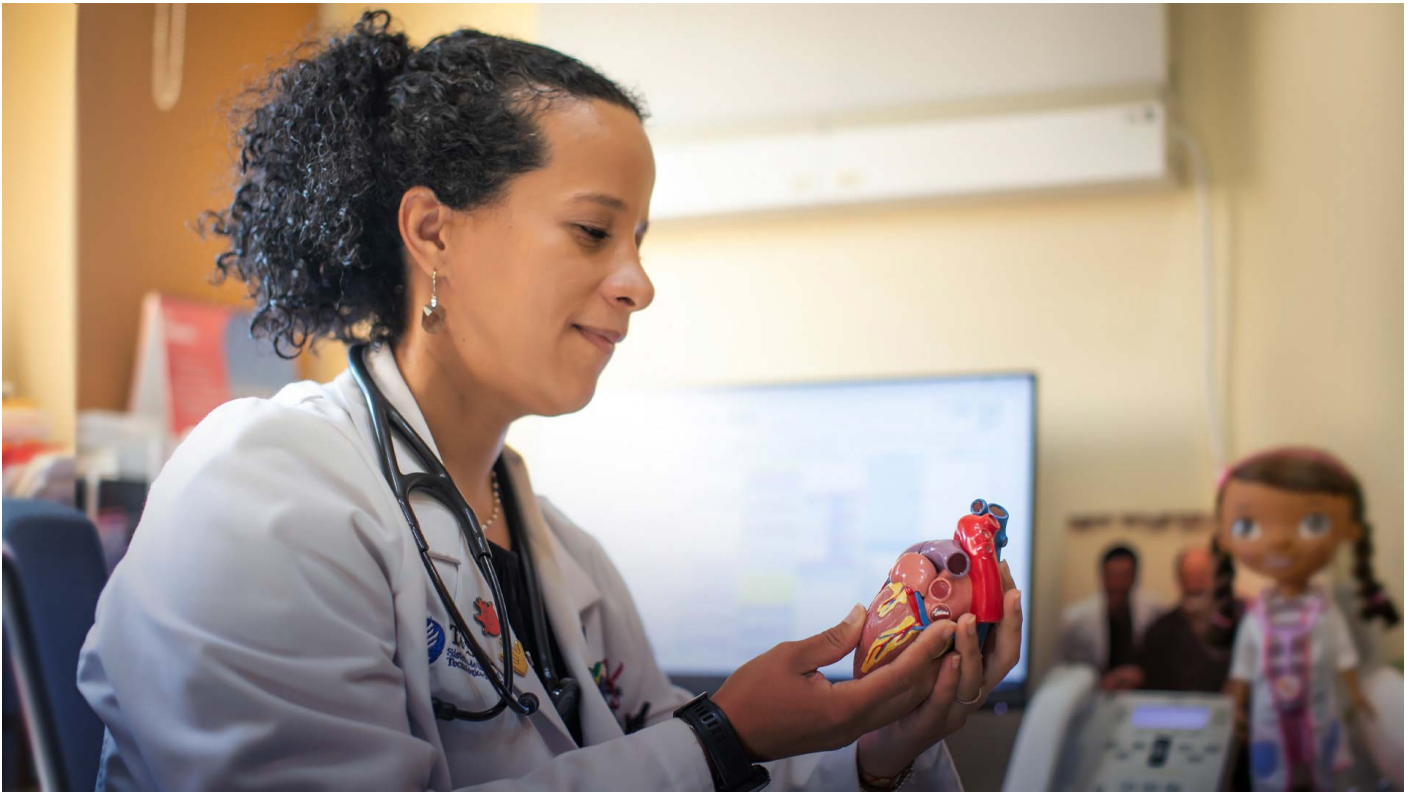


“Doc McStuffins” touches the hearts of children with her magic



The little patient woke up. The **beeping** of the **heart monitor** in intensive care and the probes connected to her body were evidence of the seriousness of her condition after a **heart surgery** that had lasted hours.

