

Spotlight

Yale
NewHaven
Health
Yale New Haven
Hospital

Out of options and afraid for her life

Until she was rescued by
generous donors like YOU



From the outside looking in, Ashley's life seems fabulous. A great student, she was the first in her family to go away to a four-year college.

SHE GRADUATED AT THE TOP of her class with a master's degree in psychology. She has an impressive job as a researcher. She's married to a wonderful man. But there's another part of her life she has kept largely private: Ashley has struggled with debilitating mental illness—clinical depression—since middle school.

What does severe depression feel like?

Most of us have down days, and maybe even long periods of feeling low. But very few of us can begin to

imagine the depression Ashley has lived with for years.

"I can't tell you how many people say, 'Just go for a run and that will make you feel better,'" says Ashley. "But when you have really severe depression, you can't just will yourself out of it."

For Ashley, depression has meant feelings of profound isolation and fear, self-harm, psychotherapy, one ineffective medication after another, multiple suicide attempts, repeated hospitalizations... and a powerful wish to die that rarely left her thoughts.

(continued inside) 



“It saved my life,” says Ashley of the donor-funded treatment she receives. She’s shown here with her husband, Stephen.

(continued from page 1)

For years, she fought through the rough times and close calls. With therapy, medication, and continuous hard work, she somehow managed to keep going. That is, until her late 20s.

“For the first time in my life I wasn’t able to put on a good face and keep going,” she says. **“I couldn’t concentrate at work and had to take a leave of absence. I started having terrifying, intense suicidal thoughts.”**

Ashley had heard about KIT—ketamine infusion therapy—for depression. Yale physicians discovered that carefully controlled intravenous infusions of ketamine, a drug originally developed as an anesthetic, were often remarkably effective for patients with treatment-resistant depression.

Desperate for relief, she enrolled in a clinical trial at Yale New Haven Hospital, which allowed her to receive a single treatment. “The next day,” she

recalls, “I woke up and discovered what it felt like not to be incapacitated by depression. I had energy. I could feel feelings again. It was like a miracle!”

But most patients need repeated doses of KIT in order to sustain the benefits. Two weeks later, Ashley’s symptoms were back, even worse than before.

KIT is expensive—upwards of \$1,500 per treatment. And since it’s not approved by the government for treating depression, most insurance companies—including Ashley’s—don’t cover it. There was no way she could afford it.

“I was out of options,” says Ashley. **“I knew there was something that worked, but I couldn’t get access to it. A life raft was in sight, but just out of reach... and I was drowning.”**

Donors had recently established the Interventional Psychiatric

YOU
MAKE MIRACLES
POSSIBLE

“Generosity DOES save lives. For me, it really was a matter of life or death.”

ASHLEY

Services (IPS) Support Fund, to help patients like Ashley who are at dangerously high risk but can’t afford the right treatment. Her doctors understood how urgent Ashley’s need was. They arranged to have IPS funds help pay for a portion of her KIT treatments.

“I’m doing better than I’ve ever done before.”

Today, Ashley’s on a regular KIT schedule, receiving treatments every few weeks. “I’m very stable, doing incredibly well,” she says. “I am so very grateful to be alive.”

But she can’t ever quite let go of that nagging worry: “What if there is no longer money to support my treatment? What will I do then?”

She is acutely aware that her life is dependent on continued access to this treatment—and her insurance won’t cover it. ♥

Will you help save a life?

The next person who runs out of options could be someone you love.

