



The Isabella Santos Foundation Commits \$5 Million to Create Rare & Solid Tumor Program at Levine Children's Hospital

CHARLOTTE, N.C., April 10, 2018 – Atrium Health's Levine Children's Hospital announced today a \$5 million charitable commitment from the Isabella Santos Foundation to establish *The Isabella Santos Foundation Rare & Solid Tumor Program* at Levine Children's Hospital. The program will oversee care for all solid tumors, rare tumors, metaiodobenzylguanidine (MIBG) therapy and all related clinical and scientific research at Levine Children's Hospital.

The donation – one of the single largest in the hospital's 10-year history – will fund the creation of a comprehensive team of providers and researchers uniquely positioned to advance care and research for rare and solid tumors. The team will be constructed over a period of five years, with the initial focus on hiring a medical director, who will be the Isabella Santos Foundation Endowed Chair in Rare & Solid Tumors. This program will serve nearly one-third of the 135 new cancer patients Levine Children's Hospital sees each year and will allow the hospital to expand their clinical trials.

"This gift is special because not only will it help us establish a program that will transform pediatric cancer care in the region, but it is also a sign of the deep level of trust that the Santos family places in Atrium Health's Levine Children's Hospital," said Gene Woods, President and CEO of Atrium Health. "We don't take this trust lightly. We commit to honoring the memory of Isabella as we fulfill our mission to improve health, elevate hope, and advance healing for all."

This \$5 million gift comes on the heels of a \$1 million donation the Isabella Santos Foundation made in 2017 to help build a MIBG suite at Levine Children's Hospital. The two-room MIBG suite, which will include a lead-lined patient room and an adjoining room for parents and caregivers, will provide targeted radiation to pediatric neuroblastoma patients and is slated to open in late 2018.

In 2007, Isabella Santos was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a rare form of childhood cancer that affects approximately 750 children a year. During her five-year fight against cancer, Isabella received much of her care at Levine Children's Hospital. However, some of the clinical trials and advanced treatments she needed were only available out of state. So, her parents had to take her to hospitals in New York City and Philadelphia.

While the Santos family had the option of seeking treatment elsewhere, Erin Santos, Isabella's mother and co-founder and president of the Isabella Santos Foundation, knew many others who

couldn't. With this gift, families will have access to the latest cancer treatments and expertise in Charlotte and this region.

"While I wish Isabella could have received the therapy in Charlotte, it is through her legacy that other families will be able to do so – and we are providing them with access to the most innovative research and treatments in their own backyard," said Erin Santos.

Javier Oesterheld, MD, the Jeff Gordon Children's Foundation Endowed Chair in Cancer & Blood Disorders and Specialty Medical Director at Levine Children's Hospital's Torrence E. Hemby, Jr. Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Blood and Marrow Transplant Center, also has a personal stake in the success of the program. Dr. Oesterheld was the doctor who cared for Isabella and has spent his career specializing in neuroblastoma, with a particular emphasis on conducting clinical trials.

"It is impossible to promote pediatric cancer research and treatments solely based on regular funding. Atrium Health relies on community support and philanthropy to further our mission," Dr. Oesterheld said. "We are deeply humbled and honored for the support of the Isabella Santos Foundation and their commitment to patients in this region. This will allow our program to flourish and to be among the best in the nation."

As the need for comprehensive cancer care in the region continues to grow, philanthropic support from donors and organizations such as the Isabella Santos Foundation will help ensure that patients have access to world-class care, regardless of where they live.

About Atrium Health

Atrium Health, previously Carolinas HealthCare System, one of the nation's leading and most innovative healthcare organizations, provides a full spectrum of healthcare and wellness programs throughout the Southeast region. Its diverse network of care locations includes academic medical centers, hospitals, freestanding emergency departments, physician practices, surgical and rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, nursing homes and behavioral health centers, as well as hospice and palliative care services. Atrium Health works to enhance the overall health and well-being of its communities through high-quality patient care, education and research programs, and numerous collaborative partnerships and initiatives.

About the Isabella Santos Foundation

The Isabella Santos Foundation (ISF) is a 501 (c)(3) childhood cancer foundation dedicated to raising funds for research for neuroblastoma, other rare pediatric cancers, and charities that directly impact the lives of children with cancer. ISF was founded in honor of Isabella Santos from Charlotte, NC who lost her battle against neuroblastoma. ISF works to improve rare pediatric cancer treatment options in an effort to improve the survival rate of kids with cancer. For more information, please visit www.isabellasantofoundation.org or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IsabellaSantosFoundation) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/TheISFoundation).

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