



Winston's Heart Journey

BY DEE DE LOS SANTOS

Our heart journey began with our 22-week ultrasound, which had to be redone several times—Winston was always in the wrong position, and they couldn't get a clear reading of his heart. At BC Women's Hospital, they were finally able to see the entirety of his heart, and what was missing. Even recalling that day five years later is still difficult. My entire life changed when I became a heart parent.

The day was a grim whirlwind of events: drawings of his heart's anatomy, explanations of what needed to be done, and explanations of what *could* be done. What stuck was that he had complex heart issues and there was only uncertainty ahead. Winston was diagnosed on that day with double outlet right ventricle (DORV), transposition of the great arteries (TGA), and a straddling mitral valve. With DORV, the pulmonary artery

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the board of the Children's Heart Network. The best sources of medical information are your child's physician and the health care professionals who provide care for your child.

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Heart Matters is the newsletter of the Children's Heart Network, which works to educate, support, and enhance the lives of children, youth, and families living with congenital heart disease.

COFFEE GROUPS NEAR YOU

If you would like to organize a coffee group for heart parents in your community, please contact Sam Aitken at saitken@childrensheartnetwork.org and we can get you set up with a coffee card for drinks and treats!

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VANCOUVER – Samantha Aitken
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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our families enjoy the spring, summer, fall, and winter gatherings that CHN sponsors. We are always looking for volunteers, so if you have some time, talent, and expertise that you are willing to share, please contact Sam Aitken at saitken@childrensheartnetwork.org.

THANK YOU

CHN would like to thank the Province of BC for its continued support of CHN through its Community Gaming Grants program.

CHN would like to thank the CKNW Kids' Fund for their generous support of our HeartBeats and Hearts of Gold camp programs.



SIGN UP TO GET CONNECTED

If you have a child growing up with heart disease, please email us at chn@childrensheartnetwork.org so that we can add you to our mailing list to receive invitations to all our fun events!

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Winston's Heart Journey, continued from page 1

and the aorta both connect to the right ventricle—when typically the aorta connects to the left. With TGA, the pulmonary artery and the aorta are switched.

After a group discussion between the cardiologists and the cardiothoracic surgeon at BC Children's Hospital, they decided the best course of action was a series of three surgeries collectively called the Fontan procedure. The first of these procedures (Norwood) would be done in the first days after birth, the next (Glenn) at one year old, and the last (Fontan) at five years old.

When Winston was born, we spent a week in the hospital, and the cardiology team was confident that Winston's heart was performing well enough that the Norwood procedure was not needed. We could take our baby home, but they would keep a close eye on him.

Several weeks before Winston turned three months old, our cardiac team told us that we would have to bring him in for his first procedure: a pulmonary artery band and an atrial septectomy (a hole created between his atria to improve blood flow), as his oxygen levels were dipping below optimal, and he was not ready for and was far too young to have his Glenn procedure.

No matter how many times you go for a procedure or surgery, it is never easy. As a parent, you are trying your best to maintain your composure so that you don't upset your child. But those moments leading up to the hand-off are the most difficult. Our first surgery and the emotions surrounding it have stuck with me, and I feel that those feelings will never go away but will hopefully dull with time. I distinctly remember a very kind cardiac operating room nurse taking Winston (who was all swaddled up,

sleeping, and less than three months old), looking me in the eye, and saying with a smile, "We'll take good care of him." The nurse and Winston went behind the automatic doors, and in that very moment, her words were comforting but also terrifying. The terror came from the real possibility that I would never see Winston again.

We were told that the procedure would take five hours, but Winston's cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr. Gandhi, was done in three. I felt so much fear as we sat in the waiting area, waiting for him to appear. Thankfully, Dr. Gandhi had good news: Winston did well, he was being transferred to the intensive care unit (ICU), and we would see him shortly.

We were led into the cardiac ICU to our little son, who was hooked up to many machines—mostly for monitoring but also for medication. The first 24 hours are always the most unpredictable, so they have one nurse for every patient. Winston did well, and we were sent to the step-down unit. After five days as an inpatient, we were back home in time to celebrate his 100-day ceremony—an Asian tradition of celebrating the first 100 days of a child's life.

