



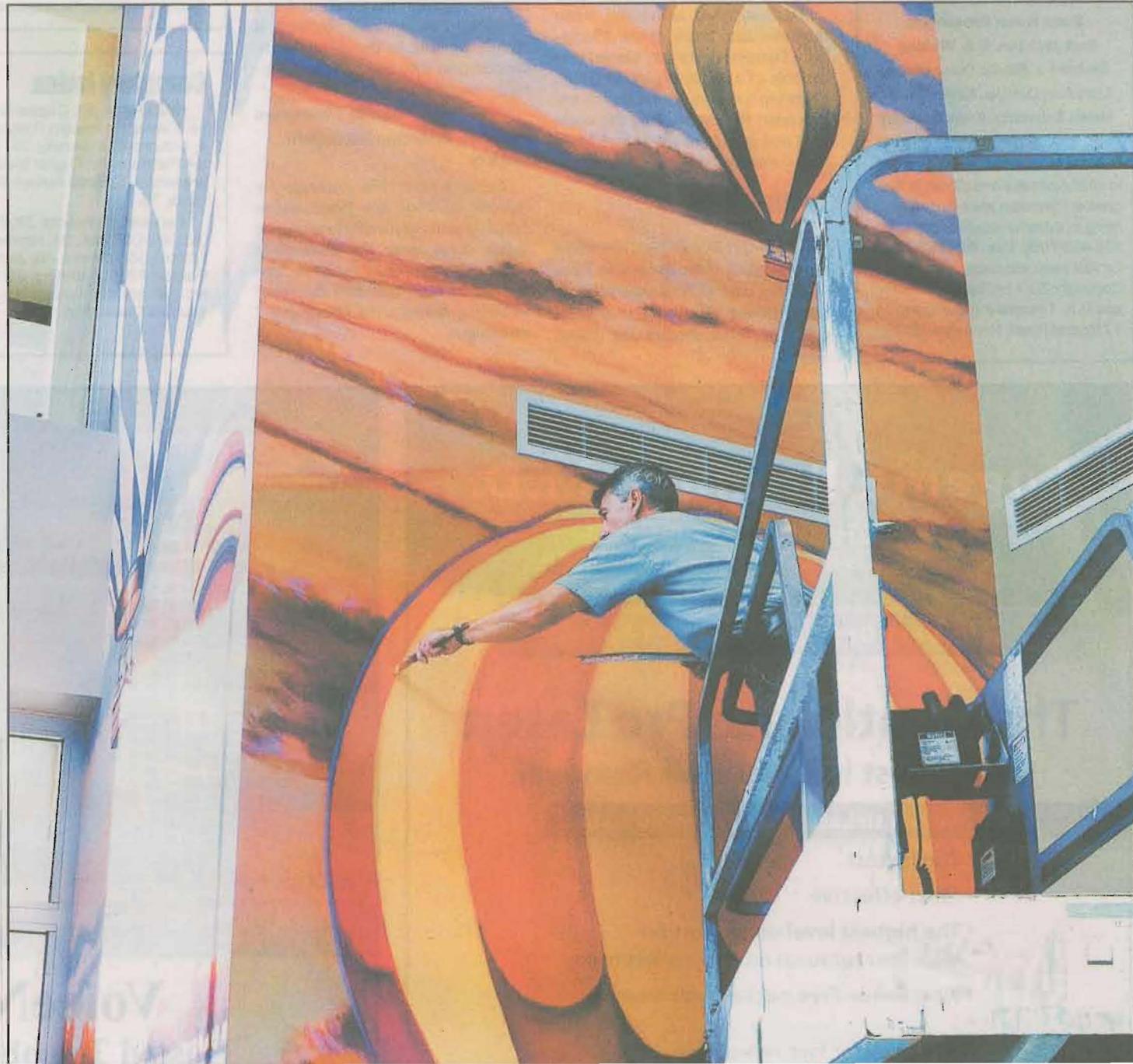
# FINAL TOUCHES FOR THE NEW HOSPITAL

## EVEN BEFORE THE SURGEON'S SCALPEL, THE ARTIST'S BRUSH

Ilene Dube reports on how art became one of the building blocks at Capital Health's new Hopewell medical center.

