

For Immediate Release

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FATHER CHANNELS HIS GRIEF INTO ADVOCACY, PROMOTES SIMPLE ACTIONS TO MAKE HOSPITALS SAFER FOR CHILDREN

GAINESVILLE, FL – (February 11, 2010) A father who lost his young son to a series of medical errors said other children's lives can be saved if hospitals embrace a culture of listening to parents and making patient safety everyone's responsibility.

Horst Ferrero, whose 3-year-old son, Sebastian, died in 2007 after being administered a fatal dose of medication as part of a routine medical test, spoke to Florida's children's hospital administrators in Gainesville yesterday. Horst and Luisa Ferrero, founders of the [Sebastian Ferrero Foundation](#), are leading the effort to build a dedicated, full-service children's hospital in Gainesville.

In an emotional retelling of his story, Ferrero described what he called a "cascade of errors." If any member of the medical team had responded differently at any of a number of points along the way, his son's life might have been saved.

Among the changes Ferrero urged hospitals to embrace are these:

Listen to parents. They know their children best and are speaking on their behalf. They should be treated with compassion and courtesy and encouraged to serve as their children's primary medical advocates.

Institute checks and balances. Build a culture that makes safety everyone's responsibility. Don't allow for systems where people can assume that others have checked. Double-checking can save lives. Encourage your staff to never be afraid to tell a patient "I am not sure, let me check".

Treat the "whole" child. Every member of the medical team must be trained to observe and treat the whole child, not just focus on their limited scope of responsibility. Give every patient the time and attention they deserve. Medical professionals need to examine patients not only their clipboards.

Don't treat children as little adults. Make sure staff at every level, from lab, pharmacy, nursing and other disciplines, are trained and sensitized to the unique protocols associated with treating children. Make sure staff knows how to calibrate dosages for children and have scales and other essential equipment designed for children.

About Sebastian Ferrero Foundation:

Horst and Luisa Ferrero created the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation in memory of their happy and healthy 3-year-old son, Sebastian, who died in October 2007 as a result of a series of preventable medical errors in Gainesville, Fla. The mission of the Sebastian Ferrero Foundation is: *to advocate and fundraise for a state-of-the-art, full-service children's hospital in Gainesville, Florida while promoting excellence in patient safety and insuring that all families are treated with compassion, courtesy and dignity.* For more information, visit www.SebastianFerrero.org.

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