miracles &
memories
December 2020
Give Kids The World Village

Quietly Making Noise

has been quietly making a huge impact on Give Kids The World.

QUIETLY MAKING NOISE MAKES ACOUSTICALLY SOUND IMPROVEMENTS

For nearly 30 years, Lisa Schott, president and principal acoustical consultant at Quietly Making Noise (QMN), has been quietly making a huge impact on Give Kids The World. By leveraging her expertise and state-of-the-art analytical tools, she has helped to create a peaceful, relaxing ambience for critically ill children and their families during magical stays at the Village.

Lisa's connection to the Village began in 1987 when, as an engineering student at Georgia Tech, she was awarded a three-year scholarship by the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (then Mercury 7 Foundation.) Created by the six surviving Mercury 7 astronauts along with Give Kids The World Founder Henri Landwirth, the Foundation's goal is to support the country's top STEM students while commemorating the legacy of America's pioneering astronauts. The scholarship was invaluable to Lisa, who was working hard to meet the high cost of education; it enabled her to continue her studies, leading her to discover a passion for acoustical engineering. The discovery had a very personal meaning to Lisa, whose father is deaf and whose mother is a musician.

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As part of the scholarship program, Lisa was invited to attend a Mercury 7 Foundation Board meeting which was attended by Henri and the Mercury 7 astronauts. While the astronauts were fascinating to a young engineer, it was Henri who had the most profound impact on Lisa. "Henri and the Mercury 7 astronauts had all reached the highest levels of achievement in their professional lives, but they did not cease working hard to make the world a better place. Henri, especially, kept creating positive change through his numerous ideas and ventures. I wanted to follow in his footsteps," says Lisa.

Henri's devotion to the Village and the families it serves proved infectious, and Lisa began repaying the Foundation's generosity by volunteering at the Village as often as possible. It was during one of these volunteer shifts that Henri became aware of Lisa's specialty in acoustical engineering, and asked if she could help out with a few projects around the Village. Lisa was overjoyed by the opportunity to lend her talent and expertise in creating quiet, peaceful places to provide wish families with the most relaxing, unforgettable experience possible.

"It is well-known that a good acoustical environment is crucial to healing – lowering the stress level of patients and improving health outcomes," says Lisa. "Meeting Henri and having the opportunity to give back to such an outstanding organization transformed my life, putting me and my husband, George, on a lifelong path to philanthropy. I can never repay the enormous debt of gratitude we owe Give Kids The World and its amazing mission."

Since then, Lisa has donated her time and talents in countless ways to improve the acoustical environment throughout the Village, beginning with the House of Hearts and the Cupcake Room of the former Gingerbread House – both of which echoed when crowded. After analyzing sound decay times and reverberation, Lisa recommended the addition of acoustically absorptive materials to improve the acoustics without changing the whimsical aesthetics of the spaces. She then set about improving the acoustics of the wish family duplex villas by reducing the noise coming through common walls and connecting doors.

When the Village began to expand, adding the multi-family Banyan Park building, Lisa was involved from the beginning – working with the design team to incorporate extensive noise control into the walls, floors, ceiling assemblies and roof to ensure a quiet, relaxing ambience. Similar improvements were also developed to reduce noise and enhance the environment within Towne Hall and the Memory Maker building, and Lisa also provided pro bono services during the design of Henri's Starlite Scoops, to ensure that every aspect of the building was sonically pleasing and relaxing for wish families.

Lisa and George's above-and-beyond efforts also include Quietly Making Noise's adoption of two family villas. With a large crew of friends and family, QMN provides maintenance, deep cleaning, landscaping

and other services throughout the year to keep them in top condition for visiting families; and decorates these villas and other buildings at the Village during the holidays. And in 2014, Lisa and George served on the Steering Committee for Extreme Village Makeover, a massive undertaking to renovate all of the villas with the latest interior design finishes and state-of-the-art appliances and fixtures.

"I cannot say enough about Lisa's personal and professional contributions to Give Kids The World," says Give Kids The World President and CEO Pam Landwirth. "We are appreciative beyond words for the innumerable things she has done to ensure our wish families enjoy a relaxing, truly unforgettable stay at the Village."

Among her many accomplishments in the field of acoustical engineering, Lisa, a member of the National Council of Acoustical Consultants, is making it easier for people worldwide to enjoy a peaceful, restful sleep – thanks again to her connection to Henri! Lisa solved a personal noise issue for Henri by inventing her now-patented Shut-Eye™ Acoustical Shutters and installing the prototype in his condominium to block out traffic noise at night.

For more information about Quietly Making Noise, please visit www.quietlymakingnoise.com.

