

Members of Krissi Holman's family stand beneath the sign for "Krissi's Children's Collection" at the library's grand opening. From left are Danni Holman, sister; parents Leon and Susan Holman; and Katy Holman, sister.



Library opening fulfillment of Holman's dream to help others



A high school senior picture of Children's patient Krissi Holman, whose dream it was to open a library of children's books for patients.

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"Dear heavenly father, I sent my mother on a wild goose chase to find some reading material for me, which gives me the opportunity to write my thoughts ... I know eventually I will succumb to these tumors, but I know you make miracles happen. A lot of great blessings have resulted from my disease, and I'm so thankful for that. I love my life and you are a huge part of my life. Children's is also a huge part of my life and I pray that the young people that I have visited with here today will also realize the beauty of this place and all of the staff members who give us hope. Perhaps someday a library will be built for young people to get away from their rooms to enjoy a new environment..."

— journal entry of Krissi Holman, 16

In 2004, with a sparkle in her eyes and a "can-do" attitude, Krissi Holman shared with family and friends her desire to establish a library at Children's. She dreamed of patients and their families having a place of retreat which held stories that could transport them beyond the walls of the hospital and the uncertainty of their circumstances.

She had a lot of time to consider her dream during the more than four years she spent in and out of Children's, battling a rare disease known as Cushing's Syndrome.

Diagnosed at 13, Krissi met her challenges with a faith and perseverance far beyond her years. She chose to not focus on her own trouble, and found strength in helping others.

"Every Tuesday night during her sophomore and junior years in high

Standing outside the library entrance on the seventh floor of the main hospital are Brent Christopher, Children's director of development giving programs, and Sandra Snyder, chair of the Krissi Holman Family Resource Center and Children's Collection Steering Committee.



school, she would prepare sandwiches and travel with her Bible study leader to downtown Dallas to feed the homeless," said Susan Holman, Krissi's mother. "Her favorite things to do were to feed the homeless, to pray for and spend time with her friends and family, and to comfort those who were in distress."

During her years at Children's, Krissi brought joy and encouragement to countless fellow patients and staff. She was thoughtful in little things: apologizing to the cleaning crew when her trash was full; avoiding the valet service when it was raining so they didn't have to get wet; buzzing the nurse to her room at 7 p.m. on Thursdays so they could watch new episodes of *Friends* together.

"Our first time in the hospital, before we left, Krissi knew and loved every nurse and met every patient on her floor," her mother said. "Krissi and I spent many nights at the hospital over four years but she never complained, because she was at Children's. Every time she was released, she always wanted to stay another day to encourage her friends."

For Krissi, life wasn't about hardships, it was about relationships.

The creation of the Krissi Holman Family Resource Library and Children's Collection was an act of love and honor on the part of Krissi's friends and family. The concept of a family resource library had been in development at Children's for several years, but it was Krissi's

vision that prompted the creation of an additional room with a special collection of children's books for patients. Friends and neighbors throughout the community collected more than 6,000 children's books and committed to raise \$200,000 of gifts for Children's to ensure that her dream would be realized.

The family resource library allows families to research health information that complements their child's diagnosis. Resources such as informational weekly coffee hours for

parents and guardians, to be hosted in the library, and a bilingual research librarian, widen the circle of support services.

“For those of you who know Krissi Holman, it should be no surprise that her vision for the library was bigger than the original vision at Children’s,” said Brent Christopher, director of giving programs at Children’s, during the Jan. 6 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the library.

Krissi’s parents and two older sisters were among those in attendance at the ceremony.

“I’m sure she’s looking down and knows what’s going on,” said Leon Holman, her father. “We now have a children’s library for everyone here at the hospital – a place that Krissi loved almost as much as home.” ■