



Helen DeVos Children's Hospital Peter & Joan Secchia CarePartners Program

On March 20, LEAD members and guests were able to be part of a wonderful presentation at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital's Peter & Joan Secchia CarePartners Program. This Learning Session was led by Michelle Lancaster, Secchia CarePartners Coordinator; Laura Muma, whose family has greatly benefited from Secchia CarePartners; and one of our very own LEAD members, Connie Lettinga, who shared her story in caring for her daughter, Coral, who has Autism and has navigated the healthcare system without a program like CarePartners.

The Peter and Joan Secchia CarePartners Program exists to help families with children who have complex health situations navigate their way through their health journey. Michelle Lancaster has been with Secchia CarePartners since the beginning, and shared that since day one, the program averages 17 new referrals per month, with over half coming from our Helen DeVos Children's Hospital specialty teams and The Gerber Foundation Neonatal Center. Over 300 patients have received services, and each nurse has a case load of 70-75 patients. Fifty of the families currently being served have been part of the Secchia CarePartners family since the very beginning.



The Muma family has seen the incredible ways that Secchia CarePartners makes a difference. Laura Muma shared a little bit about her son Avery, who has a digestive disease disorder that requires frequent appointments with multiple specialists every month. Avery's care includes use of durable medical equipment, lab work, various therapies, radiology visits and check-ups. Laura shared that with the support of Michelle and the Secchia CarePartners team, she was able to manage life with a special needs child and has been able to continue to work full-time.

Connie Lettinga also shared her powerful story raising twin girls, Coral and Crystal, one of whom was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at age three. Connie's journey to find a diagnosis, provide comprehensive care and accommodate the special needs of her daughter Coral without a program such as CarePartners has been challenging, but is also a testimony of a mother's love.

Because Secchia CarePartners is a patient and family support service, it is not covered by insurance and relies completely on philanthropy to continue. Please consider allocating your LEAD gift to this important program of Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, so they can work towards making sure the 250 families currently on the waiting list have access to their services.