The Glenn procedure was planned for May of the following year, prior to Winston's first birthday. I remember between surgeries fortifying all his food and drinks so he could gain the optimal amount of weight to be a good candidate for the Glenn. That time felt like it went so quickly, as we had to buckle down and prepare him yet again for surgery.

Winston ended up catching a cold, so Dr. Gandhi pushed our surgery further out, because he wanted Winston in optimal form for the Glenn. Winston ended



up having his Glenn in July of 2019, and we stayed in the hospital for a grand total of three days: one overnight in the ICU, and then home after two days in step-down. We were shocked to say the least, and we even asked if we could stay longer. But there is no better place to heal than home, so home we went.

We got to enjoy the next couple years between the Glenn and the Fontan, but of course with exceptions—the largest and most apparent one being the pandemic. Our plans of returning to play dates and outings were abruptly cut short. We kept Winston indoors because we were unsure of how it would affect him, and because we had to keep him well for the Fontan. We struggled with that uncertainty, as we knew it meant we were hindering his social and developmental skills. After a lot of thought and discussions with his team, we decided to enroll him in a small preschool. Winston enjoys his time at school, and he often surprises us with all the things he's capable of. It is such a joy—a joy we never thought we would be able to experience.

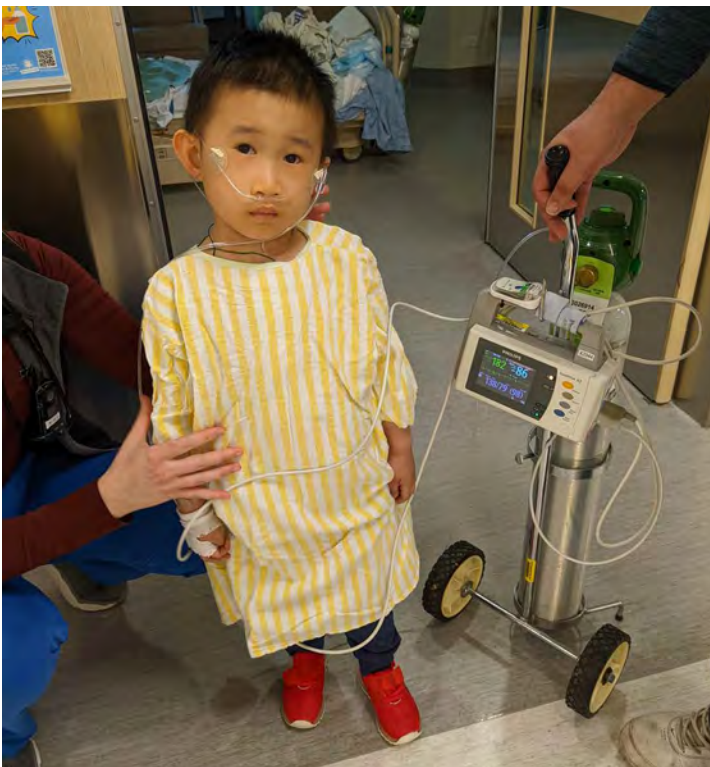
At our six-month checkup, our cardiac team told us to prepare for Winston's Fontan. The bubble of living some sort of normalcy popped, and going through the motions leading up to surgery was now front and centre. We dreaded this surgery, mostly because we knew Winston would definitely remember this time around, and we had no idea how to have the conversation with him that he would have to go back to the hospital and have a surgery.

The procedure itself wasn't complicated; it was the healing process that took a toll on Winston emotionally. Winston is generally a happy and energetic child, but to see him drained of that and unwilling to play or engage

with the wonderful certified child life specialists at BC Children's Hospital was incredibly tough. We wondered if the trauma from being in the hospital would linger for a long, long time. But of course, Winston being Winston, once the drainage tubes were pulled out, he was back to his sweet, funny self.

We are now coming up to Winston's fifth birthday, a milestone we weren't sure we'd see. Watching Winston fight, struggle, and thrive through these years has been a privilege. Winston takes taekwon do, loves to get around on his scooter, and loves participating in sports. He eats like a full-grown adult. His favourite foods are Grandpa's spaghetti and any form of bread. He's taught himself the planets in our solar system and internal anatomy, and he reads above his age level. We are constantly amazed at what he can accomplish.

