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### CMH Performs Its First Heart Transplant

Children's Mercy Hospital

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# CMH performs its first heart transplant

## MY LINKS

### Kansas City teen is first patient to undergo a pediatric heart transplant at the Ward Family Heart Center

Feb. 13, 2015

*Click on the link to view a video of Hannah with the CMH Heart Transplant team: <http://bcove.me/8tv32ynw>*

The Ward Family Heart Center at Children's Mercy performed its first pediatric heart transplant, ensuring that Kansas City children no longer have to travel and leave their community for this procedure.

Hannah Mountz, 15, Kansas City, Missouri, was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy at age 12, a disease in which the heart muscle becomes weak and enlarged, making it difficult to pump blood through the body.



Dr. Aliessa Barnes with Hannah Mountz, the first patient to receive a heart transplant at Children's Mercy. "We have been able to manage her heart condition with the help of the cardiology team at Children's Mercy for the past three years," said Hannah's father, Tim Mountz.

“Hannah was on the transplant list for five weeks, and we were filled with so many emotions when we got the call that it was time for her to receive a new heart.”



The heart transplant team performing the first heart transplant at Children's Mercy on Feb. 13. Hannah's heart transplant took place at Children's Mercy on Feb. 13.

“We couldn't have asked for a better Valentine's Day gift,” Mountz said. “Our family is so grateful that we were able to stay home, in Kansas City, where Hannah has the support of our family and friends.”

“Months of preparation and dedicated work from the Children's Mercy Heart Center came together with a great candidate in Hannah. This combination resulted in an amazingly successful inaugural heart transplant,” said [James D. St. Louis](#), MD, Surgical Director of Cardiac Transplantation at Children's Mercy, who led the team during the six-hour surgery.



Dr. James St. Louis led the team during the six-hour surgery.

"I am a part of an amazing team of hardworking people that goes into performing a heart transplant. In addition to the cardiologists and surgeons involved, the transplant team is composed of transplant nurses, a pathologist, a pharmacist, social workers, dietitians and child life specialists," Dr. St. Louis said.

Leading the Children's Mercy heart transplant team are two nationally recognized experts. Dr. St. Louis is a board-certified thoracic and cardiac surgeon with more than 15 years of pediatric experience, previously the Director of Pediatric Cardiac Transplantation and the Director of the Heart Center at University of Minnesota Children's Hospital. [Aliessa P. Barnes](#), MD, Medical Director of Cardiac Transplantation at Children's Mercy is a board-certified pediatric cardiologist specializing in pediatric heart failure and pediatric cardiac transplantation. Dr. Barnes has 10 years of experience, the past five as Medical Director of Heart Transplantation at Children's Medical Center, Dallas.

Last November, Children's Mercy received approval for its pediatric heart transplant program from the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), a nonprofit group that oversees organ allocation and transplant programs under a contract with the federal government.



Hannah, practicing her french horn, went home 11 days after her surgery. She will need to take 15 medications to keep her healthy.

Integral to the heart transplant program, Children's Mercy also now offers ventricular assist devices (VADs), critical to support pediatric heart transplant patients as they wait for a new heart.

"The reality is that there is a limited supply of pediatric donors and pediatric donor hearts. This means our patients may need to wait for extended lengths of time for that gift to become available," said [Girish Shirali](#), MBBS, FACC, FASE, Co-Director of the Ward Family Heart Center. "In order to support our patients in every way possible, a transplant facility also must have expertise and resources to implant mechanical hearts, or ventricular assist devices, to help the patient remain stable while they wait."

Children's Mercy currently provides care for hundreds of heart patients who could require this therapy in the future, including one patient who is currently on the transplant wait list.

### **Outstanding outcomes**

Last year alone, the hospital's heart team performed more than 400 surgical heart procedures; provided more than 12,000 cardiac outpatient visits; conducted more than 16,000 echocardiograms; and provided more than 500 catheterization and electrophysiology procedures. The Ward Family Heart Center's outcomes, according to the Society of Thoracic Surgeons National Congenital Heart Surgery Database, are among the best of the 114 North American children's hospitals.

As a comprehensive transplant center, Children's Mercy also provides kidney, liver, bone marrow and stem cell transplants.