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Northwestern alum win bid to design Chicago hospital floor

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Two Northwestern alumni will be designing the 15th floor of the yet-to-be-completed Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital in downtown Chicago, the graduates' firm announced Tuesday.

Karen Zissis (MSC '88) and Katherine Ross (Communication '87), creative directors at Kinc Design and Fabrication, recently won a bid to lay out the floor's cardiac care unit, which will open with the rest of the children's hospital next June.

Their visual theme will invoke the Russian storytale "Peter and the Wolf" by Sergei Prokofiev, according to a news release issued Tuesday. That literary inspiration will shape the forest, meadow and pond elements planned for the 15th floor.

Kinc's outline will also tap into an overarching message of "listen to your heart," according to the news release.

"Our goal is to give Lurie Children's Hospital's young patients an environment that inspires strength, hope and perseverance — traits exemplified by the hero Peter, in Peter and the Wolf," Ross said in the news release. "Some of the children will spend months at a time in the Cardiac Care Unit. Kinc is going to make sure they're always in a space that engages and uplifts them and contributes to their overall recovery."

The cardiac care unit is not the first time the children's hospital recruited Kinc's creative services.

Previously, Kinc has helped design the studio set for the hospital's television channel, Skylight TV. The firm also crafted the fifth-floor nook part of the Kimberly Brown Family Life Center.

In the news release, Skylight TV producer Rene Roy touted Ross and Zissis as "hands-on artisans, with a strong artistic vision and the ability to deliver high quality results."

The new children's hospital, which is still under construction, is located at 225 E. Chicago Ave. in downtown Chicago.

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