

GE Johnson Construction Company
Children's Hospital of Colorado, Colorado Springs
Category 1: Contribution to the Community

Overview

Children's Hospital Colorado is more than just a place for sick kids to receive state-of-the-art medical care. It is an invaluable resource with an extraordinary mission: to eradicate childhood disease so that one day, hospitals will no longer be needed.

The construction of a new Children's Hospital Colorado facility in Colorado Springs was a godsend to the community. Instead of driving an hour or more to access specialized pediatric care and treatment, it is now just minutes away. For some families, this is a matter of convenience and peace of mind. For others, it could mean the difference between life and death.

To emphasize the importance of this project and the benefit the new hospital would provide to the community, GE Johnson instituted the Kid of the Quarter (KOTQ) program. This unique program highlighted children treated at Children's Hospital Colorado in Denver, allowing them to share their stories, tour the site, and serve as a reminder to workers and residents of Colorado Springs that this project will have a powerful impact on countless young lives and families.

Children's Hospital Colorado – Colorado Springs (CHCO) represents a remarkable step forward in the fight against childhood disease. It meets a pressing need for pediatric medical care in Southern Colorado and presented the opportunity for the community to join together in support of our children.

Special Needs Met

Children's Hospital Colorado is a not-for-profit pediatric healthcare network founded in 1908. The main facility, located in Aurora, examines, treats, and heals more children than any other hospital in a seven-state radius. With more than 3,000 pediatric specialists and more than 5,000 full-time employees, it has been ranked as one of the top 10 pediatric hospitals in the nation.

While the hospital offers the finest child-centered healthcare in the region, the focus has been Denver – the largest city and county in Colorado. This has left families in El Paso County, the second largest and second fastest growing county in the state, without easy access to specialized pediatric care. The only opportunity to receive cutting-edge medical treatment for area children has been through time-consuming, expensive, and, often (because of weather and traffic) dangerous travel.

Nearly 25% of the estimated 714,000 residents of El Paso County, Colorado are under the age of 18 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). That’s approximately 180,000 children. The new CHCO facility provides these kids with the opportunity to be treated by the nation’s best doctors and caregivers in an environment designed and constructed with children in mind.

CHCO is a desperately needed addition to the Colorado Springs community, offering “the best care for kids, close to home,” with more than 40 pediatric specialties to serve Colorado Springs and Southern Colorado. No child is turned away from care at Children’s Hospital Colorado, and the local Colorado Springs community has already shown support by donating more than \$1 million to the Children’s Hospital Colorado Foundation.

Company and Employee Participation

One of the most powerful aspects of this project for the team and community was Kid of the Quarter. This unique program provided added motivation for everyone working on the project, putting faces and names to the effect the facility will have on the community.

Each quarter, a local child who received treatment at Children’s Hospital Colorado in Aurora was selected to represent the new hospital. During their tenure as KOTQ, they visited the project, toured the site, participated in Stretch & Flex (part of GE Johnson’s safety protocol), attended team lunches, and had the opportunity to share their story. Their presence inspired the crew, reminding them that they were doing more than just putting up a building – they were helping to save and improve the lives of children in the region.

Lauren is a great example of just how inspirational the program was. This amazing 11-year-old was born with a congenital heart defect and quickly became a hospital “frequent flyer.” In 2009, Lauren received a heart transplant. While being treated at the Children’s Hospital Colorado in Aurora, she enthusiastically began sharing news of the facility being built in Colorado Springs. When she had the opportunity to visit the site, she told the crew: “This is my hospital.” A true testament to the family atmosphere the project team created, Lauren thanked her friends – GE Johnson superintendent and construction executive - at the grand opening celebration.

“Lauren’s Hospital,” as her mother calls it, will meet the needs of the growing child population throughout Southern Colorado, providing them with the finest in specialized pediatric care.

Each kid left their mark by signing structural beams, door frames, conduit pipes, as well as placed tiles, bent conduit, pulled wire, and brazed pipe, among others. The KOTQ visits made an even deeper, indelible mark on the project team, reminding the team that their dedication to excellence on this project will provide life-saving treatment to children for many years to come, leading back to the team motto of Many Hands, One Heart.

Community Impact

When CHCO chose GE Johnson to build their new facility in Colorado Springs, it was the first step in meeting a pressing need to offer local pediatric treatment to the children of Southern Colorado. Beyond simply providing medical services, however, the vision was to create a family-friendly refuge of healing.

The new hospital has 60 neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) rooms. One of them is exclusively for triplets, another is for twins. The floor throughout this section of the hospital is covered in rubber to help keep things quiet and enhance the comfort of patients, visitors, and staff.

The facility also features five operating rooms (ORs), each with special ceiling vents that create air curtains to keep the area sterile. An entire air handling unit is dedicated to the OR suite, along with an elevator used exclusively for transporting sterile surgical equipment and supplies.

The stairway located on the southeast corner of the building is designed to be an illuminated light tower. It is also the backdrop for the CHCO Balloon Boy logo. The glass enclosed stair is one of the first visible elements upon entering the campus. A brick wall plane behind the glass enclosure provides visual support and offers opportunity for graphics and color to the light tower, like elements on CHCO's other campuses.

From special activity areas for the brothers and sisters of patients, to the colorful glass balloons that greet guests as they enter the facility, Southern Colorado's first pediatric-only hospital is specifically geared toward meeting the medical needs and encouraging the hearts of our children.

Historical/long-range value to the community

Back in the 1860s, Colorado developed a reputation as a place of healing. Doctors had discovered that fresh air and high altitude were effective in the treatment of tuberculosis, the leading cause of death in the United States in the 1800s.

In 1887, Dr. Minnie C.T. Love applied these principles to the treatment of children, erecting a summer tent hospital for young children. A small medical staff treated about 50 children under the age of five. The need for a permanent facility soon became evident and in 1908, Children's Hospital of Colorado was incorporated.

In the century since then, Children's Hospital Colorado has expanded, relocated, and opened additional facilities around the Denver area. Today, they have more than 3,000 pediatric specialists and 5,000 full-time employees, and provide the only dedicated Level 1 trauma center in a seven-state region.

CHCO will continue the more than 100-year tradition of improving the health of children. Recognizing that families are partners in the treatment of children, they deliver family-centered care in a family-friendly environment – “working towards a world where kids are safer and healthier and will one day have less need for a hospital.”

Environmental/Safety

While there were more than 1,700 different workers oriented on the project, there were zero lost time injuries. The recordable injury frequency rate (RIFR) – a calculation that describes the number of recordable injuries per 100 full-time employees – was well below 1.0 (the industry average in 2017, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was 3.1.).

GE Johnson exceeded \$4.4 million of craft labor and roughly 80,000 hours without a single recordable injury – a total of more than 500 days.

According to the project superintendent, the safety effort was led by the entire team. Early buy-in and strategic targets that were set early on contributed to their success.

Another important factor was the development of a safety innovation team. Field leaders and hand-picked tradespeople met monthly to review goals, trends, leading indicators, upcoming activities, and project changes to help prepare for changes in conditions as progress was made.

“It takes a village,” says the superintendent, “and when everyone feels like part of that village, folks come together and really own the program.

“We want to thank Children’s Hospital for supporting and promoting a culture that enabled us to succeed in safety. Without these core values being aligned between contractor and client, these types of stories don’t exist.”

This success was a team win and a win for the kids in Southern Colorado.