

KWAC Hospital Report-
“Park with A View...Dream Designers and A Comfort Zone”
By Alexandra Rose Rieger

Not too long ago I received an invite. I had the amazing opportunity to participate in my first Comfort Zone for the Huntington Children’s Hospital in Pasadena. The first thing we asked the children was, “can dreams come true.” Sadly, a few of the kids said “no,” including a sweet little girl, with whom I was paired. The fact that she said “no” made me all the more excited to show her that dreams can come true.

Once we were all in our own individual “dream teams,” we asked the children, “What are a few of the things that would help you enjoy your stay in the hospital?” My little “Dream Designer” (the 10- year old little girl I was paired up with) did not have the typical answer such as: movies, books and cuddle buddies. She wanted to go to the park and do arts and crafts. This would not be surprising, except for the fact that both of her arms, hands and legs were immobilized and seemed in critical condition. So, both “going to the park” and “arts and crafts” appeared to be out of the question. How was I going to make this little girl’s dreams come true?

At first, I was a bit concerned, but when it came time to present the children’s dreams...I had thought of a plan. When I stood up and announced my little “Dream Designer’s” dream, some of the hospital staff cast worried glances (understandably). Still, I was confident that I had found a way to answer her dreams. After each child received their own KWACers ducks and pillows for their excellent dreaming...we began to make their dreams come true.

In no time, videogames, DVD players, craft supplies, coloring books, music, movies CD players, board games, books, cuddle buddies and lots of other fun toys were brought in, fulfilling dreams and sharing smiles. My “Dream Designer” still seemed a bit sad until I shared my idea. I said to her, “I am going to bring the park to you. You can design your very own park here with me.” I grabbed clay, a green piece of construction paper, and that’s exactly what we did. We created a whole miniature park equipped with a lake-house, a bench, a lake with cattails and swan, a picnic blanket with fresh berries, French bread and even tiny people frolicking among the greenery.

I molded the clay, while my now emboldened “Dream Designer” took charge choosing anything she wanted to add to her mini park. Her eyes grew bright when she deliberately thought out what she wanted to have in her “park.” Later, we hung the “Kids With A Cause Comfort Zone” banner, and quickly settled down for story time.

Would you believe, we had a surprise visitor come right in the middle of story time! She was a lively and charismatic girl who was a former patient of the Huntington Hospital and a long time KWAC friend. When she found out that we would be visiting, her family made it a point to come back to say hello to the KWAC team and encourage the current patients. Before we left, I asked my little “Dream Designer”: “So do believe dreams can come true *now*?” She smiled and said, “Yes!” Then she paused a bit and added “... they always do find a way”. That is so true and really warmed my heart; for me to even be able to help one child *believe* is my dream come true.

P.S. Thank you kids with a cause for presenting me with this awesome opportunity and I can’t wait to do it again!

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Here I am, Alexandra Rose Rieger, with my “Dream Designer” and Logan J