Make your donation today at givetoynhh.org/ipsfund

THANK YOU

Give now to support psychiatric services: givetoynhh.org/psychservices



420 Heartfelt emotions from kids who hurt

Caring donations bring a joyful art project to our youngest psychiatric patients

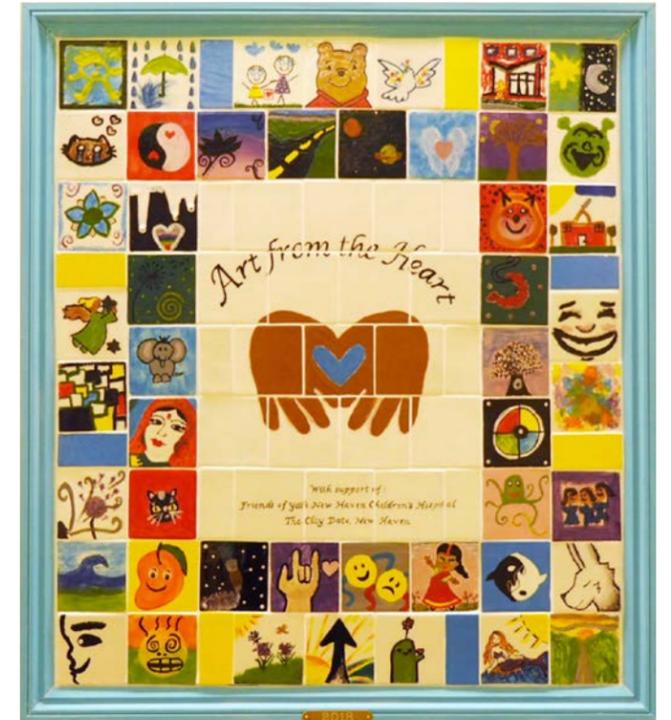
YOU MIGHT IMAGINE the Children’s Psychiatric Inpatient Services (CPIS) unit, for 4- to 13-year-olds, is always a very sad place. But you’d be wrong.

It’s true that the patients there have significant mental health issues, ranging from depression to anxiety to self-harm—sometimes even attempted suicide. It’s heartbreaking to think of children that young struggling with such things.

But **donors like you are bringing joy to these children** during their stay at CPIS. Take, for example, Art from the Heart, a program that was funded by a donation from the Friends of Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital.

Over the course of a year, our patients (and their families) had the opportunity to sit down with their peers and express their feelings—whatever they might be—using paints and ceramic tiles. The staff got into the act too—many of our physicians, nurses, recreational therapists, and social workers painted their emotions too.

By the time we were done, we had 420 colorful, inspiring painted tiles, which were assembled into three large wall



murals. They provided a wonderful creative and emotional outlet for the patients, and now—hanging in the entrance hall to the unit—they show every new child who arrives that there is hope and happiness ahead for them too.

Thank you, Friends of YNHCH, for your compassion and generosity! ♥



A case of the blues or major depression?

Depression isn’t a weakness that you can simply snap out of. It may require long-term treatment. Most people with depression feel better with medication, psychotherapy, or both. If you or a loved one are regularly experiencing any of the symptoms below, see your doctor or call the **Yale New Haven Psychiatric Hospital at 203.688.9704.**

- Lasting sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Changes in weight or appetite

- Changes in sleep patterns, such as inability to sleep, early morning awakening, or sleeping too much
- Loss of pleasure in activities formerly enjoyed
- Increased restlessness or irritability
- Decreased energy or fatigue

- Feeling worthless, helpless, or hopeless
- Feelings of inappropriate guilt

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches, digestive problems, or chronic pain that don’t get better with treatment
- Frequent thoughts of death or suicide

If you are having suicidal thoughts, call the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800.273.8255.

This information—and much more—is available at the YNH Health Library healthlibrary.ynhh.org

“Life will get better... I know because I’ve been there.”

Message from Katelyn to teens in the Yale New Haven Psychiatric Hospital

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD KATELYN knows how tough it can be to struggle with mental illness. Her anxiety and depression became so severe that she was unable to manage her mental health symptoms on her own.

That’s when she was first admitted to the Yale New Haven Psychiatric Hospital Adolescent Unit. There, she received a combination of treatments that got her back on track.

One of the challenges she faced in the hospital was trying to find ways to keep herself busy. “I needed a way to distract myself from what was going on inside my head.” When a nurse asked her to make a list of things she could do to occupy herself, she came up with the idea of jigsaw puzzles.

The next day, her mom brought her a puzzle, and she dove in. Soon her roommate joined her too. They discovered that working on puzzles strengthened their coping skills. “Puzzles distracted me from what was going on inside my head,” she says. “It was such a great activity for us.”

Katelyn wanted other teens in the hospital to have the same tools for distraction and skill-building that worked so well for her. So last December, when the holidays rolled around, she organized her family and friends to collect puzzles to give as holiday gifts.



“I hope the patients found it just as helpful as I did. I want them to keep holding on, no matter how dark it gets. And I want them to know there are people out there thinking about them. Like me.”

Together, they collected over 70 puzzles and gifts, and made cards with inspiring quotes for every patient that received one.

Katelyn, your kindness made the holidays so much nicer for adolescents who really needed a bright moment. We are so proud of you! ♥



**Do you have a
Creative Giving idea?**

There are so many ways to show our patients that you care—and they don’t all involve cash donations! If you have an out-of-the-box idea you’d like to try, please let us know at Giving@ynhh.org or **203-688-9644**—and we’ll do our best to help!