

“A Home for Camilla”: thanks to the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation support, the construction of a house for medical visits and treatments for “Butterfly Children” has begun in Modena, Italy.

In 2023, the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation (NaEPF) awarded a grant to the association Le Ali di Camilla in memory of Dr. Yvonne Katharina Schmucker, a dermatologist and friend of NaEPF. For years, the association has been committed to improving the quality of life for individuals affected by Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), providing essential, tangible support to children and families facing complex medical challenges. Epidermolysis Bullosa, often called the “butterfly children’s disease”, is a rare and severe genetic disorder that makes the skin and internal mucous membranes as fragile as butterfly wings. Children with EB are highly vulnerable to injury: everyday activities such as eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, holding objects, playing, or even receiving affectionate gestures can cause painful wounds.

Thanks to NaEPF’s support, a new facility dedicated to “butterfly children” and their families will be built in Modena, offering them a safe and welcoming environment near the city hospital. Here, they will receive assistance and support during multidisciplinary visits and hospital stays, alleviating the burden of a condition that requires constant care.

“With this initiative, the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation reaffirms its commitment to the dignity, resilience, and well-being of the most vulnerable individuals, supporting interventions that address urgent and concrete needs. The Foundation firmly believes that ensuring equitable access to care and excellence in research is essential to building a fairer and more inclusive society,” said Sara Tescione, Program Manager and Grant Advisor of the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, during the laying of the first stone, February 22, 2025.

The public event, marking the laying of the first stone for Camilla’s house, was held at the presence of local authorities, citizens, and supporters. This event was part of the Association’s annual meeting, which focuses on individuals with Epidermolysis Bullosa, as well as their families, researchers, healthcare professionals, and advocates. Attendees included Professor Michele de Luca, Director of the Center for Regenerative Medicine and the Interdepartmental Center for Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, the parish priest of San Lazzaro Parish (on whose land the house will be built), and the Association’s President, Stefania Bettinelli, who during the event added:

“We are grateful to the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation, and we are deeply moved by the thought that it is thanks to the help of a dermatologist we never met—someone who lived and worked so far from here, like Dr. Schmucker—that our butterfly children and adults will have a home built for them when they come to Modena for visits with dermatologists and other specialists of the EB. Solidarity truly knows no borders and finds paths we could never have imagined.”

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