



**ATTENTION: News Assignments/
Medical/Health Reporters**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TEXAS SCOTTISH RITE HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN CELEBRATES
“CHILD LIFE WEEK” WITH EDUCATIONAL FESTIVITIES**

Hospital’s Patient-Centered Approach Addresses Emotional, Medical Needs of Each Patient

(DALLAS – March XX, 2007) – Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children (TSRHC) proudly celebrates Child Life Week as part of the Child Life Council’s Child Life Month this March. In an effort to educate TSRHC staff about the role of the child life department, child life specialists will raise awareness about child life services through various activities throughout the week, as well as teach hospital staff tools that they may utilize. Child life specialists will distribute light up distraction key chains, one of the distraction methods child life specialists use for patients undergoing procedures, and set up informational table tents and boards in the cafeteria and the atrium that will feature facts about the department’s role and services.

TSRHC is one of the nation’s leading pediatric centers for the treatment of orthopedic conditions, certain related neurological disorders and learning disorders, such as dyslexia. There is no charge for treatment at the hospital, and admission is open to Texas children from birth to 18 years of age.

The hospital’s Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Child Life Center on the third floor offers a happy, healthy play environment for its patients. Patients and their families can take a break from tests, doctors, nurses and stress to play with their favorite doll, game or toy. Child life specialists also ensure that children who are unable to leave their rooms have access to the toys, utilizing mobile video game and computer systems and other portable forms of entertainment.

“We at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children believe the services offered by our child life specialists are essential to the recovery of our patients,” said J. C. Montgomery, Jr., president of TSRHC. “We are proud to celebrate Child Life Week with our patients, staff, volunteers and friends to highlight the important work of this department.”

Focusing on patients’ overall happiness and emotional well being, the goal of TSRHC’s child life department is to improve a child’s understanding of complex healthcare and life experiences, foster an environment that incorporates

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emotional support, identify and support strengths within the family and facilitate continued child development and growth. With the services of child life, patients can leave the worry and discomfort of their conditions at the door and have fun while developing meaningful friendships with specialists and other patients. This philosophy has proven to decrease recovery time and improve the overall health of the child.

Role-playing is an activity that child life specialists use to explain procedures to children. Patients at TSRHC may dress in scrubs and utilize miniature-sized medical equipment on specially designed dolls to apply a plaster cast, give a shot or other appropriate procedures. This activity helps prepare children for their own procedures and allows them to better understand what to expect during their hospital visits.

Providing comfort and support to patients and families before, during and after procedures is just part of a child life specialist's job. As part of treating the child as a whole, specialists at TSRHC aid patients in the transition back into the "real world." When necessary, specialists visit a patient's school to educate teachers, counselors, coaches and students about the patient's condition and special needs. Answering questions and providing accurate information increases compassion in the school environment while limiting misunderstanding, which can lead to teasing.

With training in child development, psychology, human and family studies or a closely related discipline, child life specialists are a constant and comforting fixture in the hospital. TSRHC strongly believes the recovery of its patients hinges not only on the medical treatment they receive, but also on their emotional wellbeing.

Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children

Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children is one of the nation's leading pediatric centers for the treatment of orthopedic conditions, certain related neurological disorders and learning disorders, such as dyslexia. There is no charge to patient families for treatment at the hospital, and admission is open to Texas children from birth to 18 years of age. For more information, to volunteer or to make a donation, please call (214) 559-5000 or (800) 421-1121 or visit www.tsrhc.org.

Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Child Life Center

Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Child Life Center and the child life program at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children (TSRHC) were established to continue the hospital's philosophy of family-centered care. Child life specialists prepare children, adolescents and their families for upcoming procedures, surgeries and hospitalizations. Specialists use education to prepare patients for surgeries and different tests a patient may have while in the hospital. As a part of family-centered care, family members are encouraged to participate in the teaching. This process helps the family to learn more about what they can expect and to discover ways to help the child cope with their fears and concerns. Child life specialists promote coping through various methods and techniques. The techniques are chosen based on their appropriateness for each child or adolescent, their family and the situation. By providing play opportunities and other activities that are developmentally appropriate for a patient, the child life specialist can help the patient and the family with the coping process. Each patient and family is special, and TSRHC's child life program strives to establish relationships that provide emotional and social support to meet their individual needs.

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Pictured are Jennifer Weems, TSRHC child life specialist, with TSRHC patient Ben, age 15.

Pictured is TSRHC patient Emily, age 10, dressed in scrubs and enjoying the toys in the child life department.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please contact us to set up an interview with a TSRHC child life specialist or to arrange a tour of the Dr. Bob and Jean Smith Child Life Center.