



Press Release

Contact: Amy Blaser, Vice President

Phone: 402-562-3371

Email: aebblaser@columbushosp.org

Date: June 6, 2023

New partnership makes hospital visits fun for kids

(COLUMBUS, Neb.) – Hospital visits can be overwhelming and scary for kids — especially if they are sick or in pain. That's why Columbus Community Hospital has joined forces with the Starlight Children's Foundation to enhance hospital visits for children. The Starlight Foundation is a charitable organization that receives donations from large corporations and distributes those items to hospitals nationwide.

"The Starlight Children's Foundation supports hospitals that treat pediatric patients with the ultimate goal of helping those patients have the best experience they can during their treatment," said Ramaekers, director of Volunteer & Guest Services.

Hasbro, Nintendo, Radio Flyer, Disney, and other top-name companies donate items to the foundation. These items are shared with hospitals and care centers that serve pediatric patients, such as Columbus Community Hospital.

Wiggles & Giggles Therapy for Kids™, the acute care unit, the emergency room, or any other department caring for children can use these donations. Children can access some items as they receive care and take others home after their visit.

"There is a vast inventory of items, but the Starlight Children's gowns stood out," said Ramaekers. "The gowns have button snaps on the sides for easier access, so we can run IV lines and other operations while allowing the patients to stay covered. They have fun and unique designs such as 'ISpy' to distract the patients when receiving care."

The nearest Starlight warehouse is in Omaha, Nebraska — just a short distance from Columbus Community Hospital. At times, the warehouse will reach out to nearby facilities to see if they are interested in smaller donations of items in its inventory. Starlight contacted Ramaekers, who placed her first order recently for items that included "Cars"-themed play sets and mats.

"The Starlight Foundation has items ranging from digital resources to gaming systems," said Ramaekers. "We can print activity books for siblings of pediatric patients or offer games to pass the time. The hospital stay can be daunting for the entire family, so this helps improve that experience for everyone."



Ramaekers foresees every pediatric patient receiving an item.

To learn more about this program or the services available at Columbus Community Hospital, visit columbushosp.org.

###