

# Nemours Children's Specialty Care Jacksonville Receives Gift of \$16,000 from Hobbyists Dedicated to Toy Train Collecting and Department 56 Village Displays

*They join the 'Choo Choo Crew' volunteers in caring for Nemours' landmark lobby toy train*

Jacksonville, Fla. (January 26, 2021) – A group of train enthusiasts from the Train Collectors Association, Southern Division (TCA) and the North Florida Village Collectors Club have donated \$16,000 to Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville. The funds were raised by the two groups after their planned annual 2020 convention was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will go toward Volunteer Services to help cover the costs of maintaining the landmark toy train that is a beloved centerpiece of the Nemours lobby, and benefit patients via the ADAPT (Assisted Dogs and Pony Therapy) program.

Each year, the TCA and the Department 56 collector clubs each hold a national convention. The 2020 convention was to be the first-ever event to be held jointly between the two groups. "The overlap between the collector groups is well illustrated by the lobby display at Nemours, which is maintained by a dedicated group of people that utilize both trains and villages," said Anita Sanford, President of the North Florida Village Collectors Club.

"When the TCA's 66<sup>th</sup> National Convention, 'Make Trax to Jax,' was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Convention Committee and all of the volunteers were very disappointed," said Steve Johnson, who served as the TCA Convention Chair. "Between CSX, the Florida East Coast, the Norfolk Southern, the Genesee & Wyoming, and JaxPort, Jacksonville is truly a 'train town' with a long history of railroad related developments."

Both groups have a tradition of selecting a charity to benefit from convention proceeds. The COVID-19 pandemic meant the groups couldn't meet in person. Over 1,000 pieces of village houses, accessories, and toy train parts had been donated to support convention fundraisers. The groups opted to use on-line auctions to dispose of the items and were able to continue to support Nemours as their selected charity.

The model train and village display is a centerpiece of the lobby at Nemours, which, thanks to a transformative gift from THE PLAYERS golf tournament, was recently renovated and renamed THE PLAYERS Lobby at Nemours Children's Specialty Care.

Dedicated volunteers from the Northeast Florida Model Railroad Club, known affectionately as "The Choo Choo Crew," visit Nemours four times per year to maintain the trains and tracks, and to change the village for each season, providing some levity and contentment for children who come to the clinic for specialty care for their complex medical issues. The model train at Nemours is the largest size available and is known as "G" scale, for "garden," since many collectors use them outside in their flower beds.

"This generous donation from the North Village Collectors and the Train Collectors Association allows Nemours to provide a fun, unique and interactive experience for our patients when they enter our lobby," said Dr. Gary Josephson, Chief Medical Officer of Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville. "The train has served as a landmark in our lobby for over 30 years, and will continue to be a vital experience for years to come."

The new renovations at THE PLAYERS Lobby at Nemours Children's Specialty Care included a new base for the train, and enhanced accessibility to view it.

"We are delighted that Nemours believes the train and village display are a critical part of patient care," said Larry Shughart, a railway consultant and member of TCA. "Many toy train and village hobbyists strive to present displays that remind them of their childhood, favorite stories of days gone by and miniature worlds without strife, disease, or conflict. The Nemours Train is designed to appeal to children and is a whimsical model that does not represent any particular time or place, but the villages surrounding the train represent the imaginary places we all visit from time to time to seek comfort and peace."

*" This generous donation from the North Village Collectors and the Train Collectors Association allows Nemours to provide a fun, unique and interactive experience for our patients when they enter our lobby," said Dr. Gary Josephson, Chief Medical Officer of Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville. "The train has served as a landmark in our lobby for over 30 years, and will continue to be a vital experience for years to come. "*

### About Nemours Children's Health System

[Nemours](#) is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the two free-standing children's hospitals: the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in five states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, [KidsHealth.org](#), and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours [CareConnect](#). [Nemours ReadingBrightstart.org](#) is a program dedicated to preventing reading failure in young children, grounded in Nemours' understanding that child health and learning are inextricably linked, and that reading level is a strong predictor of adult health.

Established as [The Nemours Foundation](#) through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, Nemours provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy and prevention programs to families in the communities it serves.

For further information: Margot Winick, [Margot.Winick@Nemours.org](mailto:Margot.Winick@Nemours.org) (407) 785-5766

---

Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(3\)](#)

<https://nemours.mediaroom.com/news-releases?item=122854>