

# Starring Sparkle!

How you help us inspire sick children with Comfort Kits

BY EDWARD GRINNAN, Editor-in-Chief

**T**HERE ARE A COUPLE OF THINGS I don't do—cry (very easily, at least) and dance (I mean it!). But then I went to Arizona. To Phoenix Children's Hospital, to be exact, for a fun event thrown not too long ago by the Guideposts Comfort Kits team and starring Sparkle (more on Sparkle in a second).

The Comfort Kits program is for children who are hospitalized or undergoing medical treatment. It's one of Guideposts' most important outreach programs. The kits are truly wonderful, like hope and comfort in a box. Each one contains crayons and stickers, a stress ball and other toys, a CD of soothing music, a journal, a prayer card and Sparkle, a plush toy in the shape

of a smiling star. Kids love Sparkle.

The Comfort Kits team was holding a luau-themed party at the hospital for patients and their families featuring all sorts of goodies—party food, games of chance (at which everyone won), Comfort Kits, and Sparkle herself in the flesh (well, in a pretty nifty costume). Kids lined up to hug Sparkle and have their pictures taken while some of our wonderful supporters from the area handed out prizes and candy or just talked to the kids and their folks and let them know that they are cared for and prayed for by the larger Guideposts family (and that includes you).

Finally, a Hawaiian dance troupe took the stage to demonstrate some traditional island dances. They were fan-

tastic, the dances were great, the music was cool. The kids clapped and cheered. And then the troupe leader recruited volunteers to come up and try their hand (and feet) at some of the dances. I attempted to hide behind a pillar but was hustled up front. Remember, I never dance. But looking at the delighted faces of those kids and their families, I had absolutely no excuse not to make a fool of myself. God might eventually have forgiven me for chickening out, but I wouldn't.

I was deeply moved to see how the organization I work for reaches out



**FOR THE KIDS** The young patients at Phoenix Children's Hospital loved meeting Sparkle the star and doing the hula with Edward.

and touches sick children and their families in a time of incredible need and stress. Seeing the happiness of those kids—some of whom were very sick—brought tears to my eyes. I tried to pretend I had to lean over and tie my shoe, but there was no pretending how I felt—proud, moved and grateful that Sparkle and the gang could bring that much hope and comfort to children and their families so in need of it.

I've traveled all over the world in my career at Guideposts, but this trip was the most unforgettable. ©

For more information on Comfort Kits and our other outreach programs, go to [guideposts.org/kits](http://guideposts.org/kits).

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