

Introducing Our 2015-2016 National Patient Ambassadors

Every year, Shriners Hospitals for Children® selects two national patient ambassadors to represent the patients cared for by the health care system. The ambassadors spend the year sharing their stories, including the importance of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Meet this year's National Patient Ambassadors:

Katharine Koonce, 11, of Huffman, Texas

In 2008, the Koonce family sought refuge from Hurricane Ike at the restaurant in Houston where Katharine's father, James, worked.

Suddenly, while 4-and-a-half-year-old Katharine slept, a fire broke out that quickly engulfed her room in smoke and flames. Katharine's father dove into the room and emerged with Katharine in his arms.

Both father and daughter sustained serious burns. Fifty percent of James' body had been burned and Katharine had burns covering 70 percent of her body. The two were airlifted to a hospital in San Antonio for emergency care.

Once stable, Katherine was taken to Shriners Hospitals for Children — Northern California, via a Medevac flight. After three long months of treatment there, Katharine returned to Texas and continued her rehabilitation at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Houston, and later, at the Shriners Hospital in Galveston.

Katharine is now 11 years old and is a happy, vivacious and busy child. She practices gymnastics, sings, plays piano and loves to dance. She also enjoys fishing with her father.

Katharine has dealt with this painful situation with grace and bravery. She has been an ambassador for her local Shriners Hospital in Galveston and is happy to now have the opportunity to share her story with others around the country.

"I love God, my parents and the Shriners because they have helped me a lot and they are like family," said Katharine.

Clint Crain, 15, of Huffman, Texas

The Crain family was out on their boat enjoying the 4th of July weekend in 2014, when tragedy struck.

While standing on the back of the boat, Clint lost his balance and fell right into the propeller.

Once the boat was stopped and Clint was able to swim to the surface, his mother jumped into the water and held Clint while she waited for Clint's father, who was in the water wakesurfing when Clint fell, to come help her.

Weather and the holiday weekend combined to cause delays in getting Clint to a hospital. Still, a surgeon was onsite and able to treat Clint, who was



in critical condition, when he arrived. After seven days in the hospital, including three in intensive care, and an above-the-knee amputation, Clint was sent to Shriners Hospitals for Children — Houston, where he received physical therapy weekly and was fitted with a prosthesis.

The Crain family believes that everything has worked out so well for Clint — possibly even miraculously — for a reason, and that perhaps Clint has a new purpose.

It has only been a year since the accident and Clint is doing remarkably well. He is a very positive and personable teenager and is a great speaker, and hopes to be able to give back to Shriners Hospitals for Children through the ambassadorship.

"It's the climb I'm taking to be who I was, and be even better than I was, because without them [Shriners Hospitals] I wouldn't be where I am, I wouldn't have the things I have, the confidence that I have," said Clint.

Clint and Katherine's stories of grace and confidence can be seen on YouTube at youtube.com/ShrinersHospitals, and are available on DVD from the public relations department. Call 813-281-8162 or send an e-mail to shrinepr@shrinenet.org.



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