



Saving Children's Lives, Thanks To Research

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association and The Children's Heart Foundation set to join forces in the fight against congenital heart defects

Dallas, TX (Oct. 31, 2014) – When Brycen Principe was born, his parents were overjoyed. But shortly after birth, a chance diagnosis took them by surprise in a time they should have been celebrating – Brycen was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect (CHD). “Everything happened so fast. There were nurses and doctors everywhere but all I can remember is thinking that my baby was going to die.”

In the United States each year, it's estimated that at least 40,000 children are born with a heart defect. To help further lifesaving research in this area, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) and The Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) are joining forces to help tackle the world's number one birth defect: CHDs.

Through this new alliance, the AHA/ASA and CHF will establish the Congenital Heart Defect Research Awards that will provide \$2.5 million in grants over the next two years to support research in this field.

“The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association are extremely pleased to join with the Children's Heart Foundation in an effort to promote further research for congenital heart defects and to raise awareness of CHDs across the country,” noted Dr. Elliott Antman, President of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, Professor of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School; Associate Dean, Clinical/Translational Research, Harvard Medical School. “This alliance assures parents and children diagnosed with CHD that we are deeply committed to finding treatments so that children with CHD can live longer, healthier lives.”

In addition to funding research, the AHA/ASA and CHF will be able, for the first time, to provide an instant outlet to encourage organic conversations between consumers for patients and caregivers that are diagnosed with a CHD through the AHA/ASA's new patient Support Network. This network

connects people living with heart disease and stroke with others that are going through a similar journey and offers an online community, as well as materials for starting face-to-face community support groups. In addition, both organizations will continue to raise awareness about CHDs, the need to address national policies for early CHD detection and health advances that can change the life expectancy of babies born with a congenital heart defect.

“CHF is proud to partner with the AHA/ASA as we unite to build a world free from congenital heart disease,” stated William Foley, Executive Director of The Children’s Heart Foundation. “Through this collaboration, we strive to make a lasting impact in the lives of those with CHDs.”

In recent years, innovative CHD research has resulted in new treatments for many defects — like the one Brycen had at birth. But the work doesn’t stop there.

“Thanks to the AHA/ASA and this new relationship with the CHF, we have great confidence, as the parents of a child with a CHD, that future treatments and diagnosis will be brighter than they were in the past,” Jessica Principe said.

“Brycen continues to inspire us each and every day. He is so smart and has far exceeded any expectations we had of who he would be. He makes us laugh every day, he is loving and he is determined. Our hope for him is that he can continue to lead his life with the same ferocious courage he was born with.”

For more information on the AHA/ASA and CHF relationship, research grant opportunities, or for CHD support, please visit www.heart.org/congenitalheartdefects or www.childrensheartfoundation.org.

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About the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association

The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association are devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America’s No. 1 and No. 4 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based American Heart Association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

About The Children’s Heart Foundation

Established by Betsy Peterson in 1996, The Children’s Heart Foundation (CHF) is the country’s leading national organization solely committed to congenital heart research funding. Since 1996, CHF has funded 58 research projects with more than \$6.3 million. CHF is a national 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization that does not receive any government funding. The goal of the foundation is to bring health, hope and happiness to children and families impacted by congenital heart defects, the most common birth defect in the United States. This objective is accomplished by funding the most promising research to advance the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of congenital heart defects. For more information, please visit: www.childrensheartfoundation.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

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