

Something for the kids

Therapeutic center opens on Broadway

By Al Sullivan
 Reporter staff writer

Everywhere Jack Kruehkowski goes, he drags about his favorite toy, Buzz Lightyear from the movie Toy Story. So it was only natural that when he was scheduled to come to the grand opening of the new Children's Specialized Hospital in Bayonne, along came the toy.

"I tried to get him to bring along a quieter toy," his mother, Judy Szklarski, said. "But he wouldn't leave it behind."

Amy Mansen, president and chief executive officer of CHS, didn't mind, saying that she would love to have the kids who come to the facility "hop, skip or jump," but will take the kids any way they can get them. She also said that once the kids are there, the facility will do everything possible to make certain they reach their full potential.

Until the Bayonne facility opened doors this month, Jack had to travel to Mountainside, previously the northern most of the other eight centers, which is a half hour ride from Bayonne.

While this was no great burden, Judy said when her mother told her Bayonne would have its own center, she was thrilled.

She said that Mountainside was a wonderful facility, but she was extremely excited about having one in town.

The Bayonne facility, according to Mansen, will provide services to the potential 20,000 children in need in Hudson County alone, although the facility is expected also to service children from Bergen and Passaic counties as well.

Judy said she also had a daughter who she brought to Mountainside before this. But Jack has more serious developmental issues and the center, she said, has been great.

Mansen said the Children's Specialized Hospital is a provider of rehabilitation for children with special needs for over 119 years.

"This started with a group of women sitting down to talk about this," she said. "We now have nine sites in New Jersey who cared for 17,500 last year. We have more than 1,000 employees."

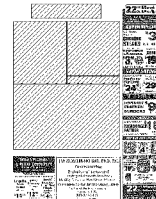
CSH is the largest free standing pediatric rehabilitation hospital in the United States and serves children affected by brain injury, spinal cord dysfunction and injury, premature birth, autism, developmental delays, and life-changing illnesses.

Mansen said this includes kids from zero to 21, with the goal to make sure each child reaches his or her full potential.

The Children's Specialized Hospital tries to make this a personal experience by providing programs, policies, facility design, even day-to-day interactions with the kids and their families.

To this end, the CSH encourages parents to get involved and volunteer – such as Pat O'Hallon, a family facilitator who grew up in Jersey City and made frequent trips to Bayonne as a child. Her son is now 20, she said, has a girlfriend, a job, and has managed to find his own life.

Through a process of therapeutic partnerships, patient families actively serve on hospital committees and ultimately collaborate on goal development and treatment planning from a patient care perspective. In conjunction with this, both inpatients and outpatients are consistently providing the hospital with feedback, via customer satisfaction surveys. The hospital consistently applies the information that families share as a basis for continual



improvement of its practices and services.

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"This perpetual collaboration ensures that Children's Specialized provides excellent and compassionate care to all of our families," she said. "When a child or parent expresses a concern, we listen and try to accommodate their needs to the best of our ability. Whether it is a small or large request, each suggestion is taken with high regard."

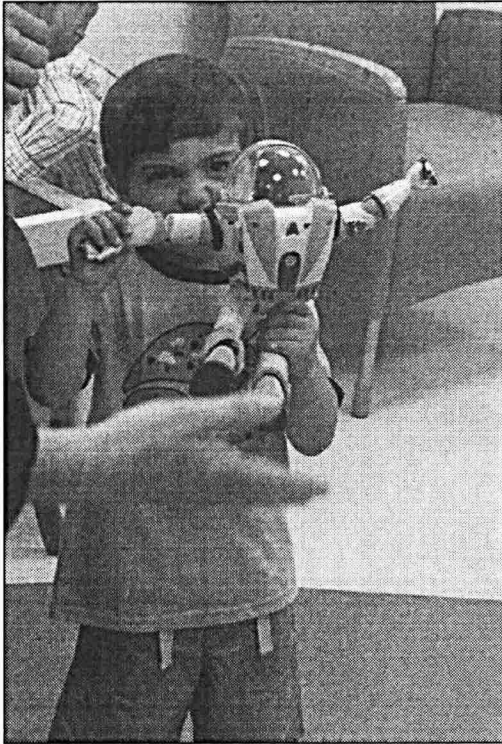
She said opening facilities of this kind in New Jersey involves the help of local officials, and at times the Children's Specialized Hospital will step in to provide services when asked. She said the facility and the community are partnered in this way. But the key to the success of the facility will be word of mouth in the community.

She said the idea was to develop a relatively small store front facility in Bayonne to start to see where it goes.

Mayor Mark Smith said he is well aware of the need for this kind of facility in Bayonne, and in northern New Jersey, and recounted the experience of his daughter's fall from her bike and the scramble he made to find facilities to evaluate and provide treatment.

Quoting the film Casablanca – Smith said he quotes movies a lot – "This is the start of a good friendship," Smith said. He later also quoted poet philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. – *HR*

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JACK AND BUZZ LIGHTYEAR – Jack Kruchkowski brought his favorite toy to help celebrate the ribbon cutting of the new center in Bayonne.



A GRAND EVENT – Servicing a population in Hudson County, the new facility will also be open for people from Bergen and Passaic counties and others throughout Northern New Jersey.