



Shriners' "Oldest Poster Boy"

(NAPSA)—Although comedian and actor Pat Morita has passed away, his influence on Shriners Hospitals for Children will continue to live on. Morita, perhaps best known for his role of Mr. Miyagi in "The Karate Kid" movies, was an active supporter of Shriners Hospitals throughout his life. Now his family has established the "Pat Morita Memorial Fund" of SHC in his honor.

Morita was born in California on June 28, 1932, and his connection with Shriners Hospitals began at a young age. When Morita was 2 years old, he was afflicted with spinal tuberculosis and his family was told he would never walk again. At the age of 9, Morita entered the San Francisco Shriners Hospital where he had extensive spinal surgery and learned to walk again. He was released at age 11 and immediately transported to reunite with his Japanese-American family at an internment camp in Arizona, where they were held for the duration of World War II.

Despite these challenges, he compiled an impressive list of "firsts" during his career in show business. He had a recurring role as Arnold on "Happy Days" and later starred in his own sitcom. Morita was the first Asian American nominated for an Academy Award, for Best Supporting Actor as Mr. Miyagi in "The Karate Kid."

Morita always credited Shriners Hospitals with providing the specialized care that allowed him to walk. Joking that he was the Shriners' "oldest poster boy," he appeared at many of their events



Actor Pat Morita was once a patient at Shriners Hospitals for Children. Now his family has set up a fund there in his memory.

to thank them for the help he received.

For information on the "Pat Morita Memorial Fund," contact the Shriners Hospitals Office of Development, 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, (800) 241-GIFT or donorrelations@shrinenet.org.

For information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607 or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child whom Shriners can help, call (800) 237-5055 in the United States or (800) 361-7256 in Canada.