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*Hopewell artist Thom Montanari puts the finishing touches on his mural in the pediatric emergency waiting room.*



# Needed: Lasers, Scalpels — and 600 Pieces of Art



**C**apital Health's new hospital on Scotch Road just off I-95 in Hopewell will open to patients on Sunday, November 6, and what they and their visitors will see is a hospital that embraces all the literal and figurative esthetics of a top-notch art gallery. Both Capital Health and the University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro, which opens in spring, 2012, acknowledge the importance of art in healing, and have made a significant investment in planning their spaces to showcase the work of local artists.

With its Mondrian-like stained glass wall and 600 works of art by 70 artists, Capital Health could be the new Grounds For Sculpture for patients and their families. During a recent open house, visitors were chanting "check me in!"

But you don't have to be a patient or a family member to see the artwork, much of it in public spaces throughout the hospital. Capital Health is even preparing a brochure about the artwork that will be available to visitors.

The building itself is a stunning creation, with stone walls and a waterfall reminiscent of the modernist Vandamm house in Hitchcock's "North by Northwest." A five-story atrium is flooded with light from the curved wall of windows that has become a new landmark visible from I-95. There is an on-site spa, a bistro, a kiosk with freshly brewed coffee, a cyber cafe, a stone fireplace in a waiting area, glass tile walls by the elevator, and Michael Graves-designed patient room amenities in the 1 million square

foot building designed by HKS Architects.

There are healing gardens, garden rooms, and roof gardens, all part of the LEED certified green building design. Capital Health embraces the "locavore" movement in its food service, and project architect Shane Williams, who lives in Dallas, spent significant time cruising the Trenton-Hopewell area to get ideas for materials that would reflect the area. The stonework, for example, is intended to evoke the stonework of local bridges.

Lin Swensson, the Tennessee-based art consultant Capital Health hired to oversee the art program, also spent a significant amount of time in the area — one week out of every month for two years — get-

by Ilene Dube

**Blank Slate:** Princeton artists Lucy and Charles McVicker, left, both have artwork in the new hospital. A mosaic by Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella of Earthsongs Studios in Metuchen is located in the cafeteria seating area.

ting to know artists. "This region has a rich history of art on both sides of the (Delaware) river," says Capital Health COO and executive vice president Larry J. DiSanto, who selected Swensson. "We wanted to see art not just to beautify the building but to enhance the healing process and reduce stress for patients, visitors, and staff who face life and death issues daily."

DiSanto hopes the artwork will help visitors get over the fear they have of visiting hospitals. "With state-of-the-art equipment, we're here to help sick people get better

using the best technology in a beautiful hospital environment."

"The idea for white white white is out," says Swensson, who is an artist herself. "We're bringing in nature, and colors are bright and positive yellows and purples to create joy. Clinical findings show that positive distractions reduce stress. It also shows the patient a commitment to superior care."

Swensson cites research by Roger Ulrich, a professor of architecture at Texas A&M University

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## **The Hospital as Gallery**

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who has studied the effects of healthcare facilities on medical outcomes. Ulrich and his associates have shown how viewing nature reduces stress for hospital patients.

Swensson describes “biophilia” as the desire to hide in nature in order to reduce stress and experience positive feelings. In his book “Biophilia,” biologist Edward O. Wilson hypothesizes about the subconscious connections humans seek with other forms of life.

“Not only does art heal, it helps a hospital become more connected to the community,” says Swensson. “People come into the hospital and feel a rapport, because of the work of New Jersey artists.”

