

# Things Are Looking Up

## A Ceiling Tile Project Inspires Patients, Family, and Staff

Jennifer Quinn, MAET, ATR,  
and Lisa Hartkopf Smith, RN, MS, AOCN®, CNS

When patients and family members enter the medical oncology unit at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus, OH, they are met by inspirational paintings and messages that traverse the unit's ceilings. At a closer look, they may realize that a different person painted each ceiling tile with a special message for all who walk under them.

While many hospitals decorate ceiling tiles, the Riverside tile project was inspired by an idea from the Foundation for Hospital Art, a nonprofit organization that brings art to hospitals. At Riverside, patients and family members were instructed to paint a comforting or healing image and think of a newly diagnosed patient coming to the unit for the first time.

Project implementation simply involved ordering a case of new ceiling tiles and using acrylic paint. Once a tile was painted, it replaced an existing unpainted tile. The removed tile was then used for the next painting.

Once a few tiles were installed, everyone—including community groups, schools, and churches—wanted to get involved. After five years, requests are

still being taken to paint a tile. According to Cynthia Hughes-McNally, RN, MSN, OCN®, the nurse manager of the unit, “You never know the impact of an image, how it can make someone's day, give them a smile and even the strength to go on. Family members love the project and say that it's nice to know their loved one is in such an environment. While we see the tiles every day, they are always new to someone else.”

For more information about Riverside Methodist Hospital Healing Arts Program, visit [www.ohiohealth.com/body.cfm?id=930](http://www.ohiohealth.com/body.cfm?id=930). For more information on ceiling tiles, visit [www.hospitalart.com](http://www.hospitalart.com).



Note. Illustration courtesy of Riverside Methodist Hospital.

Jennifer Quinn, MAET, ATR, is an art therapist and Lisa Hartkopf Smith, RN, MS, AOCN®, CNS, is a hematology/oncology clinical nurse specialist, both at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus, OH. Quinn can be reached at [jquinn@ohiohealth.com](mailto:jquinn@ohiohealth.com) with copy to editor at [CJONEditor@ons.org](mailto:CJONEditor@ons.org).

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/08.CJON.386



Note. Painted tiles line the ceiling of the inpatient oncology unit at Riverside Methodist Hospital.

## Thursdays

Patti Strelec

The doctor is in  
we wait to be called  
eager to be on with our day.  
Listening to the voices  
as we move in and out of the chairs  
all taking our turns to be seen.  
Separate conversations  
learning about each other  
sharing stories and feelings as we wait.  
Some reach out to all while others reach only  
within.

Moving through life  
as we all come together daily  
Waiting room conversations with  
patients—family—friends.  
Comparing levels of discomfort  
asking why we are the chosen.

As we look at white walls, warm glances  
and cold  
information, we listen to the hum in the air  
waiting for our name to be called—counting  
down the days  
to when our afternoons are free.

One day we will part  
having touched each others' lives.  
Onto a normal routine without markings  
and paper shirts.

Healthy, strong lives filled with laughter,  
daffodils and seashells.  
Capturing new stories to share with other  
new friends  
we will meet along the way—all part of  
life's journey.

Patti Strelec is a breast cancer survivor. She has written one poem per day during her radiation treatments to help her cope through the journey.