

free
to be
a champion

DOERNBECHER
Freestyle

Freestyle XVII PRESENTED BY SoleSavvy

Doernbecher Freestyle XVII – Virtual Unveiling Event: Feb. 25, 2022

Doernbecher Freestyle joins patients from OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital in Portland, Oregon with NIKE, Inc. visionaries to create sneaker and apparel collections that are auctioned and sold to benefit the hospital. Since 2004, the program has engaged more than 100 patient-designers and hundreds of Nike employee volunteers to make each patient’s design dreams come true.

Often adorned with intricate details, hidden messages and unexpected color palettes, the coveted Doernbecher Freestyle designs represent the life experiences, medical journeys and relationships of the young patients who created them. Importantly, the collections also provide an opportunity for these special designers to give back to the hospital that helped save their lives.

Since its inception, Doernbecher Freestyle has raised more than \$30 million to help to cover the cost of care for families in need, expand pioneering research that benefits kids around the world, and support specialized care unavailable anywhere else in the region. [Learn more about the program here.](#)

Following the public unveiling of the Doernbecher Freestyle XVII collection on Feb. 25, 2022, exclusive sneaker packages will be auctioned online via eBay from Feb. 26 – March 5; all profits will benefit OHSU Doernbecher.

The full collection will be available for purchase in Nike retail stores and on Nike.com later this spring. Nike will donate 100% of the profits to the children’s hospital.

Introducing the Doernbecher Freestyle XVII Patient-designers and collection



Ayman Wamala

Age: 13

Hometown: Salem, Oregon

Diagnosis: Sickle cell anemia

Shoe: Nike Blazer Mid '77

Ayman was born in Kenya and diagnosed with sickle cell anemia at an early age. When his family moved to Portland four years ago, Ayman began treatment at OHSU Doernbecher Children’s Hospital.

Ayman’s larger-than-life personality is a perfect fit for his career aspirations: He hopes to be an actor. He’s already started his resume by starring as one of the main characters in the stage production of Jumanji at his school. When not on stage, Ayman enjoys playing soccer, cooking and sharpening his wilderness survival skills.

As for his signature Blazer Mid ‘77, it’s powered by Ayman’s alter-ego: a mysterious, mind-reading character you’ll find on the tongue of the shoe. Triangular shapes represent protective armor, while subtle tiger stripes hold a secret: they glow bright blue in UV light.

The red blood cells on the outsole represent Ayman’s condition, while the words *Hope, Strength and Perseverance* around his logo help guide you on your daily travels. And because a little extra wisdom never hurts, the phrase *Life is uncertain...make fast decisions in tough situations* runs along the midsole.



Catalina Vazquez

Age: 16

Hometown: Kelso, Washington

Diagnosis: Von Hippel-Lindau

Shoe: Nike SB Zoom Stefan Janoski

Catalina's love for the Galapagos Islands serves as the inspiration for her Zoom Stefan Janoski. Hand-drawn flowers reflect her love of nature, while a butterfly graphic on the top symbolizes the changes Catalina has experienced throughout her life.

At just three days old, she was diagnosed with Von Hippel-Lindau disease, a rare hereditary condition that causes tumors to grow in multiple organs throughout the body. The tumors have affected Catalina's eyes, spinal cord and brain, requiring five surgeries to remove them.

Despite a difficult medical journey, like a butterfly Catalina continues to emerge, and is determined to stay strong and bring awareness to her disease while she's at it. That's why you'll find a DNA helix along the side of her shoe, as well as a powerful statement from the VHL Alliance: *The cure is in our genes.*



Cidni O'Brien

Age: 16

Hometown: Lebanon, Oregon

Diagnosis: Anomalous aortic origin of the left coronary artery

Shoe: Nike Air Force 1 Fontanka

In 2018, Cidni was diagnosed with anomalous aortic origin of the left coronary artery. This means that a critical artery supplying blood to her heart was attached in the wrong place and Cidni's heart wasn't getting enough oxygen, causing dangerously poor cardiac function.

Six months and one major heart surgery later, Cidni was back on the pitch and playing to win for her high school team, the Lebanon Warriors. Her soccer-inspired Air Force 1 Fontanka pays tribute to her teammates, as well as all the beloved animals in her life.

Cidni's horse, Tank, is featured on the left sockliner, while her mom, Nikki, gets a special mention on the other. Flip Cidni's shoe over, and you'll find another of her favorite things on the outsole: shrimp pasta. (See if you can find her name written in the noodles).