A Boy, A Wish And A Miracle

Walt Disney World Resort's donation of more than three million sparkling lights has transformed Give Kids The World Village into a bright and merry wonderland during Night of a Million Lights – a walk-through, socially distanced holiday light spectacular taking place now at the Village and continuing through January 3. Considered among Central Florida's most exciting holiday celebrations this season, the event is much more than an imaginative pivot for the Village, which closed to wish families temporarily in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For one 15-year-old teen, it's a magical homecoming.

One of only four people in the world to have been born with both Dravet Syndrome, a catastrophic form of epilepsy, and cortical dysplasia, an abnormality of the brain cortex, Gavin Haines has endured thousands of debilitating seizures beginning when he was six months old, causing severe developmental delays. It wasn't until an unforgettable trip to Walt Disney World Resort at the age of six that the Star Wars super fan spoke his very first words.

Gavin's seizures continued daily, upending every aspect of the family's lives – until a visit this past March to Give Kids The World Village changed everything. Endless doctor's visits were replaced by precious time laughing, playing and celebrating together. The Village's delicious meals and signature "Ice Cream For Breakfast!" were a welcome respite from hospital food. And to make the experience extra special, Walt Disney World Resort arranged for a memorable day at Star Wars Galaxy's Edge. Gavin's smiles never stopped... but his seizures did! Gavin has been seizure-free ever since, and his mother, Stacey Haines, credits the Village with Gavin's miraculous improvement.

"Visiting Give Kids The World Village felt like coming home," said Stacey Haines. "Our stress just melted away; we were floored by the overwhelming support, love and compassion we were showered with, and it truly has been life-changing for Gavin and our entire family."

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The Village had such a profound impact on Gavin that in April, the Haines family packed up and moved from Connecticut to Central Florida so they can volunteer at the Village every week once it reopens. However, they didn't have to wait long to be welcomed "home" to the Village. Gavin and Stacey volunteered to help bring the Village's Night of a Million Lights fundraiser to life, becoming a permanent part of the installation with their own Star Wars-themed villa.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jim Gourley

"You likely don't remember me," began a letter by Jim Gourley to Pam Landwirth a couple of years ago, "...but I work at Coca-Cola Bottling Company Consolidated, and was led to the Village by your website (and the Princess!) and thought it would be a great opportunity to enhance my servant leadership abilities through helping the families at GKTW. Little did I realize that it was I who would be receiving the help, not the other way around. You have allowed me to become a better person as a result of the two weeks I have spent there thus far, but I am still a work in progress."

Jim's poignant words were a wonderful reminder of our mission, and a great illustration of the transformative power of volunteerism – not to mention the start of a remarkable journey of giving back. Since then, Jim has traveled to the Village from his home in South Carolina to volunteer nearly 1,200 hours in virtually every capacity possible. Humbly, passionately, and with an infectious smile, Jim has made an enormous impact at the Village during weeks-long volunteer visits. Despite his own battle with cancer, Jim has continued to devote his time and talents helping to brighten the lives of those facing the most devastating challenges a family can endure. Most recently, Jim returned this summer and fall to help prepare the Village for its eventual reopening, and again in December to support Night of a Million Lights.

A more recent letter to Pam underscores Jim's selfless devotion to giving back: "I believe that I was sent to GKTW prior to my mishap to give me the perspective I needed. If I felt a little pain, I simply thought of the truly amazing kids I had met and what they lived with on a daily basis...and my pain was diminished. I never once asked 'why me,' and that would not have been the case if this had occurred before my GKTW service. The parents of these children are the most incredible servant leaders. It is a parent who has been chosen by God to care for a special child...a parent who gives and gives and gives, to the point where 'taking' even something as simple as a hot meal placed in their hands seems foreign to them. Those families showed me how putting others before self and having strength against the odds are possible even in the direst circumstances...and it kept my compass centered. You have given me purpose along with a new measure of 'success' far more important than any career accomplishment ever could."

Jim continues to make a difference for wish families. He is currently working on creating six lending libraries that will be located throughout the Village. On behalf of everyone at Give Kids The World, we'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Jim for his tremendous dedication to our mission.

A Pledge For Leah

Life is full of defining moments...a point at which the essential nature of a person's character is revealed, and their destiny cemented. For Give Kids The World volunteer and fundraiser Tom Wilson, that moment was meeting Leah Mullen. A native of northern England, Tom had moved to the Baltimore area to work at a large hotel, where he became fast friends with Leah's dad, Tim. He was amazed to learn that Tim ran in marathons several times a year, and flabbergasted that he had done one while pushing Leah the entire way in a stroller. And when he met Leah for the first time, Tom's heart melted.

