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# Good News Department

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## Hope For Children With Chest Deformities

(NAPSA)—For the past four years, church members have told Mariah Moreno that she has the voice of an angel. At age 8, she continues to amaze her audiences with her beautiful singing voice and confident stage presence.

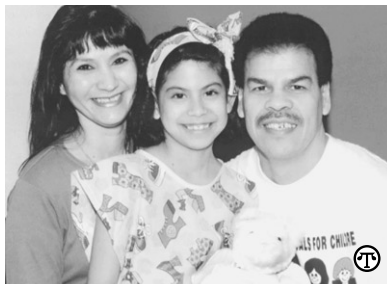
The most inspiring thing about Mariah is that she recently had corrective surgery for pectus excavatum (PE) at the Houston Shriners Hospital for Children. This condition is also known as “sunken chest” and is the most common congenital chest wall deformity.

Born with a noticeable indentation in her chest, Mariah’s parents were informed by her doctors that she would eventually grow out of it. By age 6, though, she began suffering from severe breathing problems and chest pains.

“It seemed like everywhere we turned, our doctors would not address her chest defect,” said Mary, Mariah’s mother. “We were confident that her sunken chest was a real problem, as we prayed for a solution.”

Their prayers were answered when the family posted a letter on the Shrine’s Web site message board. Shortly thereafter, Mariah was seen at the monthly chest clinic conducted by chest specialist Laurens R. Pickard, M.D., an 18-year veteran physician at the Houston Shriners Hospital, who diagnosed her with a moderate case of PE. After consulting with Pickard, Mariah’s parents agreed to move forward with corrective chest surgery.

“Two hours after the surgery, there was a 100 percent improvement in her chest,” said John, Mariah’s father. “We learned through this struggle that you should never give up to find the



**During her week-long recovery in the Houston Shriners Hospital, Mariah’s teddy bear, Faith, was her constant companion, along with her parents, Mary and John.**

answers, and don’t take no for an answer.”

Approximately one in every 600 people is born with an abnormal growth of the lower costal cartilages between the ribs and sternum, where the sternum is pushed inward (excavatum—85 percent) or outward (carinatum—15 percent).

Pickard evaluates and treats all chest defect cases, offering both surgical and non-surgical options.

For more information on Shriners’ network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at [www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org). Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.