

GREENWICH BRIEFS

Senior center party rescheduled

The Greenwich Senior Center Christmas Party scheduled for today has been rescheduled due to threat of inclement weather. It will be held instead from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday at Greenwich Civic Center, 90 Harding Road, Old Greenwich.

Chabad presents 'Unite the Lights'

A Chabad of Greenwich "Unite the Lights" event, part of a global Hanukkah campaign to direct the groundswell of sympathy and solidarity in the aftermath of the Mumbai tragedy toward a commitment to acts of goodness and kindness, will be held at 4:30 p.m. Sunday at Westchester Fairfield Hebrew Academy, 270 Lake Ave.

The event will include a concert, dinner and menorah-lighting.

The campaign also encourages people to share their resolution with others

by posting photos and video clips of their participation at a Unite the Lights event at www.unitehelights.com.

For more information, call 629-9059 or e-mail www.chabadgreenwich.org.

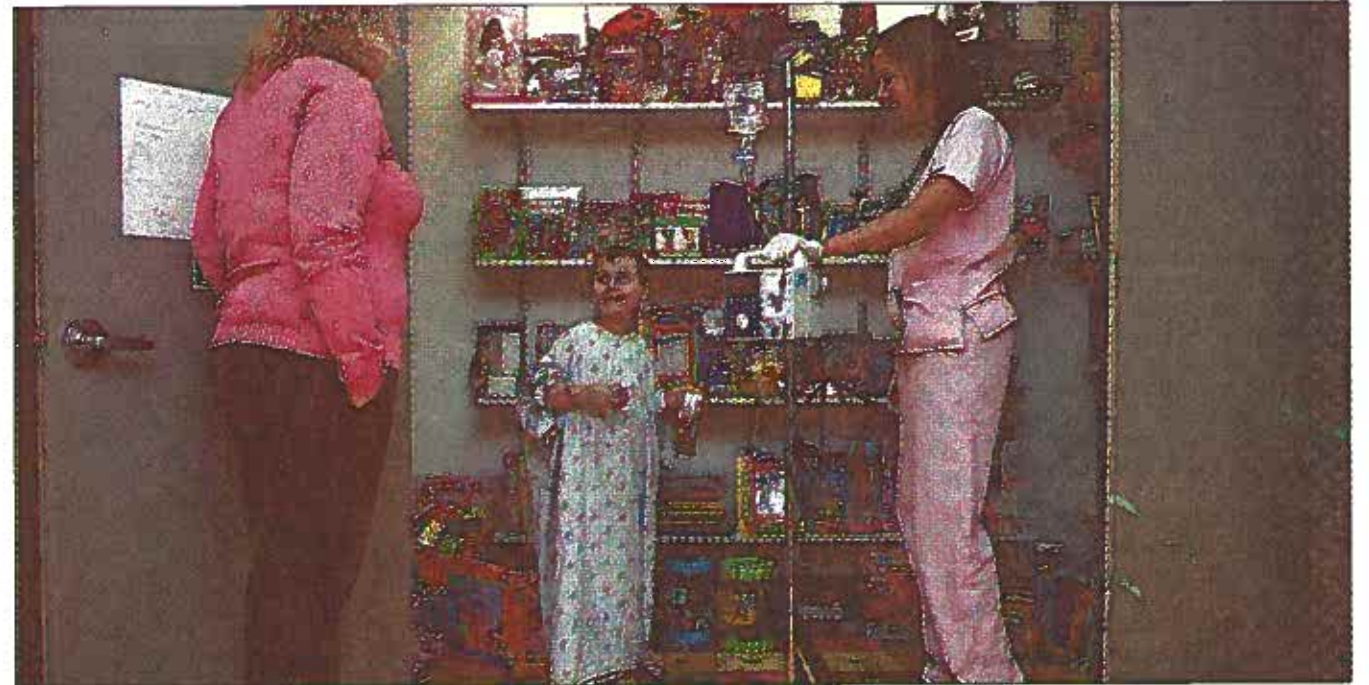
Library offers Internet training

Greenwich Library's technology training center, 101 W. Putnam Ave., will offer 11 Internet training programs in January.

The program schedule is: Jan. 5, online job searching with indeed.com, 2 p.m.; Jan. 6, Internet basics, 11 a.m.; Jan. 7, using search engines, 10 a.m.; Jan. 12, online networking with LinkedIn, 2 p.m.; Jan. 13, setting up e-mail with Yahoo!, 11 a.m.; Jan. 17, downloading digital books, 11 a.m.; Jan. 21, Web site evaluation, 11 a.m.; Jan. 22, basics of using a mouse, 3 p.m.; Jan. 26, podcasts, 2 p.m.; Jan. 28, using Greenwich Library's Web site, 3 p.m.; Jan. 30, basics of using Google, 11 a.m.

