

# CONNECTIONS

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A health and lifestyle publication from Evanston Northwestern Healthcare.



## Paralysis Averted

Teamwork in the ER and beyond

Pregnancy and Depression  
Lightening the *Mother-load*



## Will's Challenge:

### How one infant's care inspired a loving gift for others

Shortly after adopting him, Sarah Schmidt and Julie Matthei learned their infant son Will had sickle cell anemia, a chronic blood disorder. They were determined to find the best treatment available for Will, and they found it at Evanston Hospital, part of Evanston Northwestern Healthcare (ENH). Now, through a special philanthropic gift to Evanston Hospital, Schmidt and Matthei are helping to provide improved health resources for other families in the community while creating a way for others to help.

As Schmidt and Matthei quickly learned, even routine illnesses for an infant often entailed a trip to the Emergency Department and could require an overnight hospital stay. They met other families struggling with the same challenge—caring for a sick child while juggling family and career responsibilities. Having quality healthcare services close to home alleviated these challenges, and they decided to make a charitable contribution to Evanston Hospital to help improve care for their son and the

more than 2,000 other children and their families who use the services of the Pediatrics Unit.

The couple initiated *Will's Challenge* in honor of their son, making an initial, significant gift. The fund will

finance needed enhancements and patient amenities to Evanston Hospital's 20-bed Pediatrics Unit.

To Schmidt and Matthei, *Will's Challenge* is both a way to express thanks for the quality healthcare they received and to strengthen these resources for the community by getting other families involved.

"Evanston Hospital's Pediatrics Unit is a gem," said Schmidt. "For us, it's close to home, and the staff is just the right size to be able to really know your child's needs. We always leave the hospital feeling thankful."



Will is now a rambunctious 2-year-old, and while his sickle cell anemia will be a lifelong health concern, he has a bright future thanks to the resources at Evanston Hospital and the support of its patients and friends.

For more information on supporting *Will's Challenge*, please visit [www.enh.org/foundation](http://www.enh.org/foundation) or call the ENH Foundation at 224-364-7200.

## How to Keep Kids Safe and Healthy During the School Year

By Russell G. Robertson, MD, Evanston Northwestern Healthcare

Autumn leaves are turning. And you know what that means: whether they like it or not, your school-age children are back in school. While they're busy learning the three Rs, it couldn't hurt for you to bone up on the three Ss (how to keep them safe, sound, and successful).

### Optimal sleep for optimal learning

Although children of any age need their sleep, keep in mind that your teenagers may require more sleep than anyone else in the family (as many as 9 to 10 hours). Unfortunately, they rarely get it.

But if you can help them get more Zs, they may actually get more As. One way to do this is to limit distractions like TV and computers before bedtime. It may not be easy, I know, but good sleep habits are so important that extra effort may be required on your part. If nothing you do to change their habits seems to work, they should get an additional 2 or 3 hours to sleep in on the weekends to help them replenish their deficit.

### Vaccinations can help prevent needless illness

One might think that by age 5 or so, immunizations for children would be a thing of the past, but that's not the case. For example, there are new ways to

prevent a rare but lethal form of meningitis. A pertussis booster is also available for whooping cough. And for young women, there is now a vaccine to prevent infection from the most common forms of the human papilloma virus (HPV), which can cause cervical cancer.

No one looks forward to shots, but they are important to keeping your children in the best possible health. So be sure to make appointments with your family physician in a timely manner. If you're not sure of the timing or have other questions regarding vaccinations, just call your doctor's office and they'll be glad to answer your questions.

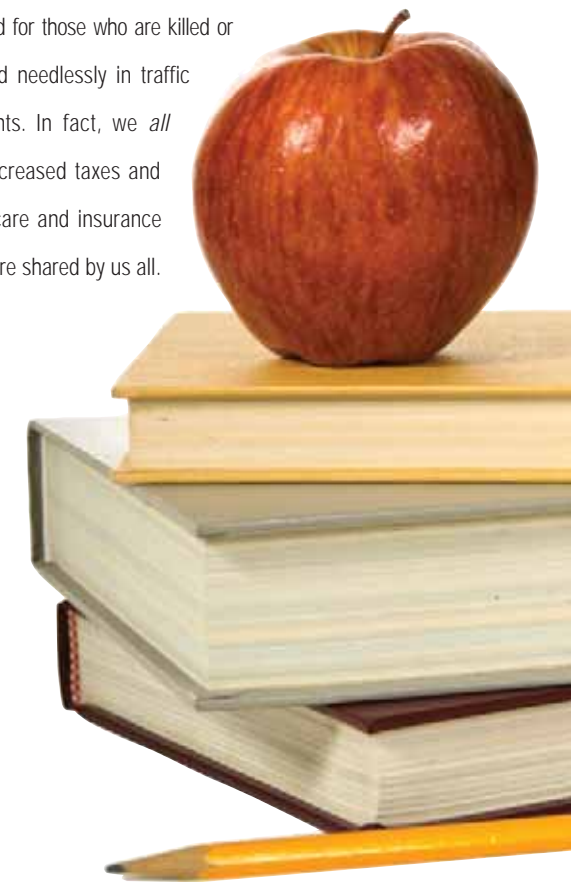
### Accidents waiting to happen

While we all fear diseases, the reality is that accidental injuries are the most common cause of disability and death in our children. But, like many diseases, accidents can also be prevented. You may not be able to be with your kids all the time, but you can teach them how to avoid accidents. Education is quite literally the best medicine.

*Play it safe.* Start by making sure your children are well protected during play by insisting that they wear bicycle helmets, pads for inline skating, and appropriate protective gear for all sports activities. It's important that you clearly communicate this

message about safety, even if other adults do not reinforce this message.

*Seat belts: make them a habit.* Seat belts are a safety measure that by now should be a habit for everyone. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), "The needless deaths and injuries from safety belt non-use result in an estimated \$26 billion in economic costs to society annually." The emotional cost of unbuckled drivers and passengers goes far beyond the grief and loss suffered for those who are killed or maimed needlessly in traffic accidents. In fact, we *all* pay: increased taxes and healthcare and insurance costs are shared by us all.



Seat belts save lives, whether you're driving fast or slow, so be a role model for your kids by buckling up before you turn on the ignition. Believe me, if you aren't wearing your seatbelt, your kids aren't going to be wearing theirs.

**Teens at the wheel**

A related highway traffic safety issue is teen driving. There's no way around it: teens want to drive; it goes with the territory. It's natural to be anxious—even terror-stricken—to even think about your teenager driving a 1-ton-plus vehicle. Try to quell your alarm and remember that experience behind the wheel has a profound effect on reducing car accidents. If you have a new teenage driver in your family, ask him or her to drive as often as possible (with a licensed adult driver in the car, of course). Don't let your teenager take to the road without an adult in the car until he or she has adequately and repeatedly demonstrated competence, courtesy, and safe driving.

**After-school safety**

With more and more children coming home to an empty house, established rules regarding a "guest policy" are essential. The after-school hours are the time of day when kids are most likely to have sex or consume alcohol or other intoxicants if there are no adults present. In my opinion, few if any visitors should be allowed in the home

when parents are absent. It goes beyond trust issues between you and your child; it's also about protecting your children from the behaviors of others.

**Teenage drinking**

It has been reported that an average of 25.6% of high school students have drunk alcohol for the first time before age 13. In fact, the age at which high school students start to drink is getting younger and younger.

Think carefully about where you store your alcohol. If it's out of sight, it will probably pose less of a temptation. Exercise drinking-related behavior that will have a positive influence on the way your child approaches drinking. Most important of all: talk to your kids—seriously and repeatedly—about the dangers of underage drinking.

**Oh what a Web**

We've all heard about the dangers posed by the Internet—especially to children. It's important to discuss rules about computer use often with your children. And remember, there's absolutely nothing wrong with checking to see which Web sites your kids visit in your absence. In fact, it's absolutely right. Finally, ask yourself if your child really needs access to the Internet 100% of the time. If the answer is "no," then you can limit their access to when you are at home so you'll be able to see for yourself what they're up to.

**Create a positive learning environment**

It may not be the only reason, but the main reason for attending school is to learn. As a former teacher, I can assure you that the ways in which you communicate with your child about school issues can

make all the difference in scholastic performance. Reinforce the values of learning and inquisitiveness.

If you see that your child is struggling with school, make certain that he or she has no hearing, vision, or learning disabilities that may be impeding the understanding and learning of new information. Be sure to let your children know that your love for them is independent of their grades. Never fail to praise them for their accomplishments. A strong and affectionate parent-child relationship is the best defense against any bad influences that may be lurking.

**Enjoy a family meal daily**

Eating together every day helps establish a pleasant routine that your child will remember for years to come. Importantly, it also creates a natural environment for conversation and sharing.

**Three little words**

My prescription for making this school year happy, healthy, and fruitful, is to say "I love you" to your kids at least once daily. That simple little phrase packs a lot of power.

**Have a great school year!**

Dr. Russell G. Robertson has a Family Medicine practice in Glenview. He has written regularly on topical issues related to health and families for many years, and currently writes a column, "The Doctor Is In," for *Pioneer Press Newspapers*. His office can be reached at 847-657-5757.

# community calendar

Evanston Northwestern Healthcare is pleased to offer you classes and events. The following is a list of some of those offerings. To register for classes and events, or to view more, log on to [www.enh.org/calendar](http://www.enh.org/calendar). You can also call 847-570-5020.

## October Is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**Breast Cancer Support Group**

*Oct. 10, 2007, 7–8:30 PM*  
 Graham Medical Office Building  
 1000 Central St., Suite 800, Evanston, IL

This support group is for breast cancer patients at any stage of treatment. Participation is welcome in these open-ended meetings.

**Justin Roberts Benefit Concert**

*Oct. 6, 2007, 11 AM–Noon and 2–3 PM*  
 Evanston Hospital, Frank Auditorium

Children's music sensation Justin Roberts will perform in an intimate setting at Evanston Hospital. All proceeds will benefit *Will's Challenge* to renovate the Pediatrics Unit at Evanston Hospital. Free parking in Evanston Hospital's parking garage. Individuals may purchase 6 tickets at a time. Tickets are \$20 each and purchases are final.

**"Look Good Feel Better" Support Group**

*Oct. 15, 2007, 4:30–6:30 PM*  
 Highland Park Hospital, 847-480-3853

*Oct. 16, 2007, 5–7 PM*  
 Glenbrook Hospital, 847-657-5826

A special support group for women actively undergoing cancer treatment. It teaches beauty techniques and strategies to combat appearance-

related side effects of radiation and chemotherapy. This program is offered in collaboration with the American Cancer Society, CTFA, and NCA.

### Key to the Cure

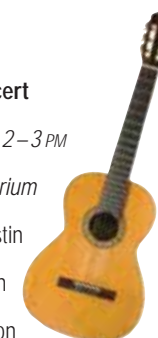
*Oct. 18–21, 2007*  
 Saks Fifth Avenue, Highland Park  
 847-859-8930

Benefits breast cancer research and treatment.

**Celebrate LIFE: Diet and Nutrition Guidelines for Cancer Survivors**

*Oct. 25, 2007, 6–7:30 PM*  
 Highland Park Hospital

The LIFE Cancer Survivorship Program, a community partner with the Lance Armstrong Foundation, introduces part one of the Myra Rubenstein Weis Survivorship 101 Lecture Series. Come and hear about "Eating to Beat Malignancy" and "Walking Away from Cancer" from the LIFE Healthcare Professional Staff. Presenters Carol Rosenberg, MD, FACP, LIFE Program Director and Founder; Carole Martz, RN, AOCN, LIFE Clinical Nurse Coordinator; and Oehme Soule, RD, lead dietician for the Women's Health Initiative, will address nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle concerns in conjunction with the American Cancer Society's "I CAN COPE" modules for cancer survivors. Light refreshments will be served starting at 5:30 PM. For more information, call Carole Martz, RN, AOCN, at 847-926-5818.



## November Is American Diabetes Month

### A Night in Morocco:

*From Casablanca to Marrakech, Architectural Artifacts*  
**Nov. 3, 2007**  
 Presented by The Associate Board of Evanston Northwestern Healthcare  
 4325 N. Ravenswood, Chicago  
 847-570-5306 or Kate Dell at [kdell@enh.org](mailto:kdell@enh.org)  
 Benefits Infant Special Care Unit at Evanston Hospital.

**Cholesterol/Glucose Screening — PC**

*Nov. 6, 2007, 8–10 AM (15-minute intervals)*  
 Glenview Park Center, 2400 Chestnut, Suite A Glenview, IL

This 15-minute screening measures total cholesterol, HDL ("good cholesterol"), LDL ("bad cholesterol"), triglycerides (fatty acids that contribute to plaque build-up), and glucose (an indicator of diabetes) to determine risk for heart disease. Fee: \$25.

**Diabetes Education Support Group**

*Nov. 20, 2007, 7:30–9 PM*  
 Highland Park Hospital

This program is for people interested in increasing their awareness about diabetes self-care through evening education programs. For more information, please call 847-432-8000 extension 5032.

**Blood Pressure Screening**

*Every other Friday, 8:30–10:30 AM*  
 Highland Park Hospital  
 Free.

