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Thea Patterson (director of the home) and Seumas Reynolds of the Rotary Club.

PLAYROOM AT ST JOSEPH'S: OPENING MARKS FINAL STAGE OF HOSPITAL RENOVATION

It's time to play

ASTRID FEBRUARIE

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The playroom at St Joseph's Home for Chronically Ill Children in Montana was officially opened on Monday 11 September as one of the final stages concluding the three-year renovation programme at the hospital.

TygerBurger previously reported ("Safe space for kids at 'new' St Jo's", 01/03) that the R46 million upgrade project for the home had been completed, giving the home a complete "facelift" and transforming the more traditional hospital into an eco-friendly space of light, warmth and healing.

Alrika Hefers, resource development manager of the home, says the renovations included the modernisation of five wards, a state-of-the-art rehabilitation hub, the upgrade of the nurses' home and staff dining room, upgrade of the parents' accommodation (from five to 20 visitors), various offices and interlinking open spaces.

Landscaping of the ward gardens and certain outside areas was also done.

"This project, ring-fenced for the hospital and the benefit to its patients, was made possible through a generous overseas donation," Hefers said at the time.

The renovation of the home took two years of intense planning, working with a wide range of experts defining the scope of the project, refining the design of the upgrade and still keeping within budget.

Hefers says the five wards are now linked with open and functional spaces that can accommodate between 120 and 140 patients.

"St Joseph's is a progressive, 'one of a kind' care facility in South Africa and provides a holistic care programme for children up to 18 years of age," she says.

This includes 24-hour specialised and general nursing care and rehabilitation – physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy, counselling, social work support, pastoral care and schooling.

Hefers says the playroom renovation,

which is part of the hospital and designed for patients to have some creative time outside their wards, came at a cost of R150 000.

"In the afternoons and weekends our patients can watch movies, interact with programmes on the computers, or read in the reading room.

"The idea is creative and therapeutic play," Hefers says.

The home received several donations, with one being R100 000 from the Rotary Club, while R10 000 was donated by a former volunteer from Germany who stayed at the home for six months.

"The volunteer organised a street concert back home and they donated more than R25 000 to the home, and the Dieter and Bettina Wulkow Foundation donated R35 000 towards the computers," she says.

Conny Keller and Friends donated play equipment, chairs and tables.

The playroom, one of the smaller projects within the R46m renovation building project, has now been completed.