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There is also no need to schedule night shifts and overtime hours for floor finishing.
Hess noted that “The savings in time and materials normally dedicated to flooring maintenance are now able to be reallocated to other critical cleaning and maintenance projects. As a result, we have a cleaner, healthier environment for our children, their families and our professional staff.”

Finishing with a healthy outcome
The finished project wowed the Pittsburgh community it serves, while also achieving another astounding result: “We hit our projected completion date on this project, and we didn’t exceed our budget number,” Hess said, adding, “I don’t know too many people who can look you in the eye and say that with a straight face.”

Hess attributes the achievement to finding experts who were delivering at a very high level, and infusing them with Children’s passion for improving kids’ health. “It sound like a cliché, but we did this by surrounding ourselves with the right people;” Hess said. “It’s really a matter of spirit. We were not going to settle for less than the best, and that spirit has a way of spreading to everyone involved.”

“Everybody at Forbo is exceptionally proud of our involvement in this project,” added Darragh. “When you find a client who cares this deeply about achieving a great outcome...for kids and for the environment of the community at large...you can’t help but be inspired to go beyond anything you ever thought possible.”

The achievement didn’t end with the May 2009 opening of the new Children’s Hospital. Hess noted that the commitment continues in ongoing efforts to improve the sustainability of the hospital’s maintenance, food service and waste management practices.
Children’s also plans to conduct research on the effects of sustainable practices on the health of children.
““We want the benefits of our experience to spread beyond our campus,” said Hess, who hopes that the efforts in Pittsburgh will serve as an inspiration to other hospitals seeking greater sustainability. “This has truly been a partnership,” added Darragh. “We feel privileged to work with a partner who wants to benefit its community, and is willing to expand its vision and effort to improve the health of its industry and world beyond.”

If you doubt that buildings can have healing properties, plan on paying a visit to Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. There you’ll find a hospital and research tower that were planned and built in a bold new way. The process began with a clean slate and a provocative question: how can every aspect of the built environment be used to improve a child’s health?
The answer is easy to see in a new 1.5 million square foot complex that is obviously dedicated to making kids feel better. Visitors instantly notice the combinations of bright colors and interesting designs that lend a cheery and whimsically childlike appeal to the interior spaces of the facility. One of the most notable features is the Transformation Corridor, a hallway between the parking structure and the hospital that is alive with butterfly imagery, signifying the metamorphosis from disease to health that takes place within. Features like these earned Children’s recognition as one of the world’s most beautiful hospitals from the industry publication HealthExecNews® in 2012.

The difference between Children’s and an average hospital is far more than skin deep, however. The facility’s planning team searched around the world to find construction materials, building techniques and maintenance practices that maximize the health of both patients and staff. The welfare of future generations of kids were factored into their thinking as well, as reflected by the hospital’s decision to become one of the first pediatric medical centers in the United States to strive for LEED certification from the US Green Building Council. Both the hospital and the research tower have since been granted LEED status, with the research tower earning a LEED silver designation.

A broader vision, led by LEED

Practically everything that goes into creating a hospital was re-examined in a fresh new light in the development of a design for Children’s. “The health of children is not something people take in a halfway measure,” observed Eric Hess, Vice President of Operations and the leader of the Children’s project management team. “We wanted everything in our facility to be the absolute best for the kids in our community, and LEED was a big help in focusing us in that aim.” The LEED certification process naturally shifts attention away from construction details to consider why a building will harmonize with the natural environment and human communities that surround it. “(LEED is) a great way of keeping the team’s eyes on what matters most,” Hess stated.

LEED shaped the finished facility in a practically endless variety of ways, including:

• Creation of open, people-friendly spaces, filled with the natural lighting from abundant windows
• The choice of a previously developed site in an urban setting, with easy access to multiple bus lines
• Extensive use of recycled materials, many sourced from local suppliers to minimize the environmental impact of shipping
• A preference for materials that limit the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
• A design which maximizes access to natural light and conserves rainfall, including the use of “green” roof spaces and healing gardens that double as rainwater retaining systems
• A long term commitment to environmentally sustainability in the buildings’ ongoing operations, including recycling programs and a hospital-wide campaign of employee environmental education

“Children’s hospitals are among the toughest challenges from a floor maintenance standpoint,” Connelly added. “Children in the hospital get more visitors, and moms and dads are often staying with their kids. That means a much higher level of foot traffic than you’d find at an ordinary hospital.”

In addition to its environmental friendliness, Marmoleum also met healthcare, I don’t think we’ve ever had a cleaner, healthier environment for our children, their families and our professional staff.”

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