

## Local Artist helps build Balloon Wonderland to Raise over \$50,000 for Give Kids the World

A week of hard work and creativity for Korene Tom from Fortune Kookie Fun helped Give Kids The World Village take its fundraising to new heights after hosting the Qualatex Balloon Wonderland – one of the nonprofit's most uplifting events ever, raising over \$50,000 in the process.

Over a period of 5 days in July 2022, at Orlando's Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress Korene Tom worked alongside over 300 other Balloon Professionals from around the world Using 500,000 Qualatex balloons they brought alive with vibrant colors and breathtaking flair a life-sized replica of Give Kids The World Village – an 89-acre, whimsical nonprofit resort in Kissimmee, FL, that provides critically ill children and their families with magical week-long wish vacations at no cost.

Balloon artisans like Korene Tom were chosen from 46 countries to construct the life-sized replicas of seven iconic Village venues during a build taking over 15,000 hours, using 500,000 biodegradable balloons.

Pamela Landwirth, president and CEO of Give Kids The World, said, "Children with critical illnesses face countless appointments, treatments and hospital stays, and they are often told "no" due to the limitations of their illness. With support from partners like Pioneer Balloon Company and Korene Tom of Fortune Kookie Fun, we are thrilled to be able to provide these children and their families with a magical week of "yes" where they can forget their worries, experience joy, and create unforgettable memories in a storybook oasis which attendees will have the opportunity to get a glimpse of during Balloon Wonderland."

The Balloon Wonderland was gifted to Give Kids the World following the five intensive days creating the most challenging, beautiful balloon structures. Give Kids the World used the event to raise awareness about Wish Kids with terminal illness, but also raise much needed funds to continue to provide these moments to families in need.

Korene said that this was the most amazing experience of her life, being able to use her talent to make a difference to so many children and their families. "(add a quote here about your experience)"

An amazing experience that changed my perspective working with a large crew to create a wonderful large build in 30,000 sq ft space in the Marriott Grand Cypress. Instead of just taking pictures of my work to help promote my business, I was creating with 350 other artists to benefit a charitable organization. When we had the ribbon cutting to open the display to the public, it was truly gratifying to see the amazed, happy faces of the guests of all ages. The first guests were the children of Give Kids the World. News teams and bloggers came out. I am thrilled that I was part of Stuart Davies crew to raise \$54,000 to help other critically ill kids and families to stay at the Give Kids the World Resort.