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Dream home: Sick boy gets own clubhouse

By [Francesca Donlan](#)

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- The staff at Make-A-Wish Foundation asked 7-year-old RJ Otero to share his greatest wish.

The first-grader from Port Charlotte didn't want to go to Disney World, attend a baseball game or swim with a dolphin.

He simply wanted a clubhouse in his backyard.

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- Staff and spouses with Architecture Inc. help raise the clubhouse. They spent nine hours on the project.

RJ has had a difficult year. He had a brain tumor removed last September and it has been a confusing year of surgeries, chemotherapy, radiation, ambulance rides, hospitalization and feeling sick. He's too weak to go to

school so a teacher visits him twice a week.

"He likes to stay home because he goes away so much to hospitals," said his mother, Angela Otero.

That's why RJ thought a clubhouse would be the perfect wish come true. His cousins and neighborhood friends could come over and play in his own personal place.

Employees at Architecture Inc. in Fort Myers stepped up to make RJ's wish come true. They got so involved in designing the clubhouse, they chose to build it as well, said vice president Ted Sottong.

An architectural team including Jason Dontje, Tom Ring, Neil Bourne and half a dozen other staffers and spouses spent nine hours last Saturday sawing and hammering. They designed the clubhouse with a ramp so RJ could use his walker. The Make-A-Wish-Foundation stocked it with board games, books, a gumball machine, furniture and a TV.



Terry Allen Williams/news-press.com

- RJ Otero, 7, and his mother, Angela, walk down the ramp in front of RJ's new clubhouse. RJ had a brain tumor and is still fighting cancer. A local architecture firm granted RJ's wish and built him a clubhouse.

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RJ smiled the minute he walked into his clubhouse.

"I like everything," RJ said. "Those people are great."

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His mom cried throughout the whole process. She still cries when she thinks about how perfect strangers made her son's wish come true. RJ turns 8 on Oct. 17, and Angela can't think of a better place to have a celebration.

"They are wonderful people," she said. "These kids go through so much and it's hard for them. It made me feel good that somebody cared about him."

The staff at Architecture Inc. also gained a lot that day.

"It was just great to see RJ so happy," Ted said. "We built a lot of buildings in the past but there is something very special about that clubhouse."

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