

ISSUE FEATURE: **INTERIORS**

kid -centric



by Kerry Hogue, AIA, LEED-AP | Photos by Jim Roof Creative

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta promotes kid-friendly care in award-winning spaces

The Children's Healthcare of Atlanta projects at Egleston and Scottish Rite in Atlanta, Ga., prove that designing a healing environment through thoughtful design can alleviate stress and even promote whimsy and imaginative thinking. From their inspiring healing gardens to creative discovery walls, these healthcare facilities speak to children >>





The Egleston and Scottish Rite children's projects have received numerous design honors, including those from the Georgia chapter of the American Institute of Architects as well as the American Society of Interior Designers, and *Contract* magazine.

The projects, designed by internationally renowned healthcare architects HKS, Inc. and Stanley Beaman & Sears, reflects the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta patient-focused care, enhanced wayfinding, and positive distractions that are entertaining, educational, and healing.

"The facilities are designed to reflect unique buildings that are sensitive to the high-tech nature of the healthcare profession while blending sensitivity to patient and parents," said HKS principal Ron Dennis, member of the American Institute of Architects, and the American College of Healthcare Architects. "Color, forms, and shapes draw people into the facilities and provide less intimidating environments."

The \$225 million, 375,000-square-foot Children's Healthcare of Atlanta facility at Egleston features a five-floor tower built above a four-level underground parking



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deck. The facility includes a second floor that centralizes the Sibley Heart Center's specialized pediatric cardiac services. The project also includes an enlarged emergency department which more than triples the treatment space of the existing area. The hospital also hosts an enhanced surgical services suite with four additional operating rooms and an expanded outpatient clinic for the Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders Service of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and a state-of-the-art, 30-bed pediatric intensive care unit with all private rooms.

Previous page, the main lobby at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite in Atlanta, Ga.

Left, the learning wall in the public elevator lobby at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston, Atlanta, Ga.

Above, the patient registration area at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite, Atlanta, Ga.



The main lobby (left) and the cardiac unit nursing station (below) at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston.



The \$150 million, 223,000-square-foot Children's Healthcare of Atlanta facility at Scottish Rite includes a three-story addition built above the child-friendly lobby. It houses a 28-bed comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation unit and space for two additional 30-bed inpatient units. A two-story addition was also built above three underground parking levels to provide patients, visitors, and employees with direct elevator access into the hospital. The addition also includes a 54-bed emergency department and expansion of surgical services and diagnostic imaging. The new surgical services department adds three more operating rooms and an intra-operative MRI — one of only three in service in the United States.

"During the last several years, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta has experienced a tremendous increase in patient volume due to community growth," said John Baldwin, vice president of facilities planning and development, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. "Atlanta's pediatric population is forecasted to keep growing faster than any other city in the nation. As this popula-

tion continues to grow, the number of children we treat also continues to grow."

The visitor's movement through both hospitals is designed to be a journey of discovery. The interiors reflect the healing power of Mother Nature with a language that focuses on patients and their families as well as staff and community.

"The color palette is inspired by nature," said Betsy Beaman, member of the American Institute of Architects, and principal with Stanley Beaman & Sears. "These colors reflect all aspects of a garden — including plants, insects, and trees."

Elements throughout the healthcare facilities also reflect the nature theme including acrylic sliding doors embedded with real grass at patient registration areas, elevator walls that simulate the inside of a tree trunk, and etched glass simulating large blades of grass located along the public thoroughfare.

"The interiors are dynamic, kinetic, and engaging," said Beaman. "Evocative of a children's nature theme, the modern design uses soft organic forms in concert with the bold, poppy colors found in nature."

"In addition, natural woods, stone terrazzo floors, nature embedded acrylics, and interactive, virtual water walls are incorporated to achieve functional and visual appeal for children and people of all ages," she continued.

Each lobby features an inviting public lobby, consisting of a three-story atrium. The airy, light-filled volume

of the lobby provides visitors the opportunity to reference nature in unique ways.

According to Beaman, color studies were conducted prior to interior selections.

“The comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation unit department at Children’s Healthcare at Scottish Rite is enveloped in soothing blues and greens because patients may find outside stimuli to be overwhelming. In contrast, the cardiac services at Children’s Healthcare at Egleston are situated in a volume of bright oranges, reds, and pinks, which are colors that increase pulse rate and circulation.”

“These interior design standards — including the master finish palette, palette books, paint colors, finishes, furniture, and fabrics — are outlined in a master finish book,” said Beaman. “This will allow the hospital to maintain the timeless interior design style for years to come.”

Wayfinding was also key to the design of both facilities — using strategic space layouts, sweeping floor patterns, floor and ceiling nodes, and decorative lighting.

To further promote wayfinding, Discovery Walls are located on each floor. These educational features provide positive distractions, donor recognition, and interest for both patient and families. Each lobby also includes a custom wall containing six interactive buttons, 18 high-definition plasma displays, eight synchronized Apple computers, and copyrighted IMAX film footage with caricature voice overtures.

On the outside, both Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta facilities at Egleston and Scottish Rite wanted its new construction to be reflective of the existing surrounding-building context. “Materials, fenestrations, and building heights were all carefully selected to work with the surrounding Emory University campus while design details, including color, were carefully chosen for an inviting and child-friendly impression,” said Dennis.

The HKS design highlights the entrance, making it easily visible for traffic approaching the new hospitals. The underground parking garage is a key organizing element as patients and visitors arrive from the parking garage elevators and onto the central atrium.

Natural elements, including healing gardens, are important design themes at both campuses. Children’s at Egleston features a nature garden complete with reflective seating areas and calming walking paths. Views and vistas to the gardens from the hospital can

be enjoyed by all — while providing orientation and wayfinding. Patients at Children’s at Scottish Rite can also relax in a private, contemplative nature garden.

“Whether their favorite element at Children’s is the healing garden or the Discovery Walls, one thing is clear — the new facilities are a hit with patients, families, and staff,” said Baldwin. “We know our new expansion will further our efforts to gain and maintain national distinction in the pediatric healthcare arena, allowing Children’s to continue to attract brilliant medical leaders to help our patients. But, the most important aspect is providing the best healthcare environment possible for children.” ■

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