

# Clowns Make a Difference

**P**ATIENT ambassador Megan Johnson started a fundraising initiative in 2006 called "Megan's Mission" to help the homeless. She holds fundraisers selling cookies, hot chocolate and apple cider outside her home to raise money for materials to make scarves and blankets and to purchase socks and gloves for those living on Seattle's streets. She has created a new way to support her fundraising efforts by selling bracelets for \$2 each.

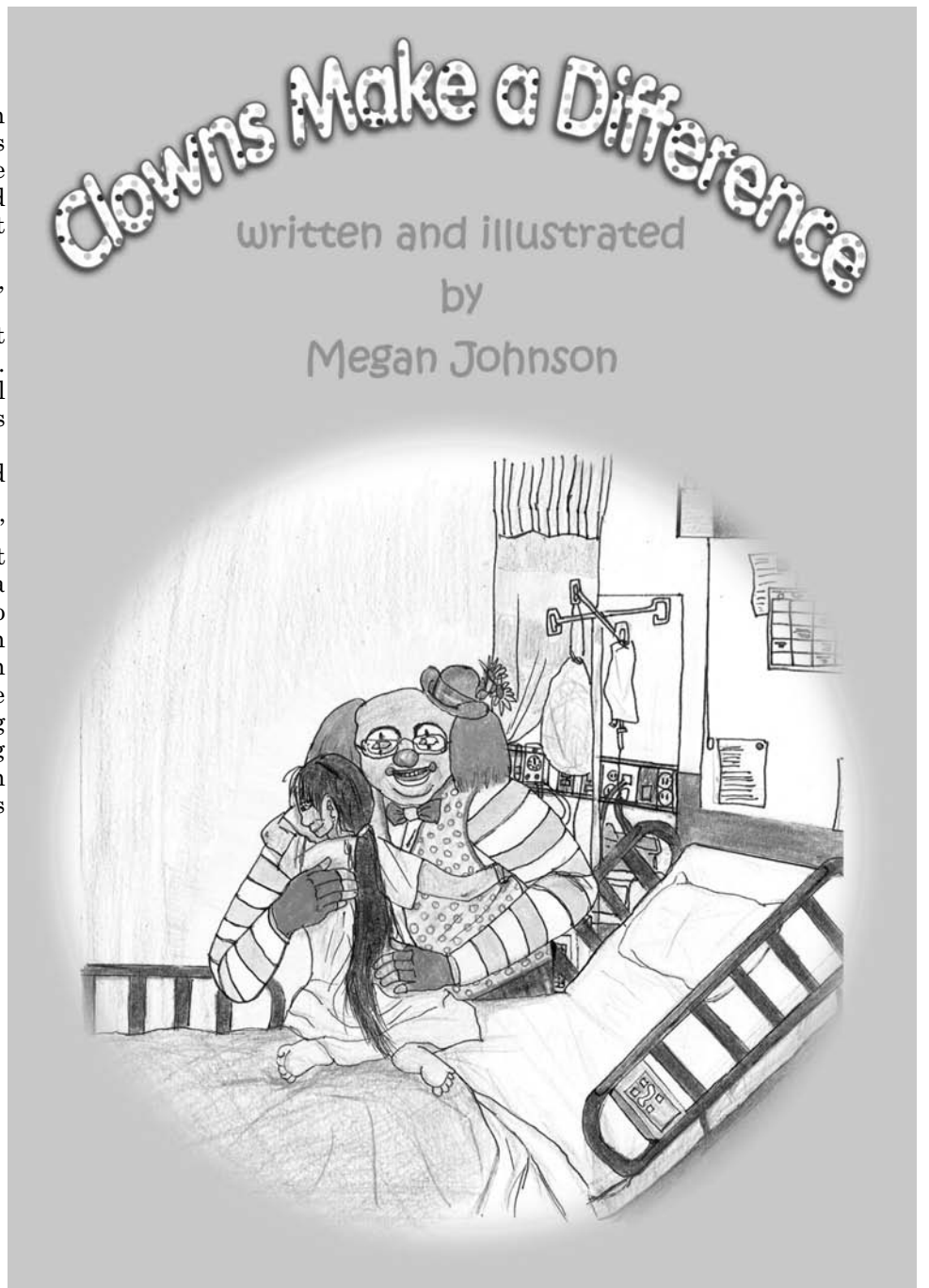
Megan Johnson has written, illustrated and published her first children's book, *Clowns Make A Difference*.

