

Emergency center for kids puts on happy face

By Brent Whiting
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This is no ordinary hospital facility, but one that is decorated with bees and butterflies, frogs, and turtles, snails and hummingbirds and other kinds of creatures.

It's part of the décor for a newly expanded Mendy's Place, the north Valley's only emergency center for kids.

The facility, which opens to patients Monday, is part of \$48 million worth of improvements, including a new wing at John C. Lincoln Hospital in Deer Valley, 19829 N. 27th Ave.

We're ahead of schedule and under budget, two of my favorite things," said Ron Davis, the construction director at the hospital complex southwest of Interstate 17 and Loop 101 in north Phoenix.

Thousands of kids, including nearly 11,500 last year, have received pediatric care at Mendy's place since its opening in December 1998.

The new facility will expand the number of beds to 12 from seven, as well as offer more space for doctors and nurses and many other improvements, said Susan Fuchs, a Lincoln spokeswoman.

"The intent was to make this a friendly place for children," Fuchs said. "This way the children are less stressed."

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. today, hospital officials will host a public grand opening for the new Mendy's Place.

Fuchs said there will be a number of free offerings, including Project Safekids, in which a child's photo and fingerprints are preserved on a computer disk for use in emergencies.

The center is named for the hospital's mascot, Mendy, a 6 foot dog with pink bows on her ears who also is a nurse. She wears oversized scrubs and a stethoscope around her neck.

Fuchs said the name of the friendly dog is intended to evoke thoughts of mending.

"It's a happy name," Fuchs said. "Mendy has become our symbol of fixing kids."

A wide array of aches and ailments may be treated at Mendy's Place, including asthma attacks and flu, burns, broken bones, earaches and high fevers, Fuchs said.

Tony Struthers, the hospital's vice president, for ancillary services, said the new Mendy's Place was built with kids and practitioners in mind.

"Our staff essentially designed it, but the architect drew up the plans, he said. As for the décor, Struthers said hospital

officials wanted nothing too feminine or too masculine, so an insect and animal motif was selected.

“We decided that children love bugs,” Struthers said. “They find them very friendly and not very frightening.”

The hope is that kids who come to Mendy’s Place will have a positive experience, even though they are not feeling well, Struthers said.