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A place for wishes to come true



By LISA HOPPENJANS, STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL -- With the flutter of wings, the wishes went up, and hopeful eyes watched on.

The butterfly garden at the N.C. Children's Hospital is a place where wishes need granting.

The garden was built by Derek Baker, a junior at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Raleigh, and the members of Boy

Scout Troop 39 as Baker's Eagle Scout project.

Scoutmaster Jim Mackorell read a Native American legend to the people gathered at Thursday's dedication to watch the release of 100 butterflies.

"If you want a special wish to come true, capture a butterfly and whisper your heart's desire to it," he said.

The butterfly will carry your wish to the Great Spirit, and the "heart's prayers [will be] quickly answered."

Mackorell had his own special wish, he said. His son is dying of cancer.

The quiet garden off the hospital's noisy lobby was transformed after seven months of planning and two long days of gardening. The Scouts pulled up bamboo grass and replaced it with carefully selected plants to nurture caterpillars and butterflies. Milkweed, parsley, coneflower, joe pye weed and daisies support the larvae. Nectar-bearing asters, black-eyed susans, pansies and lave On Thursday, patients, employees and their children and a kindergarten class gathered in the garden to see their work and watch the butterflies take flight.

A small boy lay in a wheelchair, a blanket covering his legs, scratches covering his face. Samuel Isaac Hurlburt, 2, was in a car accident Sept. 12. This was the first time he had been outside since then. He cried as Patricia Cadle, a UNC Hospitals chaplain, said a prayer before the butterflies' release.

Mackorell released the first butterfly, carefully goading the monarch out of its packet. The butterfly flew by Samuel in his wheelchair, as those around him whispered "oohh."

The others were released. One fluttered around the boy's head, then landed on his arm. Another landed on the blanket covering his legs, then another.

As Samuel drifted off to sleep, his father, Lucky Hurlburt, leaned forward to kiss his son's forehead.

Later, Hurlburt carefully guided his son's wheelchair through the garden, keeping a cautious eye for butterflies resting on the sidewalk. He patted Samuel's head.

"Did you make a wish, buddy?" he asked.

"I made one."

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[Back to previous page](#)

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