When she came around, the girl recognized **the silhouette of her doctor** from her bed. Despite having almost no strength, she called to her, in a slow and soft voice, to say: **“Ceci... I love you very much!”**

That’s one of many **“magical” experiences** for **Dr. Cecilia Britton**, a pediatric cardiologist at [TecSalud](#) who is also known as **“Doc McStuffins”**, a nickname she uses **to inspire confidence** and because **she gives a toy** (and a lollipop) to her little patients every time she sees them in her office.

*“That’s when you say, ‘Wow! How can it be that at your worst moment, **when you’re so ill at that age**, you have the time, the reasoning, and the idea of thanking someone?’ I can’t explain what I felt, but I almost broke down and cried. I said: **“Let’s keep going!”**”*

Like this little one, between **18 and 25 thousand children** are born with **heart problems** in **Mexico every year**. **Dr. Britton** notes that she is one of about **40 interventional cardiologists** for **congenital heart diseases** in the country.



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The magic of being “Doc McStuffins”

There’s a typical phrase that Dr. Cecilia uses to introduce herself to her small patients on their first visit to **create a peaceful and safe atmosphere** from the beginning.

“I say, ‘Hi, I’m Doc McStuffins. Have you seen my cartoons?’ They’re amazed. Then I show them the doll (of the character), and everything makes sense to them. I think I do look like her. I just need the braids,” says the specialist smiling.

She remembers that the **nickname** was given to her by Azucena Rositas, who coordinates the **Invincible Hearts program** with the [TecSalud Foundation](#). One day, she surprised her with the **character’s outfit** to greet little ones during an event. She gladly accepted it.

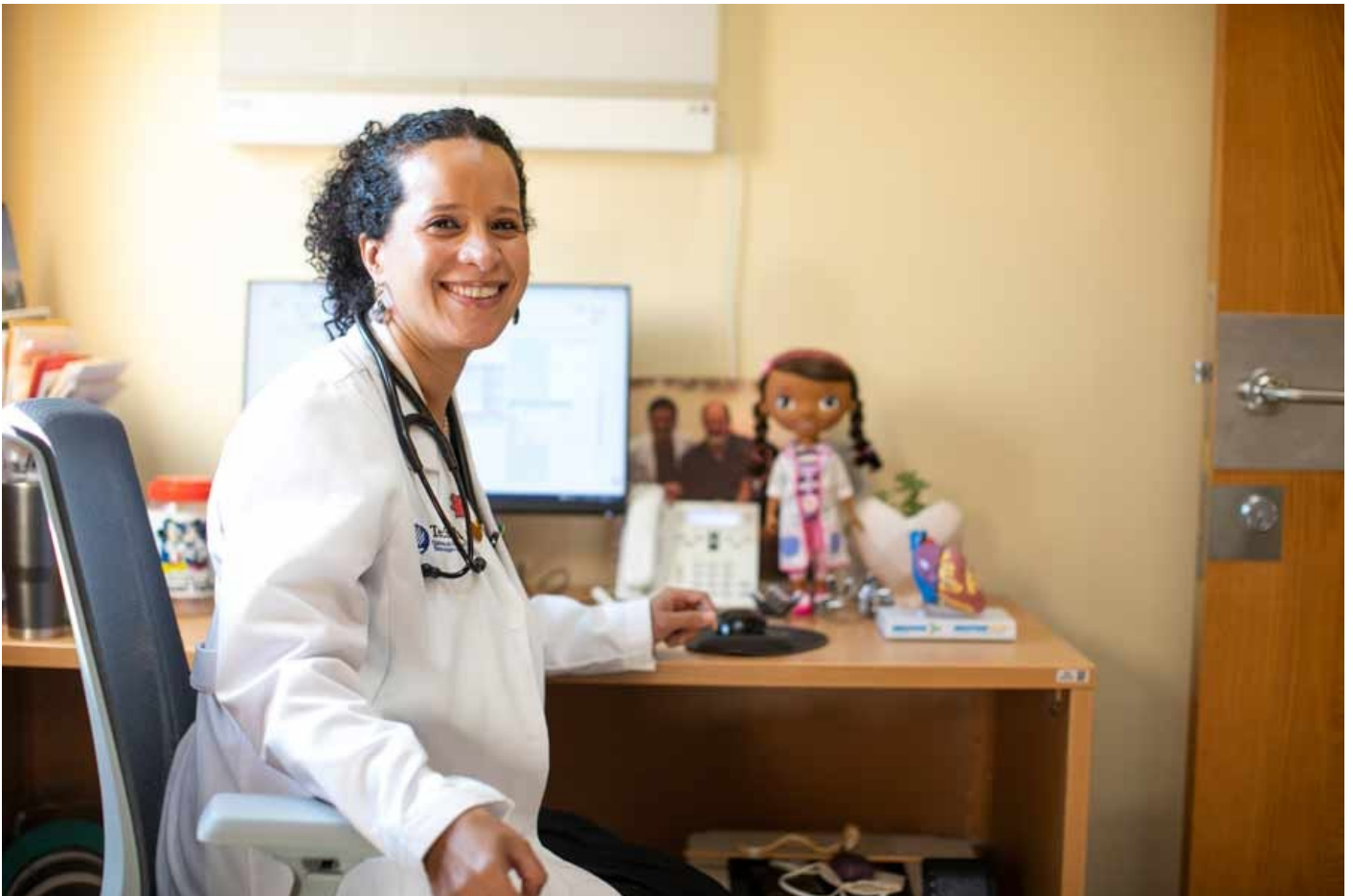
“I say, ‘Hi, I’m Doc McStuffins. Have you seen my cartoons?’ They’re amazed. Then I show them the doll (of the character), and everything makes sense to them.”