Before Winston was born, one of our nurses told us that we should imagine the journey not like a race, but like a marathon. Don't dwell on how you'll get to the end point, but take it mile by mile. I often think back to that advice. Having a heart child means life is full of uncertainties, but in those moments, we love harder and deeper because we know how precious time is and how easily that time can be taken away. What warms my heart is having met so many heart families through the Children's Heart Network and knowing that there are people out there that "get it," because this journey can often be lonely. We love participating in breakfast with Santa and connecting with other families, and hopefully some day soon Winston will connect with other kids just like him to go to summer camp and the other activities the Children's Heart Network provides. ♥



Meet Lydia Schwartz, CHN's 2023 Wine Gala Dinner Speaker

BY LYDIA SCHWARTZ

I am 17 years old, and I only have half a heart. Despite having half a heart, I excel academically, artistically, and athletically

I have encountered setbacks and challenges in my life. However, it is the power of support and a growth mindset that have helped me become the resilient and positive person I am today. My story is one of determination and hope, both for myself and for you.

I have tricuspid stenosis and a hypoplastic right heart. In plain language, the right side of my heart is too small and doesn't work. To fix this, I had two open heart surgeries: a bidirectional Glenn at six months old and a full Fontan at two years 10 months. Together, these procedures rerouted my circulatory system to bypass the right side of my heart and deliver the deoxygenated blood directly to my lungs. I would like to give a *wholehearted* thank you to my cardiologists, Dr. Sandor and Dr. Harris; my surgeon, Dr. Campbell; and the team at the Children's Heart Centre for outstanding care.

With both operations, I got chylothorax. This is when your lymphatic system drains into your chest cavity. This is very serious, because it can result in collapsed lungs, which is exactly what happened to me when I was six months old. Additionally, I have had eight other surgeries, including a liver biopsy. I don't remember the surgeries from when I was little, but I have the scars to prove it.

I have many scars. To me, scars are not a disfigurement. They tell stories. They are storylines—*my* storylines. Before I was born, my parents were told that I would not be able to do much, that my heart would place a limit on my



abilities. My parents accepted that I might have some limitations but felt it would be important for me to find those limits myself *before* being limited by the possibility that they might exist. I have always been encouraged to follow my interests.

My interests include aerial silks, piano, dance, theatre, creative writing, swimming, volleyball, and both downhill and water skiing. I am a certified Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance Level 2 ski instructor teaching at Whistler Blackcomb. I have my Bronze Cross in swimming; I am cast in this year's school play. I have been an active member of the Whistler Public Library's book club for the past six years and was in Girl Guides for three years. I have studied piano since I was four and completed my Royal Conservatory of Music Level 6 exam. I have submitted art multiple times to various art shows, and I will graduate with a Dual Dogwood, having been enrolled in French immersion since grade 5.

Last summer, my family and I hiked around Mont Blanc in France. We hiked 100 kilometres in 7 days, at elevations of 9,000 feet. I am not going to pretend it was easy or that I didn't complain. It got really difficult at high elevations, and I had to rest often.

I like to think of myself as a bumblebee. From a physics perspective, bees should not be able to fly. Their bodies are too big, and their wings are too small. It should be impossible, but somehow, they fly. Despite having half a heart, I can do way more than was expected of me.



In addition to all the previously listed pursuits, I also run an organic peanut butter business with my sister Stella. We make and sell small-batch artisan peanut butter at farmers' markets. Growing our business from its initial tiny stall to a polished, organized, thriving, entrepreneurial endeavour (currently undergoing certification for retail expansion) has been incredible. You can find us on our website, thepeanutbutterqueens.ca.

However, participation in these activities is not without increased risk for me. To support my heart and blood flow, I take Aspirin daily as a blood thinner. When I was 11, I crashed when I was water skiing and hit my head. I went in and out of coma, narrowly escaping brain surgery, and spent 10 days at BC Children's Hospital (BCCH) with a brain bleed. The doctors believed that the blood thinner, while helping my congenital heart defect (CHD), worsened the brain injury.

I must be aware of the heightened risk when I am doing certain activities. I let instructors and supervisors know about my CHD and that if I am to hit my head, things can get critical quickly and to call emergency medical services sooner than they would for someone else. The first response most people have is "Well...don't hit your head?" I usually only tell those in charge and not my peers. I don't want to be treated differently. Experience has taught me that people often treat me like I am breakable when they find out. **I am not breakable; I am capable.**

I am capable, in large part, due to the support of my parents. My dad has been a great role model on how to live a life with scars. He was in a helicopter crash and has burn scars all over his face. From him, I have learned that what's on the outside doesn't define us on the inside. Or, in my case, what is inside me doesn't define or limit me on the outside. I do have scars, though, and they do affect me.

