

# ANY BABY CAN

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## TWO YEARS OF RAMPANT INFECTIONS

And Rihanna Smiles Through it All

When Rosio Castro's infant daughter, Rihanna, turned six months old, Rosio weaned her off of breast milk and returned to work. Immediately, Rihanna was diagnosed with an ear infection. Then another. And another.

### 42 EAR INFECTIONS

We hear that breast milk has magical powers, helping infants fend off disease and enabling them to grow strong and healthy. Rosio learned the truth of that theory as she diligently and methodically took her baby to a series of specialists, each of whom tried various medications, tubes, surgical procedures and other treatments. By the time Rihanna was one and a half years old, she had suffered 42 serious ear infections.

### DIAGNOSED WITH IMMUNODEFICIENCY

Many people go through life unaware of the numerous deadly bacterial infections that can befall a person. Rosio knows them all because Rihanna has contracted 14 different infections, often simultaneously, including RSV, H. flu, pneumonia and MRSA. Finally, after incessant testing, Rihanna was diagnosed with an immunodeficiency disease. She does not produce antibodies, making her susceptible to infection.

### A RARE CONDITION, RIGOROUS TREATMENT

Her condition is rare and doctors cannot find the source of her disease. Currently, she is undergoing an experimental treatment, getting plasma transfusions every three to four weeks. The regimen is rigorous. She is hydrated for two hours; given medication for two hours, then transfused with plasma for a four-hour period. "The hope is that this procedure will boost her immunity and her body will learn to produce white cells. The outcome is a big question mark," her mom says.

### GOOD NATURED, CALM & SMILING

Rihanna has undergone a lifetime of health problems ... and she is just two years old. Amazingly, she does not cry or complain, even though Rosio says the constant ear infections "made her feel as if she was under water all the time." Such misery could have produced a sad, grumpy baby, "but she is the happiest baby you ever saw ... she is good natured, calm and always smiling."

### MEDICAID & ANY BABY CAN

Medicaid covers Rihanna's care, for which her mom is deeply grateful. And though she had to take a leave of absence from her job with a



*A mother's tenacious love sustains her beloved daughter.*

cardiology clinic, her employers are holding her position open and she hopes to return to work.

In the meantime, Any Baby Can has helped her with rent, utilities, a car seat, food, diapers, clothing and other resources. "Rosio is a single mom and has two older children," Genevieve Brock, Case Manager, says. "This mom is stretched thin, but she is maintaining herself and pushing through. We are so glad we can help them." (cont'd on page 3)

# ON THE WINGS OF THESE ANGELS,

## Sick Children are Able to Soar

When you hear the poignant stories of the little ones we serve, know that an Angel may be the reason we can bring these children hope, comfort and healing.

Families come to us holding children in their arms who are suffering from critical or chronic illness, disabilities or developmental delays. Because of the generous Angels who give \$1,000 or more to the Any Baby Can Angel Society each year, we never turn a child away.

We call these faithful and selfless donors "Super" Angels and we recognize them each year at our Angel Society Luncheon. Their sustainable annual gifts are critical to the clients who come to Any Baby Can seeking help.

If you'd like to grow wings and join this compassionate group, know this: Angel Society gifts are the most cost effective investment you can make: 100% directly supports our families' programs and needs. Call us at 210-227-0170 and ask for Denise Rizzo. We'll tell you everything you need to know to earn your very own "Super" Angel wings.

