



Riley Cheer Guild

helping to create smiles since 1924

Letters and Handmade Greeting Cards

We all enjoy receiving mail, right? Especially if it is a brightly colored, handmade card, with sweet sentiments or a thoughtful letter. At Riley Hospital for Children we are not able to hand out cards, notes and letters to patients for several reasons including:

- 1) Families come from a variety of cultural, religious, and family backgrounds. Hospital staff must be very careful to respect these important aspects of our patients with regards to holidays and celebrations.
- 2) Kind messages can be perceived differently by children facing a potentially life limiting or chronic illness. Reading “get well” when you are told that your tumor is inoperable or “you will go home soon” when you are on a transplant list or “you are beautiful” right after you have lost your hair to treatment can actually make kids feel sad despite the positive intention to provide love and comfort.
- 3) Some cards and letters ask for patients to respond to the writer and include the writer’s name and contact information. This is a privacy concern and a safety concern for both the writer and the patient who might receive it.
- 4) Some children are anxious about being in the hospital. Receiving a card or letter from an unknown person increases this anxiety for some children. Even though some may enjoy this gift, staff must protect all patients by anticipating this concern for even a few patients and families.
- 5) Handmade cards and letters are exposed to the same types of viruses and bacteria that can cause infections, and some of these germs can live on paper for an extended period of time placing our patients at risk when they are vulnerable.

If you have any questions about this shift in supporting patients and families, please feel free to reach out to us directly at (317) 944-8705, and thanks for always helping us to put our patients and families first! Please continue to share cards, letters etc. with your local community centers, churches, long term care facilities, and daycare centers. You will be spreading comfort to your entire community!