

Markham Stouffville Hospital

Surgical pre-admission program offers children comfort

By RENA GALANIS
Advertising Features Coordinator

The Dr. Bear Surgical Pre-admission Program at Markham Stouffville Hospital offers tours and information, as well as coping techniques for children about to be hospitalized.

"Our role is to normalize the procedure of hospitalization for the child and their family and to offer support during their stay here," says the hospital's child life specialist, Sandy Bever.

The advance preparation the program provides alleviates the stress and fear of the unknown which is common for many children who require hospital care, she says.

Specifically geared to four- to 12-year-olds, the program also gives parents the opportunity to ask any questions regarding their child's stay or surgical procedure.

Bever uses a teaching puppet, "Rusty", to explain procedures to the child and they in turn, can express feelings through puppet play and learn more about what they will go through by viewing a slide show and allowing hands-on exploration of commonly used medical equipment.

Children can simulate something as simple as giving a needle on Rusty so that the act becomes familiar, Bever says. Children identify with the puppet, who is a character their own age, and it is this friendly approach which can help relieve their anxiety during their stay.

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They ask questions and the tours let them know exactly what to expect. If still frightened, Bever will accompany the child and either distract them as they're receiving a treatment, talk them through it, or use relaxation techniques so that the child can cope.

Studies indicate that children who are prepared in advance are better able to cope with hospitalization and surgery than those who are not and their parents also experience less stress, Bever says.

"We work very closely with the child and parents," she adds. "It's a family-centred program that works for both of them."

Children can repeat the program as they get older if they again require hospital care, since the information they need will change as they grow.

Although parents are welcome to take part in the program along with their child, the hospital recommends that other siblings do not take part, so that individual focus on the child being hospitalized is maintained.

Bever says parents have been pleased with the results of the program and often comment that "it's great to deal with a hospital that looks at the whole child - addressing emotional as well as physical needs."

Markham Firefighters have been generous financial supporters of the Dr. Bear program since its inception in 1992.

For more information on the Dr. Bear program call the community relations department of the Markham Stouffville Hospital at 905-472-7000, ext. 618.

