September 12, 2014

To the Supporters of the 22nd Annual Toy Drive:

Life can hurt. Play can heal. For many kids, chronic or sudden illness has the potential to change their outlook and the way they feel about healthcare – forever. Wouldn’t it be amazing to have the ability to help them feel normal and find enjoyment and distraction in the hospital environment? What if you could do that today?

You can.

Kade is a 9 month old who has been waiting for the right heart to come available for the last 276 days. He loves toys that light up and objects he can hold. He enjoys the opportunity to smile and coo at people he recognizes. Kade’s parents live a significant distance from the hospital and visits include working around the school schedules of his two school-age siblings. His family relies on the resources and support Kade receives from staff at the hospital.

Erin is 3. Because her family is able to visit only occasionally, she passes her days looking forward to the next time she can attend playroom. Play has transformed Erin’s well-being in the hospital. Her face lights up when she is allowed to choose what she will play with and she finds great joy in all toys – from Barbies to bubbles to blocks. Play is the reason Erin makes the trek with her IV pole down the hallway and back – three times every day.

Andrew is 14 and has been treated at UCLA since he was 3. He knows every nurse, care partner and volunteer on the floor. Andrew is frequently on “isolation precautions” meaning that he is unable to leave his room to socialize with peers due to the fragile state of his immune system. However, he is quick to show visitors his newest Lego creation, or summarize a story he read in one of his super hero comic books. Despite his situation, Andrew’s positive energy is infectious. His two siblings are frequent users of the playroom and they help Andrew pass the time playing together in his hospital room.

This is just a small sample of the patients seen every day at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA.

This year’s holiday toy drive will provide a panorama of developmentally appropriate toys and creative arts supplies that Kade, Erin, Andrew, their siblings and their hospitalized peers may use throughout their admission, reducing anxiety, and increasing opportunities to be a kid again. Playing games at bedside, engaging in songwriting activities, and creating artful masterpieces, are a few of the countless activities that medically fragile children at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA will enjoy because of your generosity.

Sincerely,

Kellye Carroll, MS, CCLS
Director, Chase Child Life Program
Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA