

A Children's B D E F G H Health

Fun Jeeps Help Patients With Surgery Anxiety

(NAPSA)—There's something magical going on at the Lexington Shriners Hospital for Children...not just that patients are receiving the best care known worldwide, or that there are approximately a thousand successful surgeries annually, or even the fact that there is no cost to the patient or family.

Magical moments happen every day when a patient is able to drive himself—or herself—into surgery, via a pink Barbie or a black Wrangler battery-operated jeep.

"These cars have definitely helped decrease anxiety for our patients going to surgery," said Donna Thompson, director of the post anesthesia care unit (PACU). "They are so excited about driving the jeep that they don't even think about having surgery as they go down the hall to the operating room (OR). It's even made it better for parents, because it is so much easier for parents to see their children smiling and laughing as they go to surgery."

The experience begins with a description of the jeep given to the patient on the preoperative visit by the OR/PACU nurses and continues during their preoperative tour conducted by the recreational therapist.

"I've noticed a big difference," said Chester Tylkowski, M.D., Lexington Shriners Hospital chief of staff. "Everyone has gotten involved and using the jeeps has helped to reduce the patient's anxiety as far as surgery is concerned. It's always nice to see happy, smiling faces on these youngsters."

Thompson also added that



At Lexington Shriners Hospital for Children, youngsters get to drive themselves into surgery.

before each child is seated in the jeep, the staff jokingly asks for a driver's license. Then each child is given a temporary "License to Drive" to have as a keepsake.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.