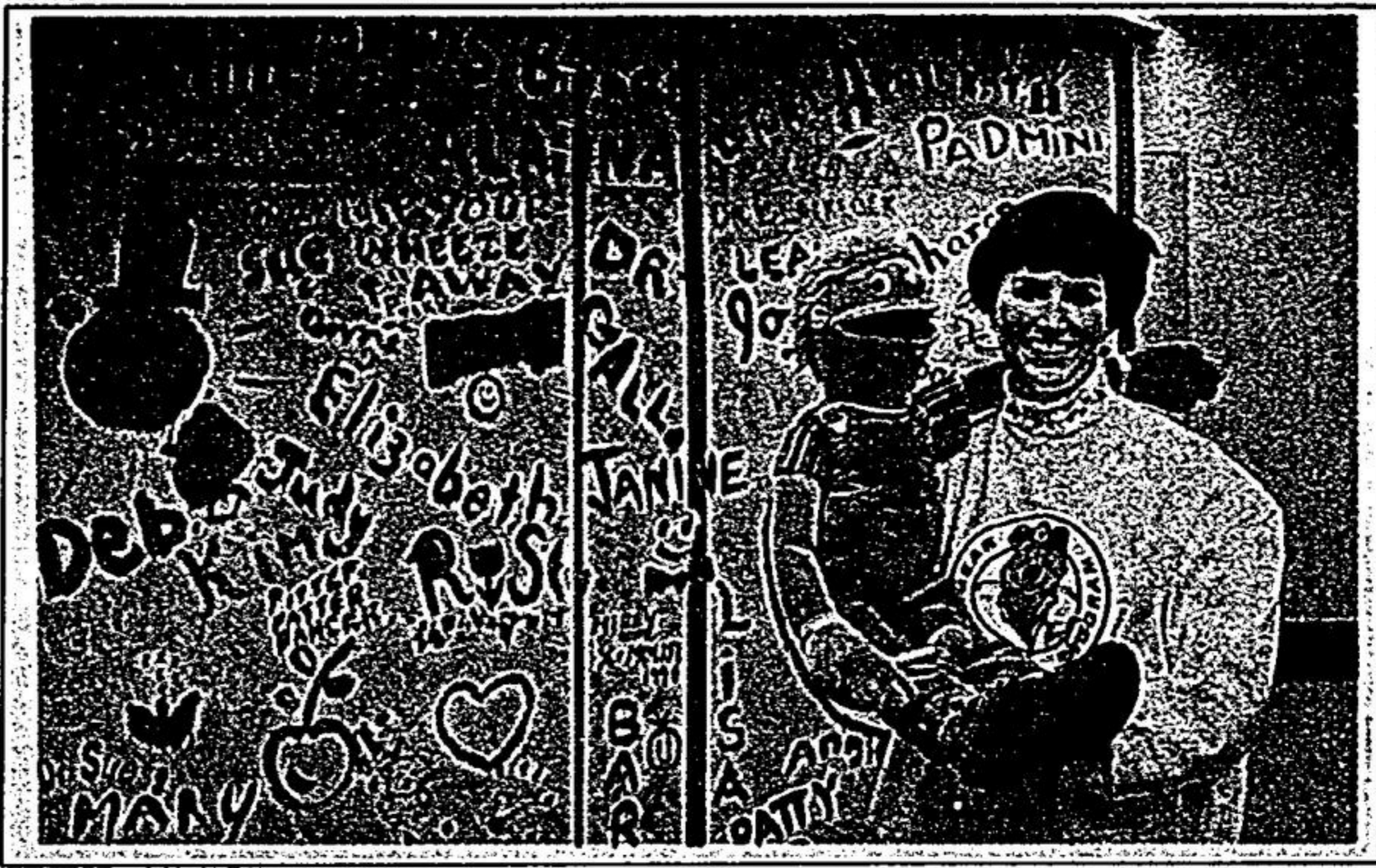


Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE

Child life specialist, Sandy Bever, poses with puppet "Rusty." Bever uses puppet play to help prepare and give information to children who are about to be hospitalized. In addition, tours and slide shows are all part of the Dr. Bear program offered at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

Echocardiogram machine provides detailed data without invasive testing

By RENA GALANIS
Advertising Features

The paediatric echocardiogram machine purchased last October by the Markham Stouffville Hospital is one example of how the hospital makes use of technological advances to better serve their community, says a hospital representative.

"The echocardiogram allows us to acquire medical information which previously required invasive testing," says Lynne Campkin, director of diagnostic imaging services. "It also provides detailed information about how the heart looks and functions."

This ultra sound machine is

designed to do heart and vessel scanning. Sound waves are sent and received through a transducer, an instrument which looks like a microphone. The transducer is scanned over the area investigated, sending and receiving sound waves which are then translated by the echocardiogram machine into electronic data.

This data creates the moving image of the investigated area and is viewed on the machine's computer screen in black and white color.

The echocardiogram is particularly ideal for use with children," says Dr. Roland Beaulieu, a member of the hospital's paediatric cardiology medical staff. "Children's hearts are closer to

the chest surface, therefore sound waves don't have to travel as far and this allows for a better image.

It is also used to perform fetal echo cardiogram testing and can help in genetic counselling because it can provide early detection of any abnormalities.

The test along with a general examination only requires about 30 minutes, Dr. Beaulieu says.

But the amount of information gathered during this short time is "quite amazing," he adds.

The \$200,000 purchase of the paediatric echocardiogram machine was made possible through donations made to the hospital foundation.



Photo by LORI EMMERSON

Dr. Roland Beaulieu uses the echocardiogram machine on four-year-old Kaitlin Ritchie, as mom Joan looks on. This ultra sound machine, which is designed for heart and vessel scanning, is ideal in examinations of children.

HOSPITAL NEWS

- Be a part of Markham Stouffville Hospital's birthday celebration this Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. Cake, refreshments, tours and activities are part of the day. Parking is free!
- Effective Monday March 6, the Markham Stouffville Hospital will offer extended laboratory services in the new location on the second floor, east wing, room 2222.
- New hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday to Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday.