‘Oh, For Goodness Sake’ Embodies the Essence of SHC Childcare

The closest my mother, who died at the age of 95 in 2008, came to profanity was to say when something didn’t go as she thought it should, “Oh, for goodness sake!” I heard it a thousand times in my growing-up years. It was a throw-away expression for her, spoken without thought and little intended meaning. I’d like to redeem that expression: I think it captures perfectly the philosophic vantage point that has been the motive force creating and sustaining the 23 Shriners Hospitals for Children built across North America since 1922 and in operation today.

When Freeland Kendall of Lulu Shrine, and Forest Adair of Yaarab Shrine, proposed the creation of the first Shriners Hospital in Shreveport, LA, at the Imperial Session, Portland, OR, with the words, “It’s time to spend money for humanity,” they were saying, “Oh, for goodness sake.” When the first hospital opened to offer hope to children with infantile paralysis, the Shrine was saying to the world, “Oh, for goodness sake.” That expression has driven the creation of every Shriners Hospital now in existence across North America—one of the most remarkable philanthropic enterprises ever envisioned and fulfilled.

“Oh, for goodness sake!” I see it expressed on a daily basis as I walk the halls of SHC – Chicago, where we still care for children with the finest pediatric medicine anywhere in the world. Goodness, not profit, is the raison d’etat of our work. Goodness, not fame, creates the glory of our care. Goodness, not political power, provides the might of our mission. Thousands of children and their families are touched by the genuine goodness of the unique Shrine vision.

As we gather this year around our Thanksgiving tables, I’d like to suggest we say a prayer of thanksgiving for the goodness integral to each Shriners hospital every day. To assist in your focus, I have selected some of my favorite images from past Shrinelines of patients who have been especially blessed—and who have blessed us with their lives: We are bound by this remarkable, very special quality of life—“Oh, for goodness sake.”

Jackson Shrine Club Works Hard on ‘Main Focus: Kids’

There are only 40 active members in the Jackson, MI Shrine Club—but they make a big difference at our hospital. In the photo, right, Dave Long (l), Dave Fowler, Jerry Freeburn, and John Van Wert present checks for $7,000 to Administrator Mark Niederpreum for special needs at our hospital. Noble Jerry, president of the club, commented “Every member of the club knows that our main focus is kids—and they respond!” Raising funds from onion sales, cash calendars, and raffles, the men work hard each month for our hospital. They transport approximately 30 children—many from the Amish community within their area. Over the years, this club has raised $20,500. We are thankful this season for the dedicated Nobles from Jackson and so many other Shrine groups across the country, who take seriously their membership in the Shrine and their commitment to children.