

# Richie Pediatric Trauma Center



Jaimee Jessop can hold up her head, feed herself and is learning to walk—again—precious milestones every parent awaits. But Jaimee’s first steps are nothing short of a miracle for the Jessops, who found her unconscious and in full cardiac arrest when she was just 3 years old.

Jaimee’s mother Mardee believes she was pretending to be a puppy when the accident occurred. She was outside in the play set that’s equipped with a climbing rope and likely wrapped a dog collar around both her neck and the rope to mimic a leash. The collar quite possibly hooked onto one of the rope’s climbing notches and Jaimee slipped.

An older brother discovered her dangling and cried out for his mother. Mardee ran outside and instructed him to call 9-1-1 while she began CPR, a skill she had learned just four weeks prior. By the time the ambulance arrived, Jaimee had regained a faint pulse.

At a local hospital, medical staff members supported Jaimee with oxygen. Meanwhile, the emergency room physician informed the Jessops that the hospital was not a pediatric trauma center and was unequipped to save their daughter’s life. They also didn’t have a helicopter available to transport her to another facility. Attempts to transfer Jaimee to two other hospitals were met with denials. “One hospital said they could send a helicopter in four hours, but the physician said she wouldn’t survive that long,” says Mardee.

A call was also made to Northridge Hospital Medical Center, where they finally heard a “yes” from **Hooshang Semnani, MD, FAAP**, Medical Director, Pediatrics. “When Jaimee was airlifted here, her chance of survival was very poor,” says Dr. Semnani.

“She suffered significant brain damage and acute respiratory distress syndrome or ‘shock lung’—a condition in which the lungs fill with fluid. She needed oxygen, but her fragile body wouldn’t respond to a conventional ventilator.”

## PEDIATRIC TRAUMA PHYSICIAN TEAM

Stephen Jones, MD, Medical Director, Emergency Department  
Richard Kang, MD, FAAP, Medical Director, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit  
Shawki Saad, MD, FACS, Medical Director, Trauma Center  
Hooshang Semnani, MD, FAAP, Medical Director, Pediatrics  
Stephen Shew, MD, FACS, FAAP, Medical Director, Pediatric Trauma Services

This past Halloween, 5-year-old Jaimee, aka Cinderella, went trick-or-treating on her own two feet.

Top of page: With her father Jeff at arm’s distance, Jaimee walks to Hooshang Semnani, MD, seven months after a strangulation accident nearly took her life.



## JAIMEE WAS A GUEST OF HONOR AT THE RICHIE PEDIATRIC TRAUMA CENTER'S GRAND OPENING THIS PAST FALL

From l-r: **Greig Smith**, L.A. City Councilmember, 12<sup>th</sup> District; **Zev Yaroslavsky**, L.A. County Supervisor, 3<sup>rd</sup> District; **Bob Blumenfield**, State Assembly, 40<sup>th</sup> District; **Mike Wall**, Northridge Hospital President and CEO; **Stephen Shew, MD, FACS, FAAP**, Medical Director, Pediatric Trauma Services; **Richard Alarcon**, L.A. City Councilmember, 7<sup>th</sup> District; and **Hooshang Semnani, MD, FAAP**, Medical Director, Pediatrics.

Mardee worried she would soon lose her daughter. "They say the hearing is the last thing to go, so I kept talking and singing to her," she says.

Hope surfaced when Dr. Semnani gave Jaimee a blood transfusion from her father's donation. "It provided her with life-saving oxygen and prepared her for a high-frequency oscillatory ventilator—a newer treatment at Northridge Hospital—that allowed Jaimee's lungs to heal," he explains.

"It is a gentler way of ventilating the patient while using higher pressures," describes **Richard Kang, MD, FAAP**, Medical Director, **Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)**.

When Jaimee could breathe on her own she was removed from the ventilator. Her hearing was intact, but she was unable to see, talk, taste or move anything but her tongue, and required feedings through a tube.

Even in her delicate state, the Jessops celebrated her milestone. "Everyone at Northridge Hospital was happy for us," says Mardee. "They supported us like family and coached us on how to further Jaimee's progress."

Jaimee returned home five weeks later and began continuous physical, occupational speech and equestrian therapies.

Seven months after the accident, the Jessops returned to Northridge Hospital to thank the entire staff who saved their daughter's life. Jaimee was talking, regaining balance and took some of her first steps right into the arms of Dr. Semnani.

"She's a fighter," exclaims Mardee. "So I'm not surprised at how well she's done. People who know her said if anyone could get through this, it's Jaimee."

## WHERE'S YOUR PEDIATRIC TRAUMA CENTER?

Mardee was surprised to learn that her local hospital was unequipped to save her daughter Jaimee's life. "Everyone needs to know where their nearby Pediatric Trauma Center is located," she says.

In 2010, Northridge Hospital opened the Richie Pediatric Trauma Center—the first and only one in the San Fernando Valley. "In a moment's notice, our specialized Pediatric Trauma Team assembles to save lives within the Platinum 30 Minutes," states Stephen Shew, MD, FACS, FAAP, Medical Director, Pediatric Trauma Services.

### Injuries treated include:

- Abdominal and chest injuries
- Traumatic brain injuries
- Spinal cord injuries
- Injuries to extremities
- Fractures
- Animal bites

Learn how to prevent children's injuries at [www.NorthridgeHospital.org/kidshealth](http://www.NorthridgeHospital.org/kidshealth).