natalie distracted with princess toys; her calming presence was a gift. The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner was able to swiftly collect the evidence. After the exam, Natalie said, "I was so brave. That didn't even hurt," as she proudly received a bravery certificate from Amanda.

Because our Child Life Specialist was there, there has been some justice for little Natalie. It doesn't take away the abuse she suffered, but the DNA collected during that exam led to the defendant pleading guilty. A dangerous predator will spend 19 years in prison and be registered as a Tier III sex offender for life thanks largely to GBMC's Child Life program.

**Name changed to protect patient privacy*

"We are excited to help GBMC provide a new level of comfort and support to families in our community. We've seen dedicated specialists ease children's anxieties helping to make their medical procedures less frightening. We encourage others to support this vital program."

- Ebert Charitable Foundation





“We have seen how Child Life Specialists transform the entire medical experience. It is difficult to work without them – we know we are not providing the best quality care when they are not part of the team.”

- **MELISSA SPARROW, MD**

GBMC CHIEF OF STAFF, DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

1 crayon = 500 patients



1,200 in-patient pediatric patients/year



Unit is open 24 hours a day/
7 days a week

11,000 pediatric emergency department patients/year

Ages 0 – 18



To support this new program for children and families in your community please call the GBMC Philanthropy team at 443-849-2773 or email philanthropy@gbmc.org.