Construction begins on Alberta’s first hospice for children!

Rotary/Flames House set to open as early as Summer 2009

Thanks to generous donors, the Calgary Health Region and the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation have officially broken ground on the province’s first hospice for children. Rotary/Flames House will help families caring for children with progressive and life-threatening illnesses and will be located right next door to the Alberta Children’s Hospital. It is expected to open as early as the summer of 2009.

The ground breaking celebration took place on April 7, 2008 with a crowd of over 200 in attendance. “Years of hard work and planning have made today possible,” said Paula Tyler, VP of Child and Women’s Health for the Calgary Health Region. “We’ve consulted with families, caregivers and experts to design what we believe will be one of the best children’s hospices in North America.”

The Honourable Ron Stevens, Deputy Premier of Alberta was on hand to announce a $4.65 million grant from the Alberta Lottery Fund to complete the capital costs of the building. “Albertans can pride themselves on building this much-needed facility - only the sixth of its kind in North America,” he said. “People in this province are leaders in compassion and caring for children and families.”

“Like the new hospital, this project really demonstrates the power of community support”, says Jim Truesdale, Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation Board Member. “The Calgary Health Region’s commitment to fund operating costs, the lottery fund grant for $4.65 million, and the dozens of generous individual and corporate gifts totalling more than $8 million clearly show how much the need for this hospice touched everyone who heard about it.”

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The hospice is named in honor of the first lead gift from the community, a $2.5 million donation from The Rotary Clubs of Calgary and the Flames Foundation for Life. Says Ken King, President & CEO of the Calgary Flames, “The families who need Rotary/Flames House demonstrate an incredible dedication to their children through every stage of their journey. Personally, I can think of no better way to honor their courage and strength than to offer them support through a beautiful facility like Rotary/Flames House. It is a privilege for the Calgary Flames organization to be involved with this project.”

An estimated 400 families in Southern Alberta rely on services to help them care for their children whose lives will be shortened by incurable illness. These children have complex medical needs which do not necessarily require hospitalization. As well as end of life care, Rotary/Flames House will offer planned and urgent respite and short term transitional care.

A grant for $4.65 million from the Alberta Lottery Fund completes the capital costs required to build Rotary/Flames House. Pictured here from left to right: Xina Chrapko - Hospice Manager; The Honourable Ron Stevens - Deputy Premier, Province of Alberta; Paula Tyler - VP, Child and Women’s Health, Calgary Health Region; Jennifer Bekker - Family Ambassador and Donor, Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation; Ken King - President & CEO, Calgary Flames; Jim Truesdale - Director, Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation Board.

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The Family of Hope is a special group of individuals who choose to support the Alberta Children’s Hospital with Legacy Gifts. Anyone can make a Legacy Gift as a meaningful and lasting way to ensure your generosity benefits others.

Joining the Family of Hope is simple. Just let us know that you have left a gift in your Will or have made the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.

One Family member says:
“As parents of young children, we feel very fortunate to have a world-class resource for children’s health located in our city. There is nothing more crippling than watching a child in need, and if our contributions help ease the pain of any family, we consider it money well spent.”

For more information about how you can join the Family of Hope, please contact Sheelagh Mercier at the Foundation at 403-955-8837.

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Imagine how difficult it would be to watch your son suffer from more than 20 seizures a day and realize there was nothing you could do to help. Imagine not really knowing who your child was because he was either having a seizure or recovering from one. Imagine the feelings of hopelessness after living this way for more than eleven years.

This was the life of Lisa Gerard and her son, Nicholas. Medications weren’t working and surgery didn’t appear to be an option to help control his unrelenting seizures...until one amazing day.

That day, doctors at the Alberta Children’s Hospital told them there was a new surgical procedure that could change Nicholas’s life forever. Nicholas was a perfect candidate for keyhole surgery – a minimally invasive technique where surgery is performed through a one centimetre hole in the skull. For many children requiring brain surgery, the only option would be to open up the skull completely, resulting in a much more traumatic experience for patients and parents alike.

Dr. Walter Hader, a brain surgeon at the Alberta Children’s Hospital, performed the highly-complex operation to remove the 5 mm lesion from the centre of Nicholas’s brain using new equipment paid for by donations from the community. It was the first time the procedure had been done west of Montreal. Remarkably, Nicholas now lives each day seizure free.

Lisa truly believes that the surgeons and specialists at the Alberta Children’s Hospital have not only changed her son’s life, but they’ve given her the son she never knew she had. “For eleven years, Nicholas lived life in such a fog. He was exhausted all the time and his emotions were completely out of control. Now, he’s full of energy and he’s free to be himself. He has a future that we couldn’t have imagined for him before!”

As for Dr. Hader, he says “It’s extremely rewarding to be involved with these families in these kinds of life-changing experiences. Support from the community makes a very real difference for kids like Nicholas.”

Our kids are the biggest winners!

Buy your tickets today!
early bird deadline: June 15 ■ lotto deadline: June 30
on-line www.homelotto.com
Calgary 531-2273
Toll Free 1-888-531-2273
World-renowned for its innovations in design, the Alberta Children’s Hospital has celebrated another first by unveiling the only “living” mural in western Canada!