All programs, which will be taught by librarians, are free and open to the public.

For more information, please visit www.greenwichlibrary.org/trainingcenter.asp or call Jasmine Posey at 625-6508.



Chris Prevolos/Staff photo

Nabil Riordon, 7, and his mother, Tanya, of Norwalk, pick out a toy with the help of registered nurse Koleta Glover, right, at David's Treasure Tree, the toy closet in the pediatric wing of Stamford Hospital.

Toy trove delights sick children

By Devon Lash
Staff Writer

STAMFORD — Christmas came early for 7-year-old Nabil Riordon, who sat in his hospital bed in Stamford Hospital's pediatric unit Wednesday, clutching a brand-new Batman action figure.

Nabil, who has Down syndrome and was hospitalized with pneumonia on Monday, chose the action figure from the shelves of David's Treasure Tree, the hospital's pediatric toy closet.

"This is the most he's smiled since he's been here," said his mother, Tanya, watching her son fly Batman around his bed.

The Norwalk boy alternated between exclamations of "Cool!" and making engine-like sound effects for the winged superhero.

Last month the toy closet marked its fifth anniversary — and more than \$76,000 in donations and toys for about 3,600 ailing children. It was founded by Greenwich residents Robin and Joe Kanarek for their son, David, who died of leukemia in 2000.

When he went to the toy

closet, Nabil looked in disbelief at the shelves of new race cars, games and Legos.

"Woah!" he said, after looking at his mom to make sure it was OK. "Cool!"

He walked back to his room, unaware or uninterested that he kept stepping on his hospital gown with his tiny black-and-green Pumas, looking at nothing but the deluxe Batman still in its packaging.

"They feel like it's a toy store," said Sharon Fearon, the charge nurse on the unit. "Sometimes we do it before we give a lot of 'ouchs,' sometimes after they've stayed for a while."

Since the toy closet opened, patient satisfaction increased and the children feel more at home, said Koleta Glover, another nurse on the unit.

"All the parents want to give back when they find out another parent gave a toy for their child," Glover said. "It's a big cycle."

That was how it began for the Kanareks. Their son received a toy from Yale-New Haven's toy armoire when he was in terrible pain, Robin Kanarek said.

"David's eyes just lit up and for one moment he forgot he was sick," she said. "The focus goes on the wonderful experience of receiving a toy and not on the anxiety of surgery. It's a wonderful thing to watch as a parent."

After the hospital found space for the closet, the Kanareks hired Judith Caseley, an illustrator, to decorate the doors in a colorful mural of David's favorite things.

Belinda Foster, director of operations and development for the Stamford Hospital Foundation, said she won't forget the first visit to the closet.

"The first little girl said, 'All my dreams have come true,'" Foster said. "That, to me, was just precious."

The closet needs toys for infants and teenagers — two age groups that can be overlooked, Foster said. For teens, she recommends movie gift certificates and iTunes cards. For infants, rattles and bath toys; the closet can't accept stuffed animals, which might harbor germs, she said.

Gifts are shared with the Tully Health Center's

Immediate Care Center and Stamford Hospital's emergency room.

Club Chefs of Connecticut, a professional organization that promotes the education of executive chefs and sous chefs from country clubs in Connecticut and Westchester County, has been the largest single donor since becoming involved in 2004.

Through annual gourmet showcases, Club Chefs has raised more than \$31,000 for the toy closet, said Jeff Perez, group vice president. This year's event, held Dec. 1, raised about \$10,000 for the closet — slightly less than the 2007 amount, he said.

Perez knew David Kanarek when they worked at the Millbrook Country Club in Greenwich, where David prepared food for the children's day camp.

"He was a very open and personable young man — the type of kid who would walk into the kitchen and just start talking about the Yankees or the weather or something," Perez said. "He wouldn't hold back, always giving me his opinion on my cooking."

Honor roll

Town students honored at King

The following Greenwich middle school students were named to the honor roll at King Low Heywood Thomas in Stamford for the first marking period of the 2008-09 academic year:

Sixth grade: Honors — Jessica Borker, Thomas Catenacci, Julia Crawford, Kate Hirsch, Luke Price.

Seventh grade: King scholar — Ann Del Genio, Olivia Katcher.

High honors — Michael Hart, Helen Paglia.

Honors — Christian Deschappelles, Lauren Martin, Gerard Pozzi.

Eighth grade: King scholar — Spencer Blair, Katherine Sachs.

High honors — Melanie Borker.

Honors — James Kyle, Christian Morales, Chloe Potter, Hailey Ullmann.