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Giving Drops of Hope to Children with Cancer

by MaryAnn DeSantis

Each year, thousands of children in South Florida battle life-threatening cancer, and trips to the park are replaced by trips to the hospital. For some children, this means spending hours alone on public transportation to get treatment. In 2006, local entrepreneur and philanthropist Michael Fischer started the nonprofit organization Drops of Hope to help make those trips a little easier. Drops of Hope provides free limousine transportation to and from chemotherapy treatments for pediatric cancer patients and their low-to-no-income families. Fischer's hope is that by giving these children a fun-filled ride with movies, snacks and games, he can keep their minds off of treatment and bring a little happiness to their day.

While chauffeuring these children in the Drops of Hope limousine, Fischer noticed that many of them shared cramped rooms with siblings or even slept on the floor. This led to the launch of Rooms of Hope, a campaign that brings together volunteers and corporate sponsors to create personalized room makeovers. With custom furniture, hand-painted murals and fun accessories, the children's bedrooms are transformed into magical places where they can dream, play and get back some of the joys of just being a kid.

In June, Rooms of Hope honored Naomi, a 3-year-old who has undergone extensive surgery, radiation and chemotherapy to battle Wilms tumor, a rare kidney cancer. With the help of 20 volunteers and more than \$5,000 of in-kind donations from Incapital, Rooms to Go, Fathead, Home Depot, Monster and Kreative Makeovers by interior designer Tamara Roth, Naomi received a princess-inspired dream room where she can play, rest and relax in comfort and style.

Drops of Hope relies exclusively on cash and in-kind donations from individuals and organizations to make these free services possible. And with more than 75 children like Naomi on the waiting list for a new room, and countless others needing a ride to chemotherapy treatments, Drops of Hope needs your support to keep making dreams come true. To learn more about Drops of Hope, to make a donation or to see more room makeovers, visit www.dropssofhope.com. You can also visit them on Facebook.

