

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project

Inception to Induction

Jay's World Childhood Cancer Foundation

Year of Founding: 1997

Issue Addressed: Children fighting cancer

Category and Induction year: Philanthropy, 2010

Founders: Ralph and Maryann Napolitano

Personal Quote from Ralph Napolitano: "Do as much as you can to fight the devastating effects of fighting cancer."

History: Jay's World Childhood Cancer Foundation is a nonprofit foundation founded by Ralph and MaryAnn Napolitano. Their son, Jason, was diagnosed with leukemia on January 29, 1994. From that point on, they wanted to help other children who were in Jason's position. They not only want to improve the lives of the children diagnosed but the parents' lives as well. The 501(c)3 foundation was founded in 1997.

Ralph Napolitano states that their main focus is to, "Do as much as you can to fight the devastating effects of fighting cancer." At North Shore Hospital, they raised money to create a cancer unit for children. Later on they started a scholarship program for children who have or had cancer. As mentioned on the website, "The Foundation awards a scholarship each year to a child who has or has had cancer and is continuing on to college." They have awarded these scholarships to more than sixty children with cancer.

The couple has raised approximately \$1.7 million and has given all of it to the foundation. They have, on their own, built a unit in Winthrop Hospital in Mineola, New York, which opened in the spring of 2004. It consists of a five unit room and each room has 2 beds with accommodations such as televisions, DVD players, and also a room where the parents can sleep. As mentioned in the website, "Winthrop's Institute for Cancer Care, the Cancer Center for KIDS was developed to meet the unique medical, social and emotional needs of children and families dealing with cancer. A team of highly skilled, experienced physicians, pediatric oncology/hematology nurses, a psycho-social team and other specialists have dedicated their lives to help both children and their families fight this terrible disease." It is known as the Jay's World Childhood Cancer unit and is a unique initiative organized by Jay's World. In cases where children need full body radiation and sterilization results, Jay's World pays to have sperm and eggs frozen in a bank for future use.

The organization has grown because every year they have a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament open to ages eight and older. It is \$150.00 for a four player team in a two day tournament. Unfortunately donations have been dwindling due to the economic crisis. The foundation does not have many volunteers but they have a few officers and a board of directors. The majority of work is done by are Ralph and his wife, MaryAnn, who now alternate time between their New York and Florida homes. Their son is the president of the foundation, Ralph is the executive director and MaryAnn is the vice president. They've had volunteers in the past, but now it's just the family. They are not currently looking for any volunteers at this time because they have downsized. The couple is also a big supporter of Saint Jude's Children's Hospital but is not affiliated with any other organizations.

Mr. and Mrs. Napolitano took a tragedy in their lives and made it into a positive by starting this organization to help other children and their families. They dealt with this tragedy and moved beyond it to help other children who are facing the same challenges that their son faced. They are an inspiration to many people.

Agency Mission: To help children fight cancer and to support the families of the children.

Funding Sources: Donations from the public and raising money through hosting a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament.

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**Submitted by:
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