The drainage tube scars have caused me the most grief. They became attached to my diaphragm and limited my

breathing capacity. By the time I was 15, I could no longer take a deep breath, and they were becoming uncomfortable. This is when I went to see Dr. Gill Lauder at the pain clinic at BCCH. She uses myofascial activation and needling to release the scar tissue. Although it was painful to have my scars poked, Dr. Lauder's technique was very effective, and it took only four sessions to restore my breathing. This is an ongoing process—earlier this year I had two maintenance appointments with Dr. Lauder.

I am also capable because of the love and support I have received from the Children's Heart Network and Hearts of Gold. I was nine when I went to Camp Zajac for the first time. It wasn't until I had found such a great group of heart kids that I realized how much I needed the connection with other people who were *different like me*, how freeing it was to be able to ask "What's wrong with you?" and not offend anyone with the question. We were united by what set us apart. We were there to learn and share with each other, and that's exactly what we did and continue to do. I have made lifelong friends through camp and Hearts of Gold and consider them to be an integral part of what makes me who I am today: a strong, confident, and capable person. I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in camp, and I continue to grow from the experiences and connections offered to me through CHN and Hearts of Gold.

My job as a ski instructor just wrapped up for the season, I am about to act in my school's theatre production, I have a painting in an art show in Whistler, and I am getting ready to sell peanut butter in the upcoming market season. I am finishing grade 12 with a top GPA, and I am looking forward to attending UBC to study applied biology, with the intention of one day becoming a veterinarian.

At the end of May, I am going to camp with the Hearts of Gold group, and I am super excited to reconnect with all of the incredible people who will be there! ♥



CHN's 19th Annual Wine Gala

What a night! The fabulous event took place at the Terminal City Club on April 26. Guests came from Victoria, Whistler, and all over the Lower Mainland to celebrate and support the Children's Heart Network.

Attendees were welcomed with live piano, bubbly, and hors d'oeuvres. The room quickly filled up with over 225 guests who perused and bid on the over 100 silent auction items.

Our beloved emcee, John Emmet Tracy, welcomed our guests with his witty humour and some fun stories from his latest acting gig on the TV show *Yellowstone*. It was clear he had some fans in the audience! Then we had an update on what was happening at the Children's Heart Centre from Dr. Shu Sanatani, head of cardiology at the BC Children's Hospital. However, it was Lydia Schwartz who really stole everyone's heart that night. Lydia told the heroic story of her challenges growing up with heart disease and how she overcame these challenges to become a ski

instructor, an actress in her school play, an entrepreneur in owning a business with her sister, and a high-achieving student about to graduate from high school. There were many wet eyes in the room, and she received a heartfelt standing ovation.

Our wine sponsor for the evening, the Georgian Court Hotel, provided a fabulous array of wines that were enjoyed alongside a three-course dinner. Shortly after dinner, our incredible auctioneer, Fred Lee, took to the stage. With his oozing energy, he captured the room and in no time raised a whopping \$35,400 for CHN's "Send a Kid to Camp" program. The live auction was next, and bidders went wild for the unique items, one of which included tickets to the Wimbledon final coming up this summer!

It was then time for the "Glasses on/off" game. Participants purchased a pair of glamorous heart glasses and then decided whether to put them on or take them off as we flipped a coin at the front of the room. We narrowed down the players to a handful, and the winner took home a



Thank You to All of Our Sponsors!

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- Fountain Tire Abbotsford



\$1,000 gift certificate from Burrowing Owl Estate Winery and Guest House. A ton of fun and one of the highlights of the evening!

Finally, after some short thank-you speeches, we held the “cork draw.” Guests who had purchased numbered wine corks were entered in a draw for two Air Canada tickets for anywhere Air Canada flies in North America, including Mexico, Hawaii, and the Caribbean. Captain Darren Nadeau was happy to present the tickets on Air Canada’s behalf.

After all expenses were paid, the total raised at the gala came to just over \$106,000!

