

Westlake students deliver lily pads to children's hospital

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The Westlake High School Robotics team recently enjoyed the fruits of their labor when they delivered 10 lily pads to Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas.

Students raised funds to manufacture lily-pads platforms that can be connected to an intravenous pole and used as a seat for children receiving treatment at hospitals. The idea was originated by a young cancer patient who saw the need.

The Westlake Robotics team became involved in the Lily Pad Project after WHS Assistant Principal Casey Ryan's wife, Lesley, read about it online.

"We immediately thought it was an awesome idea, as our son Rex would just stand on the pegs of the IV pole to ride around at Dell," Lesley Ryan said.

WHS graduate Elise Hackney, who took the lead role in the project, said the experience was rewarding for everyone involved.

"Delivering the lilypads to Dell Children's Hospital at the beginning of June was so amazing," Hackney said in an email. "I was overwhelmed with joy as I saw two patients roll around on the lily pads. I had been excited for this event for a long time, but it felt even better than I had imagined. When you work on something for so long, you sometimes forget how much of an impact it can have on the intended receiver.

"My favorite part of the event was seeing the excitement and happiness on one of patient's faces as he received the Captain America lilypad I had painted."

The Robotics team will donate lily pads to at least four area hospitals this year, including Dell Children's. North Central Baptist Hospital and University Hospital, both in San Antonio, have already received three lily pads each.

The lily pads are produced by students in the Westlake Robotics Program. The students use various machining tools to cut out the initial shape, and then router and sand the material to give them a smooth finish. Then the lily pads are given to student, mentor, or parent volunteers in the Robotics program, as well as a few art and design classes at Westlake High School.

Each lily pad costs \$12 to make, and donors received recognition on the Robotics team website, social media, and on the lily pads themselves.

The Westlake Robotics team is an extra-curricular organization that facilitates student participation in community events that encourage STEM (science, technology, engineering and math.) The team has competed in and won several international competitions over the last several years.

For more information on donating to the Lily Pad Project, contact Morgan, head of the Westlake Robotics Program (nmorgan@eanesisd.net).



