



Retreat Transforms Lives

Conditions Treated at the Cincinnati Hospital

BURN CARE

- Burn injuries
- Inhalation injuries
- Burn reconstruction & rehabilitation

PLASTICS & RECONSTRUCTIVE CONDITIONS

- Congenital ear deformities
- Congenital hairy nevus (large birthmarks)
- Cleft lip and palate
- Brachial plexus injuries (nerve damage affecting upper extremities)
- Congenital hand malformations
- Gynecomastia (abnormal breast development in teenage boys)
- Congenital breast deformities
- Hidradenitis (chronic sweat gland disorder)
- Post trauma deformities (treadmill injuries, dog bites, lawnmower accidents)

COMPLEX WOUND & SKIN CONDITIONS

- Purpura Fulminans
- Necrotizing skin infections & Necrotizing Fasciitis
- Stevens-Johnson Syndrome
- Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis
- Port wine stains

All Services Provided Regardless of the Families' Ability to Pay

"I always thought that I was the only one with burn scars. I never saw anyone else like me in my school or anywhere I went," laments a young teenaged girl who is a patient at Shriners Hospitals for Children® – Cincinnati. "I felt alone and insecure. Since everyone told me I was ugly, I believed that it was true." That was before she attended the **Angel Faces Retreat** last summer in California. "From then on (after Angel Faces) I felt more confident about how I looked. The change was huge... I started seeing myself as a beautiful young lady instead of that ugly little child."

Angel Faces Retreat was founded by Lesia Cartelli in 2003 to transform the lives of adolescent girls with severe, permanent facial burns and disfigurements. Lesia herself was burned over more than 50% of her body in a natural gas explosion when she was nine. She knew what it was like to grow up with burns on her face and decided to create a retreat for other young girls with facial burns and teach them the tools that it took her 20 years to discover. The annual retreat is located in Cordova, California, about two and one-half hours north of San Diego. Over the course of the week, the girls attend sessions to learn about positive methods to respond to stares, teasing, bullying, unwanted questions and coping with uncomfortable situations. Therapeutic touch using facials, massage, hair and makeup lessons are also some of the activities the girls participate in, along with daily journaling and exercise. The attendees work in group settings to tell their stories, role play, and work together to learn how to answer and react to the uncomfortable stares and questions.

Adriana Ramirez is another Cincinnati patient who benefitted from attending an Angel Faces Retreat. She was burned in a hot oil fryer accident when she was 16 months old and was severely burned on her face, scalp, neck, chest and back. She learned about the retreat from Cincinnati employee Tracy Gaboury OTR/L, a licensed occupational therapist at the hospital. "Before I arrived at the retreat, I was very nervous. After I arrived, all that changed. I felt a sense of belonging as I walked through those doors. By the end of the first three hours, the whole group had bonded and become very close," Adriana said.



Adriana Ramirez

"This is a retreat, not a camp. This retreat focuses on situations what we girls face every day: Stares, teasing and questions. The girls focus on helping each other through the pain. We find our way how to answer questions and respond," she said. Before she went to the retreat, Adriana said that she really didn't like herself and avoided looking at herself. Adriana's parents also noticed a big change when she returned from the retreat. "Oh she was so interested in makeup and hair all the time," said her mother. "She had so much more confidence and smiled all of the time." "When I came back, everything was just different. Everything happens for a reason. Before, I never looked into the mirror, and now when I look in a mirror, I see the beauty that is there." Ongoing contact with the people from Angel Faces Retreat remains long after the girls return home. The girls and counselors use Skype once a month to continue learning and bonding. "When I need an energy boost or need help, I can call or text Lesia and she's there."

To learn more about how to support a Shriners patient desiring to attend Angel Faces Retreat, call Tracy Gaboury at Shriners Hospitals for Children – Cincinnati at 513-872-6522.

If you know a child we can help, please call:

Burn Services

(a burn injury, possibly requiring admission to hospital)

866-947-7840

Non-burn Services

(non-emergency burns and non-burn conditions)

855-206-2096 or helpachild@shrinenet.org