

# The Providence Journal

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## **Founders of Lend A Hand Riding Foundation give thanks**

CRANSTON — Five-year-old Angelica Negron of Providence, her hair trailing in long dark curls behind her, was so excited yesterday that she ran across a field at the Lend A Hand Horse Farm to tell her mother that she had gotten a chance to hold baby bunnies.

Angelica, who recently completed chemotherapy at Hasbro Children's Hospital, personifies the resilience of children.

She and other young patients partied all day yesterday as guests of the Lend A Hand Therapeutic Riding Foundation, whose founders know all too well what it means for parents to worry over a sick child.

Larry and Jessica Moses have run a therapeutic horseback riding program for children with disabilities at the farm on Laten Knight Road since 2004.

On Aug. 1, eight weeks ahead of schedule, Jessica gave birth to triplets, Summer, Maja, and Luna.

Maja and Luna thrived, but Summer did not respond to treatments for jaundice.

"She was at death's door," said the baby's grandmother, Elizabeth Moses. Then Summer made a dramatic turnaround that her grandmother said can only be a miracle.

Larry Moses said he and his wife and other supporters of the Lend A Hand Therapeutic Riding Foundation organized the day-long event in appreciation for the care and support their family has received at Hasbro Children's Hospital, the pediatric division of Rhode Island Hospital, as well as Ronald McDonald House.

Jessica Moses, an occupational therapist, gave pony rides, while Larry focused on the arrangements for the other festivities.

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Volunteers, including members of Girl Scout Troop 370 of Cranston, set up lunch under a tent and performers and a dog trainer took their places. Corporate and individual sponsors donated all the food and equipment for the event, while performers contributed their services, according to Thomas Citak, vice president of the foundation.

Angelica, wearing a pink velour track suit that set off her dark hair, sat in the front row of a circle of children watching magician David Down cut a piece of rope into eight and then make fun of himself when he had a hard time turning the eight snippets back into one strand.

Eight-year-old Robbie Beauchaine of Warwick had followed along, counting on his fingers to eight as the magician cut the rope.

Robbie, who is deaf and has autism and a learning disability, didn't want to leave the house for the ride from Warwick to the farm in western Cranston, said his grandmother, Mary Ann Mitchell.

But once he got there, Robbie mixed in with the other children, enjoying the magic show and a lunch that included pizza.

A former student at the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, Robbie now attends class in the Warwick public schools.

"He's come a long way in the last two years," she said.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Moses and her friend, Marie DiMauro, nestled the three Moses babies under matching pink gingham comforters in a huge triple-bassinet stroller. They maneuvered the vehicle down a path from the farmhouse to a field that served as party central.

Moses said doctors suspected Summer had a rare condition called biliary atresia, in which the bile ducts that pass along waste from the liver to the small intestine are either missing or blocked.

Only when surgeons operated did they discover that the problem was caused by a cyst.

But even after the cyst was removed, Summer remained in poor condition, her grandmother said.

She was scheduled for a second surgery in Philadelphia when suddenly she responded to steroid treatments and the bile began flowing as it should, said Moses.

"We went from fear and a lot of sorrow to so much happiness," she said.

Hospital officials allowed the entire family to stay together, with Larry and Jessica and the two healthy babies living at Ronald McDonald House for two months while Summer was in intensive care at Hasbro.

Elizabeth Moses said her son and daughter-in-law share a love of creatures great and small that will make them perfect parents.