



Gill Restores Vision for Aranza

Eight-year-old Aranza is a bright, cheerful child with a love for dancing, playing at the park, and coloring. She enjoys learning math and science at Cesar Chavez Elementary, and her friendly nature makes her a joy to be around. Her mother, Noelia, is proud of how social and kind Aranza is.

Two years ago, a family gathering turned tragic when Aranza's cousin, while playing with a BB gun, accidentally shot a stray bullet that struck Aranza in her left eye. She cried briefly but quickly went back to playing with her cousins. Noelia recalls, "Aranza seemed normal. We didn't notice anything different or unusual about her, so we thought it wasn't serious because we didn't see any swelling in her eye."

Months later, Noelia began to notice that Aranza's injured eye was crossing. Her teacher also observed that Aranza's vision was worsening, and her grades started to decline. The school conducted a vision exam, provided her with eyeglasses, and referred her to an eye specialist.



The diagnosis was devastating: a detached retina, requiring surgery to correct her vision.

"I felt like a bucket of cold water had been thrown on me," said Noelia. "I wasn't expecting this news. Aranza's dad and I couldn't sleep because we were worried about how we would pay for the medical bills."

The impact on Aranza was more than just physical. She began to withdraw, avoiding the friends she had once enjoyed playing with. Her grades continued to suffer, and her self-esteem took a hit. Noelia shared, "Aranza's self-esteem dropped because her eye looked different. She would lock herself in her room when people asked her about it. She used to be very social, but after the accident, her self-esteem suffered significantly."

That's when Aranza's family learned about Gill Children's Services. "We didn't know anyone else who could help us," said Noelia. The team at Gill immediately sprang into action, negotiating discounted rates with the physician, hospital, and anesthesia group to ensure Aranza could receive the surgery she so urgently needed. Thanks to the generosity of Gill's supporters, Aranza's surgery was scheduled for the spring.

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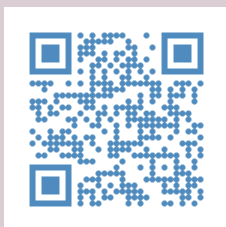
“ This is the happiest day of my life. ”



On the day of the surgery, Aranza's joy was overwhelming. She told her mother, "This is the happiest day of my life."

Since the surgery, Aranza has regained her confidence and is reconnecting with her social life. Her grades are improving, and her smile is brighter than ever. Noelia and her family are deeply grateful for the support they received from Gill Children's Services. "Gill brought happiness back to our lives," Noelia said. ●

Help children like Aranza with a monthly gift.



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Alice Celebrates 25 Years and Receives Community Hero Award



Alice Espinoza

has been a faithful steward of Gill Children's Services' mission for 25 years. She began work as a Case Manager in 2000, processing children's requests to fund dental treatment. Having worked

for a local dentist for nine years prior to joining Gill, Alice was well suited to respond to the growing requests to fund emergency dental treatment. Alice continues to serve in this vital role today.

The children whom she serves are often in crisis, experiencing extreme dental pain, missing school, or struggling with serious infection. When parents call Alice, she is their last resort and only hope of getting their children the treatment and surgeries they desperately need.

Alice cares for each child, one child at a time. Over her tenure, she has approved over 11,000 cases and ensured that over \$5.8 million of funding was provided to Tarrant County children who need it most. Her influence upon the mission cannot be measured. Her service is so longstanding that she worked closely with late founders Martine Ginsburg and Ginny Richards, has officed in several buildings, and even remembers recording her work in microfiche. Her institutional knowledge is unmatched by any employee, past or present.

Alice's contributions to the mission were recently recognized by the Rhetoric of Gratitude students at the John V. Roach Honors College of Texas Christian University, who honored her with the Community Hero award. This award recognizes individuals who dedicate their time, talent, and resources to improving the lives of those in Fort Worth and Tarrant County. The award was also accompanied by a \$10,000 donation to Gill Children's Services, made possible by a generous donation from Kelly and Jeff Dillard.