*“I also **give toys to the kids**. When I lived in Mexico City, that was the fondest memory I have of my pediatrician. I could go to get a vaccine shot, but in the end, **I always came out with a toy**,”* she adds.

For the doctor, taking care of these little details helps **bridge the gap between doctor and patient**, has a **positive impact** on their **emotional condition**, and is a sign to parents that their child is **receiving care with love and respect**.

*“Being a pediatric cardiologist is a magical thing. It’s magical what we can do for children’s lives by **repairing their hearts**. I also keep an eye on them. I’m very happy to answer their questions on WhatsApp if they want to **ride a bike** or go on a **roller coaster**.”*

Her office holds some of the **signs of affection** that her patients have given her: there are drawings, letters with hearts, and even some figures of **Doc McStuffins** on the walls.



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Her responsibility: healing children’s hearts

Dr. Britton is originally from Mexico City and studied medicine at the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas. As a resident, she got a lot of satisfaction from caring for children, no matter what time it was.

This motivated her to later study a **specialty in Pediatrics at TecSalud**.

“I love kids. From the beginning, I really liked the idea of caring for them and helping them cope with the diseases they have to live with. What could be better than to help them experience things

in an easier way?" says the doctor.

Today, with the ability to perform **complex cardiac interventions**, she feels a great responsibility to try to **improve or save the lives** of these little ones, whom she calls **warriors because of their resilience** and the strength they show to keep going.

*"Operating on a child's heart isn't as easy as pie. We put in our time and our knowledge; the parents put their trust in us and support their child; but in the end, **the warrior, the one shows you what they're made of, is the child,**" says the doctor.*

"There's a great deal of complexity to a heart that was born sick. Your heart is the size of your fist, so imagine (what it's like to treat and operate on) a newborn."

*"As a pediatric cardiologist, I work with congenital diseases. **There's a great deal of complexity to a heart that was born sick.** Your heart is the size of your fist, so imagine (what it's like to treat and operate on) a newborn," she adds.*

Although they can sometimes go **up to 8 hours in the operating room**, she and her colleagues seek to relax with music or stay calm, especially when **operating on children's hearts through their veins** and arteries.

*"Our goal has to be **how we're going to help that patient.** However, sometimes there are things beyond our control, and we have irreparable losses. Every child we lose, we carry in our hearts and **share that pain with the family,**" she says.*



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The long training to heal children's hearts

To get to where she is today -as **one of the few women specialists in interventional cardiology in Mexico**- she had to make many **sacrifices** and strive to complete her preparation, Dr. Cecilia acknowledges.

