

Dear Smilezone Foundation,

When we got approached about doing a Smilezone in Sudbury I jumped at the opportunity. Thanks to a lot of great people who made it happen, we have seen a drastic change in Sudbury Children's Hospital. I often hear people ask, 'Why do you need a Smilezone?' To me, it's a no brainer... Having a daughter who has frequented hospitals in the 2 young years of her life, I can tell you nothing is more disheartening as a parent when your child knows he or she is walking into a hospital and begins to whimper because they understand what's next... and you can't do anything to comfort them. The importance of what Smilezone does is that it makes these kids less afraid and more comfortable in an already uncomfortable setting. What I have seen at the Sudbury Smilezone is an absolute transformation from a dull frightening looking place to a warm inviting and friendly area to wait, get treated, or do a check-up. I had kids wanting to show me each room and walk me through all the characters on the wall, or new toys to experience. To me that's the purpose of Smilezone. Taking the reality away for a little while and letting the imagination run free. Let the kids be kids. They don't know any better, and why should they? They deserve to have fun and be in a setting where they feel safe and comfortable and to me that's what Smilezone provides.

So I want to say thanks for allowing my daughter and the countless other children that Smilezone has helped to just be kids in the face of all the adversity they have in their lives. For them to have the comforts of what Smilezone provides at these hospitals is truly a difference maker!

- **Nick Foligno, Captain, Columbus Blue Jackets**