

This Is Where Hope Thrives

BY GORDON CLOUGH



Healthcare architecture can significantly affect the emotional well being of patients so it is important that health care providers seek to provide human centered design when planning new facilities or remodeling older ones. Nowhere was this a more important objective than when the Seattle Children's Hospital was planning their new expansion. Not only did ZGF Architects design a beautiful, healing environment...they made the interior elements age-appropriate for their young clientele.

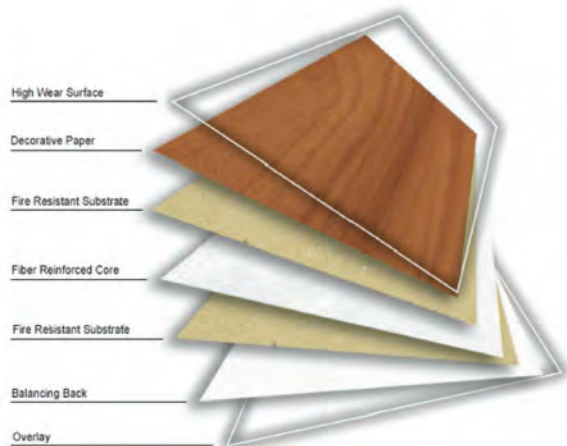
A new 330,000 sq/ft expansion building called: "Building Hope" provides a new home for the cancer center, emergency department and two critical care units. The objective of the hospital was to create a more welcoming and friendly environment for their young patients. Instead of being assigned to sequentially numbered floors, these children are now welcomed to zones such as Ocean, Forest, River or Mountain. During the young patient's convalescent period, they make their way through hallways, elevators and lobbies adorned with brightly colored whimsical artwork depicting various natural themes. The hope is that, for a moment or two, they are cheered by their surroundings.

The colorful new facility has received rave reviews from staff, parents and most importantly the young patients.

The attractive, new and completely custom environment was made possible by fusing custom digital graphics (shown as decorative paper in the graphic on the right) into the 7 laminate layers in Panolam's Fiber Reinforced Laminates (FRL).



Cladding the hospitals walls was a straightforward procedure. The hallways and elevators were covered with panels fastened with adhesive and then trimmed with aluminum moldings. Special color matched caulking was developed to ensure that the panorama of the art continued in an unbroken line. The tremendous physical attributes of FRL such as Class A fire rating, very high abrasion wear resistance (3500 cycles), high impact resistance, stain resistance and ease of cleaning all added to the benefits of using FRL. When custom prints are required for less demanding installations, the same digital art process can be used in a less expensive HPL configuration.



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The excellent physical properties of the FRL allowed designers to eliminate what can be expensive wall protection systems, including reinforced hand rails and impact protection from stainless steel wainscoting, allowing for broad unbroken vistas and continuous floor to ceiling imagery. This further enhances the environment by providing a look that is less institutional.

To produce the magnificent murals for the project, ZGF Architects assembled their own art team to create original artwork. The team worked together to develop story themes and provide color schemes that created a bright friendly environment. The FRL from Panolam Industries was a perfect platform to show-off the brilliant colors of the artists' designs.

The project work started two and one-half years ago, with a team that included ZGF Architects, Sellen Construction, the creative group of artists, Seattle Sierra Forest Products and Panolam Industries, the manufacturer of these beautiful panels.

Building Hope provides improved patient care and comfort. It helps the hospital keep its promise to the community – providing compassionate, family-centered care to the children who need it most. It's not just about concrete and steel; it's about Hope. **s&p**

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