And if you should meet any of the following "Super" Angels at an earthly gathering, please thank them on behalf of our children. 🙏

## ABC SUPER ANGELS 2011

Mrs. Jeanie Allgeier  
Mr. and Mrs. Randy Baker  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Barish  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Byrd  
Mr. and Mrs. Nick Campbell  
Mr. Keith Clay  
Mrs. Dixie Dixon  
Mr. and Mrs. Craig Donegan  
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Dubrof  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Duff  
Mrs. Mystel Duke  
Mr. and Mrs. Martin Flynn  
Mrs. Carolyn Fralix-Gold  
Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Gardner  
Mr. and Mrs. Hallstead  
Ms. D'Ann Harper  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hernandez  
Dr. Gregory Hudspeth  
Mrs. Janet Irwine

Mr. Robert Kaufman  
Dr. and Mrs. Scott Kercheville  
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Stacy Locke  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Loeffler  
Ms. Martha Klein Lottman  
Dr. and Mrs. Frank Moorhead  
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nollen  
Ms. Lulu Olson  
Mr. and Mrs. Keith Orme  
Mr. Andy Pratt  
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Scantland  
Dr. and Mrs. Brian Schroder  
Mrs. Carol Severyn  
Mr. Craig Stanich  
Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Velez  
Mr. and Mrs. Graham Weston  
Mr. Jerry Willborn  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Woolfolk

# SCHOOL SUPPLY/ UNIFORM DRIVE

## When You're Out Shopping, Think About a Child in Need

To do their jobs effectively, doctors need a stethoscope; dentists need a drill; builders need a hammer; teachers need books ... and children need school supplies.

Can you imagine how embarrassing and frightening it would be for a child to arrive at school without the obligatory backpack filled with paper, pencils, rulers, glue, crayons, erasers, tissues, scissors and other necessities? And what about a fresh, clean uniform?

Sadly, it happens every year. Many parents simply cannot afford to buy school supplies and new uniforms and they must send their children to school unequipped for the work ahead. These children are handicapped from the get-go ... but it doesn't have to be that way.

Any Baby Can wants to help ... and we need your help. This school year marks the agency's first official school supply/uniform drive. We've always accommodated parents who come to us requesting assistance with school supplies and uniforms, but this year we're widening our reach, enlisting generous San Antonians to make a contribution.

When you're shopping at the drugstore, grocery store, big box store, office supply store, mall or anywhere that sells school supplies and uniforms, please consider adding a few items to your basket for a needy school child. You may drop them off at Any Baby Can at 217 Howard, San Antonio, TX 78212 (210-227-0170) or 1619 E. Common, Building C, Suite 303, New Braunfels, TX 78130 (830-606-4040).

The drive continues through the end of September. And if you'd rather make a monetary contribution, please mark your checks: School Supply/Uniform Drive and mail to the addresses above.

A little child will thank you.



# HONORING VOLUNTEERS

## Jon's Run Brings Solace to Baby's Family

A smiling, good-natured, cherubic baby boy died when he was just three months old, devastating the family that loved him beyond words. But Kristian Barrera will always be held in the hearts of all who knew him ... and Jon's Run is helping to keep his memory alive.

Kristian's grandmother, Letty Sczepanik, is doing her part to ensure that Kristian's legacy of love continues and embraces others who have suffered the unthinkable loss of a child. Letty spiraled into a depressed state after her grandson's death, but now she has found an outlet for her grief through Jon's Run, the annual walk/run hosted by Any Baby Can that offers grieving families a day of remembrance, a day to honor the child who is no longer with them.

Letty and 25 family members and friends formed a team to walk Jon's Run and she recruited her employer, Walgreens, to lend support. Walgreens supplied a tent, 400 balloons, a helium tank and bottled water for the balloon release. "Participants write the name of their child on a piece of paper and attach it to a balloon and when all those brightly colored balloons are released into the air, it is a very emotional moment," Letty says.

As manager of the Walgreens at Goliad and Southeast Military Drive, Letty encouraged other Walgreens to support the event. "Next year," she said, "we hope to involve even more stores."

Letty's son Kristopher and his wife, Alita are Kristian's parents. He was part of a big, close family and is missed by everyone who knew him. "My mother-in-law saw him just a few weeks before he died and said she'll never forget his smile — she says it was the best smile anyone ever gave her," Letty recalls.