This amount will keep the Children’s Heart Network pumping for yet another year. CHN serves about 1,000 families in BC and will continue to do so to the best of its ability thanks to all the wonderful prizes generously donated to the gala and all the guests who came with their wallets open to enjoy this festive and fun evening. We are so grateful for the continuous support from many of our heart families every year.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers and our fearless auction captains, Tatiana Mawani and Philip Jaling!

Last, CHN would like to extend a huge heartfelt thank you to our hard-working, committed gala coordinators, who were an incredible team: Dee de los Santos and Serena Parbatani! ♥







Meet Our Gala Coordinator Team

Serena Parbatani, Gala Coordinator

Serena is heart mom to two-year-old Elias. She is a faculty member at the Melville School of Business and the co-founder of a children's toy company. A community volunteer, Serena is a member of the MOSAIC board of directors and has served on boards and portfolios within the Ismaili community.



Dee de los Santos, Gala Coordinator

Dee is a digital marketing and public relations professional working in numerous industries, including film and television, food and beverage, non-profits, and real estate. She is mom to a sweet five-year-old named Winston who was born with double outlet right ventricle and transposition of the great arteries and has gone through the Fontan procedure. Dee organizes the Heart Box Project, which sends celebration boxes to children living with congenital heart disease. When not working, Dee writes about food and travel on her blog Gastrofork.ca and for numerous tourism boards and online publications. ♥



CHN's Fundraising Committee Needs You!

*Potential board members—
start by joining our fundraising committee!*

How can you help support CHN so that we can continue to provide programs, events, education, and camps for our BC heart families? Join our fundraising committee! Here are the details:

- Meet once per month via Zoom with a team leader and other heart parent volunteers to discuss fundraising opportunities.
- Help put our fundraising initiatives into action.

- Support our annual wine gala and dinner by rounding up donations by emailing, phoning, or meeting with businesses and contacts that could be potential donors. Easy to do on the weekends or evenings from home.

You don't have to live in Vancouver! If you can offer up some of your free time to support CHN, please contact Sam Aitken at saitken@childrensheartnetwork.org. ♥

Triple Crown for Heart—Come Cheer and Volunteer!

**CYCLE. CLIMB. CONQUER.
CONTRIBUTE. CHEER!**

Founded by one of our cardiac nurses, the Triple Crown for Heart bike ride is coming up on Saturday, July 15. This ride involves cycling all three North Shore mountains in one day.

The Triple Crown raises funds for cardiac inpatient wards at the BC Children's Hospital and for the Children's Heart Network in support of Camp Zajac.

The Triple Crown has raised over \$25,000 every year. This past year, \$10,000 was donated to CHN, which was gratefully accepted by our board president, Tracey Carpenter.

There are many ways to help:

1. Roaming ride support
2. Aid station support
3. BBQ support
4. Medical support



If you would like to volunteer, please visit <https://triplecrownforheart.ca/volunteer>.

Another way you can support our riders is by coming out to CHEER on the riders on the last climb up Cypress Mountain. The suggested time to be on the route up to Cypress is 11:30 am to 1:00 pm.

If you would like to donate to the cause, consider sponsoring a rider. Here is the page for heart dad Shaun Carpenter: https://donations.triplecrownforheart.ca/team_fundraising/fundraiser/161/.

Shaun and all the other riders are raising funds to support our BC heart families. Let's help them conquer that last hill!

GO, Team Cardiology, GO! ♥

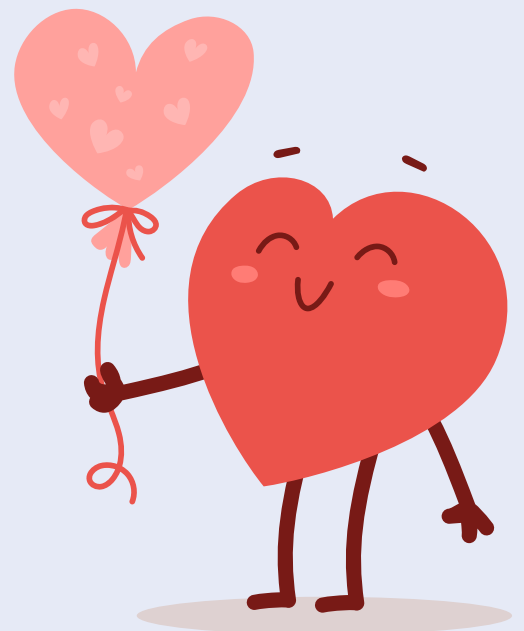
Dear CHN heart families and friends,

Do you, your friends, or your colleagues participate in events such as sport tournaments, 50/50 draws, other special celebrations, or activities that might include a fundraising component? If so, please consider the Children's Heart Network of BC as your charity of choice, and help us spread the word so that CHN's programs might benefit from a partnership and potential donation.

The Children's Heart Network is an established charity dedicated to supporting children with congenital heart disease and their families. By selecting us as your beneficiary, you will directly impact the lives of these brave children and their loved ones, providing them with resources, emotional support, and a sense of community.

Any contribution will go a long way in helping us continue our mission of bringing hope, healing, and resilience to those affected by congenital heart disease. Together, let's make a significant difference in the lives of these remarkable children and families.

For more information, please contact Sam Aitken at saitken@childrensheartnetwork.org. ♥



Executive Function and Congenital Heart Disease Research Opportunity

Would you like to participate in a study using an online game-based intervention to improve executive function in children with congenital heart disease?

Purpose:

With the majority of children with congenital heart disease (CHD) surviving into adulthood, there has been a shift to optimize long-term outcomes in these patients. Poorer executive function (EF) has been reported in these patients, which can hinder their academic, social, and behavioural development.

EF refers to a set of cognitive skills that are required to plan and execute complex tasks. Our aim is to improve EF in children with CHD using an innovative game-based parent intervention, which has shown to be effective in other clinical populations with poor EF skills (e.g., children with ASD, FASD, or ADHD). Improving EF and academic skills may be beneficial for long-term health outcomes (e.g., medical adherence) and quality of life in children with CHD.

Potential benefits to patients and their families:

- Information from this study will help researchers learn for whom this type of intervention would be most beneficial.
- Families will receive a \$10 online gift card after the pre- and post-training assessments (a total of \$20) as a token of appreciation.
- Parents are provided free training on how to improve their child's cognitive skills and provided support as needed from the research team.
- Once the study is finished, families may continue accessing their video game accounts and they can continue playing for free if they wish on their own home tablets.



Inclusion/exclusion criteria for patients:

- Between 4 and 12 years of age
- Diagnosed with congenital or acquired heart disease
- Parent and child are able to play the game-based intervention together for at least 30 minutes three times per week for a total of six weeks
- Have sufficient mobility to interact with the tablet (e.g., accurately tapping the screen)
- Have sufficient language ability to understand and follow simple instructions
- Have no more severe than a mild intellectual disability (i.e., not moderate/severe intellectual disability)

Demo of game-based parent intervention(Dino Island):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IB8p14momvo>.

If you are interested in learning more and to sign up for the study, please contact the study coordinator, Ms. Thumri Waliwitiya, at thumriw@student.ubc.ca. ♥

Sent on behalf of:



Dr. Sarah Hutchison, PhD

Sunny Hill Child Development and Rehabilitation Research Manager
Division of Developmental Pediatrics – Medicine | Pediatrics
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Physical Activity in Children with Congenital Heart Disease

Learnings from a physical activity counselling study

BY BIANCA FUKAKUSA, DR. ERICA BENNETT, DR. CHRISTINE VOSS, AND DR. KEVIN HARRIS, RESEARCHERS AT THE CHILDREN'S HEART CENTRE

Physical activity is important for heart health for people of all ages. The recommendation for children, including children with congenital heart disease (CHD), is to be active for at least 60 minutes each day. Dr. Kevin Harris's research has focused on physical activity in children with CHD. Whether it is playing soccer, dancing, riding a bike, helping with gardening, going for a walk, surfing, or doing karate, these activities and so many more are how we have seen children with CHD enjoy being active.

Many researchers have studied different ways to help children with CHD be more active and meet the recommendations, but we still do not know what the best way is. Each child with CHD has their own interests, obstacles, and motivators. We wanted to see what children and families with CHD thought about a physical activity counselling program that was centred on each individual family.

What did the physical activity counselling study look like?

