



Changing the View:

Children's Hospital Rooftop Gets a New Look

By Judy O'Gorman Alvarez



Volunteers are pitching in to create a rooftop art project to enhance the view for pediatric patients at the K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital.

NEPTUNE – An ongoing art project will make the view for pediatric patients at Hackensack Meridian Health K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital a little more enjoyable.

Rumson resident and artist Lucy Kalian is spearheading a creative rooftop painting project to brighten the views and spirits of the children, families and staff of the Neptune hospital.

Kalian is a familiar face around the children's hospital where she visits once or twice a month with her therapy dog, Oliver, bringing smiles and squeals to children. In addition, she and her family, the Hovnanians, have been longtime philanthropic supporters of the children's hospital and network as a whole.

"Going in and out of the various patient rooms sparked the idea to take the existing

and necessary mechanical equipment outside of the children's windows and turn it into something exciting and unique, something that might brighten their day," Kalian said.

The outside view overlooks the building's mechanicals – vents and ductwork – creating a necessary but unattractive site.

"It was like the elephant in the room," said Kalian, who sat on an advisory board at the children's hospital, and was invited to a "brainstorming session" about improving the view. "It's depressing to look out the window," she said. "Not only is it disconcerting to the patients and guests, but also for doctors and caregivers."

Kalian said they went through a variety of suggestions, including whether or not to paint the windows. "But no matter what the view or the weather, you have to be able to look outside," she said.

Kalian decided to turn to the hospital's surroundings for inspiration. "We're right down the street from the famous Asbury Park," she pointed out. "We're right here at the Jersey Shore."

She set about researching and sketching to create a Jersey Shore-themed design, complete with seaside sites, maps of the towns along the coastline and other notable landmarks.

She also researched and included nautical flags with inspirational phrases, such as "Calm Sea Breezes" and "Sunny Days." Fish and birds, native to the area, will also dot the new scene.

Then Kalian created stencils and outlined



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Artist Lucy Kalian, right, with her dog, Oliver, and team members Jaclyn Lang, Cheryl Lintner and Brenna Keeley are creating a bright new look for some industrial equipment.

drawings on the ducts, making it easy for others to assist in the creation of the artwork.

In early October volunteer artists of all abilities hauled out their paintbrushes to help create the new look.

"We just finished phase one," Kalian said, "and then we ran out of good weather." The paint they're using works best when applied in moderate temperatures. She expects to pick up the project again in April when warmer weather arrives.

"Now if you look at one section of a metal wall, there's a map from Sandy Hook lighthouse to Barnegat lighthouse," she said. "Kids

will look at the map, see familiar places, names of rivers, and another areas," said Kalian. A digital map will allow children to find their towns and answer questions. "Kids will have to decipher it as a puzzle," she said. "It'll be fun and interactive."

Kalian credits some "wonderful volunteers from inside and outside the hospital," for helping with the project.

"I really believe that if we take care of the kids – their emotional and physical health – we'll make a difference," she said. "They'll grow up to be physically and emotionally healthy."

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