

A dream come

By Andrea Blowers

The pirate ship nurses' station is a centerpiece of the Amber's Dream project. The ship is built so the desk is at children's eye level, and portholes dot the ship's hull. Each porthole features a different hands-on activity for children.

It's a dream for kids, it's wonderful," says Randi Schaeffer. "You can just see the kids' faces when they walk in the door. . . . It is something totally superior for kids and their hospitalization."

Schaeffer, the children's hospital nurse manager at Medcenter One in Bismarck, ND, is referring to the Amber's Dream project, a complete renovation of the hospital's pediatric wing. Basin Electric and other area electric cooperatives committed to making the project a reality from its very beginning more than two years ago. Today, the \$1-million project funded through donations to the Medcenter One Foundation is nearly complete, and the transformation is nothing short of magical.



The project is named after its visionary, Amber Des Roches, who at just 11 years old, learned she had acute lymphocytic leukemia. For four years, Amber courageously battled the disease spending a lot of time at Medcenter One's Children's Hospital.

During difficult times, Amber turned to J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan. She loved the book's whimsical illustrations of mermaids, fairies and pirates. According to her mom, Pam, Amber dreamed of a place where other hospitalized children could get lost in an adventure, not in their illness. She

looked to the story and its illustrations as her inspiration for what she thought the hospital could look like. It gave her something to imagine and focus on, which provided a distraction from her own procedures and medical worries. Her ideas became Amber's Dream.

In December 2007, before any project plans could be made, Amber passed away.

But Amber's parents, John and Pam, were determined to make Amber's Dream a reality. "I guess we were just motivated by the idea of helping other families that came after us and the kids. We sort of decided that we really had nothing to lose," Pam Des Roches says.

Basin Electric learned about Amber's Dream during its first-ever St. Baldrick's event in 2008. St. Baldrick's is the cooperative's annual fundraising event for children's cancer research. Over the course of that next year, Basin Electric, Capital Electric, KEM Electric, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, Roughrider Electric and Slope Electric cooperatives committed \$80,000, the project's first donation, specifically for the children's playroom.

Schaeffer gives a lot of credit to the Basin Electric cooperative family. "If it wouldn't be for Basin Electric, I'm not sure this project would have even started.

“This is legacy, not just a legacy for Medcenter, it's a legacy for our entire community.”

Randi Schaeffer, Medcenter One

true

Cooperatives help turn a child's dream into a legacy for the community

[The electric cooperatives] came forward with the amount of money we needed to actually say, 'Hey, we can do this,'" Schaeffer says.

"The transformation is cool. I mean, it's really cool," says Hans Gilsdorf, the project's designer and artist. Gilsdorf and Dwight Williams captured the essence of the Peter Pan adventure with brilliant color and detail. The two designed and created the life-sized pirate ship nurses' station with its Meddy Bear pirate and an illuminated floor, a playroom that looks like Wendy's bedroom with a 15-foot branch canopy where children can sit inside, and all the portal games and activities integrated in every corner of the children's hospital.

"The playroom is a magical place like no other I've seen," Schaeffer says. "If a child comes in there, there are developmentally appropriate places for them, there's a quiet time to escape, there are developmental toys, there's music therapy. It's wonderful."

Though the artistic elements are vital to creating a child-centric environment, the renovation is more than a facelift, Schaeffer says. There will be a treatment room with distractions, where any invasive procedures or lab work can be done because, according to Schaeffer, a child's room should be their safe, comfortable place.

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My favorite part



Gilsdorf: "I love the mural with a passion, because it was such a fun piece to paint. ... At the same time the pirate ship was a blast. What boy doesn't like to make a pirate ship?"



Pam Des Roches: "It's a toss between the playroom area, which looks like a children's bedroom, and the pirate ship for the main nurses' station. ... That to me was beyond what I ever thought it could be. The fact that they were able to put the effects of water coming out from underneath the desk, it's amazing."



Schaeffer: "I don't have a favorite part because I think the whole thing is ... it's magical. The playroom is a magical place like no other I've seen."



According to Randi Schaeffer, the Meddy Bear pirate on watch at the pirate ship nurses' station welcomes kids with his warm, friendly face. The hat on his head is made out of all of the newspaper articles published about Amber, the project, and the individuals involved with it.

Also, in addition to adding three larger rooms and a double room, the air flow between the rooms was updated so one side of the wing has negative pressure air flow and the other side has positive. "We're not a hospital where children with cancer are on one floor, surgicals on another, and children with infectious diseases on another. We're all together," Schaeffer says. The new air system will help prevent diseases from spreading to other kids, especially those with compromised immune systems.

Also, for the optimum care of the children, four child-height nurses' stations are spread throughout the wing, instead of just one station common in most hospitals. There will be a room for teens and a family room.

"Our main goal has been met 10 times over, which was to make a better care facility for the kids, the providers and the families, just making it easier for everybody," Des Roches says.

Schaeffer adds, "This is legacy, not just a legacy for Medcenter, it's a legacy for our entire community."

Watch a video on project at <http://bit.ly/AmbersDreamReality>.

To learn more about Amber's Dream, visit medcenterone.com/ambersdream.



Amber Des Roches has been honored every year during Basin Electric's St. Baldrick's events and will be honored again this year. Her mom, Pam, has taken a special role coordinating with the families of the St. Baldrick's honorees.



It's St. Baldrick's season

March 17, 2011, marked the fourth consecutive year for North Dakota's only St. Baldrick's event. Participants shave their heads or cut their hair in solidarity of children affected by cancer. Since 2008, through Basin Electric's events more than 650 volunteers have shaved and nearly \$500,000 has been raised for childhood cancer research and fellowships.

This year marks the first year the event was fully brought into the community. Basin Electric, together with MDU Resources Group, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), Medcenter One, Kadrmias, Lee & Jackson and the Bismarck-Mandan Young Professionals Network jointly hosted the 2011 event at the Bismarck State College National Energy Center of Excellence. The theme: Shave a Life. Details from the event will be published in the May-June issue of Basin Today, but read on to learn about the multiple fundraising events held leading up to St. Baldrick's Day.

24 Hour Trivia Fundraiser



A 24-hour trivia fundraising event was held Friday, Feb. 25. Basin Electric partnered with Scott Wild's Wild Trivia Tour for Bismarck, ND's first-ever event of this kind. The trivia event was held at the Elks Lodge with four teams battling to see who would win the most rounds and raise the most money. The event went around the clock beginning at 5 p.m. Feb. 25 until 5 p.m. Feb. 26. Scott Wild not only hosted the event for the entire 24 hours, he also sacrificed his locks to the "2011 Greatest Trivia Team Ever" – The Lifesavers. Wild's brother, Brian Wild, was on that team and took his turn with the clippers. The event raised more than \$5,000 for St. Baldrick's. Watch the video: <http://bit.ly/24TriviaShavingEvent>.

Bismarck Bobcats game



On March 14, during the Bobcat's home game against the Austin Bruins, members and coaching staff of the team shaved their heads live on center ice. Layne Sedevie, the Bobcats head coach even dyed his hair green before going bald. Players wore specially designed St. Baldrick's jerseys during the game. The jerseys were auctioned off following the game and the proceeds were donated to St. Baldrick's. Watch the video: <http://bit.ly/BobcatsJerseyAuction>.