



Bishop Edward J. Slattery blesses the new Children's Hospital at Saint Francis. With him is Father Matt Gerlach, director of the Office of Divine Worship. (Photos courtesy Saint Francis Health System)



A portion of the stained glass artwork that adorns the new children's hospital chapel.



Bishop Slattery blesses the chapel at the new Children's Hospital.



Bishop Slattery stands with Rosalind Cook, the artist who designed the sculpture outside the new facility.

At right, a hospital room and waiting room in the new St. Francis Children's Hospital.



Jake Henry Jr., president and chief executive officer of Saint Francis Health System, speaks during the opening ceremony for the Children's Hospital at Saint Francis. Mr. Henry is a parishioner of the St. Therese Maronite Catholic Church in Tulsa.

'Kids truly come first' at new hospital

By MARTY MITCHELL

Sister Mary Nika admits she was a little nervous when she first saw architectural plans for the chapel within the new Children's Hospital at Saint Francis, and for good reason. After all, plans called for the back wall of the chapel to be completely glass in an effort to provide a serene view of the running fountain directly behind it.

While no doubt aesthetically pleasing, it did raise concerns.

"The tabernacle is supposed to take pride of place," said Sister Mary, a member of the Religious Sisters of Mercy, six sisters who reside at the Saint Francis Xavier Convent within Saint Francis Medical Center.

As it worked out, two beams running down the center of the glass wall proved the perfect place to locate the tabernacle.

"The marble stand was ordered, and it is beautiful," she said. "The fountain behind the tabernacle shows that Christ is the healing water. It's peaceful, and the peace shows that with Christ things will be all right."

Sister Mary said witnessing Bishop Edward J. Slattery consecrate the altar on Jan. 30 was a moving experience.

"It was a very powerful ceremony. It was very, very beautiful. Bishop Slattery commented on how the chapel should be the true center of the hospital."

The new Children's Hospital may not be the true center of the vast hospital complex at 61st Street and Yale Avenue, but it certainly is the most noticeable. The chapel is just inside the main entrance, first floor, outside the main lobby.

Bishop Slattery, who is a trustee of the Saint Francis Health System, dedicated the distinctive pink and blue hospital — with a giant panda bear character posted on the front of the building — on Jan. 31.

"The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis is perhaps the most significant facility expansion in nearly 20 years for Saint Francis Health System," said Jake Henry Jr., president and chief executive officer. "This is a tremendous step toward improving health

care for children in eastern Oklahoma and our entire region."

The \$72.6 million, 104-bed facility is the area's only dedicated children's hospital. It is designed to provide pediatric inpatient and outpatient care, medical/surgical procedures and pediatric intensive care services. Of the 104 beds, 84 are used for general pediatrics, and 20 are designated for the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

The architecture is by TRO/The Ritchie Organization of Memphis, and Manhattan Construction Co. of Tulsa built the new hospital.

The final product was a collaborative effort that included the project team, physicians, nurses, clinical staff, administrators and other professionals who care for children. Parents and children also teamed up to help shape the design and functionality of the facility.

Family-centered care is a major focus of The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis. Special accommodations include all-private patient rooms and comfortable sleep areas designed for two family members to stay with a child.

There is a nurse's station within each room and a work space for parents, including wireless Internet access. The rooms also feature child-friendly television programming and video games.

Three hotel-style rooms are on-site for parents to use during extended hospital stays.

"It's obvious through the overall design of the new facility, features of the patient floors, layout of the rooms, the colorful décor and even in the artwork of this hospital that kids truly come first at The Children's Hospital at Saint Francis," said Shannon Filosa, the new hospital's executive director.

For Sister Mary, that sentiment shines through in the small chapel on the first floor.

"Spiritual healing is a crucial part of the physical healing," she said. "It really is a very prayerful chapel."

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