

photo: Henke Studio

Woodwinds HealthEast Cancer Center

2015

Woodbury, MN United States

Overview

“Trillium: Gathering of Light” was commissioned for a new Cancer Center, designed to welcome and inspire. The suspended 10’ diameter aluminum framework is made in 3-segments creating a large spiral. These are covered with clusters of “trillium blossoms”, kiln-formed dichroic, fused and laminated glass elements. The inner circle is a 7’ cascade of hundreds of beaded crystal and glass-laminated paper collages, which are created by patients, families and caregiver participants. The spiral symbolizes the healing journey, the trillium theme was chosen to express hope and resiliency, all themes that resonate intimately with people diagnosed with cancer.

Goals

(1) Design an architecturally integrated work for the main rotunda entrance. [The work echoes the circular space and spiral tile design in the floor. When viewed from below, the viewer visually connects the spiral segments into a whole & becomes the human link connecting the “earth to the sky”, an expression of one’s wholeness and interdependent connections.] (2) Based on Biophilia research, the sculpture will bring nature’s light and texture into the space. [Collages made from nature-infused handmade papers create natural textures; dichroic and other faceted glass creates light-filled movement as the sunshine changes throughout the day. Integrated illumination creates an ethereal effect after dark, seemingly floating off the ceiling.] (3) Engage patients with a meaningful healing experience that will be integrated into the design of the work. [Collage art-making sessions with patients and families created the center cascade of elements. Using mixed media and text stamps, they collaged personal “expressions of hope and gratitude”. These were later laminated into glass circles that created the “heart and soul” of the project.]

Process

This collaboration included the artists; the cancer patients and other participants; and all of the supporting team members. Artists: Allison Luedtke, sculptor, known for glass and metal

constructions, co-designed and fabricated the work using kiln-formed, fused and laminated glass, and a variety of metal work. Victoria Hovde, cancer survivor and healing arts specialist, conceived and co-designed the work, facilitated the art-making sessions and led the project management. The Woodwinds Cancer Center's director, manager and patient planning group assisted with the implementation of art sessions. HGA Architects and Engineers, Kraus-Anderson Construction provided on-going expertise in the planning, engineering, lighting and installation. HealthEast Care System Foundation provided the funding and participation of donors.

Additional Info

The best part of the project culminated with the Center's opening celebration. Patients, families and other participants were invited to see their individual work in the finished sculpture. It was an evening of emotional sharing of survivor's stories about the power of love, hope, faith and resiliency; there were memories shared by family members, both with tears of loss and gratitude. The collaborating team walked away with a new understanding of how the work of art can be more than a beautiful architectural statement, but one that can open the heart and be a beautiful tool for healing.

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