

Community Foundation of Medicine Hat & Southeastern Alberta Helping Kids Heal...

Submitted by Kelli Moore

Being hospitalized is never fun, especially when you're a child. But it has been made more tolerable with the help of the **Community Foundation of Medicine Hat & Southeastern Alberta**. With the provision of a \$5,000 grant, the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation have provided the Pediatrics unit at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital with a Mobile Fun Centre. This state of the art video game on wheels combines a DVD player, Nintendo Game Cube and a high-resolution flat screen. The Fun Centre has games and movies for all ages and is small and versatile enough to provide bedside access in any room.

Children experiencing a stay in the hospital need an escape from all the Medical Chaos. Sometimes just watching a movie or immersing themselves in a video game for an hour can help take their mind off of the frustrations of not feeling well.

The mobile Fun Centre is a great way to pass long days in the hospital, especially if the child is bed ridden or experiencing reduced mobility. Child Life Activity Convenor, Tracy Romaniuk says the Mobile Fun Centre has done wonders for the children's spirits, particularly during the earlier part of their stay when they don't feel up to getting out of bed for other activities. Having video games and movies available on a brand new flat screen perks the kids up and helps get their minds off the reason they are in hospital, even if it is only for a few hours at a time.

Romaniuk also says the addition of the Fun Centre to the Unit puts them on the same playing field as the larger hospitals in Calgary and Edmonton. It's a great distraction from the larger problems facing these kids and it goes a long way in fighting boredom, cooped up in their hospital room. These children have enough to deal with as is, so the more enjoyment that can be brought to their stay in the hospital, the better.

There's nothing more heartbreaking than a child in the hospital. Luckily, our Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Pediatrics Unit can now offer those children a little piece of normality and a miniature vacation from their medical problems. A vacation they like to call the Mobile Fun Centre – courtesy of the Community Foundation and the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation.

If you would like more information on other grants the Community Foundation has made or information on how to apply for a grant contact Melissa Frew-Wannamaker at the Community Foundation at 527-9038