

# The Herald-Sun

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## Changes mark new school year

ham students will be the different start and stop times for most high schools and elementary schools.

In an attempt to improve academic achievement, the school board adopted a policy to start most high schools at 9 a.m. instead of 7:30 a.m., while most elementary schools will begin at 7:45 a.m. instead of 9 a.m.

Start and stop times for middle schools will remain

virtually unchanged.

Five year-round schools and four speciality high schools have already given the new bell schedule a test run and have reported no significant problems.

The school board adopted the new bell schedule because it believes later start times will lead to improved academic performance

SEE SCHOOL/PAGE A2

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posed to become a source of  
to state and local policymak-  
with "the environmental and  
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nize it was embedded in the  
dget, which promised \$1 mil-  
along with perhaps another  
\$3.5 million in start-up money  
if campus officials can match  
it dollar for dollar with private  
fundraising.

So far, the university admin-  
stration's key decision has  
been to assign the manage-  
ment of what on its face is an  
academic project to a non-ac-  
ademic, Associate Vice Chan-  
cellor for Campus Enterprises



The Herald-Sun | Caitlin Penna

Tony Marreddy, 12, builds a bouquet of flowers for his older sister's birthday in the WonderSphere on Tuesday at the UNC Children's Hospital in Chapel Hill. WonderSphere is an airtight dome with built-in gloves that allow hospitalized patients to play, touch and see nature, without the possibility of being infected.

## WonderSphere brings nature inside hospital

BY KATIE JANSEN

## CHAPEL HILL

**J**azmyn Pratt, 8, hadn't worked with the WonderSphere before, but as soon as she saw it, she sat in front of the dome and slipped her hands into the gloves, reaching toward the flowers inside.

"I saw the flowers, and I saw the cups, and I knew I was supposed to put the flowers in the cups," Jazmyn said.

The WonderSphere is intuitive that way — it has two holes with gloves attached for a child to put his or her hands into, and a larger glove on the side to allow an adult to help out with the project going on inside.

The WonderSphere is the first of its kind and was invented by Katie Stoudemire, program manager at WonderConnection, an outreach arm of the North Carolina Botanical Garden that brings hands-on science and outdoor activities to kids in the hospital.

Stoudemire first started WonderConnection 10 years ago at Duke Gardens and eventually brought the program with her to the North Carolina Botanical Garden.

The organization allows



The Herald-Sun | Caitlin Penna

**Jazmyn Pratt, 8, right, learns how to make a volcano explode with vinegar and baking soda, with the help of Wonder Connection's Program Coordinator Andrew Torlage at the UNC Children's Hospital on Tuesday in Chapel Hill.**

Stoudemire to pair her love of science with her passion for working with kids.

"These families can't go to the garden, so we bring the garden to them," she said.

Stoudemire said she wanted to pass on a love of the outdoors even to kids who can't play outside because of threats to their immune systems.

"I always feel like, when I'm outside, I'm connected to the rest of the world," she said.

WonderConnection allows kids to experiment with things like baking soda-

and-vinegar volcanoes and small homemade rockets in canisters.

But the WonderSphere, a sealed mobile chamber that can be brought to kids in their hospital rooms, is the newest part of the organization's programming. It was designed by Stoudemire, built by product innovation lab Bresslergroup and funded by grants from the Institute for Library and Museum Services and the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline Foundation.

**SEE NATURE/PAGE A2**

**TERY**

**Saturday  
night numbers**

Pick 3: 3-4-4  
Pick 4: 2-3-3-1  
-16-17-20-38  
4-32-48-49-63  
Power Play: 2

**ERY**

**Saturday  
numbers**

**NIGHT DRAWING**  
Pick 3: 2-8-1  
Pick 4: 5-2-3-6  
Cash 5:  
0-11-13-21-28

**NATURE**

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

The WonderSphere recently won the Botanical Garden a Core 77 Design for Social Impact Award.

Stoudemire said she was inspired by neonatal beds, which have a similar design with gloves that allow nurses to work with newborns.

And the WonderSphere lives up to its name — it inspires wonder in kids.

Jazmyn gasped as she carefully separated the petals of a tulip to see inside. “It’s so beautiful,”

she said.

The activities Stoudemire chooses are not only focused on science — they’re also focused on letting kids make their own choices.

“It’s all about creativity, and there are choices built into every turn,” she said. “When they’re in the hospital, they don’t get many choices, so we want to give them as many choices as possible.”

Flower arranging is only one of the activities that takes place in the WonderSphere. Past activities have included planting seeds and looking at caterpillars under a

magnifying glass.

Tony Marreddy, 12, told Stoudemire about the parts of the flower as he arranged them, adding that he’d learned about flowers in school last year.

Marreddy said he loves science because “it’s just fun to experiment with different things and see what would happen and why it did that.”

When he grows up, he wants to work in the medical field.

Stoudemire said she’d like to see programming similar to what WonderConnection offers across the nation.

“I can see the powerful

positive impact it has,” she said, adding that similar programming could help hospital patients of all ages, although kids are her favorite.

But for now, such programs are sparse, and WonderConnection is looking at its own future.

Stoudemire said the next product will be a model of a stream that kids can explore. She hopes to have it ready by the fall.

WonderConnection is completely funded by grants and donations. To learn more about the organization, visit [www.wonderconnection.org](http://www.wonderconnection.org).