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Scottish Rite says welcome with popcorn

Volunteers and staff create 'Disney-like feel' for children

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Whenever 7-year-old Audra Stovall hops off the elevator at Scottish Rite for Children in Dallas, it's first things first.

Drawn by the smell of popcorn in the air, Audra will make a beeline to a sky-lit atrium lobby where she knows she'll find a smiling volunteer ready with stickers and a snack dished out from the vintage-style popcorn machine.

There's magic in the ritual Audra has repeatedly performed since her first visit to Scottish Rite in 2017, shortly after her adoption from China.

"I smell the goodness," said Audra, an active, bubbly Frisco second-grader who was born with a club foot and amniotic band syndrome, a rare condition that caused her to have shortened or missing fingers and toes.

Scottish Rite's signature popcorn scent is symbolic of the pediatric orthopedic care pioneer's mission to give childhoods back to kids like Audra.

At Scottish Rite, there's a running joke that the only time you see patients cry is when it's time for them to go home.

"There's so much serious medical care that happens behind the scenes, but it comes with a Disney-like feel," explained Ashley Givens, vice president of development and events at Scottish Rite. "We are so intentional with how we are engaging these children at a level where they find inspiration."

Established in 1921 to provide compassionate care for children with polio, the nonprofit hospital recently marked 100 years of redefining the science of healing muscles, joints and bones. It's known for research and treatment of pediatric orthopedics and certain related arthritic, neurological and learning disorders. It recently expanded its local presence north to Frisco with the opening of Scottish Rite for Children Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center and Scot-

How to help

Scottish Rite for Children hopes to resume new volunteer applications, currently on pause, in the months to come. For more information, visit scottishriteforchildren.org/get-involved.

tish Rite for Children at The Star.

The quest to treat the whole child, an approach offered to all patients regardless of their ability to pay, focuses on the experience — not the diagnosis. It's a tone that starts with a building design studied worldwide and the "how can we help?" attitude that comes naturally to those who work and volunteer there.

Located near the corner of Maple and Oak Lawn avenues, Scottish Rite's current building on the Dallas campus, which opened in 1977, was intentionally built with two levels below ground to appear less intimidating to children. It's fronted by a youth fitness park and a wheelchair-accessible playground on the grounds where the original hospital once stood.

Inside the front doors, framed with giant bright red crayons, are vibrant splashes of color, artwork and whimsical elements like a colossal mobile and giant kaleidoscope, waiting rooms with activity stations, and space, sports and seasonal themes throughout.

Wide-open hallways are filled with natural light and have no medical equipment in sight. Instead, such equipment is kept in a central "bullpen" area behind the clinic rooms that were architecturally designed in a circle around this core. Here, patient teams can collaborate on care before they enter the exam room through a separate interior door.

And then there's the popcorn — 6,000 pounds of it popped each year, as part of a purposeful design element that appeals to all the senses. Money raised through popcorn and gift shop sales is earmarked for a hospital wish list that covers patient needs that don't fall under the current budget. Recent-



Jason Janik/Special Contributor

Longtime volunteer Ken Morford, 83, makes popcorn at Scottish Rite for Children in Dallas. He said he enjoys "the excitement, joy and wonderment you see in a child as they are watching the popcorn pop."



Kimberly Chaubere

Seven-year-old Audra Stovall loves her visits to Scottish Rite for Children, her mom says.

ly approved wish list items include a play kitchen and craft supplies and software for the Movement Science Lab.

Longtime volunteers like 83-year-old Ken Morford are the heartbeat of Scottish Rite. Morford is a familiar face around Scottish Rite, starting in the mailroom as a volunteer 17 years ago after he retired. Morford arrives an hour early for his 8 a.m. shift each Wednesday to ensure his popcorn station is ready to greet the day.

Morford, who lives in Arlington, has been known to underwrite a free popcorn day to honor the memory of a late best friend and fellow volunteer. He said he enjoys "the excitement, joy and wonderment you see in a child as they are watching the popcorn pop."