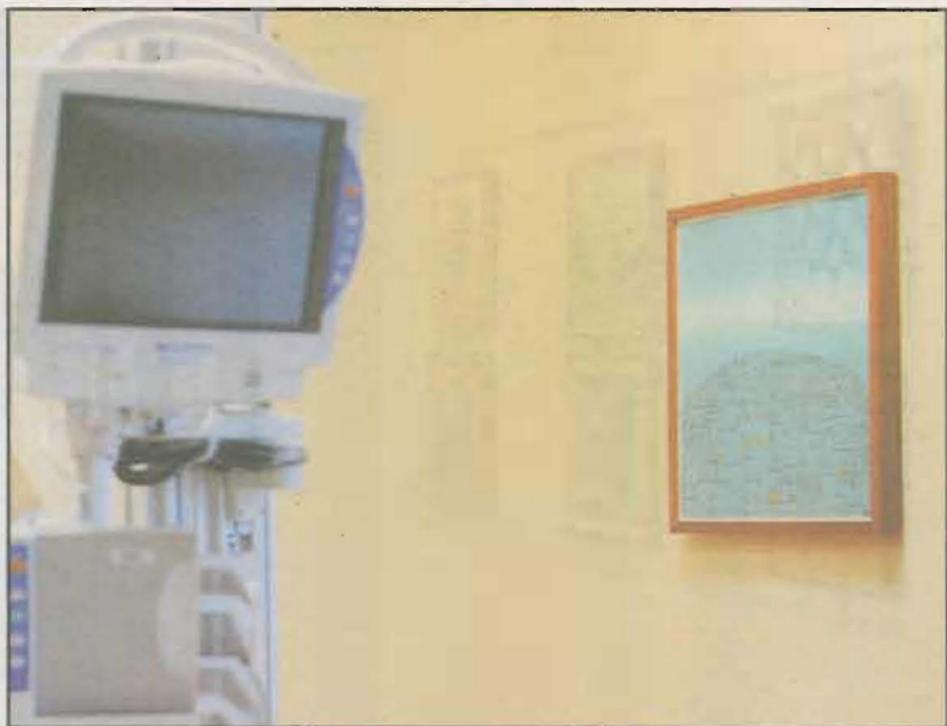
**The Joy of Color:** *For the art gallery on the second floor of the atrium, artwork of the same size was created by several different artists from the Brodsky Center for Innovative Editions in New Brunswick.*

According to a statement issued by the Society for the Arts in Healthcare, “the arts benefit patients by aiding in their physical, mental, and emotional recovery, including relieving anxiety and decreasing their perception of pain. In an atmosphere where the patient often feels out of control, the arts can serve as a therapeutic and healing tool. Art also has the power to communicate and educate, giving it growing significance in healthcare institutions. Further, research shows that the arts can reduce pa-

tients’ use of pain medication and length of hospital stays, as well as improve compliance with recommended treatments, offering substantial savings in healthcare costs.

“From architectural design to art on the walls, from access to natural lighting to the inclusion of nature through landscaping and healing gardens, the physical environment has a significant impact on relieving patients’ and caregivers’

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stress, improving health outcomes, and overall quality of care.”

Placing artwork in a hospital differs from placing it in a gallery because in a hospital you are creating an environment, says Swensson.

For niches near the elevators on floors four, five, and six, Swensson commissioned Morrisville, Pennsylvania-based sculptor Kate Graves to create trees with different medical specialties at the hospital. Graves used steel to create a willow tree for cardiology, an ash tree for oncology, and a gingko for orthopedics.

Graves also made a quilt for oncology. “It’s to give a sense of comfort in the waiting area, like a handmade blanky by grandma,” says Swensson. Staff members picked out and donated fabrics, some from Pennington Quiltworks and some from loved ones who had survived and some who did not.

A poem about what cancer cannot do is woven into the quilt, although the casual observer will not see it. The staff knows it is there, and can point to it if needed, as well as to fabrics they donated, so the quilt is for the staff, as well as patients.

The design is Amish Building Blocks, but Graves divided the diamonds into equilateral triangles.

### **Hi-Tech, Lo-Tech: ‘New Day’ by Margaret Kennard Johnson of Princeton, in the neuro intensive care unit.**

Most of Graves’ quilts are made to be machine washable, but this one, behind glass, presented an opportunity to use precious fabrics, like silk from an old kimono.

“It’s like cooking,” says Graves. “You have your ingredients, and it’s how you put it all together.”

For the two-story pediatric emergency waiting area, Thomas Montanari of Hopewell was commissioned to create a mural with hot air balloons. “Kids can be scared in large spaces,”

says Swensson. “The mural gives the feeling of being lifted up. There are three stages: on the ground, in the balloon during takeoff, and up in the sky looking at the Delaware River. It makes you feel like you are flying.”

With colors that evoke Peter Max, the multi-paneled mural shows billowing clouds over the Delaware and a patchwork-quilted landscape on the Pennsylvania side. It makes you want to sing Beatles songs.

