

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project – *Inception to Induction*

The Ronald McDonald House of Long Island

Year of Founding: 1986

Issue(s) Addressed: Children's health, family services, children with disabilities.

Induction Category and Year: Health & Mental Health, 2002

Founder: Lyn Jurick

Personal Quote: On the Ronald McDonald House, Lyn Jurick wrote, "Our mission is to strive in all ways possible to relieve the stress and pain of illness by minimizing disruption in the family's life."

History: Former Philadelphia Eagles player Fred Hill and his teammates provided the support for the Ronald McDonald House foundation in 1974 in Philadelphia as a place to accommodate hospitalized children's families. The concept captured the imagination of Lyn Jurick who played an instrumental role in bringing it to Long Island's Schneider Children's Hospital in New Hyde Park after visiting the Philadelphia facility.

Lyn, beginning with her commitment to the Junior Division of both the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and the United Jewish appeal at age 16, has dedicated her life to community service and charity on Long Island. Since founding the Freeport Auxiliary of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children of Nassau County in 1952, her activism has targeted the needs of children and families. Since then, she received the first "Volunteer of the Year" award in 1965 for her advocacy on behalf of children with mental disabilities and joined the Long Island Jewish Medical Center's Board of Trustees in 1978.

To create a Ronald McDonald House on Long Island required overcoming numerous obstacles and ordinances, but Lyn's dogged determination enabled her to overcome them and bring this vital service to Long Island's families. Describing her longstanding devotion, one doctor wrote, "This is not only the 'the house that love built', it is the house that Lyn Jurick built." Since opening in 1986, the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island has served nearly 12,000 families from Long Island and all over the country and world. Lyn Jurick has continued to play an active role in its operations.

Agency Mission: "The Ronald McDonald House of Long Island is a very special place where our generous donors, dedicated Board of Directors, hard-working staff and giving volunteers work together in support of a critically important mission....offering comfort and encouragement

to our resident families, as they focus on caring for their children who need them so much."
Stacie Rodriguez, Chairman of the Board

Scope of Activities: The Ronald McDonald House of Long Island provides facilities for families of hospitalized children at the Schneider Children's Hospital in New Hyde Park. It has 42 bedrooms, play areas for the children, two kosher kitchens, a food pantry, five laundry rooms, a social room for families, and separate lounges for private and quiet activities.

Volunteer Involvement: Although the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island has a small staff of paid employees, volunteers provide "the heartbeat of the house" and depends on a group of nearly 120 volunteers for much of its day-to-day functions.

http://www.rmhlongisland.org/volunteering_opps.cfm

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Submitted by Colin Walfield, Summer 2010

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