

## *Hi, I'm Larah Nicholls the Play Therapist at Centenary Hospital for Women and Children*

Can you imagine how an 8-year-old would feel having to spend many hours every single week confined in a hospital bed, unable to go to school or play with their friends?

*I can.*

My job is to make a child's stay at Canberra Hospital more comfortable and less frightening. I provide a much-needed distraction from medical interventions through a play therapy program that helps minimise medical trauma and relieve their distress and anxiety.

### *One child I help is Kalten.*

Kalten has a rare genetic disease called MPS4 Number A. He's missing an enzyme his body needs to break down sugars and process all the toxins.

So for the past two years, every single Wednesday, Kalten has been coming to Canberra Hospital for an infusion treatment that takes 5 hours.

That's 5 long hours lying on a hospital bed. With no other available treatment, this will be Kalten's future indefinitely.



As you'd expect, on his 'hospital days' Kalten can feel bored, frustrated, sad, angry and lonely.

I see most children become overwhelmed by the strange, clinical spaces they find themselves in. They miss their family, their own bed, their pets, being able to watch a movie or play their favourite music or game.

Bedside play with Kalten, who's already spent more time in hospital than many adults ever will.

By providing Play Therapy, I give sick kids like Kalten strategies for coping. This can change a stressful and sometimes frightening experience into a calmer and more soothing environment.

Children in hospital just want to be at home. A play therapy program helps them feel less anxious and scared – it makes it so easy to put a smile on their little faces!

For Kalten, our time together is an important distraction. It's something he can look forward to on those long and boring treatment days.

I play games with him, do some craft, art and read him stories. He tells me "I wish you could come more often!"

With your help, I can continue providing kids like him with a welcome distraction from medical interventions. I can give them some learning opportunities whilst they're away from school, and ease their worry as well as the boredom of long stays in a hospital bed.

*Your support can make sure my program continues helping kids throughout and beyond COVID-19.*

Social distancing restrictions have changed the way I can offer play experiences on the wards.

For the safety of our vulnerable young patients, some play programs, dedicated areas and equipment that bring joy, distraction and a smile are now temporarily off-limits.

**I urgently need equipment and digital play therapy items that kids can enjoy regardless of COVID-19 measures.** That might include interactive online classes in music and drama, or the development of a play therapy app to help sick children with their unique challenges.

Your support to continue Canberra Hospital's play therapy program will help me change a child's hospital experience and create some happy memories during a distressing time.

By donating this CAN GIVE DAY you can make an incredible difference to children just like Kalten!

Please help us put smiles on children's faces.

*Thank you.  
Larah*

Give today to **DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT**

A gift of    \$23 = **\$46**    \$225 = **\$450**  
                  \$105 = **\$210**    \$853 = **\$1706**

[www.canberrahospitalfoundation.org.au/icangive](http://www.canberrahospitalfoundation.org.au/icangive)



CANBERRA  
HOSPITAL  
FOUNDATION

**CANGIVEDAY**  
26 NOV 2020  
*Be life giving*