

## **SickKids celebrates first anniversary of its Hollywood Theatre**

*SickKids receives a generous donation ensuring theatre encore*

**Toronto, ON (Friday, June 27, 2008)** – Madison Scott, an 11 year old budding actress and SickKids leukemia patient, joined other patients, families, Barry Avrich, who inspired and helped to build The Hollywood Theatre, and John and Myrna Daniels in a celebration marking the theatre’s first anniversary today. Patients and special guests were treated to a screening of *Kung Fu Panda* featuring the celebrity voices of Jack Black, Angelina Jolie and Canadian Seth Rogen.

Michael O’Mahoney, president, SickKids Foundation, accepted a generous donation from John and Myrna Daniels which will help to fund ongoing theatre operations. The Daniels family also made a contribution toward the theatre’s construction in 2006-7. “It is support like that of the Daniels family and Barry Avrich that helps the hospital continue to provide family-centred programs that stimulate children and offer a much-needed escape from their ailments and treatments,” says O’Mahoney.

Today’s celebrations also included a naming ceremony led by O’Mahoney who revealed the theatre’s new name: John and Myrna Daniels Hollywood Theatre. “It is an honour to have friends like the Daniels play a starring role in making dreams come true for so many kids,” says Avrich.

The Hollywood, a 232-seat facility equipped with state-of-the-art audio visual technology and Dolby surround sound, is the most advanced theatre within a paediatric facility in Canada dedicated to showing first-run films on a continual basis. Since its inception in May 2007, the Hollywood has screened many new Hollywood blockbusters including *Shrek the Third*, *Hairspray*, *The Golden Compass*, *Nim’s Island*, *Ratatouille* and *The Bee Movie*.

“On-site movies and entertainment are really valuable in helping us to enhance the social and therapeutic components of patient care,” says Caron Mills, Child Life specialist, entertainment and donations coordinator at SickKids. “You should just see the kids’ faces as they walk into the theatre for the first time and see the blue lights and big screen just like in their local cinemas. Hollywood gives patients access to many of the same new blockbuster films that their friends are watching back home.”

Patients like Scott, and so many others who rely on SickKids everyday for life-saving treatment and care, appreciate the much-needed escape that the Hollywood offers.

The Hollywood at SickKids screens movies monthly, including new releases from major studios and family movies from a library of films. All movies are also broadcast into 120 patient rooms and clinic waiting areas via closed circuit television. When the screen is dark, the theatre is used to enhance the educational capabilities of the hospital through state-of-the-art broadcast and telemedicine equipment. Over the past year, the theatre has also served as a venue for many other celebrations and meetings including Nursing Excellence Awards, Humanitarian Awards, Human Resources orientation sessions, Patient Safety Day and weekly medical staff meetings.

The theatre was conceived by filmmaker and advertising executive Barry Avrich, who was instrumental in bringing together dedicated donors and the entertainment industry to build the theatre in 2006/7. A donation of \$1 million of both cash and in-kind went towards the construction of the theatre.

#### About SickKids Foundation

SickKids Foundation was established in 1972. Its mission is to inspire its communities to invest in health and scientific advances to improve the lives of children and their families in Canada and around the world. Its vision is “Healthier children. A better world.”

In addition to its support of The Hospital for Sick Children, the Foundation has a mandate to support children’s health on a national basis. Through its National Grants Program, SickKids Foundation invests \$4 million annually across Canada in paediatric research, focusing on issues important to children’s health which have not been addressed elsewhere.

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