
For Immediate Release /
Request for Coverage

Newtown Students Raise Funds to Build Healing Hearts Playground at Regional Hospice Center for Comfort Care & Healing Installation and Dedication Monday, November 10

(Danbury, Conn.) -- Thanks to a small group of dedicated middle school students from Newtown, children coming to the new Regional Hospice and Home Care Center for Comfort Care & Healing to receive grief counseling or visit a loved one in hospice care will have a heart-inspired playground to help brighten their time there.

The students, who formed the KIDOs (Kids In Deed Organization) to support the bereavement programs of Regional Hospice's Healing Hearts Center for Grief and Loss, raised \$50,000 for the purchase of the one-of-a-kind playground designed by KOMPAN. The Healing Hearts Playground will be installed and dedicated on Monday, Nov. 10, at the construction site of the new Regional Hospice and Home Care Center for Comfort Care & Healing, 30 Milestone Road, Danbury, Conn.

"KOMPAN's support of the Sandy Hook children's playgrounds, and its longstanding community support and involvement in innovative children's playgrounds, is the reason we chose it to design and supply our playscape equipment," said Cynthia E. Roy, president and ceo of Regional Hospice and Home Care. "We are thrilled they designed a specialty heartstring play piece specifically for our Healing Hearts playground."

KOMPAN designed the climbing structure especially for the Healing Hearts Playground with ropes and heart-shaped arches creating a heart-shaped tunnel for children to climb through, around, and up and down. Jane DiDona of Didona Associates Landscape Architects in Danbury was instrumental in designing the climbing piece in collaboration with Andrew Kimball and Samantha Jeffrey from KOMPAN.

"We are honored to work with the new Regional Hospice Center and the efforts of the students to raise money for this playground. We know that play has a healing affect on children. In play, you focus on the now," said Helle Burlingame, manager of the KOMPAN Play Institute in North America. "By immersing yourself in both challenging physical play and also collaborative group play, the Healing Hearts Playground sets the stage for immediate connections and well-being between children."

In 2012, Ryan Patrick, then a 12-year-old Newtown Middle School student, sold wrist bands and raised more than \$24,000 for the Healing Hearts Center for Grief and Loss, which provides free grief counseling to families who lost loved ones at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Healing Hearts also offers similar bereavement support to thousands of other families throughout Connecticut and nearby New York since 1995.

Ryan then encouraged several of his friends to join him in his philanthropic efforts, and they began meeting after school, in between sports and homework. In 2013, they formally founded KIDOs and committed to raising money for Healing Hearts Center for Grief and Loss. Greg Brissette, Caroline Condon, Josh Dunn, Brian Montoya, Allie Paynter and Ashley Santore have joined Ryan in KIDOs.



The students raised money to pay for the playground equipment and turf that will be placed outside the wing of the new Regional Hospice Center for Comfort Care & Healing that will house the Healing Hearts Center. KIDO's fundraising efforts included gift wrapping at a Barnes and Noble Bookstore, Newbury Place Holiday Shopping Event, selling ornaments, candy and hot chocolate at different venues, a Peachwave fundraiser, and a Rita's Celebrity Scoop fundraiser, just to name a few of the many events held during the past two years.

"We are so thankful to the KIDOs for all they have done to support Healing Hearts and raise awareness of our grief services, especially the programs we offer for children who have lost a loved one," said Roy. "We are also grateful to them for their amazing fundraising efforts, which have made this playground a reality."

About KOMPAN

KOMPAN is the world's No. 1 playground supplier. KOMPAN develops, produces and markets an extensive range of playground equipment that covers all age groups. All KOMPAN's playgrounds are designed using extensive research into child development to improve childhood health and learning. KOMPAN is renowned for their compelling design, uncompromising safety, unique innovation and long-lasting quality. You can visit their website for more information at www.kompan.com. Like them on Facebook: www.facebook.com/playKOMPAN

About Regional Hospice

Regional Hospice and Home Care, a nonprofit home hospice and palliative care agency based in Danbury, Conn., is currently building the state's first and only private-room, family centered hospice residence -- the Regional Hospice Center for Comfort Care & Healing -- with plans to accept patients in January 2015. For more than 30 years, Regional Hospice's certified caregivers have offered real hope to those facing advanced illness and their families through medical, emotional, spiritual and comfort care. The award-winning Healing Hearts Center for Grief and Loss, a bereavement center that offers a range of grief support services, is a program of Regional Hospice. For more information, visit www.RegionalHospiceCT.org. Follow us on twitter: @real_hope. Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/RegionalHospice.

###