



The Blue Bird Circle Making A Difference

- The Blue Bird Circle, established in 1923, is a women's volunteer service organization servicing the Houston community. The primary focus of the Circle is to support the treatment of children with neurological disorders and the research into the causes and cures of those disorders.
- Circle members devote thousands of hours each year working in The Blue Bird Circle Clinic for Pediatric Neurology at Texas Children's Hospital, The Blue Bird Circle Resale Shop and other fundraising activities to support the Circle's charitable causes.
- The Circle gives more than \$1,300,000 annually to support The Blue Bird Circle Clinic for Pediatric Neurology and The Blue Bird Circle Clinical Research Center at Texas Children's Hospital, The Blue Bird Circle Rett Center and The Blue Bird Circle Developmental Neurogenetics Laboratory at Baylor College of Medicine.
- **The Blue Bird Circle Clinic for Pediatric Neurology at Texas Children's Hospital** is the largest pediatric neurology clinic in the United States, with more than 30,000 patient visits each year. The Clinic excels in general child neurology care and multiple specialty clinics including, but not limited to: Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Rett Syndrome, Batten's Disease, Angelman's Syndrome, Sleep Disorders, Epilepsy, Stroke and Headache.
- The Blue Bird Circle pledged \$1 million in 2010 to establish **The Blue Bird Circle Clinical Research Center at Texas Children's Hospital**. This center supports clinical trials designed to test potential treatments for pediatric neurological ailments and serves as the clinical research arm of the Jan & Dan Duncan Neurological Research Institute at Texas Children's Hospital making it the only center like it in the world. With innovative scientific discoveries, a large, diverse patient population and expert medical providers, the Clinical Research Center is the ideal foundation upon which to build an infrastructure that will advance care to the next level and make a difference in the lives of children affected by neurological disorders and injuries. The Research Center was chosen as one of three centers in the US for infusion of enzyme directly into the brain to treat a form of Batten Disease. It will also be one of the first centers in the US to employ a new treatment for Spinal Muscular Atrophy, a fatal neuromuscular disorder that employs a DNA molecule to modify a gene.
- In 2009, **The Blue Bird Circle Developmental Neurogenetics Laboratory** announced the pioneering discovery of the first of several genes that can predict sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP), the most common cause of mortality in children with epilepsy. Then in 2015, the Laboratory reported that these genes act by silencing the brain centers that control breathing and heart rate following a seizure. These key findings, published in the journal, *Science Translational Medicine*, promise to fundamentally change the ability of physicians to predict and prevent this tragic outcome, and the Laboratory now directs a NIH Center without Walls linking this research with 14 other Universities in the U.S. Several other important discoveries regarding prevention of the catastrophic form of epilepsy known as infantile spasms, as well as seizures caused by pediatric brain tumors, Down's Syndrome, and Alzheimer's Disease all offer hope for new and earlier treatments for these disorders.
- The continuing support of **The Blue Bird Circle Rett Center** has been responsible for the development of the first multi-disciplinary clinic for the care and clinical research for Rett syndrome. This Center has been the model for other Rett centers across this country. As a result of the activities of the Rett Center, the health status and quality of life for persons with Rett syndrome and their families has been dramatically improved with life expectancy now into the fifth and sixth decades. In 2015 the Rett Center began a program to develop a cure for Rett syndrome and has completed the initial clinical studies in children and adults with Rett syndrome. These represent the first successful treatment studies for neurodevelopmental disorders in general and Rett syndrome specifically. In 2016 the national family organization, Rettsyndrome.org, recognized The Blue Bird Circle Rett Center as a Center of Excellence.
- The Circle presented \$2,000,000 to Texas Children's Hospital in 2014 to establish **The Blue Bird Circle Endowed Chair for Pediatric Neurology and the Neurosciences** which is one of only four endowed pediatric neurology chairs in the country.

Continuing the mission and making a difference in the lives of children affected by neurological disorders, the Circle relies on the charitable contributions of individuals and corporations and funds received from our Resale Shop, Gala, Spring Luncheon and other Circle projects.