"The volunteers and employees enjoy working together, and all they want to do is one thing: to make every-



Jason Janik/Special Contributor

Morford (left) and fellow volunteer Charles Garner pass out popcorn to 10-year-old Juanita Saucedo and Louie Aguirre. Scottish Rite has more than 800 volunteers — up to 50 people a day.

child enjoy their life — whatever that is," he said. "It is just beautiful to see."

When at full force, Scottish Rite volunteers are an army of more than 800 people — up to 50 people a day — who commit to regular shifts for the long term, time that adds up to money saved on full-time employees.

"Their impact is profound," Givens said. For Audra's mom, Kim Stovall, it was the little things that helped to immediately quell the family's fears of the unknown: the smell of popcorn and friendly faces, the volunteer who slipped headphones on her daughter during a cast change appointment and the nurse after the first surgery who showed them how to fill a wagon with pillows and stuffed animals so Audra could go out and about.

Audra can't wait to see her doctors at Scottish Rite so she can share the details of her busy life, filled with tum-

bling, soccer and fun playing with her three older brothers.

"They are not just there treating her medical condition," Kim Stovall said. "They care about her and are invested in her."

Audra's medical journey once included full arm and leg casts, surgeries and weekly or biweekly appointments, but now has transitioned to occasional follow-up checks. The walk to the lobby for popcorn remains a sweet and savory reminder of how far Audra has come.

"When she starts running through halls, and I'm walking behind her just seeing her run like that, I can't help but almost tear up sometimes," Kim Stovall said. "I know all they've done to make that possible. Audra can do anything now; there are no limitations. And that is all because of Scottish Rite."

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

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TEXAS LOTTERY

Powerball

Wednesday's numbers
19 37 48 61 63
Powerball: **12**
Jackpot: \$73 million
Number of winners: 0
Winning ticket: N/A
Next drawing: Saturday
Est. jackpot: \$85 million

Mega Millions

Friday's numbers
11 19 28 46 47
Mega Ball: **5**
Jackpot: \$113 million
Number of winners: 0
Winning ticket: N/A
Megaplier: **4**
Next drawing: Tuesday
Est. jackpot: \$126 million

Texas Two-Step

Thursday **4 17 22 35**
Bonus ball: **2**

Lotto Texas

Wednesday's numbers
13 18 23 39 40 49
Jackpot: \$6.5 million
Number of winners: 0
Winning ticket: N/A
Next drawing: Saturday
Est. jackpot: \$6.75 million

Cash 5

Friday **4 9 24 27 34**

Daily 4

Saturday morning **7 5 4 8**
Saturday day **5 6 1 1**
Saturday evening **6 9 2 2**
Friday night **5 3 0 1**

Pick 3

Saturday morning **5 5 7**
Saturday day **3 7 9**
Saturday evening **5 8 8**
Friday night **6 7 6**

Not all results available at press time.
For complete results, visit txlottery.org

SUNDAY NEWS SHOWS

Here are public affairs TV highlights for Sunday:

Fox News Sunday (8 a.m., Channel 4) — Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. Oksana Markarova; Sens. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., and Joni Ernst, R-Iowa.

Lone Star Politics (8:40 a.m., NBC5) — George P. Bush, Texas land commissioner and GOP

attorney general candidate; U.S. Rep. Pat Fallon, R-Sherman.

Meet the Press (9 a.m., NBC5) — Secretary of State Antony Blinken; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley; Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va.; Fiona Hill, former senior director for European and

Russian affairs on the National Security Council.

This Week (9:30 a.m., Channel 8) — U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield; Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.

Face the Nation (9:30 a.m., Channel 11) — Blinken; Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif.; Markaro-

va; International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

State of the Union (8 a.m., CNN) — Blinken; Rubio; Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission; Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas; Nadezhda Tolokonnikova of the Russian punk group Pussy Riot.

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