Maylee Phelps

Age: 15

Hometown: Portland, Oregon

Diagnosis: Spina bifida

Shoe: NikeCourt Zoom Vapor Cage 4

Behind her quiet humility, Maylee Phelps is kind of a big deal. She's an accomplished junior wheelchair tennis player, currently ranked #11 in the world, and hopes to represent the United States in the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.

Maylee was born with spina bifida, a condition where the spine and spinal cord fails to develop properly. She's had a lot of surgeries at OHSU Doernbecher over the years to help improve her mobility and is now learning to use forearm crutches.

Maylee's Air Zoom Vapor Cage 4 is loaded with personal touches, like hand-drawn stars and a cool marbled outsole featuring all her favorite colors. To help bring awareness to adaptive athletics, she included a spine graphic on the tongue as well as a blue spina bifida ribbon on the heel. Along the midsole, you'll find a reminder to *Keep Pushing* no matter what life throws your way.



Michael Wilson

Age: 11

Hometown: Dayton, Oregon

Diagnosis: Krabbe disease

Shoe: Air Jordan 5 Retro Low

Two months after Michael was born, he was diagnosed with Krabbe disease, a rare genetic condition that destroys the protective coating of nerve cells in the brain and nervous system. The disease is often fatal, but Michael had a hero in his corner: his older brother (and now angel) Marshall.

Due to Marshall's diagnosis of Krabbe disease, Michael's doctors knew to screen him for the condition as well. And, because Michael's case was identified early, he was a candidate for a life-saving stem-cell cord blood transplant – conducted at OHSU Doernbecher on February 10, 2011 with 100% success.

More than 10 years later, Michael is just a happy kid with a serious love for airplanes, sharks and mac 'n' cheese. His high-flying Air Jordan 5 Retro Low proves it. A fierce shark glides along the side, while a mac 'n' cheese print is lasered throughout the suede upper, and cool interchangeable patches on the

tongue let you customize your own style. When you're ready to take the shoe off? Just pull the "eject" loop on the heel tab.

Michael's motto – *Take Flight* – adorns the shoe, and represents his desire to be a pilot.



Sam David Phelps

Age: 14

Hometown: Portland, Oregon

Diagnosis: Spina bifida

Shoe: LeBron 19

Sam David isn't the kind of kid to back down from a challenge. Like his sister and fellow Freestyle designer Maylee, he was born with spina bifida. But that doesn't stop him from being a force to be reckoned with on and off the basketball court. His goal is to play on the U.S. men's wheelchair basketball team, but until then, he continues to sharpen his game playing for the Portland WheelBlazers.

Sam David's favorite athlete in the whole world is LeBron James, so needless to say, he was beyond thrilled to learn he would be designing one of King James' signature shoes. His take on the LeBron 19 brings the bling with metallic gold panels, lighting bolts and his very own sporty wheelchair logo. It also features a very special detail: Nike's first-ever airbag pod, which encapsulates Sam's initials, his birth year and his go-to mantra: *Never Back Down*.

Sam David and his family moved to Portland from Mississippi so that he and his sister could get state-of-the-art care from OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital, and Sam David says he's so glad they did.



Zoe Taaffe

Age: 17

Hometown: Tualatin, Oregon

Diagnosis: Granulomatosis with polyangiitis

Shoe: Nike Dunk Low

Zoe Taaffe is one in a million—literally. When she was a sophomore in high school, she was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease that causes severe inflammation of the blood vessels. It's so rare, only one in 1.2 million pediatric patients have it. Her care at OHSU Doernbecher required multiple blood transfusions, plasma transfusions, steroids and chemotherapy. While the long hospital stays weren't much fun, they did provide Zoe with an up-close look at her chosen profession: nursing.

Zoe's positivity is apparent everywhere on her Nike Dunk Low. At first glance, it just looks like a cool tribute to her favorite team, the Oregon Ducks. But look closer, and you'll notice Zoe's name cleverly hidden in the zebra-like print. Look even closer and you'll realize that it's more than a zebra print; it's a subtle nod to the stretch marks that the steroids created on Zoe's body.

Zoe's feel-good shoe also features a glow-in-the-dark outsole, an Oregon Duck-inspired nursing symbol on the sockliner, the word *fearless* on the laces and interchangeable Velcro Swooshes that let you change up your look.

Media Contact: [Sara Hottman](#) (OHSU)