

# Starlight Spaces

## Program Overview



Since 1990, Starlight has been transforming hospital spaces into state-of-the-art, interactive, and relaxing environments that can be enjoyed by children and their families. Starlight Spaces improve the psycho-social and emotional wellness of hospitalized kids, teens, and their families by providing a treatment-free space for play, social interaction, and meaningful activities. These playrooms, teen lounges, therapy gyms, healing gardens, and playgrounds offer a variety of diversions, including video games, computers, toys, crafts, music, and best of all, the company of other children.



*"Once you're in the hospital for a couple days, the walls are closing in and you need an escape like the Starlight Space. The new Family Room addresses the needs of all family members, whether they want to read, eat or work and allows them to feel at home."*

–Wendy Pauker, Child Life Manager, Banner Thunderbird Medical Center

## Reach

Since 2003, **114 Starlight Spaces** have transformed the hospital experience for **3,229,836 million children** at **93 children's hospitals and pediatric units** in 27 states.

## Program Impact

### Play



- Toys, the playroom, and activities improve the hospital experience for children. Having a space that is easily accessible makes staying in a hospital room close to the area more desirable.
- A child's ability to play in the hospital repairs the discontinuity resulting in their life due to hospital admission and shows somehow that the child may continue their normal life even inside the hospital (Koukourikos et al., 2015).<sup>1</sup>



## Entertainment

- Starlight Spaces increase entertainment opportunities by providing children with a range of activities and access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.
- Children want a diversity of readily available, independently accessible, age, gender, and developmentally appropriate leisure and entertainment facilities seamlessly integrated throughout the hospital environment. Such spaces create a positive hospital experience for children by combating boredom, enriching choice and control, and reducing a sense of isolation (Lambert et al., 2013).<sup>2</sup>



## Comfort

- Once children or families walk into a Starlight Space, they know they are safe from all medical procedures, examinations, medications, and needles especially. Being in a medical-free zone allows individuals to feel a sense of security and ease in a particularly stressful environment.
- Studies confirm that there are spatial enhancers and detractors to a patients' experience of healing beyond the care they are receiving and that patients can identify healing spaces with healing enhancers. A healing space creates a sense of being cared for and reminds one of being home, surrounded by a feeling of comfort and calm (MacAllister et al., 2016).<sup>3</sup>



## Socialization

*"It was a blah room, but now it's a wow factor! It really looks like you're in a treehouse! Before, this room didn't get a lot of action. But now, the volume of people coming into the room... it's just so awesome."*

—Alyssa Luksa, Director of Child Life and Expressive Therapy, Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital

- Having spaces within the hospital for families to connect with each other, their visitors, and other families facilitates socialization with others facing similar circumstances, reducing feelings of isolation.
- As a result of spending time in a Starlight Space, children can reduce boredom and frustration, and increase their social and creative activities, developing friendships and accomplish new milestones.
- Parents of long-term patients may feel an increased sense of well-being through engagement and be provided with new connections that provide ongoing support.



## Normalization

- While healing is complex and multifaceted, the physical space that surrounds us plays an integral role in how we heal. Children's hospitals can ensure that all spaces – from simple waiting rooms to complex surgery suites – are designed to do what's important: assist in the overall healing of a child and get him or her back into the normal routine of life (Macklin, 2014).<sup>4</sup>
- For many sick children, there is healing power in normalcy. Events that healthy children take for granted like watching a movie in a theater, can easily be organized and implemented into the hospital environment (Macklin, 2014).<sup>4</sup>



## Emotional Support

- Space and environment can have a positive impact on a child or young person's experience of hospitalization and ultimately their health outcome. A Starlight Space helps in reducing anxiety associated with being in the hospital and improves health and well-being.
- Spending time in a Starlight Space allows for parents to experience relief, feel reassured that their child is happy and gives them an opportunity to share information with other parents and bond with their family.
- Children are given the opportunity to change their attitudes towards hospital and treatment by allowing them to feel more in control and happier about their situation.



## Physical Therapy

- Clinicians use the Starlight Space as motivational therapy by facilitating and encouraging walks to and from the patient's room and Starlight Space.

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## The Future

- Starlight is reimagining its current program, so all future Spaces can continue to be kid-friendly and inviting environments, while highlighting Starlight's brand.
- Starlight will unveil ten Starlight Spaces by the end of 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Koukourikos, K., Tzeha, L., Pantelidou, P., & Tsaloglidou, A. (2015). THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY DURING HOSPITALIZATION OF CHILDREN. *Materia socio-medica*, 27(6), 438–441. doi:10.5455/msm.2015.27.438-441

<sup>2</sup> Lambert, V., Coad, J., Hicks, P. and Glacken, M. (2014), Social spaces children in hospital. *Child Care Health Dev*, 40: 195-204. doi:10.1111/cch.12016

<sup>3</sup> MacAllister, L., Bellanti, D., & Sakallaris, B. R. (2016). Exploring Inpatients' Experiences of Healing and Healing Spaces: A Mixed Methods Study. *Journal of patient experience*, 3(4), 119–130. doi:10.1177/2374373516676182

<sup>4</sup> Macklin, L. (2014). *Creating Healing Spaces with Facility Design*. Children's Hospital Association.