

Jerry Rugg mural comes alive at Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre

A new mural has been completed at Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre (RJCHC). The latest addition a trio of paintings by Toronto-based artist, Jerry Rugg is the most recent piece in a collection funded by donations to Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation.

Making art part of the patient experience

When RJCHC was built in 2015, making the building patient and [family friendly](#) was a top priority. An art advisory committee was created to bring life and colour into the space.

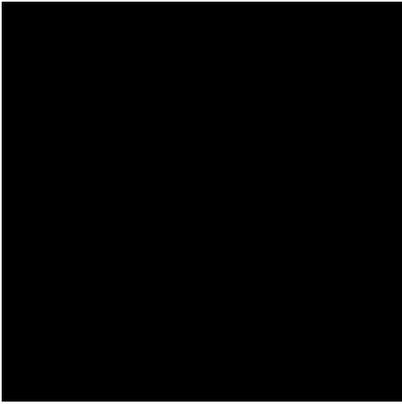
I create art to motivate, intrigue, and inspire

Research shows that art can reduce stress and create emotional connection, says Marsha Newby, clinical leader of the Child and Youth Mental Health Program at RJCHC, and chair of the art advisory committee. It can offer a positive distraction, and it's an opportunity to spark discussion. That's why we felt it was important to include high quality art in the design of our space.

Internationally recognized artist, Jerry Rugg, paints at RJCHC

Rugg's murals, which can be found in the hallways of the second, third, and fourth floors of the building, are a colourful addition to the collection. They showcase native animals in his signature geometric style. He painted the series in June, wearing his signature bird mask.





I create art to motivate, intrigue, and inspire, says Rugg. There really isn't a better place than a children's centre to do this. I made sure to take time to look at all of the work in the building before painting. It's all gallery-quality work, but with a whimsical nature for inquisitive minds. This was a project I could really get behind.

Building relationships through art

Patients, families and staff are encouraged to view the [artwork](#) while they're at RJCHC. The collection, curated by Sarah Beatty alongside the art advisory committee, now has more than 40 pieces, with a focus on works by local artists. Some large scale works in the collection have become centrepieces of the space. Why? Because, a hanging installation of planets and stars is suspended from the 4th floor ceiling of the building and is visible from the balcony of each storey. A cityscape built of more than 500,000 building bricks located in the Prosthetics and Orthotics Department has become a popular stop for patients and clinicians at the end of an appointment.

I often hear from clinicians that the artwork has become a positive way to connect with patients, says Newby. Some clinicians offer to take a family to see the Lego Metropolitan after an appointment as a reward. It gives them something to look forward to, makes the visit memorable, and builds a stronger patient-provider relationship.

Making the artwork at RJCHC more accessible and adding new pieces to the collection are ongoing projects. Through Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, donors are invited to [contribute funds](#) in an effort to source new works.

We'll be sharing photos of the artwork at RJCHC on social media. Follow along!

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