



For immediate release:

SickKids opens Hollywood theatre, a much-needed escape for hospitalized children

SickKids patients among the first to see the premiere of Shrek the Third

Toronto, ON (Friday, May 18, 2007) – A new state-of-the-art movie theatre opened today at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), providing a much-needed escape for patients and families who rely on SickKids everyday for life-saving treatment and care. As the lights went down this morning, *Shrek the Third* lit up the big screen as the inaugural film to debut in the new space, setting the stage for a series of first-fun movies patients will have an opportunity to see while in hospital.

The theatre was conceived by filmmaker and advertising executive Barry Avrich, who was instrumental in bringing together dedicated donors and the entertainment industry to build the new 230-seat theatre. A donation of \$1 million of both cash and in kind went towards the construction of the theatre. The new cinema features a state-of-the-art digital and 35 mm projection system and Dolby surround sound. The newly designed space creates an industry standard movie experience for patients and families.

“It’s about minimizing the negative impact of illness and hospitalization,” said Michael O’Mahoney, President, SickKids Foundation. “Barry Avrich recognized this need, and has been instrumental in rallying community support and gaining backing from the Canadian entertainment industry to make this theatre a reality for our patients. It is this type of initiative that makes SickKids one of the greatest children’s hospitals in the world.”

Having spent more than two decades in entertainment marketing and film production, Barry Avrich conceived of the idea while walking through a hospital and observing a child watching a film on a small video player. He felt that children should not be prevented from the entire ‘GO BIG’ experience of movies just because they were hospitalized.

“From the day you first enter a movie theatre and for the rest of your life, the emotional impact and ability to escape is an experience exclusive to film. I am thrilled to ensure that no child sick or healthy will be denied this experience,” said Barry Avrich.

Designed by Daniel Greenglass and Joe Brennan of JF Brennan Design Build Inc., The Hollywood Theatre at SickKids will screen movies each week including new releases from major studios and family movies from a library of films. All movies will also be broadcast into patient rooms via closed circuit television. When the theatre is not being used to show movies, it is used to enhance the educational capabilities of the hospital through state-of-the-art broadcast and telemedicine equipment.

The Hollywood Theatre at SickKids is also partnering with Sprockets Toronto International Film Festival for Children to show films during its spring festival. The theatre will be run by a team comprised of SickKids staff and a volunteer studio liaison.

About SickKids Foundation

SickKids Foundation was established in 1972 and is celebrating its 35-year anniversary. Its mission is to inspire its communities to invest in health and scientific advances to improve the lives of children and their families in Canada and around the world. Its vision is “Healthier children. A better world.”

In addition to its support of The Hospital for Sick Children, the Foundation has a mandate to support children’s health on a national basis. Through its National Grants Program, SickKids Foundation invests \$4 million annually across Canada in paediatric research, focusing on issues important to children’s health which have not been addressed elsewhere.

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