

## Shriners...from Page 1A

Greenville hospital specializing in orthopedic care for children, and also at the hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which treats young orthopedic patients as well. Orthopedic conditions regularly treated at Shriners Hospitals include clubfoot; limb deficiencies, deformities and discrepancies; curvature of the spine; brittle bone disease; and complications related to spina bifida, cerebral palsy, dwarfism and muscular dystrophy.

Rehabilitative programs offered to patients of Shriners Hospitals involve a complete range of therapies, fitness programs, psychosocial guidance, and experiential activities aimed at assisting patients to develop skills for living independently.

Additionally, a multidisciplinary team of medical professionals provides support to child-patients and families during transitions back to everyday life.

That's why it is no exaggeration to say that the nonprofit Shriners Hospitals are in the business of safeguarding the future by changing lives, and they do it by dramatically improving the quality of life for society's most vulnerable and precious members: its children.

Once a child receives a referral to a Shriners Hospital, he or she can start to receive world-class medical care regardless of the family's ability to pay.

Covered costs include all medical procedures, tests, follow-up visits and therapies, travel expenses to and from appointments, as well as intrahospital room and board for parents, with over-the-road and flight transportation provided if needed.

Since the Shriners are always looking for children to help, local Appalachian Club members encourage families to reach out to them if they have a need for specialized care, or if families with children in need don't know a Shriner, they can call 800-237-5055.

In addition to its child-patient care mission, Shriners Hospitals also conduct innovative medical research and offer many teaching programs for medical professionals.

As one might imagine, providing such a high level of care and support to children suffering from any number of life-altering conditions is costly, especially when factoring in the cutting-edge medical research and educational programs backed by Shriners Hospitals.

Each year, approximately 85% of Shriners Hospitals' operating budgets go directly toward funding Shriners International's overall mission of patient care, research and education, with last year's budget of \$965 million going to serve 255,000 patients in 2018.

And because acceptance into a Shriners Hospital is based solely on a child's medical needs and never on ability to pay, to further their mission of making as many children well as possible, Shriners rely on local fundraising efforts carried out by the 195 temples around the world.

Here in Towns and Union counties, members of the Appalachian Shrine Club conduct two main fundraising campaigns every year to support the mission of the Yaarab Temple.

The first of these fundraisers takes place largely in the spring and goes toward the annual Big Top Circus and Fair in Marietta, attended this year by local fifth-graders in May.



**A baby boy with a cleft lip and cleft palate before receiving treatment at Shriners Hospital for Children...**

Commonly considered the "World's Largest Shrine Circus," the annual event brings families together from all over for fun and fellowship while raising awareness about the Shriners and the causes they champion.

Local Shriners also hold a fundraising drive each fall in support of the Shriners Hospitals, during which time Shriners take to the community with their red fez hats and buckets to collect generous donations at intersections and various retail locations.

The Appalachian Shrine Club also hosts Blairsville's original "30 Guns in 30 Days" raffle fundraiser that goes toward, among other things, aiding Shriner "Roadrunners" to provide transportation for children and families of Union and Towns for treatment at Shriners Hospitals.

Such treatments are possible in large part due to the financial support of area residents and sponsors right here in the North Georgia Mountains, with all donations to the nonprofit Shriners Hospitals being tax deductible.

Shriners are also generous supporters of the causes they espouse, giving of their own personal time and money, though it takes the continued support of the community to help the Shriners further their charitable mission in the mountains and beyond.

The Appalachian Shrine Club is facing the same issue of lower membership numbers faced by many volunteer service groups these days, and as such, the local Shriners are always looking for more members to join their cause in helping them ease the suffering of children.

"It's an organization



**...And here's the same happy young man after benefiting from reconstructive surgery at Shriners Hospital, made possible through generous public donations.**

that everybody who's in it is proud to be a part of," said Dwain Brackett, a decades-long member and multi-term past president of the Appalachian Shrine Club. "Some people will ask, 'How do I be a Shriner?'"

"Well, you have to be a Mason to be a Shriner. The Masons act as our interview group, if you would, so once you become a Mason, if you want to, you can branch off over here and be a Shriner.

"Our local club has probably 30 active members at this point. We've had a lot more and we've had a lot less — it just fluctuates. And unfortunately, we've lost several over the last few years."

Added Brackett, "But what we need the most is patients. We've got the facilities right now, there's funding available. The patients that are going somewhere else because they don't know to come to us, we need to get those patients in. They're out there, they just don't know."

For the many members of Shriners International, including those based locally, the ultimate goal of the Shriners Hospitals is to make sure that no child suffers with a medical condition simply because his or her family cannot afford treatment, and all donations go toward funding that goal.

For more information on how to donate, visit the Appalachian Shrine Website at [appshriners.org](http://appshriners.org).

The Shriners meet on the second Thursday of every month, with fellowship starting at 6:30 p.m. in their Club Building at 68 Industrial Blvd. in Blairsville.

## Superior Court...from Page 1A

and Kerry B. Morris, special assistant attorney general with the Department of Family and Children Services, and attorney with the Law Office of Todd L. Lord.

All three nominees have current or past ties inside the Enotah Judicial Circuit.

Clough got his start on the circuit in 2003, taking on various roles in the district attorney's office until being appointed as Juvenile Court judge in 2015.

Levins started his public service with the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office in 2012, though he transferred to the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit nearly two months ago.

Morris served eight years in White County as a senior assistant district attorney of the circuit, and she is now working with Todd L. Lord in private law practice.

The Enotah Judicial Circuit representing Union, Towns, Lumpkin and White counties consists of three Superior Court judgeships, and the nominee selected by Kemp will join Chief Judge Raymond

George and Judge Joy Parks on the bench.

George became the new chief judge on Oct. 1 following Gunter's last day in office on Sept. 30.

"The Superior Courts of Georgia is a court of general jurisdiction handling both civil and criminal law actions," according to GeorgiaSuperiorCourts.org. "Superior Court judges preside over cases involving misdemeanors, contract disputes, premises liability and various other actions."

"In addition, the Superior Court has exclusive equity jurisdiction over all cases of divorce, title to land, and felonies involving jury trials, including death penalty cases."

GeorgiaSuperiorCourts.org is managed by the state-created Council of Superior Court Judges of Georgia, "which assists the Superior Court judges and the judicial circuits by providing administrative support, research, IT services, court automation and communications."