Nine children with CHD between the ages of 9 to 12 took part in a Children's Heart Centre research project led by Dr. Kevin Harris. They received physical activity counselling through a workbook made specifically for children with CHD called the "From the Heart" program. This workbook included activities like talking about the safety of physical activity, creating a physical activity goal to complete, and drawing a map of their neighbourhood to find opportunities for physical activity. Children and their parents worked with a physical activity counsellor over Zoom to complete these activities throughout the 12-week program.

Children in the study also wore a small device to measure their activity for a week before, in the middle, and at

the end of the program. Some children and families were interviewed to provide feedback on their experiences with the program.

What did we learn from the physical activity counselling study?

As researchers, we learned a lot from the physical activity counselling study through feedback from both children and parents. One theme that we discovered from the interviews was the impact of a support system. Involving both the child and a parent or guardian in the program helped create a comfortable environment and helped with encouragement of physical activity goals and staying on track. This is an important learning to keep in mind for the future to make sure that both children and parents are part of physical activity programs to have everyone on board.

Another theme we noticed in the feedback was how important it was for children to have the freedom to decide how they completed the workbook activities and choose how they wanted to be active. Allowing children to pick what physical activity they wanted to do, when they would do it, and where created excitement around these goals. We also learned that the physical activity counselling program helped some children be more active. This program did not come without challenges, though, such as the time required to participate in it and the COVID-19 pandemic.

These are all important take-aways for researchers to learn from and apply to future studies and programs to help children with CHD be more active, in whatever ways are fun for them! If you are interested in learning more or getting involved in Children's Heart Centre's research studies for children with CHD, please get in touch with our team at cardioresearch@bcchr.ca. ♥





PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COUNSELLING STUDY



WHAT DID WE DO?



- We wanted to know what children and families with congenital heart disease (CHD) thought about a physical activity counselling study
- Physical activity counselling through workbook activities
- Video calls with a counsellor at BC Children's Hospital every other week for 12 weeks
- Physical activity levels measured using an accelerometer
- Measured physical activity before, in the middle, and at the end of the program

WHO PARTICIPATED?



- Nine children
- CHD diagnoses:
 - Fontan
 - Coarctation of the aorta
 - Transposition of the great arteries
 - Tetralogy of Fallot
- 9-12 years old

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

1

- Support systems are important to promote physical activity
- Fosters a comfortable and encouraging environment



2

- This physical activity counselling program helped some children to be more active



3

- Encourage children with CHD to choose physical activity they enjoy
- Creates excitement and motivation



Thank You



We would like to thank the children and families who participated in this study and the Heart Centre staff!

Infographic created by Tyler Woloshyn, Hadil Alfares, and Venessa Thorsen.

What's Happening?

Hearts of Gold Events – Lower Mainland

For teens ages 13–18 years old

Lower Mainland Hearts of Gold teens will get together this summer for some fun events. July will be a pool and picnic event, and August will be at the PNE. Come and enjoy an afternoon or evening with heart friends!

If you are a heart teen or a parent of a heart teen and would like more information on joining the Lower Mainland Hearts of Gold group, please contact Kristi Coldwell at chnheartsofgold@gmail.com.

Hearts of Gold Events – Vancouver Island

For teens ages 13–18 years old

Come and meet other heart teens, make some friends, and have some fun! Every month, our coordinator, Megan Madsen (certified child life specialist), hosts a different event. If you would like to join, please email Megan at viheartsofgold@gmail.com.

July event at WildPlay – Saturday, July 15

If you would like to join in, please RSVP to Megan at viheartsofgold@gmail.com so that she can collect some parent contact information beforehand.

The next event in August will be mini-golf and go-karting!

HeartBeats Camp

For children ages 8–12 years old

Our HeartBeats camp will be July 3–7 at Zajac Ranch in Mission. Our heart kids will join other children for the mixed medical camp, which will include horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, archery, crafts, and more!

Cultus Lake Waterpark

Save the date for our super fun summer get-together! It isn't confirmed yet, but we hope to host it on Saturday, August 19. Once confirmed, we will send out an email invitation to all CHN members to come and join us.

Family Camp

Lower Mainland Family Camp

Our Lower Mainland family camp will be the weekend of September 22–24. It will be hosted at Camp Stillwood near Cultus Lake. Watch for an invitation going out to all our heart families in July!

For more information about any of our events, please email Sam Aitken at saitken@childrensheartnetwork.org. ♥

