



Mobile sensory carts donation supports neurodiverse patients at OSF Children's Hospital

Available for immediate release:

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(April 3, 2025 | Peoria, Illinois) – A generous donation from the Chuck Thomas family is helping OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois enhance care for neurodiverse pediatric patients. To memorialize the late Chuck Thomas, his family has provided funds to purchase seven mobile sensory carts, to be called the "Thomas Carts." These carts will provide comfort and support, easing the stress, anxiety and overstimulation children often experience during their hospital stay.

The Thomas family, whose granddaughter is on the autism spectrum, recognized the need for sensory support in medical settings and made the contribution to improve the hospital experience for patients with autism and other sensory-processing differences. The carts will be available throughout the hospital, including patient rooms, the emergency department, outpatient clinics and labs and areas where children prepare for procedures or surgery.

"Our family is grateful to have the opportunity to partner together with OSF HealthCare to serve the neurodiverse pediatric population in Illinois," said Susie Lotharius, daughter of Chuck Thomas. "We hope the Thomas Carts help foster a sense of calm and comfort to these children and their families."

Most Thomas Carts are Vecta Deluxe Mobile Sensory Stations, designed to create a calming, multi-sensory environment with an interactive bubble column, color controller, fiber optic tails, and a projector for visual engagement. A couple of the carts will be Vecta Jr. models, a more compact option featuring a waterless hurricane tube, Bluetooth-compatible radio, and fiber optic tails for a soothing sensory experience.

The introduction of the Thomas Carts comes just ahead of Autism Acceptance Month in April, reinforcing OSF Children's Hospital's commitment to supporting neurodiverse patients. The hospital is also home to OSF Autism Pathways, formerly known as the Autism Collective. OSF Autism Pathways provides care coordination, education and access to services for families navigating an autism diagnosis. More information can be found at [OSF Autism Pathways](#).

For interviews with OSF Children's Hospital leaders and b-roll of the Thomas Carts, visit the [OSF Newsroom](#).

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About OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois:

Located in Peoria, OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois is the third largest pediatric hospital in Illinois and the most comprehensive hospital for kids downstate. With 136 beds and more than 140 pediatric subspecialists, OSF Children's Hospital cares for more children in Illinois than any hospital outside of Chicago. Formally established as a pediatric hospital within the walls of OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in 1990, OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois has more than 7,000 inpatient admissions, 75,000 outpatient specialty visits, 2,400 newborn deliveries, and 18,000 emergency department visits each year. Learn more by visiting childrenshospitalofillinois.org.