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**Family Fun Day Provides Therapeutic Fun for Rehab Patients**

Children's at Cobb recently hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Cobb Family Fun Day. This event encourages family participation in their child's therapy in a fun and functional environment. Kids play on inflatable slides; paint their faces; and even step into a fire truck—these fun activities also showcase the skills they have learned during therapy.

This day also is a time to showcase the tremendous progress of patients like Matthew Gibson. Matthew was born at 24 weeks after the doctors weren't able to lower his mother's blood pressure. He weighed one pound, one ounce at birth and immediately needed a ventilator and tracheostomy tube to breathe. During the course of Matthew's life, he has undergone 10 surgeries—ranging from granulation tissue removal to emergency bowel obstruction surgery. Last September, Matthew had his tracheostomy tube removed, and has made incredible strides with his therapy at Children's.

Each week, Matthew undergoes physical, occupational and speech therapy, and his mother is in awe of how far he has come. "This day is exciting to me because even last year I would have never been able to take him to an event like this. It is wonderful to see him defy all the odds," said Vermikalasha Strange, Matthew's mom.

Stories like Matthew's and several others made this day worthwhile for the staff that made this event happen. Steve Cummings, manager of Children's at Cobb and Children's at Sandy Plains, says this day serves as a perfect reminder of why we are in pediatrics.

"It is our job to make therapy fun every day, but it is hard. Sometimes they are in pain, but this is a great opportunity for them not to think about therapy and to have a little fun," he said.

All Rehab area used to host one big Family Fun Day event together, but in recent years Children's has hosted separate events at the neighborhood locations to make it more convenient for the families. CIRU and Day Rehab held their event at The Zone and Fayette Rehab hosted 105 patients, visitors and family members at their location. Current and former patients served as volunteers and mentors to the younger patients.

With the help of volunteers and employees, Family Fun Day is a day many families will never forget.

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