

Children's Health Update



St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Celebrates 50 Years

(NAPSA)—Fifty years ago, few children with cancer survived, and many doctors believed treatment was futile. On February 4, 1962, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital opened its doors and took a radically different treatment approach, which proved pivotal in changing how the world fights childhood cancer.

The history of St. Jude is marked with milestones in the research and treatment of pediatric cancer and other childhood illnesses. In less than 10 years of the hospital's opening, St. Jude investigators showed that the combination of chemotherapy and radiation cured at least half of all children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). The most common form of childhood cancer, ALL was previously considered almost fatal. Today, St. Jude patients with ALL have a 94 percent survival rate.

St. Jude is recognized for playing a significant role in improving overall survival rates for all childhood cancers, which have increased from 20 percent in 1962 to more than 80 percent today.

"In the nearly four decades I've been at St. Jude, I've had the privilege of watching the organization grow from one building to a sprawling campus of about 2.5 million square feet of research, clinical and administrative space," said Dr. William E. Evans, St. Jude director and CEO. "Driven by our patients, and thanks to our employees, colleagues at our fundraising organization, ALSAC, and the public support they generate, St. Jude will only continue to grow in the years to come."

To further speed progress, the hospital embarked on the Pediatric



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Cancer Genome Project in 2010. The collaboration between St. Jude and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis aims to identify the genetic changes that give rise to some of the world's deadliest childhood cancers. Through the three-year, \$65 million initiative, investigators are mapping the cancer genomes of 600 children, comparing cancerous cells with normal cells to better understand the pathology of these diseases. The project is already yielding exciting discoveries into poorly understood cancers.

"St. Jude has a legacy of taking on the toughest of pediatric cancer questions, and that focus won't change," said James R. Downing, M.D., St. Jude scientific director and deputy director. "We're uniquely positioned to move research and treatment ahead. From the genetic data we collect from the genome project, we're creating the foundation of knowledge to deliver the next decades' childhood cancer discoveries and treatments."

Throughout its five decades, St.

Jude research has included work in cancer biology and genomics, pharmacogenomics, gene therapy, bone marrow transplantation, drug discovery, radiation treatment, blood diseases and infectious diseases, integrated into a long series of innovative clinical trials.

St. Jude is also a leader in patient care. According to Joseph Laver, M.D., St. Jude clinical director, "the unsurpassed family-centered care that's provided at St. Jude stems from the multidisciplinary team approach that has been a hallmark of St. Jude since 1962."

"Looking toward the future, St. Jude is a national resource with a global mission and will continue to enhance its leadership as a resource for children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases," Evans said. "We've created a collaborative culture whose team members demonstrate unceasing compassion for our patients and families, innovation in our treatment and research, and quality in everything we do."