Kangaroo caper comforts kids

If you think a hospital is a scary place for kids, imagine you're a kangaroo lost in the Wisconsin countryside far from your Australian home. Former teacher Jean Rennebohm thought hospitalized children and the lonely kangaroo that made headline news around Madison in 2005 might have something in common.

She named the kangaroo Boomer,* the nickname of her late husband, Robert Rennebohm ('48 BS ALS), who served as president of the University of Wisconsin Foundation for 31 years. Then she wrote a story titled "The Mysterious Kangaroo" and asked her friend, retired UW Hospital and Clinics physician Dr. Larry Hogan ('42 BS, '44 MED), to illustrate it. Finally, she turned the story into a book.

Children who come to the Robert and Jean Rennebohm Special Procedures Clinic at American Family Children's Hospital now get their very own copy.

"The Oscar Rennebohm Foundation gave a gift to help with the hospital's construction," Rennebohm explained. "My husband and I were deeply touched and wanted to give something to the children just from us. We thought this little book would be a diversion while they were in the clinic. It seems to have appeal for all ages, and it has the advantage of being absolutely true."

Jean Rennebohm reads "The Mysterious Kangaroo" to a patient in the Rennebohm Special Procedures Clinic. The book recounts the saga of Boomer, a real kangaroo.

Boomer is happy and safe at the Vilas Zoo in Madison, Wisconsin.