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FALL TV PREVIEW: TV NETWORKS PLAY IT SAFE, 1D

Area children's hospital gets \$5 million boost

A Google executive with ties to Gainesville donated the money to help the hospital effort.

By Diane Chun
Staff writer

A \$5 million gift from a Google executive with ties to Gainesville has boosted the efforts of the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation to establish a full-service

children's hospital here.

The foundation announced the gift from Craig Silverstein, technology director at Google, Wednesday afternoon.

Silverstein is the son of two Gainesville physicians, Drs. Burton and Janet Silverstein. He left his doctoral studies at Stanford University in 1998 to join two school friends, Sergey Brin and



Silverstein

Larry Page, in a nearby garage to build the now-famed search engine.

Horst Ferrero describes the \$5 million commitment as "transformative." The foundation has raised \$1.3 million to date, with its second annual fundraiser, "Noche de Gala," coming up Oct. 3.

The foundation was established after Horst and Luisa Ferrero lost their 3-year-old son, Sebastian, in October 2007 through a series of preventable errors at the University of Florida's

pediatric clinic.

The couple brought Sebastian in for a "routine" test for a growth hormone deficiency. He was given an infusion containing the amino acid arginine. Through an error in the pharmacy, compounded when the nurse administered the intravenous fluid, he was given more than 10 times the required dose. The mistake proved fatal.

The Ferreros pledged the \$850,000

GIFT on Page 4A

GIFT: Plan in works to survey premier children's hospitals

Continued from 1A

settlement they received to begin a campaign for increased patient safety and the eventual establishment of a state-of-the-art children's hospital.

The University of Florida College of Medicine and Shands HealthCare have worked with the couple to establish the Sebastian Ferrero Office of Medical Safety.

Plans are under way to survey premier children's hospitals and analyze what makes them first-rate.

"We plan to launch a strategic planning process soon that will include an assessment of children's needs and services," said Dr. David Guzick, UF's senior vice president for health affairs.

"At the same time, we continue to work toward enhancing the children's hospital environment at the Shands at UF medical center. The opening of

the Shands Cancer Hospital at UF (on Nov. 1) will provide us some new options at the academic medical campus," Guzick added.

The Silverstein gift, added to other charitable gifts to the foundation, "will bring us that much closer to achieving our mission while continuing to improve patient safety," Ferrero said.

The Ferreros realize that reaching the point of actually planning for a new, full-service children's hospital will require a multimillion-dollar commitment. The goal is to raise roughly \$100 million over 5 to 6 years.

"Growing up the child of two doctors, I understand the important role medical care plays in a community," Silverstein said in a prepared statement released by the Ferrero Foundation. "The more I hear about this project, the more excited I am by it."