


J.W. House gets ready to open its door in the South Bay - 10/23/08 - San Francisco News - abc7news.com

 By Carolyn Johnson

SANTA CLARA, CA (KGO) -- A special place is about to open its doors in the South Bay. It's called the JW House, named after the boy who had the idea to build it and the determination to make it happen.

In 2004 Jan Willem Knapen, J.W. to his friends, knew he was dying of brain cancer, but he was focused on something else.

"This idea popped into my head, raising money trying to build a house where the families and patients could meet," said Knapen in 2005.

Within a year, his fundraising efforts brought in more than \$200,000 -- the seed money to create a home away from home on Kaiser's Santa Clara campus.

Kaiser donated the land and now 4.5 years after his first fundraiser, JW's dream house is reality.

"I think the homey feeling would make him the most proud" said "so if you walk in here, it doesn't look at all like a hospital," said J.W's mother Anne Marie Knapen.

His motto, "never ever give up," graces the great room where families can sit by the fire or watch TV.

There's a full kitchen and dining area, a laundry room, two studio apartments and two suites that can accommodate a family each with its own bathroom, kitchenette and private garden.

The J.W. House also has a day room, a place where families can come during the day while their children are in the hospital. They can close the door, get some privacy, relax and there's also a full bath where they can take a shower.

A home built by the generosity of donors and volunteers and rooted in friendship.

"The main reason Jan Willem wanted a house was to give back to Dr. Wong, and I think Dr. Wong was also the reason why Jan Willem kept on going, not only because he's a good doctor, but because he's a friend, and for a friend you want to give your very best," said Anne Marie Knapen.

J.W. died before the building began, but he will always be part of this special place he inspired others to finish.

"He asked us to build a home away from home, and this is a home, we build a home for these people," said Kaiser Pediatric Oncologist Dr. Alan Wong.

JW House Grand Opening Friday, Oct. 24

2:00 - 4:30 p.m.

3850 Homestead Road

Santa Clara

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