“Probably my strongest influences are my parents and my up-

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bringing on a farm in the southwestern corner of Connecticut," Montanari writes in an artist statement (see page 40). "I was immersed in pastoral life. . . We were always outside interacting and experiencing the rhythm of nature."

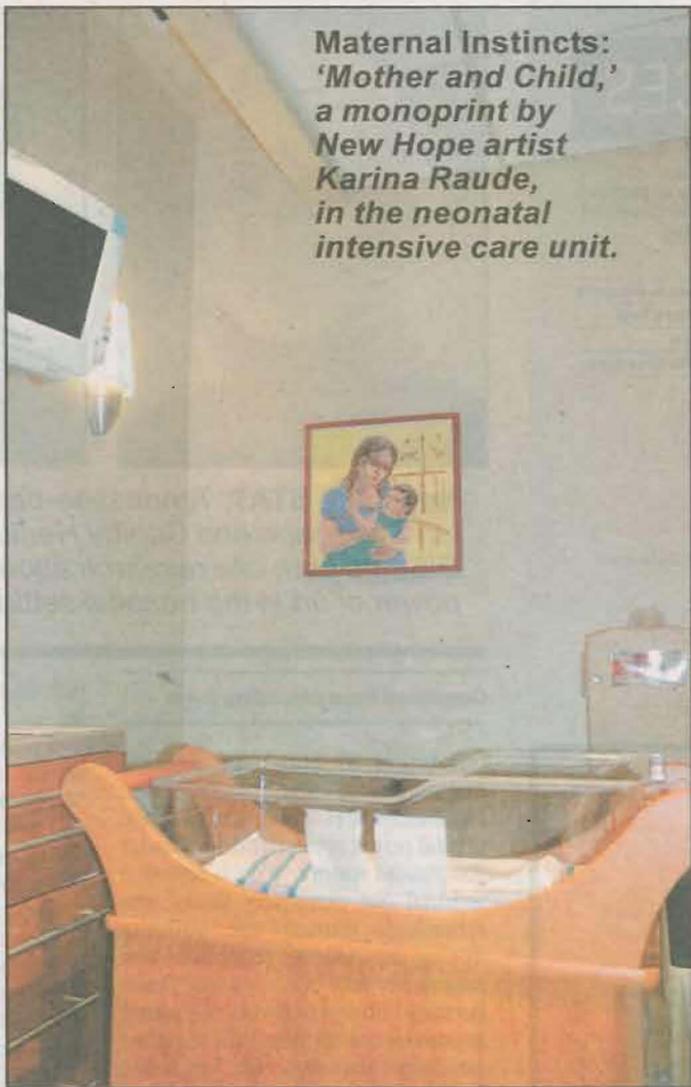
**F**or the pediatric ward, Yardley, Pennsylvania-based artist Colleen Attara was commissioned to make a mural about the bluebird of happiness in her signature style of cutting up recycled signs and creating something new — in this case, a sort of dollhouse village.

"It's about moving from an urban area to the country," says Swensson. There are bridges between the urban and country dwellings, and many birds and butterflies. "Instead of Trenton Makes the World Takes, it's renew, reuse, reinvent as the theme for the new hospital," says Swensson. "And it's at a scale where small children can touch."

Two years ago, when Swensson was first brought on board, she worked with the public relations department to craft a call to artists that was sent to artists, art groups, the media, and spread by word of mouth. More than 700 artists submitted, and the list was winnowed down by 90 percent.

In addition, 400 original prints for each of the private patient rooms were commissioned through the Brodsky Center for Innovative Editions.

**Maternal Instincts:  
'Mother and Child,'  
a monoprint by  
New Hope artist  
Karina Raude,  
in the neonatal  
intensive care unit.**



Working for a hospital is very different from creating art for a gallery, Swensson readily admits. Nudity, sexuality, and politics are not what the hospital represents, and directives are given for colors and imagery — for example, reds that may suggest blood are to be avoided. Swatches of fabric and wall finishes were given to artists to work with. "It's not matchy-matchy, but synergistic," says Swensson.

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**Need Art, STAT:** *Tennessee-based art consultant Lin Swensson and Capital Health COO Larry DiSanto both cite research about the healing power of art in the hospital setting.*

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"Artists by and large respond negatively to that," says Susan Hockaday of Hopewell, who made digital prints at the Brodsky Center for patient rooms. "But it seems it worked out extremely well," she remarked, touring the building during an artists' reception and seeing her artwork in place. "I understand how when you're putting an environment like this together you can't just say, 'oh, we'll see how it turns out.'"

