

Distinguished clowns don wigs, noses for 2010

Supporting **Children's Healthcare of Atlanta**, a distinguished group of seltzer sprayers and nose honkers is gearing up for 2010 festivities.

The so-called Distinguished Clowns are Atlanta-area male and female business executives and community leaders who support Children's Healthcare of Atlanta by participating in the annual Children's Christmas Parade, the largest Christmas parade in the Southeast.

The clown program began in 1991 when Neil Cameron, president of **Ogilvy & Mather South Advertising**, invited a group of fellow executives to don clown costumes and bring smiles to children's faces. Nearly 20 years later, the tradition continues with business leaders continuing to dress as clowns (costumes provided, though personal attire is permitted), visit patients and families of Children's and march, jump and dance along the Children's Christmas Parade route, interacting with the crowd and handing out special treats.

Notoriously an outgoing and highly interactive component of the parade, the clowns are a popular feature. Each clown donates \$1,500 to Children's, and all proceeds benefit programs and services for patients at Children's.

This year's crew includes Patrick Ungashick, president of **White Horse Advisors LLC**; Michael Rieger, managing director of institutional sales at **Wells Fargo**; and Danny Shaw, who was motivated to participate after his daughter became a Children's patient.

The Distinguished Clown program attracts business leaders with a charitable interest in supporting Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, and it allows them a unique and colorful opportunity to break outside traditional means of fundraising.



For one day each December, the group meets at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston dressed in business casual attire. Thirty minutes later, bedecked in full-blown clown attire and makeup, they forgo their corporate demeanor to become bubble-blowing clowns who visit patients in the hospital, craft balloon animals and interact with thousands of Atlantans along the parade route, most of whom are unaware of the clowns' corporate aliases.

The program has been guided by Atlanta businessmen in its nearly 20-year history. In its inaugural year, 16 clowns each made a \$500 contribution to Egleston Children's Hospital (Egleston Children's Hospital and Scottish Rite Children's Hospital merged to form Children's Healthcare of Atlanta in 1998). Since then, the clowns have raised more than \$500,000 for Children's.



SPECIAL

Clowning around: Atlanta business executives and community leaders have been making sick kids smile at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta for more than 20 years.

Bringing out a smile

The Distinguished Clowns program brings together business and community leaders to support Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Year started: 1991

Founder: Neil Cameron, president of Ogilvy & Mather South Advertising

Festivities: Clowns visit sick children and their families, as well as participate in the Children's Christmas Parade.

Giving back: Participants each donate \$1,500 to the hospital and have raised more than \$500,000 over the years.

Head clowns: Program is anchored by Patrick Ungashick, Michael Rieger, Vern Vincent and Lee White, the longest-running participant.

Recruiting: Two recruitment sessions for the program are held each year — in March and October.

Today, the tradition continues and is anchored by four head clowns: Patrick Ungashick, Michael Rieger, Vern Vincent and Lee White, the longest-running

participant. Two "recruiting parties" are held annually — the first was in March, and the second will be in October at the Ungashick home.