

Big Gifts Come In Small Packages

Austin Pearce is a generous supporter of *The New York Eye & Ear Infirmary*. Austin stands about five feet tall—and he just turned 11 years old.

Austin's father, Alan, was a patient at New York Eye & Ear last year due to severe eye inflammation that was causing him great pain and threatened to leave him totally blind in one eye. Ophthalmologist C. Michael Samson, MD, and retinal surgeon Uri Shabto, MD, collaborated to ensure that Alan's sight would be preserved. Young Austin was so grateful that he saved his spending money for many months until he reached a total of \$100, which he sent to New York Eye & Ear President and Chief Executive Officer Mc Kessler. "I sent the money because I wanted everyone with eye problems to get better quickly," he said.

When Mr. Kessler invited Austin to visit so he could personally thank him, Austin

arrived with another \$20, which he placed into Mc Kessler's hand. The visit was made even more memorable by the fact that Austin's parents, Susan and Alan, decided to match their son's caring gesture with a gift of their own. To honor Austin and support efforts to serve New Yorkers the Pearce family pledged an \$18,000 gift to create *The Austin Pearce Kids' Ophthalmology Fund*.

More than 30 percent of New York Eye & Ear's patient population consists of children and this number is growing across all three of the hospital's specialties: ophthalmology, otolaryngology and plastics & reconstructive surgery. Philanthropy will be increasingly important to support the expansion of pediatric care services.



Left to Right: Alan Pearce, C. Michael Samson, MD, Austin Pearce, Mc Kessler, and Uri Shabto, MD

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