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Home Away from Home

ASID VOLUNTEERS MAKE LIFE A LITTLE EASIER FOR FAMILIES IN NEED/



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—Vincent Bryson,
LARMH executive director



IN SEPTEMBER 2009, volunteer members of the ASID California Los Angeles Chapter completed their redesign of the Los Angeles Ronald McDonald House (LARMH). Comprising the work of dozens of designer and industry volunteers—including more than 130 FF&E specifications and 20-plus pages of CAD documents—the redesign turned the LARMH into a space that truly helps families strengthen their support network with other families.

The three areas under renovation in the service project were the family room, parents’ lounge and atrium areas of the building. The mission of LARMH is to support the health and well-being of children by providing a “home away from home” for families of seriously ill children who are receiving care in Southern California. Unfortunately, many of the common areas of the home were not welcoming, with their worn and mismatched furniture, stained flooring, and poor lighting and acoustics.

1. The redesigned family room offers something for everyone—books, comfortable seating, a game table and even a new fish tank for adults and children “to relax and get lost in.” Floor tile “rugs” help define the room’s multiple seating areas.

2. The atrium’s original brick flooring—a poor acoustic choice—was replaced with sustainable (and noise-reducing) cork flooring in a bold pattern that balances the angles of the atrium ceiling above. The new seating can be easily reconfigured to serve a variety of uses.

3. The color palette for the parents lounge is more muted than elsewhere in the building. Multiple seating areas provide space for both relaxation and business-oriented tasks. Artificial plants introduce a sense of nature, without the allergens of live plants.

4. The floral pattern fabric selected for the atrium furnishings lends a sense of whimsy to the open atrium, while also incorporating a sense of natural elements, since plants are not permitted in the building.

The mission undertaken by ASID chapter volunteers—led by a team of eight professional members from throughout the Los Angeles-area—included the three primary project goals of designing spaces that would encourage communication and bonding within and between families; using warm, “happy” colors and incorporating elements of nature in the design; and specifying sustainable materials whenever possible.

Residents and staff at the LARMH welcomed the new design with great enthusiasm, recognizing that the redesigned spaces truly reflected their unique needs. “ASID members took the design needs of our very special population and gave us back something truly amazing,” wrote LARMH executive director Vincent Bryson. “Every detail from layout to flow, décor to color schemes was designed to make our House the most healing place for our seriously ill children.” **i**