At just 18 months old, Leah had been diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a rare and often fatal childhood cancer. Surgery to remove the tumor was successful, but the lasting damage to her body was irreversible. Leah remained at a cognitive level of a 20-month-old, lost her hearing, and began having catastrophic seizures. Through it all, Tim Mullen and his close-knit family showered Leah with love and embarked on a lifelong journey raising funds for other children facing similar challenges. After hearing about Leah's magical visit to Give Kids The World, Tom began joining Tim in marathons and long-distance cycling rides to raise funds for the Village; and in January, he joined the Mullens in a life-changing volunteer experience.

When a new job with Davidson Hotels & Resorts took Tom to California, he was thrilled to discover that the company supports the Village. He began doing monthly fundraising rides and Miles for Smiles cycling events, often enlisting Davidson co-workers to join him. Even his own cancer diagnosis – just three weeks before Leah passed away in January 2018 – could not stop Tom's determination to make a difference. Following a 141-mile ride up and down the coast of California to celebrate his 41st birthday, Tom was gifted with the news that his cancer was in remission.

"After volunteering at the Village, I knew that my outlook on life was never going to be the same," says Tom. "Seeing these children bravely fighting some of the worst medical conditions imaginable gave me the strength and determination to win my own battle with cancer. I pledged to spend the rest of my life paying it forward in honor of Leah. That will be my contribution to the world...raising funds for the most amazing organization I have ever seen."

To hear more about Tom's journey and support his fundraising efforts, including a 3,000-mile cross-country ride in 2021, **follow him on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/tom.wilson.5036.**

Village News

COMING TOGETHER TO CREATE HAPPINESS AND HOPE.

Give Kids The World couldn't do what we do without the support of generous donors and corporate sponsors. Through exciting events and fundraisers, they help make wishes come true for some very brave families.

JODI BENSON IS PART OF OUR WORLD

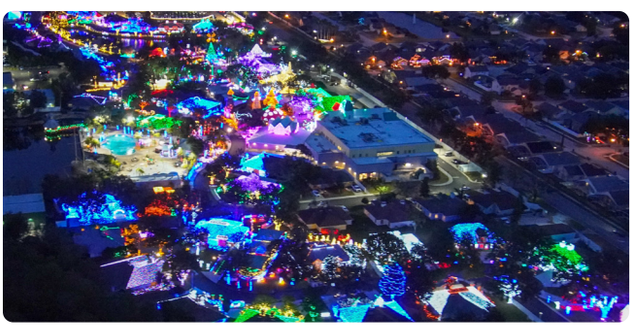
She may be a Tony Award-winning actress, voice actress and singer, but to millions of fans around the globe, Jodi Benson will always be known as the original voice of Princess Ariel in the Disney animated classic, *The Little Mermaid*. These accomplishments, however, pale in comparison with Jodi's caring spirit and commitment to improving the lives of seriously ill children. During the past several years, Jodi has devoted countless hours helping to make dreams come true for wish children and their families.

Most recently, Jodi hosted the Media Preview of Night of a Million Lights, a walk-through, socially distanced holiday spectacular designed to raise funds for future wish fulfillment. More than 3.3 million dazzling lights donated by Walt Disney World Resort, 150 wireframe displays, and 45 wish family villas exquisitely decorated by an array of generous partners highlight this fun family event, taking place through January 3. Jodi was gracious enough to sing her iconic "Part of Your World," and spent time with a precious little princess she met on the bedazzled Avenue named Harper Mae. We are indebted for Jodi's support and privileged to have her as part of the Give Kids The World family.

OVER THE EDGE

It's never too early to begin planning for Over The Edge, our heart-pounding, adrenaline-rushing fundraiser benefiting Give Kids The World Village. On February 12, 2021, registered participants can experience the thrill and excitement of rappelling down the side of the 32-story Hyatt Regency Orlando to help make dreams come true for critically ill children and their families. Don't worry if being suspended 428 feet in the air is not on your bucket list; you can still support the Village by making a donation on behalf of a rappeler!

To register or make a donation, visit givekidstheworld.org/overtheedge.



FROM ARIEL TO AERIAL!

Give Kids The World Village's first-ever Night of a Million Lights walk-through, socially distanced holiday lights spectacular has been lighting up the Central Florida skyline while raising funds to brighten the lives of critically ill children. Tickets are available at www.gktw.org/lights for the event, which ends January 3. A fundraising live stream is scheduled for December 20. (Photo credit: @bioreconstruct on Twitter)

STARS & PARS

Every year since 2013, Wyndham Destinations has hosted its Stars & Pars golf tournament and gala at the Waldorf Astoria Resort Orlando, and this year was no exception – raising more than $125,000 for Give Kids The World and bringing the total amount raised over the last eight years to more than $1.2 million. Pictured at this year's event are, from left, Wyndham Vacation Clubs Chief Operating Officer Geoff Richards; wish child Kellen Jackley; wish child Gavin Shreeve; Gavin's mom, Christina Shreeve; and Kellen's dad, Tommy Jackley.