Alice's unwavering commitment continues to shine through in her quiet, consistent service. Though she prefers to stay behind the scenes, she truly deserves the recognition and praise from TCU and her colleagues at Gill Children's Services. Congratulations, Alice, on 25 years of remarkable service! ●



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State of Gill

By Peyton S. Lehrer, Executive Director

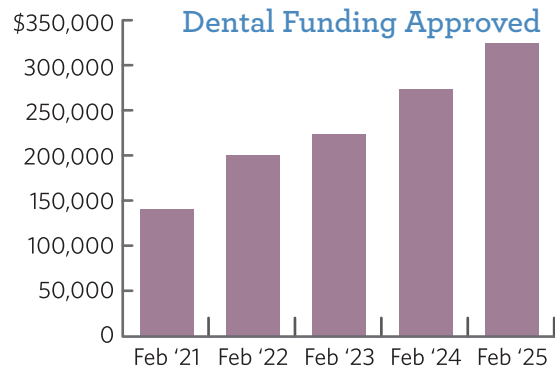
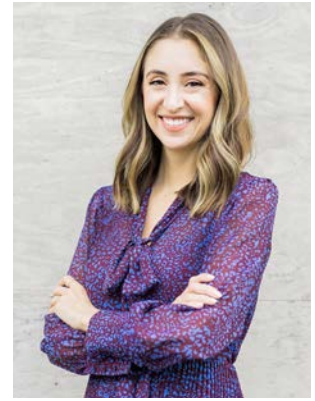
In our previous newsletter, we highlighted a troubling shortfall between donations and the increasing demand for our programs. Without expanded support, we faced the difficult reality of having to limit the assistance we could offer local children. We were deeply moved when a few of our most dedicated supporters stepped forward, making impactful contributions to help cover the gap from last year. Their kindness gave us the crucial breathing room we needed, and now, Gill is preparing for a greater need for dental treatment.

While dental care has always been a major part of our funding—typically accounting for about half of the funds we allocate to children—the recent surge in demand has been exceptional. Gill is now approving over \$40,000 each month to cover treatment, anesthesia, and facility fees for uninsured and underinsured children in need of dental surgery. The children we serve cannot be seen at local low-cost clinics due to the complexity and scope of treatment needed.

Your donation will be **tripled!**

Thanks to our generous providers, local dentists, and hospitals, so far this year Gill has saved over \$1.65 million in dental treatment. Without the substantial discounts from these providers and the ongoing support from our donors, the oral health of these children would be at serious risk.

We thank our donors for continuing to answer the call when children need help. You are their safety net! •



Design Inspirations

The 32nd annual Design Inspirations event was a tremendous success. Attendees were inspired by renowned designer Bunny Williams and admired stunning tablescapes created by Fort Worth's most creative teams. Hosted by the Kappa Kappa Gamma and Pi Beta Phi alumnae groups, the event raised funds for Gill Children's Services and Breakthrough Fort Worth. A heartfelt thank you to event chairs Claire Midkiff, Lisa Moore, Lauren Purvis, and Whitney Wynne. Gill Children's Services' table

was beautifully designed by Natalie Appel, owner and head designer of Blush Floral.





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Welcome to Lizbeth!

We are thrilled to announce Gill's newest team member, Lizbeth Aguilar. As Case Manager, she will help families as they seek financial assistance, guiding them to local resources and providing a safety net for those with last resort needs. She brings a wealth of knowledge of working with families. Lizbeth has worked in social services for 15 years, with experience at both Child Protective Services and Easter Seals in Oregon. She and her family moved to Texas a few years ago, and they have loved being part of the community. **Help us give a warm welcome to Lizbeth!**



Our Mission

Gill Children's Services provides last resort funding for Tarrant County children whose medical, dental, physical, social, psychological, or educational needs have not been met by other community resources.