She wrote this book to help kids who are going to the hospital and to highlight the work at Shriners Hospital Clowns who help children through this tough time. Megan knows what it's like to be in the hospital for weeks - even months, she will soon have her 25th surgery. The money from the book will go to help Shriners Hospital. They treat thousands of children at no cost to their families.

To order the book or bracelets you can email her at: [MegansMissionAndMom@Msn.com](mailto:MegansMissionAndMom@Msn.com), the books are \$12.50 plus postage.

Megan's Mission dates back to 2001 as a project called "Kids Helping Kids" that donated videos to children in hospitals, for which she and her Girl Scout troop were honored by the Red Cross. Since that time she has donated \$100 a month to Firstplace, a school for homeless & at-risk kids; \$100 a month to Childhaven, a facility that helps drug babies and small children; \$100 a month to Union Gospel Mission, a homeless shelter; and \$600 a year to Fusion, an organization that helps women with children affected by domestic violence. She has received many awards and honors for her work: she received the Young Philanthropist Award for the state of Washington in 2004, 2004 National Young Volunteer of the Year for the VFW/Ladies Auxiliary at their National Convention in Ohio, threw out the first pitch at a Seattle Mariners game in 2005, and was honored as the 2006 "Success Story" at the Imperial Session in Tampa.

For more information on Megan's Mission visit her website at: [www.megansmission.freesevers.com](http://www.megansmission.freesevers.com)



PATIENT AMBASSADOR **Megan Johnson**, checking out the mural in the lobby of the Shriners Hospital for Children—Boston during her tour while she was visiting. Megan and her mother **Jill** were guests of Aleppo for the January 2008 Ceremonial.



# A Variety of Shriners Events Raises Millions for Hospitals

**S**HRINERS throughout North America donate their valuable free time to hold a variety of special events each year to benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children. These events provide an important contribution by helping to fund the hospitals and raising awareness about the Shriners fraternity and its philanthropy.

In 2007 alone, 522 events held by Shriners temples raised more than \$14.1 million for Shriners Hospitals. While some temples sponsored fundraisers like

newspaper crusades, rodeos, dances, and golf and fishing tournaments, others hosted events that are a bit out of the ordinary.

For the past 36 years, the Jackson Hole Shrine Club in Wyoming, which is affiliated with Kalif Shriners, has held cutter horse races to benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children — Salt Lake City. During the two-day event, held each February, 40 teams compete in a series of races down a snow-covered track. A cutter is similar to a horse-drawn chariot, with two wheels on each side. One person sits on the cutter and directs the two-horse team during the race.

Each year, the races draw between 3,000 to 5,000 spectators and raise between \$17,000 and \$20,000, said **Bob Zimmer**, president of the Jackson Hole Shrine Club. Funds to benefit the hospital are raised through Calcutta betting, an auction-style type of wagering where people continue to "buy" teams at higher prices throughout the event.

Zimmer, who is also the Teton County sheriff, admits that organizing the cutter races each year can be time consuming, but he believes it is well worth the effort. "When you see one youngster who has had the benefit of receiving care at Shriners Hospitals, it puts it all in perspective."

In Spokane, Wash., El Katif Shriners race about 10,000 bright-yellow ducks down the Spokane River to raise funds for the Shriners Hospital in their city each year. The ducks aren't alive, though — they're plastic.

Members of the community sponsor the ducks by buying raffle tickets. Ticket numbers are affixed to the bottom of each duck. On race day, a crane lifts a container filled with the ducks high above the river and dumps them in all at once. The ducks float about a mile down the river to the official finish gate. Sponsors of the first five ducks to finish the race win prizes.

About 500 people attend the duck race every year, said **John Robertson**, an El Katif Shriner and coordinator of the 2008 race, which will be held on September 21. Last year's duck race raised \$33,500. Since 1991, El Katif has donated a little more than \$533,000 in race proceeds to the Shriners Hospital in Spokane and to the temple's patient transportation fund.

Robertson has volunteered to work on the event since becoming a Shriner five years ago. "It's rewarding to me as a Shriner, because it shows the community that we are fortunate enough to have a Shriners Hospital in Spokane," he said.

Thanks to the efforts of Shriners who volunteer to work on events like these, more than 865,000 children each year receive one-of-a-kind medical care — at no charge — at the 22 Shriners Hospitals for Children.



FORTY TEAMS PARTICIPATED in the Jackson Hole Shrine Club Cutter Horse Race held in February to benefit the Shriners Hospital in Salt Lake City. (Photo courtesy of Marilyn Paine)