PAYING IT FORWARD... CANDY LAND STYLE!

Edward Thompson's magical visit to Give Kids The World with his family last year had an indelible impression on the 15-year-old teen, who is celebrating two years in remission from Hodgkin's lymphoma. After raising funds for children's cancer charities through an annual haunted house, including nearly $5,000 for the Village last year, Edward and his family decided to switch things up this season. Inspired by the Village's life-sized Candy Land game, they created their own handmade version of the game in their front yard in Raleigh, NC, as part of a holiday drive-through fundraiser. We are grateful to Edward for his sweet, generous contribution to help make dreams come true for other wish children!

HEARTS OF REALITY

For the 12th consecutive year, more than 60 reality television stars took part in Hearts of Reality in early December at Margaritaville Orlando Resort. Cast members from shows including *Survivor*, The *Amazing Race*, *Big Brother*, and more were on hand to sign autographs, fire up their fan base, and raise funds for Give Kids The World. Since 2009, Hearts of Reality has raised more than $1 million to help make wishes come true for critically ill children.

WCI 2019 VISIT

WCI GIVES GENEROUSLY

Give Kids The World could not accomplish its mission without the generous support of donors and volunteers... and the Workers' Compensation Institute (WCI) contributes both! Since 2012, up to 1,400 attendees of WCI's annual Education Conference in Orlando have converged on the Village each August to volunteer, share camaraderie and raise funds for the Village. Due to COVID-19, this year's conference and fundraiser went virtual, with WCI's online auction raising $93,000 in support of our mission to transform lives and spread hope. In addition, more than 400 WCI community members participated in a virtual volunteer opportunity. For more information about this wonderful educational nonprofit, visit www.wci360.com.

BOSTON MARKET DELIVERS MEALS AND FAMILY MEMORIES

Boston Market continues to make stays at the Village delicious. Since 2008, the company has raised more than $6 million for Give Kids The World through an annual coupon book sold in Boston Market locations nationwide and other fundraisers. Funding supports Katie's Kitchen, where wish families are treated to wholesome family-style rotisserie chicken meals served by Boston Market employees. "We are grateful to Boston Market for its tremendous support," said Give Kids The World President and CEO Pam Landwirth. "The simple joy of sharing a delicious meal together is priceless for our families, and Boston Market's generosity is making it possible for us to continue creating these and other unforgettable moments for children and families from around the world." The 2020 coupon book program will run through January 1, 2021. For more information, visit www.bostonmarket.com.

MERLIN'S MAGIC SPACE

Give Kids The World is privileged to work in collaboration with LEGOLAND and the Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation to bring a Merlin's Magic Space to the Village! Merlin's Magic Spaces are uniquely themed treatment rooms installed within a charity partner facility that provide much-needed respite and an opportunity to experience the unique magic of Merlin for children who are unable to visit Merlin Entertainment Attractions. During the past 10 years, the Foundation has helped nearly 500,000 children and their families to have magical days out at Merlin Entertainment venues and thousands more to enjoy unique experiences within Merlin's Magic Spaces. The Merlin's Magic Space at Give Kids The World is nearly complete and features a themed play area with an ADA-accessible build area, colorful character photo spots and bright graphics. The space was built in partnership with Attractions & Entertainment Solutions, Inc., Williams Company and Adare. For more information about the Merlin's Magic Wand Foundation, please visit www.merlinsmagicwand.org.

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Purchase with a Purpose

This holiday season, make every purchase count! Our beautiful apparel for children and adults, jewelry, gifts for the home and office, and specialty items make thoughtful gifts for friends, family and co-workers, and the proceeds from all sales will make wishes come true for critically ill children and their families. To shop our exclusive Give Kids The World branded merchandise, **please visit www.gktw.org/shop**.

Help Drive Home Our Mission

Our beautiful new Give Kids The World specialty license plates are here! Anyone with a valid Florida driver's license can now visit any tax collector's office throughout the state to order a voucher for the new plate. A new website is also in the works, enabling users to purchase a specialty plate voucher online. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting new addition.

amazonsmile

Amazon is helping the Village deliver happiness and hope to wish families, one online purchase at a time. By visiting smile.amazon.com and selecting Give Kids The World as their charity of their choice, shoppers can help fund future wishes at no additional cost to them. For each purchase made on AmazonSmile, 0.5% of eligible purchases will be donated to the Village.

Give Kids The World Village
Where Happiness Inspires Hope

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