The suddenness of the baby's death made it even harder to bear. He went down for a nap and never woke up. SIDS — sudden infant death syndrome — is the suspected cause and little is understood about this heart-wrenching condition that takes the lives of 2,500 infants, usually ages one to four months, each year in the U.S. The only thing Letty and her family know for certain is that it's a cruel, senseless, unimaginably painful death for a baby's loved ones.

Kristopher and Alita attended counseling sessions at Any Baby Can following Kristian's death and it helped to talk about him. That's why the entire family gets involved in Jon's Run every year — to talk, to remember, to cry, to share their grief and listen to others' stories.

Kristian died September 12, 2007, but thanks to his devoted family, he will always be treasured and remembered, and every Mother's Day weekend, at Jon's Run, balloons will fly into the heavens inscribed with loving words for this precious baby boy.

Letty's family knows too well the tragedy of losing a child; in 1994, Letty's niece and godchild, Katherine, died at age four, a victim of cancer. The family team that participated in Jon's Run called themselves Kristian's and Katherine's Krew, to memorialize both children.

Jon's Run is named for Jon Carl Stephenson, who died in 2002. Since the first Jon's Run in 2003, the sanctioned 5K event has grown enormously. At this year's race, 1,100 participated and helped raise a record \$40,000 to sustain Any Baby Can services. Supporting Jon's Run is one of many ways volunteers may serve Any Baby Can and its clients. If you're interested in volunteering in any capacity, please call Katherine Ratcliff at 210-227-0170. 🚗



*Kristian's family and friends keep his memory alive at Jon's Run each year.*

## RIHANNA

*(cont'd from front page)*

Rosio says, "Words cannot describe how great Any Baby Can has been to me. Genevieve is awesome!"

### THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE

That's why we're here, after all. Every year, 1,200 families look to Any Baby Can to provide comprehensive assistance for children born with a chronic illness, developmental delay, health risk or challenge. Our belief is that every child deserves a chance to live a happy, healthy life. We feel that by serving the needs of the family, we serve the child. 🚗

## FASHIONISTA ALERT!

**Y**ou're going to love the 17th Annual Any Baby Can Fall 2011 Style Show and Luncheon, in a new venue — the Pearl Stable — with limited seating, so you'll want to make a reservation pronto.

On Tuesday, September 27 at 11 a.m., with the luncheon theme of Bon Appetit, you're assured a spectacular dining experience ... along with Julian Gold's dazzling styles and gorgeous models, and our energetic committee's fabulous raffle packages. And Kym Rapier will be honored

as our 2011 Angel Award recipient for her philanthropic work as chief executor of the Blake, Kymberly and George Rapier Charitable Trust.

You're invited to join this year's luncheon chairpersons, Ginger Doherty and Rachel Roberts, for this grand fashion event. Individual tickets cost \$150; tables may be reserved by calling Kay Maynard at 210-547-3017 or [kmaynard@anybabycansa.org](mailto:kmaynard@anybabycansa.org).

## AUTISM WALK BREAKS

Guinness World Record™

What does it take to beat the Guinness World Record™?

It takes the hearty enthusiasm of 5,441 San Antonians and friends who ran/walked/strolled in the Any Baby Can Walk for Autism on April 16, 2011 — including Mayor Julian Castro.

According to a Guinness World Record™ representative on hand to validate the event, Any Baby Can has gone down in the record books for garnering the largest number of participants in a Fundraising Charity Walk ... in the world! Previously the record was 4,458.



The Autism Walk netted \$150,000 to benefit the "Reaching Families Facing Autism" program, which provides parent training, counseling and case management for hundreds of families who have children diagnosed with autism.

Thanks to all — especially sponsors Little Engine Homecare, Inc., Therapy 2000, Ability Pediatric Therapy, Shape of Behavior, Circle of Care and Himmel Home Health; and the San Antonio Fire Department, which formed the biggest team, with 175 participants!