After the children are selected for surgery in Mexico, Ashley Sunderman, RN, children’s outreach coordinator for Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics, starts the process for getting the children and their parents to Des Moines. Ashley’s job is vital once the patients are determined. She is the main point of contact with the Mexican health agency and clinics in Merida and Campeche. In her role, she coordinates with the consulate to get visas and passports arranged, and works with Children’s Flight of Hope to cover the airfare for the children and their parents.

Once the travel is arranged, Ashley starts working with the departments involved once the patients arrive. The local community volunteers and Mercy Family are vital to the success of the program. Ashley coordinates with Patrick Maher in Transportation to make sure a van meets the children and their parents at the airport and transports them back to Mercy. Ashley also works with Jim and Alecia Stessman, volunteer Spanish interpreters, to greet the group at the airport. Mercy’s Dietary department provides sack lunches for the group so they have a meal upon arrival. Ashley also works with the year’s coordinating cardiologist, who is Dr. Becker this year, and Dr. Hockmuth to schedule pre-surgery evaluations and the actual procedures.

The groups of patients are usually at Mercy for two weeks, but may be here longer if they need extended care. Before they are discharged, Ashley works with the same departments to arrange the trip home. Transportation and interpreters are coordinated. Box lunches are ordered for the families to take with them. She makes sure each child has a Mercy drawstring backpack carry-on that contains essential items for the trip home: copies of the medical paperwork for parents and physicians in Mexico, and a Mercy cup they can put water in once they are through security and medications. To make the process as smooth as possible, Ashley also works with staff at Des Moines International Airport to let them know when the group will be arriving and to make sure the group gets through security.

When reflecting on what the Yucatan heart program has accomplished, the doctors agree it definitely fulfills and continues the legacy of our founders, the Sisters of Mercy. They say it meets the mission of helping those in need, and continues to develop quality children’s heart care both locally and internationally.

In May, the first group of children will arrive in Des Moines. The physicians and staff at Mercy Children’s Hospital & Clinics are already hard at work, making preparations for what will be a whirlwind of activity during their stay. They will be ready to make our newest friends feel right at home, while we provide the life-changing care they have come to know and trust.
This week, Mercy Clinical Laboratory’s (MCL) physicians, technologists, technicians and support staff celebrated National Laboratory Professionals Week. This year, April 22-28 was designated to honor these professionals, increase awareness of the various laboratory professions and communicate appreciation for the high level of expertise demonstrated by laboratory personnel.

MCL is, by volume of testing performed, one of the largest laboratories in the state of Iowa. In addition to analyzing specimens from our hospital inpatients and outpatients, MCL also provides laboratory services to more than 300 physician offices, clinics and rural hospitals on a daily basis. Comprehensive test menus include anatomic pathology, chemistry, microbiology, hematology, transfusion services and a variety of specialized laboratory assays.

Our laboratories at Mercy – Des Moines and Mercy – West Lakes employ more than 250 colleagues who are dedicated to providing accurate, accessible and timely laboratory information. In addition to our technical team members who have associates’, bachelors’ and masters’ degrees, we’re also very appreciative of our support staff comprised of lab assistants, transcriptionists, client service representatives, marketing and clinical consultants. Our nine pathologists offer clinical oversight and medical direction for our laboratories and partner with MCL to provide professional pathology services to Mercy and our outreach customers.

Mercy Rehabilitation Hospital is hosting a public open house to welcome community members to the new facility. This event will take place on Thursday, June 7, from 3 to 6 p.m. at 1401 Campus Dr. in Clive.

Slated to accept first patients in mid-June, Mercy Rehabilitation Hospital will be the first and only freestanding rehabilitation hospital in Iowa dedicated to caring for patients recovering from brain injury, stroke, spinal cord injury, and many other debilitating injuries and illnesses.

Mark your calendar and make plans to attend this special celebration. Enjoy refreshments and hors d’oeuvres while viewing and learning about the facility. Everyone is welcome to attend!

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

• Jeffery Pederson, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Christine, on the birth of their son, Christian. Christian was born on March 29 and was welcomed home by Elijah, 10, Abram, 7, Isaac, 5, and Samuel, 2.

• Emily Ruehle, pediatrics, and Kyle, on the birth of their son, Aden John. Aden was born on April 1.

• Adis Mujakic, food and nutrition, and Ernardina, on the birth of their son, Amian. Amian was born on April 11 and was welcomed home by Aidin, 8, and Armin, 6.

• Melissa Batt, hospitalist, and Andrew, on the birth of their daughter, Sonya Jane. Sonya was born on April 11 and was welcomed home by Anna, 20 mo.

• Heather Eschenbrenner, inpatient wound/ostomy, and Peter, on the birth of their son, Micah Jonathan. Micah was born on April 23.

WHAT’S UP?

WELCOME NEW PROVIDERS

• Bridget Dull, DNP, Trauma Services

• Alex Poduska, PA-C, Mercy Clinics Family Medicine Urbandale

• Deborah Schutz, ARNP, Neurosurgery

SAVE THE DATE – OPEN HOUSE FOR NEW MERCY REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

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CONTACT US

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If you are interested in submitting information to be printed in the Bulletin, send it to PR and Marketing or call 515-247-3050.

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