Several of Hockaday's prints are in a nurses' station, and Swensson has hung some upside down, but Hockaday was pleased with the result. "I firmly believe in rotation," she says. "The pieces are transformed by the setting. They gain something."

The artist list reads like a who's who of greater Princeton: Marie Sturken, Joan Needham, Anita Benarde, Jean Burdick (whose daughter is scheduled to deliver in the hospital), Susan Hockaday, Hetty Baiz, Lucy and Charles McVicker, Armando Sosa, J. Seward Johnson Jr., Fay Sciarra, Rhonda Heisler, Derek Fell, Faith Ringgold, Debra Weir, Eve Ingalls, Eileen Hohmuth Lemonick, Judy Brodsky, Harry Naar, Margaret Kennard Johnson, and Marsha Levin-Rojer. The work by Princeton-area residents is a clear representation of just how

rich an artistic community we live in.

Swensson visited many of the artists in their studios, including Michael Graves. She selected some of his Tuscan landscapes and made enormous digital prints of them for the oncology outpatient corridor. Francois Guillemain of Hopewell's Firedance Studio did restoration work on some of the doors and furniture brought from the old Mercer Medical Center.

Swensson got into the healthcare field at the suggestion of her father, an architect and artist. His firm, Earl Swensson International, specializes in healthcare design. "He inspired me to create healing environments," she says. "He taught me to be sensitive to it, and how architecture can help lift spirits and make life easier."

Her grandfather was a painter, and her mother was a soprano singer, so the Nashville native grew up surrounded by original art. "Making art is a part of what we did."

Swensson earned her bachelor's degree in fine arts from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in 1979 and a master's degree, also in fine arts, from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City in 1984. She has been an adjunct professor in fine art and interior design and sold furnishings to the healthcare industry.

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During the time she was working at Capital Health, Swensson embarked on her own medical odyssey, going through chemotherapy for breast cancer. It helped give her a deeper insight into patient needs. "I was so tired of seeing landscapes, I could scream," she says. "Don't hang a photograph of an empty boat at shore — you're so alone going through chemo."

She wasn't alone when working with artists, who became her friends and encouraged her.

It is not just the architecture and artwork that make up the healing environment. There will be no fewer than eight gardens at Capital Health in Hopewell.

The imagination garden will offer an imaginative and playful space with a chalk wall, curved walkways, and evening lighting. In the cafe garden, you can sip a cup of joe from Washington Crossing Coffee Company alongside a splashing fountain, bluestone walkways, and a rose hedge.

A perspective garden, with an arbor, water feature, and plantings, is where patients and family members may go for contemplation, and the tranquility garden offers a shady waiting area next to the emergency room.

For meetings and conferences, there are gardens as well. Outdoor rooms provide a space to gather for informal meetings, and a semi-walled and shaded break-out room offers calming sounds from a surrounding fountain wall.

The magnolia garden is an outdoor oval-shaped waiting room with shade-loving plants as well as fragrant flowering magnolias, and the Altus garden is a landscaped healing garden accessible from the cancer treatment rooms and medical office building.

In addition to the healing gardens, Capital Health has made a commitment to stewardship of surrounding land. Existing woodlands will be preserved and monitored, and approximately 12 acres of existing farmland will be preserved and cultivated by local farmers.

A roof garden, another space for healing and contemplation, will also keep the building cooler in summer and reduce energy consumption. It will absorb rainwater and reduce runoff, filtering water as it passes through the soil.

The large expanse of open land surrounding the new campus will be planted and maintained as a natural grass and wildflower meadow, reducing the carbon footprint of mowing and fertilizing lawn. Storm water bio-swales and wetlands will be used for irrigation.

For watering the gardens, rainwater will be captured from the hospital roof and stored in underground cisterns for drip irrigation.

**Comfort Zone:**  
*Michael Graves designed the end table and over-the-bed table in the patient rooms.*

To enjoy the vistas, a mile-long trail will wind its way through the wooded areas, wetlands, and meadow.

And, on a practical level, artwork can serve as signposts, as in "Oh, you're looking for the pediatric ward? Turn right at the hot air balloon."