To supporters of our 24th 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.

Jalyn is 6 months old and has spent her entire life inside the walls of our hospital. When she was born, two months premature with significant heart defects, she was placed in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at UCLA – and she has remained there since. She is just beginning to attempt to roll over and laugh and loves toys that light up and objects she can hold. Jalyn’s parents live far from our hospital but love to come visit on the weekends. They are looking forward to the day they can hold their baby outside of the NICU walls. Jalyn’s family relies on the resources and support she receives from staff at our hospital.

Jesus, a seven-year-old boy suffering from bowel and liver failure, has spent much of his life as a hospital patient – including his current six-month stay at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA. Jesus is almost 100-percent non-verbal, but that doesn’t stop him from making his wishes known and his smile can light up a room. He also loves art and especially enjoys painting. Jesus will sit for an entire playroom session and paint on canvases outdoors on the terrace. Having many brushes, canvases and colors of paint make him happy. It also helps his mom to see how much he enjoys the fresh air and the opportunity to express himself when words are not an option.

Alexander is 19 years old and has been an inpatient at UCLA for nearly a year as he receives treatment for kidney disease. During much of this time here, he has been on isolation precautions and has had to stay confined to his room. Alexander loves technology – iPads, laptops, mobile devices – and also loves fixing them. Alexander is teaching himself to create apps. He hopes that one day he’ll be able to leave the hospital and have a “real job” fixing computers.

This is just a small sample of the patients seen every day at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA. Each of these unique personalities will carry their experiences with them as they heal and develop.

This year’s holiday toy drive will provide a panorama of developmentally appropriate toys and creative arts supplies that Jalyn, Jesus, Alexander, their siblings and their hospitalized peers may use throughout their stays, reducing anxiety and enabling them to experience these special childhood moments. 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 and participation in the 2016 Toy Drive sponsored by UCLA Campus Facilities, UCLA Medical Center Softball League and the UCLA Staff Assembly.

Thank you in advance for helping provide the healing power of play to the children at Mattel Children’s Hospital UCLA.

Sincerely,

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