

PROFILE

VOLUNTEER LIGHTS UP LITTLE FACES

Some say Josephine Haywood has a special gift when it comes to children. From fretful babies to somber teens, this Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation volunteer always gets a smile. The 88-year-old has an uncanny knack for pinpointing what will invoke a response, from gentle strokes on the forehead to poetry reading.

Ironically, she and her late husband, Harry, were not able to have children. As a couple, Mr. and Mrs. Haywood were constantly "adopting" other people's kids and finding ways to support their community.

When contemplating their sizable estate, Mrs. Haywood knew she wanted their legacy to benefit children, but was not sure how. She had considered a national charity, but wanted the bequeathment to impact kids in the Cleveland area. The Perrysburg, Ohio native has lived her adult life on Cleveland's West Side.

"I needed to know my estate would go someplace where my heart is," she explains. Her plan came into focus when she toured The Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation at The Cleveland Clinic's PYRAMID Day last June. Serious about verifying a match between her personal values and a charitable children's cause, the energetic Mrs. Haywood signed up to volunteer at the hospital.

She gained much more than familiarity with the organization. To bring happiness to children born with multiple health problems is truly gratifying, Mrs. Haywood says, and volunteering two days a week gives her life new purpose. She does whatever is needed, from rocking to reading, paying special attention to babies whose families cannot visit during the day.

"It's a joy to me to be able to hold and relax them," Mrs. Haywood says. While a master of the human touch, she's also been known to play patty cake through glass isolation room doors. Simply talking to an infant or child calms them, she says.

Mrs. Haywood recently started observing children at the Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism at The Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation, the area she selected as her major estate designation. She is particularly interested in early diagnosis. When autism is discovered in the first years, therapy techniques involving intensive, one-on-one attention offer a better chance of unlocking special talents and helping children lead normal lives. The Haywoods' major planned gift will contribute to future building expansion as well as autism research.

Mrs. Haywood has also contributed generously to different areas of The Cleveland Clinic through various gifts and annuities in memory of her husband. She continues with many acts of kindness, such as crocheting a collection of colorful hats and delivering them personally to young chemotherapy patients at The Cleveland Clinic's Children's Hospital.

Throughout her 46-year marriage, Mrs. Haywood helped her husband run his project engineering service, and the inseparable pair managed two or three vacations a year traveling across the United States and the Caribbean. More recently, the adventurous Mrs. Haywood has traveled to Russia and the Great Wall of China.



Magic touch: Josephine Haywood holds Hyatt Abuhamdeh while volunteering at The Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation at The Cleveland Clinic.