

All Heart

The Willson Heart Center

“ We need help to achieve our vision. ”

– Dr. James Prochazka, Medical Director, Pediatric Cardiology

Dr. Carl Owada and Dr. Paolo Aquino
Interventional Cardiologists

A man receives an alarming call at work from his wife: their son's oxygen levels are dangerously plummeting and he's en route to Valley Children's Hospital.

This isn't the 12-year-old's first emergency trip since his birth with a life-threatening congenital heart defect. As the dad rushes to meet them, he knows their only child is in the best hands. With three open-heart surgeries, five heart catheterization procedures and ongoing cardiology visits at The Willson Heart Center, the boy known for his uplifting smile now lives a fairly normal life—except for days like this.

Congenital heart defects are the most common birth defects. While congenital heart defects continue to be the leading cause of all infant deaths in the U.S., now more than 50 percent of surviving patients reach adulthood. With this improvement also comes a greater demand to provide expert care for more adults with this condition.

Every year the Center's experienced team treats hundreds of young hearts with a wide range of complex issues, working in tandem with pediatric intensivists, radiologists, anesthesiologists and other specialists to provide the intense care and continuous monitoring fragile heart patients need.

Long known for its expertise and pioneering new treatments, the Center's goal is to expand services and staff to offer the best pediatric cardiac care in the nation. This means broadening the Center's electrophysiology and fetal heart services, state-of-the-art interventional cath lab, cardiac neurodevelopment program and more. It also means formalizing an adult congenital heart program to ensure children with congenital heart defects continue receiving the finest care throughout their lifetime from specialists who understand their condition.

“There isn't anything that can't be done here,” says Dr. James Prochazka, medical director, pediatric cardiology. “But it's expensive to provide the cutting-edge care these challenging patients require. We need help to achieve our vision.”

Soon the boy's condition stabilizes and he slowly opens his eyes, reassuring his mom and dad with that warm, familiar smile.

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