Looking back, reaching forward

Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, a not-for-profit pediatric healthcare system, combines the rich histories of three legendary Atlanta institutions. Through the merger of Egleston Children’s Health Care System and Scottish Rite Children’s Medical Center, and the operation of Hughes Spalding Children’s Hospital, Children’s holds steadfast to a single core mission: to make kids better today and healthier tomorrow.
The national healthcare industry shifted dramatically in the 1990s. Hospitals faced colliding pressures, such as reimbursement issues, insurance coverage changes and staff shortages. Egleston and Scottish Rite were among the hospitals that struggled to continue providing care for sick and injured children and their families. Faced with the possible closure of both hospitals, Atlanta leaders urged Egleston and Scottish Rite to unite to preserve pediatric healthcare for the region.

In 1998, the two hospitals merged to form Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. The new organization improved its standing immediately by eliminating redundancies and reducing costs. Children’s went on to achieve even greater financial improvements, reaching $38 million in savings in just 24 months—when the original goal had been $30 million in five years. In addition to exceeding financial targets, Children’s also achieved new benchmarks for customer service and employee satisfaction. Today, the Children’s merger is a model for other hospitals around the country.

In 2003, Children’s launched a comprehensive, five-year campaign to raise funds for the largest proposed healthcare facility expansion and renovation project in Georgia’s history. One to Grow On: The Campaign for Children’s was an extraordinary success, surpassing the goal of $265 million by raising $294 million, all thanks to the generous support of the community.

During the Campaign for Children’s in 2006, Children’s grew with the addition of Hughes Spalding, assuming the management of all services at the Grady Health System-owned facility.

In 2007, expansion and renovation continued when much-needed square footage was added to both Egleston and Scottish Rite. This new construction allowed more patient beds and parking spaces to be added. Programs and equipment at both locations were enhanced as well.

As Children’s has grown through the years, so has our impact on the community and on pediatric healthcare. Today, with three hospitals, 17 neighborhood locations and more than 700,000 patient visits annually, Children’s is one of the largest pediatric healthcare providers in the country. We continue to treat children from all 159 counties in Georgia, and U.S. News & World Report ranks Children’s as one of the top pediatric hospitals in the nation.
Community support for common good

The community’s combined philanthropic and volunteer support is as critical to the success of Children’s today as it was many years ago. Here are some ways community involvement has helped Children’s uphold its promise to the children and teens of Georgia throughout the years:

Egleston
Support from the Auxiliary of Henrietta Egleston Hospital and the community bolstered the hospital’s mission to serve patients and families.

- Pet Parade–In 1929, the very first fundraiser involved the mayor judging an assortment of animals, from a pet elephant to a talking dog.
- Bal de Salut–Created in 1959, this event honored members of the Atlanta Debutante Club.
- Festival of Trees–This nine-day holiday event began in 1977 and featured decorated trees, activities and a gift shop.

Scottish Rite
The hospital’s mission to serve patients and families was sustained by strong community support, a tradition that grew from many passionate commitments, such as:

- Scottish Rite Masons–The efforts of local and regional Masons in the early years played a vital role in covering the costs of staff salaries and medical supplies, with the Masons often paying for these expenses out of their own pockets.
- Charity events–Beginning in 1933, the University of Georgia and the Georgia Institute of Technology helped the hospital grow through their annual charity football game.
- Art of the Season–Created in 1991, this annual 10-day arts-and-crafts holiday extravaganza enabled children to use their craft-making skills to benefit the hospital.

Hughes Spalding
Beginning in 1952, the Hughes Spalding Pavilion treated and cared for Atlanta’s downtown population while being sustained by private funds and public resources.

- Early fundraising–In the late 1940s, Hughes Spalding approached many prominent figures in Atlanta, including Gone With the Wind author Margaret Mitchell, who became the first donor to the cause.
- HUGGS Run–In 2000, with support from Olympic stars Edwin Moses and Gail Devers, the hospital organized a fundraiser called Help Us Grow Greater and Stronger.
- Mardi Gras Madness–Proceeds from this elegant costume ball funded renovations and enhancements to various areas.