*"I've invested a lot of time. **My academic training was 16 years** of limiting outings, friends, trips. There are many things that we give up in this career, but there are also many others that give us **satisfaction** and that are very worthwhile," she says.*

When she completed her medical degree in 2006, she went to Monterrey to do a specialty in Pediatrics at **TecSalud's School of Medicine and Health Sciences**. There, she met **Dr. Jesús Manuel Yáñez**, a pediatric cardiologist renowned for his altruistic work.

"Being a pediatric cardiologist is a magical thing. It's magical what we can do for children's lives by repairing their hearts."

Dr. Yáñez became her **mentor**. He also encouraged her and helped her make **a trip as a medical observer** to the Dominican Republic, where she was captivated by **pediatric cardiology**.

*"I loved going into my first cardiac catheterization. It lasted about four hours, but it felt like it was half an hour to me. I was amazed at what was being done there, and I said, **'I want to do this for***

the rest of my life!’,” recalls the doctor.

She completed her training at the **National Institute of Cardiology** and the **Children’s Hospital of Mexico**, where **she trained in pediatric cardiology** and did advanced specialties in echocardiography -**heart ultrasound**- and hemodynamics - **interventional catheterization**.

“There are few women in this area. Apart from that, there are very few people who have the training in both echocardiography and hemodynamics at the same time,” she points out.



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Her mother is the driving force in her life

During her childhood, Dr. Cecilia got used to living in a hospital environment. She spent her time **playing in its hallways and offices**. Her friends were **doctors, nurses**, and the staff who worked there.

She was 4 years old then and accompanied her mother to work at the **National Medical Center** in Mexico City, where she was a **medicinal and biological chemist**.

*“It was an atmosphere I really enjoyed. I think from then on, I **started to be interested in medicine**. Since I was little, it was clear to me that I wanted to be a doctor. I didn’t see myself doing anything else,”* she says.

“I give toys to the kids. When I lived in Mexico City, that was the fondest memory I have of my pediatrician.”

Her mother, beyond inspiring her, became the **driving force in her life**. She was the one who - despite the challenges of being a single mother- **always encouraged her to follow her dreams**, to be helpful, and to do things with integrity.

*“My mom has always been very open with me. She said, ‘Do what you want to do, but do it with **inspiration**, with motivation. It should be **something you enjoy and that helps you give back** a little of the many things life has given you.’”*

“Being the daughter of a single mother has also been one of my great personal challenges. It’s something that I admire a lot from my upbringing because, although the ideal is to have a mom and a dad, here, in the best sense of the word, I have never lacked a father or a mother,” she says.



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Returning to TecSalud and promoting a social cause

