

THE HOUSE THAT JW BUILT

*“The ornaments of your house will be
the guests who frequent it.”*
- Author unknown

He was known as JW, short for Jan-Willem. He left this earth too soon, but in his sixteen years he inspired countless people across two continents with his courage and vision. JW imagined a house close to the hospital – but nothing like a hospital – where young cancer patients and their families from out of the area could relax and be together during treatments.

In the spring of 2004, JW presented a check for \$10,000 to his oncologist, Dr. Alan Wong. Somehow that \$10,000 grew to \$2.2 million and construction on JW House began August 8, 2007, two years after JW’s first birthday in heaven.

“For some unexplainable reason,” says his mother, Anne Marie, “people loved Jan-Willem a little more than one would expect. That is probably why he was able to make so many people give the very best of themselves for his dream.”

Loving life

Jan-Willem was born in Belgium on September 22, 1988, to Geert and Anne Marie Knapen-Asnong. Shortly after his fourth birthday, JW was diagnosed with leukemia. He underwent chemotherapy and radiation to the brain and spine.

Whenever there was a holiday or family celebration, instead of gifts, this young boy would ask for money to give to his oncologist for research.

Time passed and in the spring of 1998, JW was declared healthy. The Knapen family moved to California that summer and JW picked up the English language quickly. He liked his new home and his school, and he made friends easily.

In 1995, twin girls, Helena and Elisabeth, were born into the Knapen family. JW was very happy and showed an unusual amount of caring for a boy his age. “He experienced at a young age how good