

It's the season for joy, celebration and giving.

I'm always amazed at the giving spirit in our community and among our employees, volunteers and medical staff. Year after year we have a tradition in our main entrance atrium that delights everyone who sees it. It is wonderful to see the joy that Dr. Percy McDonald's holiday train display brings to so many. I invite you to take time to visit our Main Entrance Atrium to see this magical display. There's is also another tradition in the atrium -- the Port Huron Hospital Auxiliary's Tree of Peace. It is decorated with ornaments that have been purchased to honor or remember

This past weekend the Port Huron Hospital Foundation presented its annual Festival of Trees. The festival is brought together by volunteers. It is a huge feat. I'd like to extend my thanks to all of the volunteers who made this year a reality. A tradition at the festival for several years now is the Penguin Pond. This special fundraising program is a means for school children to raise money for bringing joy to children in the hospital around the holidays in the form of stuffed Penguins. I can't say enough good about the school children from both St. Clair

On behalf of all of us at Port Huron Hospital, may you experience all the traditional joys and comforts that holiday celebrations bring. I thank all of you for being our cherished partners in the community and wish you peace and good health in the New Year.

- Thomas DeFauw, President and Chief Executive Officer

Annual holiday train display is labor



Dr. Percy McDonald

For over 24 years, Dr. Percy McDonald has converted the Port Huron Hospital main atrium into a magical holiday vision. What started in the mid 80s as a single 4' x 8', 32 square foot table with one train is now a holiday destination- a miniature community created from

TRAINS RUN:

8-9 a.m.

10-11 a.m.

Noon – 2 p.m.

3-4 p.m.

5-6 p.m.

7-8 p.m.

Located in Port Huron

Hospital's main

entrance atrium

the skill and imagination of Dr. McDonald and his dedicated volunteer helpers.

Every year I say I'm not going to add to it, then I travel for vacations or medical seminars and I visit train shops and find something I like and I want to add," says Dr. McDonald, an otorhinolaryngologist - an ear, nose and throat specialist.

The display is now a massive 200 square feet, 8'x 25', and it is a labor of love and dedication. It takes three full 10-hour days of setup from Friday through Monday. It is scheduled to be set up this coming weekend. Through

the years, there has been a core group of hospital employees who volunteer to help create the elaborate display. The core team includes Manager of Pre/Post/ PACU surgery departments Cindy Barr, along with current, retired and former employees Joe Lisee, Sue Glenn, Marsha Barr, Ashley VanOrt, Kate Maloney, Sue Johnson and Eileen Makuch. The display starts with what Joe calls "grunt work" with generous help from Maintenance staff in setting up tables, and

bringing pieces from storage to the lobby. Then Joe and Dr. McDonald get busy with wiring while the rest of the group begin developing the display based on Dr. McDonald's vision.

"I've always enjoyed working with model trains," says Joe. "When we're putting (the display) up, people stop and make comments about how nice it is - people look forward to it."

In addition to the set up effort, there is also regular maintenance. In the evenings, or during scheduled "cool down" times for the display, Dr. McDonald cleans the tracks, oils the wheels and

motors, and replaces bulbs. On Sunday evenings, after the end of hospital visiting, he works on the display from 8:30 p.m. to after 1:30 a.m.

Dr. McDonald says he gets a lot of pleasure when he hears people make comments while he's doing the maintenance. "Sometimes I'm under the tables working and people don't see me," says Dr. McDonald.

"There are kids who have never ridden a train in their life who are so fascinated,

their parents can't get them away, or there are patients in wheelchairs with IV poles who come down to see it, and I hear how much they enjoy it -That's why I do it."

He jokingly recalls one year he was driving home after 1 a.m., following his Sunday night maintenance routine. "I was going about five miles over the speed limit when I saw the (police) flashing lights to pull over. The officer looked in the car and said, 'You're the train guy!' He gave me a warning and we talked about trains for a while."

The display is different every year. "It's always a different place or scene, with different lights and animation," says Dr. McDonald. "This year there are more surprises - if you saw it any other year, this year won't be the same. My goal is when people see it; it knocks

their

socks



Penguin Pond provides perfect opportunity for school children to learn about fundraising and giving to others

An average of 10,000 people -- moms, dads, big kids, little kids and individuals who just plain love Christmas -- attend the Port Huron Hospital Foundation Festival of Trees every year. One of the most popular attractions at the festival is always the Penguin Pond.

This year there were more than 100 penguins residing in the pond. Each one represented an elementary school classroom in St. Clair or Sanilac counties. To be eligible to adopt-a-penguin for the pond, the children in each of the classrooms had to raise at least \$50 to be donated for children's services at Port Huron Hospital.

According to Colleen Liebler, chairperson of the Penguin Pond Committee, there were between 50 and 60 penguins last year. In a recent Times Herald article

about Cleveland Elementary School first graders, she said about the pond: "We continue to try to develop it and have it grow. It's an opportunity for children and adults to creatively raise money for children's services. And it provides pediatric patients with a holiday gift." It also teaches children civic responsibility, she added. According to the article, the Cleveland first graders raised nearly \$120.

Once the children raise their \$50, a penguin is sent to the classroom, so that the children can name it and dress it for the holidays. The dressed and decorated penguins are given to children in the hospital during December and around the holidays. Children in Pediatrics, the Emergency Center

or Short Stay are recipients of the penguins.



This penguin brought a big smile to the face of this young penguin recipient

Second graders at Lighthouse Elementary raised \$200. Students dressed their penguin in a Hawaiian skirt, lei and sunglasses and attached a Tacky the Penguin book under the wing.

'This is such a gratifying program," says Nancy Klemmer, director of the Port Huron Hospital Foundation. "In describing this year's participants, we've mentioned two groups

of children and how much they raised. With 100 classrooms participating, it's impossible to tell the fundraising story from each classroom. But I can guarantee that there is a delightful story related to every one of the penguins in the pond."





1221 Pine Grove Avenue Port Huron, Michigan 48060

810.987.5000

www.porthuronhospital.org