

Hospital Design



Surviving against all odds

Dr. Eileen Sam Morris triumphed over a debilitating disease. The dream of building Plum Creek Regional Animal Medical Center kept her going when her body wanted to quit.

By Carolyn Chapman
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS EDITOR

Dr. Eileen Sam Morris lay in bed with bandages over her eyes. She couldn't see, but imagining her dream veterinary hospital relieved her pain and boredom. Dr. Morris mentally toured each room, picturing a hospital filled with the latest equipment. This vision, along with her three daughters' love, gave her the will to fight.

Dr. Morris suffers from Sjögren's syndrome, an autoimmune disease related to lupus that attacks moisture-producing glands. She battles fatigue, joint pain, and dry mouth and

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eyes. At one point, Dr. Morris' eyes developed severe keratoconjunctivitis sicca and her corneas eroded so much she wanted to scratch out her eyes from pain.

After years of visiting specialists, a chance conversation with a pathologist led to a diagnosis. Dr. Morris controls symptoms with medication, including applying eye drops several times an hour. "If I weren't a veterinarian, my disease would remain undiagnosed," she says.