The Alberta Children’s Hospital is now home to an amazing art experience - the Mozaik of Hope. This one-of-a-kind work of art was commissioned by the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Alberta Children’s Hospital and the 50th anniversary of the Foundation. It’s a celebration of the living spirit of the Alberta Children’s Hospital and to the people who have made it a place of hope, help and healing.

The Mozaik of Hope at the Alberta Children’s Hospital is comprised of over 50 thousand pixels – each one a tiny photograph - and features portraits of hospital staff and volunteers, donors, community leaders and of course, the children who are cared for at the Alberta Children’s Hospital. These photos, coupled with current and historical pictures of the hospital and artwork by patients are a salute to everyone in the hospital and the community who make it special.

In searching for the perfect tribute, the project team looked for something that truly honored the spirit of the Alberta Children’s Hospital and the Foundation as well as their rich history - a history which demonstrates that for as long as we’ve had a children’s hospital in Calgary, we’ve also been fortunate to have generous community members stepping up to enhance care for our children.

“This hospital has wowed the world! People from across Canada and from as far away as Japan, Spain, Germany and Australia are lining up to learn from us,” says Randy Findlay, Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation Board Chair. “Of course, the Alberta Children’s Hospital has always been about more than just bricks and mortar. The Mozaik of Hope is a reflection of the true heart of our hospital”.

Jean René is the principal artist of the “Human Mozaik” – the artist group based out of Gatineau, Quebec responsible for the Mozaik of Hope at the Alberta Children’s Hospital. The group works on the philosophy that public art has the power to transform our daily experiences. It turns everyday public spaces into more human and social spaces.

You will find the Mozaik of Hope in the corridor connecting the visitor parkade to the main entrance at the Alberta Children’s Hospital.

14-year-old David Wark strikes a pose in front of his portrait with the Mozaik of Hope artist, Jean René.
Introducing Justin Shenher...
2008 Champion Child for the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation

Justin Shenher takes pride in saying that he’s the cause of all Dr. Man-Chui Poon’s grey hair. But his happy doctor is quick to reply that Justin is worth it since he’s doing so well!

The bond between Justin and Dr. Poon began when Justin was only three days old. Justin’s parents knew something was wrong with their son the day he was born, when the routine blood test on his heel caused him to bleed for 10 hours. Dr. Poon diagnosed him with a complex form of Hemophilia and began a life-long, life-saving relationship with this very special boy.

Justin’s blood disorder is so serious that he not only has to worry about cuts and bumps, but he also faces spontaneous internal bleeding that threatens his life and had him in a wheelchair for five years.

Thankfully, our hospital specialists are among the first in Canada to use an experimental treatment that has reduced Justin’s number of serious bleeds from once a week to twice a year. Today, Justin is back on his feet, lives life to its fullest and looks for every opportunity to make people laugh. He speaks passionately about the wonderful team who’ve taken such great care of him and considers his new ambassadorship a great honour.

“I see lots of kids and families at the hospital who are going through much worse than me and my heart goes out to them,” says Justin. “I’ve had many scary moments growing up with Hemophilia and being a hospital Ambassador is an opportunity to give back to the place that saved my life. Being Champion for the next year is something I will do with great pride.” ♥

The Children’s Miracle Network Champions Across Canada program is presented by Wal-Mart Canada. In March 2008, Justin travelled to Ottawa to meet with Champion Children from the other 13 Children’s Miracle Network hospitals across the country. From Ottawa, he and his family travelled to Orlando to meet Champions from across the United States, Ireland and the United Kingdom for the Annual Children’s Miracle Network Celebration Event.

Miracle Month of MAY

Look for fundraising activities and events at our Children’s Miracle Network partners, including:

Visit www.childrenshospital.ab.ca for more info!
Healthy Hints

Did you know?

Approximately one in four Canadian children have a weight problem, and one in 10 kids are obese. These children are at risk for several weight-related health problems now and in their future:

- high blood pressure
- cardiovascular disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- skin problems
- osteoarthritis
- gall bladder disease
- certain types of cancer

Helpful tips for parents

Make it HAPPEN is a family-focused healthy lifestyle program for children and youth (six to 17 years old) who are at risk of being at an unhealthy weight. Launched with funds from donors like you, Make it HAPPEN offers parents and children a common sense approach to leading happier and healthier lives.

“This is not about buying expensive gym memberships or following strict diets,” says Kay Watson-Jarvis, leader for this program of the Region’s ‘Growing Up Healthy’ initiative. “This is about kids and families enjoying healthy food choices and getting active together.”

There are a number of ways that parents can help their child maintain a healthy weight from an early age. Offering wholesome, nutritious meals and snacks, eating together as a family 5 or more times a week, and reducing the number of fast-food meals your family consumes is often the best place to start. Adding activity to your daily lives can be done in small, enjoyable steps - walking the dog together or biking to the library instead of driving.

Watson-Jarvis stresses, “It’s so important for families to make these changes together because they are foundational for everyone’s health. The result is everyone is healthier and you’ll have fun doing it!”

For more information about the Make it HAPPEN program or other resources related to helping your family live a more healthy, active lifestyle, contact Health Link at 943-LINK (5465). ❤️

Upcoming Events

April-June ■ Kinsmen Children’s Hospital Home Lotto
Tickets on sale now! Deadline: June 30

May ■ ATB Teddy for a Toonie Campaign

June 7 ■ Kira’s Day

June 8 ■ WAL-MART Walk for Miracles