



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Starlight Honors its 2008 International Volunteer of the Year
by Dedicating a *Fun Center* to the Hospital of His Choice in His Name
–Honoree Ross Homer Chooses *Floating Hospital for Children*
at Tufts Medical Center in Boston**

(BOSTON, MA – May 18, 2009) – Starlight Children's Foundation is proud to announce that Somerville resident Ross Homer has been named the organization's 2008 International Volunteer of the Year. In his honor, Starlight is dedicating a [Fun Center](#) – a mobile entertainment and gaming unit – to Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center, the hospital of his choosing, on Wednesday, May 20 at 4:00 PM in the Ace's Place Playroom on the 8th Floor.

Raised in Wayland, Massachusetts, Ross was taught from a young age by his family and community about the importance of giving back. After graduating from Tufts University, he began a public relations internship at Starlight New England, managing a host of activities. After the internship and for the past nine years, Ross has volunteered with Starlight in a number of capacities, including helping with [Hospital Happening](#)® parties, volunteering at [Great Escapes](#)™ family events, writing and editing press materials, staffing volunteer recruitment events, dressing as Starlight's mascot, and most recently, donating to the organization in honor of the guests at his wedding.

"What started as a typical internship soon transformed into something more, as I quickly fell in love with Starlight and its mission," Ross said. "I was particularly affected by Starlight because as a child, I suffered with severe croup for which I needed to be hospitalized in an oxygen tent. I was left with a fear of hospitals and their overwhelming sterility and lack of warmth. I know how much Starlight would have helped me with my feelings of isolation, fear and sadness during that period. This is what fuels my continued passionate involvement with Starlight. I have had so many wonderful and rewarding opportunities to interact with the Starlight children and their families and to see the joy and excitement in their eyes as they participate in various programs. With all of the fun and moving ways Starlight has allowed me to be of service, it's no wonder I've stayed so long."

In his career, Ross has spent many years working in local hospitals, including summers as a research assistant in a Tufts Medical Center lab and almost five years in the marketing and public affairs department at Faulkner Hospital in Jamaica Plain. He currently holds a position as a public relations Senior Account Executive at Aria Marketing in Newton, where his clients are all healthcare IT companies.

"Ross is the most dedicated volunteer I could ever imagine," said Jonelle Prill-Tate, Community Officer of Starlight New England. "While I acknowledge and applaud all Starlight volunteers for their amazing efforts, Ross' longstanding can-do attitude and passion for our cause have made him our number one volunteer."

About Starlight's *Fun Center* Program

A *Fun Center* is a mobile entertainment unit that includes a Nintendo Wii™, a DVD player, and a Sharp AQUOS™ liquid crystal display television. *Fun Centers* roll easily right up to the side of young patients' beds or anywhere in a hospital setting, which makes them perfect for hospitalized children in numerous situations: anticipating surgery, during long outpatient clinic treatments, waiting in the emergency room or fighting loneliness after visiting hours have ended. A *Fun Center* is a welcome guest when no one else is around. Anecdotal evidence from healthcare professionals indicates that the *Fun Center* also has therapeutic benefits and can assist in the healing and rehabilitation process. For more information about Starlight's *Fun Center* program, visit www.starlight.org/funcenter.

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About Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center in Boston

Tufts Medical Center is an exceptional, not-for-profit, 451-bed academic medical center that is home to both a full-service hospital for adults and Floating Hospital for Children. Conveniently located in downtown Boston, the Medical Center is the principal teaching hospital for Tufts University School of Medicine. Floating Hospital for Children is the full-service children's hospital of Tufts Medical Center and the principal pediatric teaching hospital of Tufts University School of Medicine. For more information, please visit www.tuftsmedicalcenter.org.

About Starlight Children's Foundation

When a child or teenager has a serious medical condition, everyone in the family is affected. For 25 years, Starlight Children's Foundation™ has been dedicated to helping seriously ill children and their families cope with their pain, fear and isolation through entertainment, education and family activities. Starlight's programs have been proven to distract children from their pain, help them better understand and manage their illnesses, and connect families facing similar challenges so that no one feels alone. Through a network of offices, Starlight provides ongoing support to children, parents and siblings in all U.S. states and Canadian provinces with an array of outpatient, hospital-based and Web offerings. Programs are also delivered internationally through affiliates in Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom. To learn more visit www.starlight.org.

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