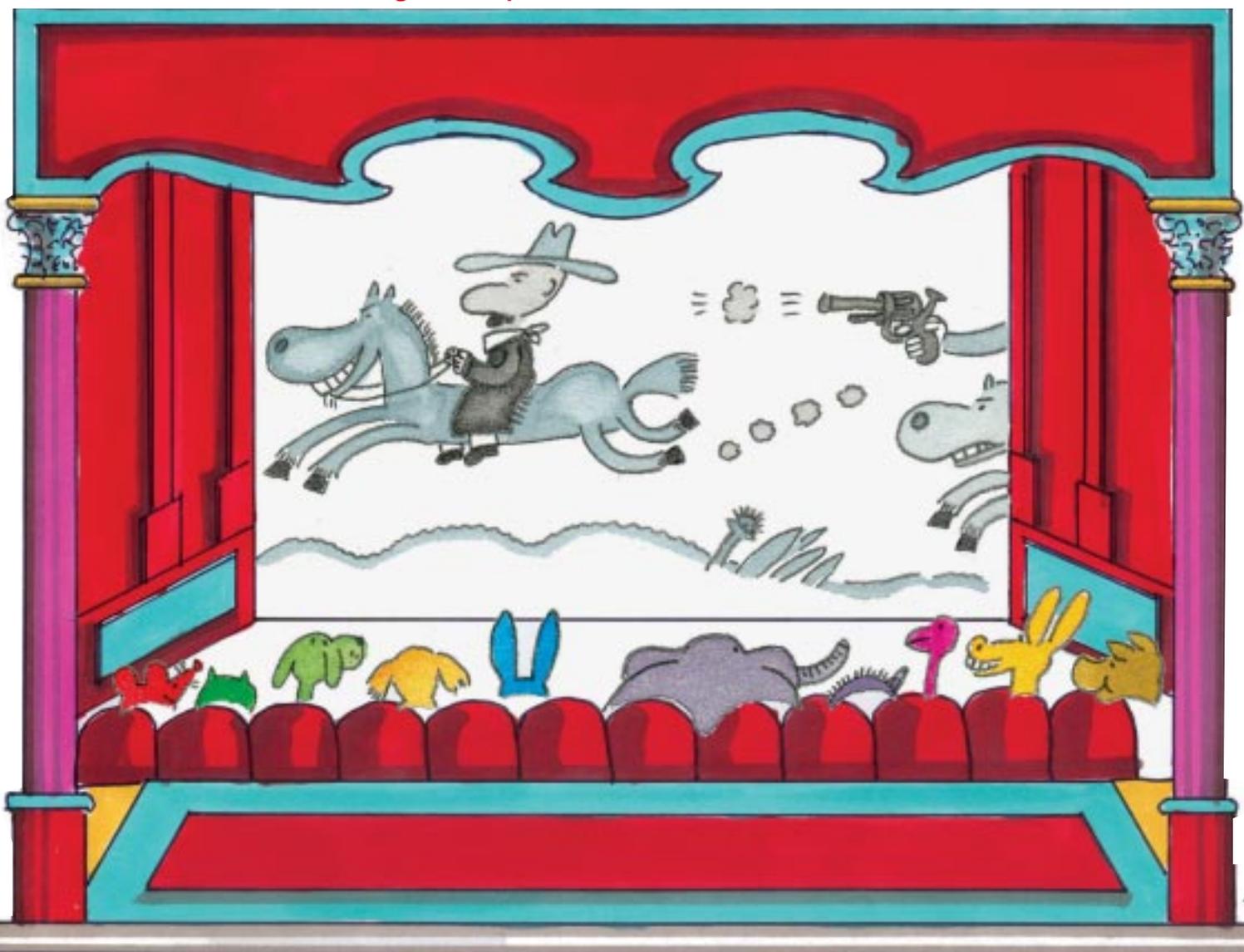




► VE Foundation

# Creating color for

A museum, a hospital, a VE employee and private foundations were all part of a generous chain of volunteers in Paris who worked together to decorate the basement areas of the Armand-Trousseau Hospital and brighten the surroundings of hospitalized kids.





