

Construction Foreman Invites Hospitalized Children to Play “Where’s Waldo?”

by Elizabeth McPherson on Wed, 07/27/2016 - 11:05am

Waldo – you know, that character wearing the red-and-white-striped shirt in the children’s picture books by Martin Handford for whom children in 28 different countries have searched since the mid-1980s – showed up this spring at a construction site across from a children’s hospital in South Bend, Indiana.

Jason Haney, a foreman working for general contractor J.J. White on the Memorial Children’s Hospital expansion project, got the idea after a snowman built by some of the construction crew during off-time generated a great deal of enthusiasm from children who were patients in the wing of the hospital facing the jobsite. Haney, a bit of an artist himself it appears, projected a sketch of the Waldo figure onto plywood in order to trace and cut out an eight-foot version of the character. Haney’s 17-year-old daughter, a former patient at a children’s hospital after having a stroke at age 3, helped complete the figure with paint.



Waldo began to appear within view of the existing hospital at various locations on the construction site. The game then seemed to take on a life of its own. Memorial Children’s Hospital of South Bend created a Facebook page titled Where’s Waldo Memorial Children’s Hospital, where patients and staff at the hospital could post sightings of Waldo, and friends worldwide could express their appreciation of the efforts of Haney, the other participating construction workers, and the staff at Memorial Hospital for brightening the days of children and family facing difficult challenges. Because of his gaining celebrity on that Facebook page, the plywood Waldo made a few appearances at the hospital, as did his creator, Jason Haney.

At our Construction Citizen staff meeting last week, one of our team commented “Where’s Waldo’s PPE?” Apparently some of the craft professionals on site thought of the same thing, posing with Waldo after giving him a hard hat and reflective vest.

This story was first reported in an article in the South Bend Tribune by Alice Culp, who mentioned the hospital-created Facebook page, and Haney’s remark that the page had received many concerned comments about a thunderstorm that had passed through the area during the week that Waldo had been placed on the tall crane at the site. From the article by Culp:

“After the storm, The Tribune published a photo of lightning spiking across the South Bend skyline. It showed one bolt striking the crane.

“Haney said, ‘Everybody was asking: Is Waldo okay?’

“He was.”

And because this is Construction Panorama, if you want to see a 3½ minute time-lapse video by [EarthCam](#) of the \$50 million hospital build so far, I am giving you this link with the warning that if the HD streaming is loading too slowly, you should pause the play until it loads. It is worth the wait to put it on full screen and watch!