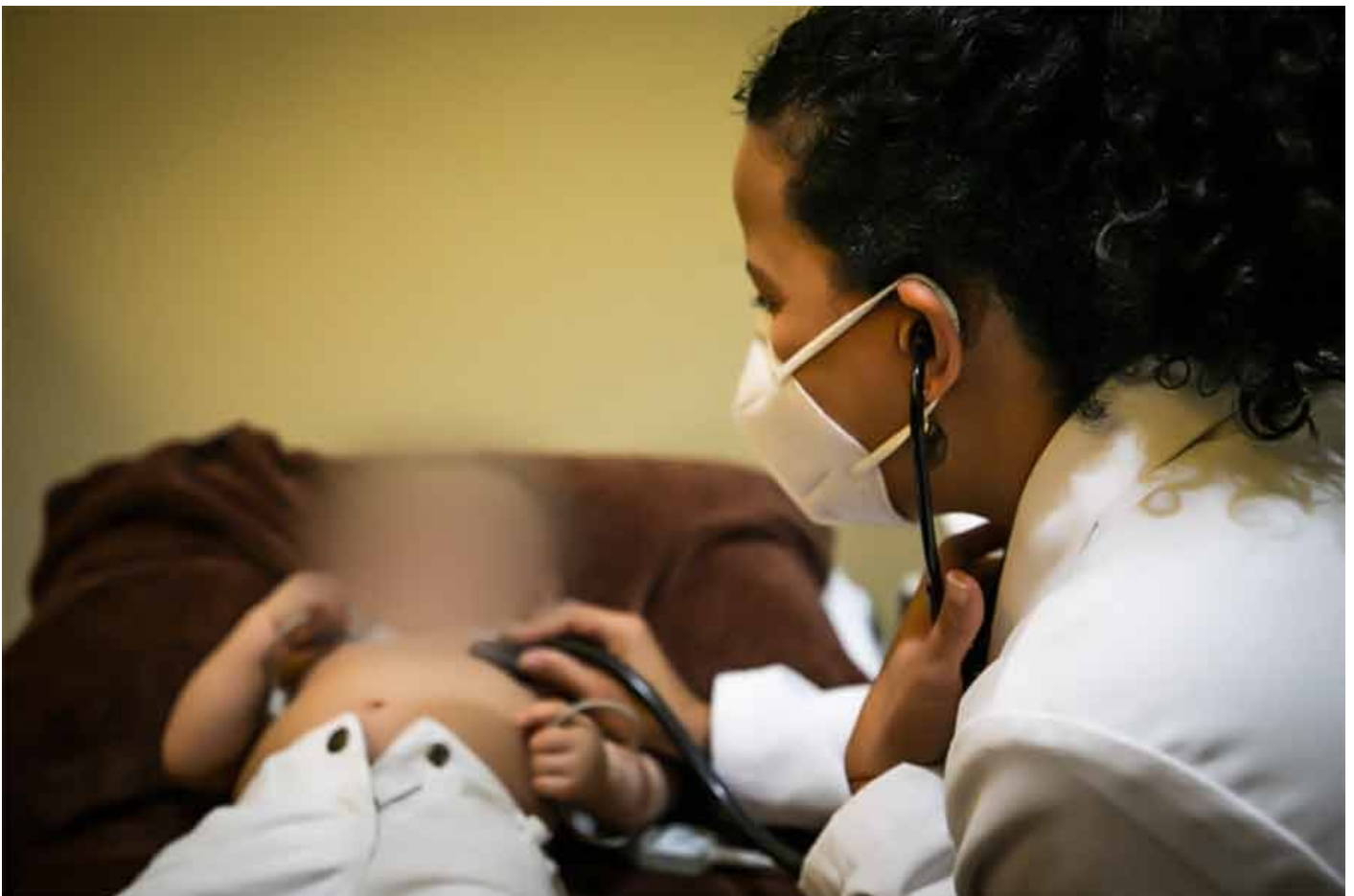
Her mother and Dr. Yáñez sowed **the seed of altruism** in Dr. Cecilia and instilled in her a desire for helping others, as well as dedicating herself 100% to giving back everything she's received in her life.

When she finished her pediatrics specialty at TecSalud, she promised Dr. Yanez that she would return more prepared to help him with the children who needed that support.

*“Six years ago, I went back to the Tec. The Zambrano Hellion Hospital and TecSalud opened their doors to me. In 2015, Dr. Yáñez and I created the **Invincible Hearts program to help families in a vulnerable circumstances**,”* recalls the specialist.

Today, this program, **promoted by the TecSalud Foundation and the [CardioChavitos](#) association**, has carried out **more than 170 interventions** and has **treated about 150 children** with heart problems, she says.

“The worst heart condition is having a heart without empathy because there’s no solution for it. You can’t operate on that.”



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*“Since 2017, we have formally begun to provide care to economically vulnerable patients, providing them with opportunities to live, surgeries, and catheterizations. **All for one price: a smile,**”*

emphasizes the doctor.

Today, despite the fact that Dr. Yáñez is no longer here with us, Dr. Cecilia and a team of specialists, such as Dr. Cristina Aguilar, **keep his legacy** of social responsibility alive.

*“I’m passionate about what I do. **The social aspect motivates me a lot.** I like and very much enjoy being able to give my time to people who have less, to explain to them and give them comfort or hope.*

*“We have a saying that goes something like: **The worst heart condition is having a heart without empathy** because there’s no solution for it. You can’t operate on that,” she concludes.*

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