# tiny patients

The Armand-Trousseau Hospital in Paris tends to sick children and has 330 beds. It is a complex of buildings linked by a maze of underground corridors. These subterranean passages, regularly traveled by tiny patients en route from one department to another — radiology, operating rooms, exam rooms — are unusually gloomy. They are also used by housekeepers and food service employees transporting linens and food. Although they are useful, their shabbiness is frightening to hospitalized children, who complain about it.

## A breath of fresh air

Hence the push by hospital management, medical professionals, parents of hospitalized children and associations to brainstorm and find a way to renovate the hallways. Sylvie Girardet, an employee of Musée en herbe, a children's museum in Paris, and a close collaborator of the hospital for many years, oversaw the makeover. Today, the Fondation des hôpitaux de Paris-Hôpitaux de France has formed a co-partnership with the Veolia Environnement Foundation to support the project, "The Yellow Coins 2004 Initiative."

"It was the children at the Armand-Trousseau school who came up with the idea of turning the basement areas into a sort of 'underground city,' painted at cot or wheelchair level, since that's how the children make their way through the corridors," explains Barbara Lesclure, communi-

cations director for the hospital. Norbert Journo, a scenic artist for Musée en herbe, and Puig Rosado, an illustrator there, have been working with the hospital for 10 years. The two approved the children's sketches, which transformed doors

## ► Gifts for life

Simple actions can save lives and provide hope for many sick children. Consider donating platelets or blood. For more information, log on to the following sites: [www.dondusang.com](http://www.dondusang.com) or [www.laurettefugain.org](http://www.laurettefugain.org). You can also donate blood marrow. Complete information is available at the [www.fgm.fr](http://www.fgm.fr) site.



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into the entrances to houses and shops, and depicted squares and streets named by the children themselves: "In Our Hearts" square and "Blood Brothers," "Secret Files" and "Frog in the Throat" streets...

Enguerrand, the son of Pierre-Dominique Lemaire, an administrative assistant at La Sade, was closely looked after at the hospital by Prof. Guy Leverger. "He's a very active professor who supported our project, which we wanted to submit to the VE Foundation," explains Pierre-Dominique Lemaire. "When you have a child in the hospital, material assistance to parents is very important: rollaway beds, a parents' lounge, a kitchen, washing machine, etc. Because you have to organize your life around the child's health. We spend a lot of time together in these places, and facilities and support systems are vital. The special projects are a breath of fresh air. However, turning plans into reality requires finding financing in the private sector." For this Veolia employee, the role as sponsor consisted of fostering collaboration between the Foundation and the hospital, then monitoring the ...



... project's progress. "I'm delighted that Michel Avenas, VE Foundation executive officer, and the whole team support this effort," he says. "It enhances the children's well-being, which is very important."

### Basement beautification

"At our children's hospital center," continues Barbara Lescure, "we hold exhibitions of drawings and have a school staffed by 15 teachers and educators. We also have an in-house TV channel, Canal Trousseau, which airs programs produced by the school (videos or tapes made by the children), including a daily live show that promotes communication with children isolated in sterile rooms. They can appear on the show by phone from their rooms. In fact, it was during the live TV broadcast that the project was worked out by them."

With additional help from its faithful partner, Musée en Herbe, the hospital continues to decorate reception areas and rooms and redo everything on a child's scale. In 2003, the hospital undertook major renovations of the basement walls so that it could install the decors being made. The "underground city" is building its foundations and coming to life. Hopefully, the new space will be inaugurated soon. ■

### ► Musée en herbe

Boasting the same passion and enthusiasm as when it opened its doors 30 years ago in the Jardin d'acclimatation in Paris, the Musée en herbe sponsors quality exhibitions, original art workshops and regular events for children ages 4 to 12. Its introductions to art, science and civic topics were initially conceived by Sylvie Girardet and Claire Merleau-Ponty, who now have a list of 70 expositions and over 80 works specifically for children, including the "Salut l'artiste" ("Hail to the Artist") collection at the Réunion des Musées nationaux.

The museum is currently hosting one exposition, *Les Portraits rigolos d'Arcimboldo* (The Humorous Portraits of Arcimboldo) through April 16, 2005.

Musée en herbe. Jardin d'acclimatation. Bois de Boulogne. 75116 Paris. Tel: 33 1 40 67 97 66. Website: [www.musee-en-herbe.com](http://www.musee-en-herbe.com)