

Creating An Inspiring Environment

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Zach Rieseck's mother died of uterine cancer in 2008. He has also lost two uncles and a cousin to the disease. Both a friend's 14-year-old son as well as a former co-worker are currently battling cancer.

This might not be information the electrical general foreman normally shares on the job but the new cancer building isn't a typical construction site. On the first floor—a spot all the trades pass daily—is a recognition wall where they have placed ribbons inscribed with the names of loved ones who have had cancer. Ribbon color denotes the type of cancer, such as dark blue for colon, maroon for myeloma, light green for lymphoma, white for lung, green for kidney and orange for leukemia.



“Having the wall makes it more personal; it reminds you of the purpose of the space and that it’s not just a building,” Rieseck says. “It’s really a wake-up call and brings the purpose to your attention. It takes a lot of courage to fight cancer. We’re thinking of the patients.”

And that’s what David Doren, owner’s representative in the Cleveland Clinic Buildings and Properties Department, and other cancer building project leaders had hoped to instill: respect for future patients, respect for the caregivers who will work in the building and respect among those on the project.

Doren, Joe Schilens, Turner Construction superintendent, and Cliff Kazmierczak, Turner Construction vice president and project executive, met with workers during their breaks to discuss the Lean Construction concepts, built on the foundation of respect for others and continuous improvement. They also shared the significance and purpose of the building to Cleveland Clinic and the impactful meaning of the recognition wall. The Cleveland Clinic empathy video was shown at the end of each meeting.

Typically on a construction project, the workers never interact with those running the project. “It’s me talking to the owner of the construction company, the owner talks to the project manager who talks to the foreman and the foreman talks to the workers,” explains Doren. “We wanted to bring the frontline workers in, from the beginning, and have that face-to-face time to let the tradespeople know how much this project means to us.”

We Are All Caregivers

Construction workers do their part of the job—framing, plumbing, insulating—and move on to the next site. “For all they know, they could be working on an office building, a retail site,” says Doren. “We wanted to drive home that this is a cancer building and cancer touches everyone at some point. Show up every day and put care into this building. You could be sitting here one day. Your loved one could be sitting here.”

Near the recognition wall, and sprinkled throughout the site, are renderings of the finished building. “These are not typical on a job site,” explains Kazmierczak. “We intentionally placed these renderings so that the tradespeople would develop a greater sense of pride in building this project. It helps them understand what it will mean to the Cleveland community. This building will truly create an inspiring environment and provide hope to those who are unfortunate to be stricken with this cruel disease.”



anticipated.”

As Chief Experience Officer Adrienne Boissy, MD, notes, the building itself is amazing—the design and orchestration required to construct the new cancer center—but it was the recognition wall that let her know “the place had a soul, a sense of purpose from the very beginning, which resonated in ways I hadn’t

Response to the recognition wall has been extremely positive. “Cancer touches all of us and our construction crew working on the new building is no exception,” says Brian Bolwell, MD, Chair, Taussig Cancer Institute. “We were so impressed with how connected they feel to the new and improved experience we are building for our cancer patients, that we plan to incorporate this special wall as a permanent art piece in the new building.”

The new cancer care building will open in 2017. “The heartbeat of the building, the lifeline of the building has already begun with the workers,” adds Doren. “It started with the men and women and the passion they have for this building.”

