

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Smilezone Foundation Partners with Sittler Family to Bring Joy to Grand River Hospital

KITCHENER, May 8, 2024 – In a heartwarming collaboration, Grand River Hospital Foundation, Smilezone Foundation and the Sittler family have joined forces to create vibrant and welcoming spaces for children and families at Grand River Hospital. Through their generosity and commitment to community well-being, the Sittler family has made it possible to install two Smilezones within the Hospital, enhancing the environment and bringing smiles to those who see it.

Smilezone Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children facing illness, disabilities, or physical obstacles, focuses on transforming hospital spaces into areas of comfort and joy. Their mission aligns perfectly with the vision of the Sittler family, who recognize the importance of nurturing environments in promoting healing and resilience.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Sittler family in this meaningful endeavour," said Scott Bachly, Co-Founder of Smilezone Foundation. "Their generosity and compassion will have a lasting impact on the lives of countless children and families who pass through the doors of Grand River Hospital."

The newly installed Smilezones at Grand River feature vibrant murals, and comforting elements designed to create positive and uplifting spaces. Placed in two of the Hospital's children's isolation rooms as well as the hallway and family lounge outside of childbirth, the spaces offer respite for families visiting loved ones. The impact of Smilezones extends beyond the physical transformation of hospital spaces, fostering a sense of hope, resilience, and belonging for children and families facing adversity.

"We feel honoured and privileged to have worked with Smilezone Foundation and the Grand River Foundation to enhance the walls of the maternity ward hallways and isolation rooms of Grand River Hospital children's ward," said Norma Jean Sittler. "The entire Smilezone team deserves thanks and recognition for bringing our project to life for the betterment of future community members. Grand River Hospital has been an important part of the Sittler family history having had five generations rely on the care and support of physicians, nurses, and staff personnel. We hope this creative donation brings an abundance of joy and happiness for many years to come. We are pleased to bring 'smiles' to a community we fondly embrace."

"We are grateful to the Sittler family and Smilezone Foundation for their dedication to enhancing the Hospital experience for our youngest patients and their families," said Ron Gagnon, President and CEO, Grand River Hospital. "Their contribution will undoubtedly make a difference in the lives of those we serve, and we look forward to witnessing the smiles these installations bring."

The installation of Smilezones at Grand River is a testament to the power of collaboration and community support in creating positive change. Together, Smilezone Foundation and the Sittler family are brightening the lives of children and families, one smile at a time.



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About Smilezone Foundation:

Smilezone Foundation is a registered charity in Oakville, Ontario committed to improving the lives of children receiving medical treatment at health facilities across Canada. In 2012 founders Adam Graves and Scott Bachly were approached to make a financial contribution to the construction of a local hospital. Through partnerships with hospitals, community centers, and other organizations, Smilezone creates accessible, fun, and therapeutic environments where children can heal and thrive. Smilezone has transformed over 395 spaces into Smilezones across Canada, benefiting over 83 communities and reaching more than 340,000 children annually. For more information, visit www.smilezone.com.

About Grand River Hospital

Grand River Hospital is building a world class health system for all in the communities we serve. One of Ontario's largest community teaching hospitals, we're delivering exceptional, patient-focused quality care by a team of dedicated health care workers and volunteers. Located in one of the province's most diverse and rapidly growing regions, we provide services and support to more than 840,000 residents of Waterloo Region and Guelph Wellington at our two campuses (KW and Freeport) and satellite locations. Driven by innovation, we're proud of our partnerships and collaborations with health system partners, our region's academic and innovation communities, and diverse community partners.
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About Grand River Hospital Foundation

At Grand River Hospital Foundation, we dedicate ourselves to our great community by working in partnership with people from all walks of life to make every health care experience exceptional. Our main objective is to raise money to support the programs and equipment needs of Grand River Hospital. Thanks to the generous support of donors across the Waterloo region, Grand River Hospital Foundation was able to raise more than \$28M last year to support world class health care right here in the heart of Kitchener-Waterloo. careneverstops.ca | Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @careneverstops | LinkedIn: Grand River Hospital Foundation

