



IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE: No, it's med student Mike Piccioli. The intellectual prowess he flexes in class is matched by his physical prowess. Piccioli pulled a 24-ton fire engine 75 feet in 29 seconds to become New Hampshire's Strongest Man.

For a **WEB EXTRA** with links to more photos of the new art installation, see dartmed.dartmouth.edu/w10/we06.



Kids plus paint equals exuberance

The grounds of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center got a little brighter this fall—and not just during the peak of autumn foliage season. A colorful new art installation, part of a project called Inside & Out, was placed in a grassy area near the East Patient Tower.

Needs: Suzannah Luft, a second-year medical student and a Schweitzer Fellow at DMS, conceived of the project while teaching children's art classes this past summer at the AVA Gallery in Lebanon, N.H.

"One of the empowering things about art is you can work with other people to make something really special," says Luft. She decided to help her students create colorful life-sized self-portraits to bring some cheer to an unadorned corner of the hospital grounds. Her eight students ranged in age from 7 to 13, and

all have some special need, such as autism, developmental delays, or a chronic disease.

Pose: Luft had each of the kids strike a pose—waving or doing a handstand—while she traced the pose onto cardboard. Then Jeffery Sass, a metal sculptor affiliated with the AVA Gallery, transferred the silhouettes to aluminum, which he cut and polished. Next, "the kids went wild with acrylic paint," Luft says.

Every step the students took was a learning experience. Even mixing paint—discovering that red plus blue makes purple—was an opportunity for language interaction, she says.

Once the silhouettes were complete, it was time to install them in a permanent location. Luft knew just the place. Volunteering at DHMC last year, she

had noticed that several inpatient rooms in the East Patient Tower looked out on a weather-stained concrete wall. "It was so dismal," she says.

No longer. Patients in those rooms now look out at a crowd of colorful silhouettes. To top it off, Luft says, "the hospital painted that wall light blue so it looks like they're dancing against the sky."

The project is the first art piece created for Inside & Out, a collaborative public art project.

In 2008, the New England Foundation for the Arts awarded DHMC and the AVA Gallery a \$10,000 grant to develop a comprehensive, collaborative art plan for the DHMC campus. "We wanted to identify places and projects where we could collaborate with the community," explains Elisabeth Gordon, coordinator of the DHMC Arts Program. "This was the first of those projects."

Gordon is now trying to secure funding to add more artworks to Inside & Out. In the meantime, she's thrilled that the first installation has been such a hit. "I've gotten a lot of good feedback from patients and staff," she says.

Gaze: Luft, too, is delighted to have made a difference, both for her special-needs art students and for the patients who can now gaze at the result from their hospital room windows. "I really believe that art is essential for your soul and your spirit and your mental health," she says.

KIRSTEN WEIR

THEN & NOW

A reminder of the pace of change, and of timeless truths, from the 1970 MHMH-DHMC annual review:

"In the spring of 1953, we moved into a shiny new, modern, gem-of-a-place with the latest equipment and the delight of air-conditioning. Imagine being gowned, rubber-gloved, masked, and having your hair covered throughout a six-hour operation on a hot, humid August day, and you can truly appreciate what a tremendous advance . . . came about with air-conditioned operating rooms!"



12

Operating rooms in 1970

1991

Year the Lebanon DHMC opened, with 16 ORs and an eco-friendly AC system

31

Operating rooms today



MARK WASHBURN

These boldly colored metal figures—newly installed on the DHMC grounds, within view of a number of inpatient rooms—were the work of a group of art students with special needs, led by a second-year medical student. There are eight figures in all.