

Starlight center delights pediatric patients at LMC

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Last week, children undergoing treatment at Laredo Medical Center had a reason to smile more brightly: Thanks to an ongoing partnership between Women's City Club and Starlight Children's Foundation, a new Starlight Fun Center mobile-entertainment unit was unveiled at the hospital for its pediatric patients.

For children who may be facing surgery, enduring long outpatient treatments or fighting loneliness after hospital visiting hours have ended, Fun Centers provide a comforting break. Each Fun Center features an LCD TV, DVD player and Nintendo Wii gaming system to provide hours of fun and distraction.

"When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, the day-to-day joys of childhood take a back seat to the rigors of treatment and hospitalization," said Mark Ford, Starlight Community Development officer. "Our Fun Centers help ease the isolation and fear children often experience while in the hospital. We're proud to



Photo by Cuate Santos | Laredo Morning Times

join Women's City Club in dedicating this new Fun Center at Laredo Medical Center."

Mark Ford, second from left, community development officer for the Starlight Children's Foundation Texas, watches as 11-year-old Alex Borjas, a patient at the Laredo Medical Center, plays a video game on a Wii donated to the children's ward at the medical center Thursday morning.

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"Women's City Club has supported our community for 60 years and we are proud to partner with Starlight Children's Foundation to brighten the lives of seriously ill children and their families through programs that help them reduce their feelings of isolation and fear," said Ruby Chapa, president of Women's City Club. "We hope the Fun Center will create many

smiles and hours of fun for the young patients served by Laredo Medical Center."

This is the second year the Women's City Club has provided support for Starlight programs in Laredo. The Women's City Club helped launch Starlight's Great Escapes family activities program in Laredo, which provides families with seriously ill children a chance to spend recreational time together to relax, regroup and return home with a renewed sense of strength and hope.