



“Kathy’s Kids” Benefit from Legacy of Retired CEO Kathy L. Russell

Retired Chief Executive Officer Kathy L. Russell’s love of technology and passion for creating a respite for kids continues to benefit Children’s Inn families. The Inn’s Board of Directors created “Kathy’s Kids Technology and Fun Fund” to honor her 25-year commitment to The Inn, a tenure that included a major expansion, kitchen renovations, numerous technology improvements and the addition of many state-of-the-art games.

You only need to watch Stacy Paulin, nine, from Canada, jumping and skipping on squares of the EyePlay Floor, Kathy’s latest gift, to appreciate the dynamic game and



INNspirations

FALL 2015

The **Children’s Inn** at NIH

Mission Statement

The Children’s Inn at NIH will fully and consistently meet the needs of children and families participating in groundbreaking research at the National Institutes of Health.

We will:

- Respond to evolving family support needs from pediatric research and clinical care
- Provide a free family-centered “place like home”
- Reduce the burden of illness through therapeutic, educational and recreational programming

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its impact on kids battling serious illness. Stacy, who suffers from an auto-immune disorder, forgets for a few moments about her bandages and treatments as she giggles and stomps on simulated piano keys projected onto the floor. The black and white keys light up – as does her excited face. “I like all the musical games,” she says.

The motion-activated game gives kids a workout. The mat stretches as wide as six feet, allowing players to use their whole bodies. Multiple players can run, jump, twist and dance using their hands and feet to activate sounds and flash graphics across the mat. Games switch every three minutes and with a total of 30 games, there’s a wide variety, catering to all ages. Among the choices: Ketchup vs. Mustard lets players jump and crush ketchup or mustard packs, as well as sports, dance and educational games.

“Kathy truly knows how important it is for kids to just be kids, to play and have a break from their illness and treatments,” says Jennie Lucca, The Inn’s current CEO. “Whenever we hear children giggling in the Playroom, we know Kathy’s contributions continue to help fulfill our mission.”



The Milkshake Band, lead by singer, Lisa Mathews, and guitarist, Mikel Gehl, performing at The Inn

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Top row from left to right: Allison, 20, Justin, Emily, Ethan, 17, holding JT, 3, Kenny, 8. Front row left to right: Anna, 6 and Mena, 4

Inn Dad, Marine Corps Sergeant, runs the Marine Corps 10K to Support The Inn

As a Marine Corps Staff Sergeant, Justin Neu is accustomed to pushing his limits. The father of six recently climbed two mountains in Colorado with his oldest daughter Allison, 20.

During the family's first visit to The Children's Inn last October, they were overwhelmed by the supportive, welcoming environment and the ability to connect with other families facing similar struggles. It gave them a chance to feel normal, says his wife, Emily. They traveled again from their home in Ohio to the NIH this October; Justin jumped at the opportunity to run in the 10K Marine Corps race to benefit The Inn.

He already has raised nearly \$700 for The Inn team and is aiming to beat his fastest running time of 55 minutes for a 10K. As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, The Inn is an official charity of the Marine Corps Marathon for the first time.

"I love to run," Justin says. "But this race means more to me."

Justin is running to honor his six-year-old daughter Antionette "Anna," who is treated at the National Institute for Allergy and Musculoskeletal Skin Diseases (NIAMS) for a rare condition she has battled since age two. Anna's disease, Ankylosing Spondylitis, is a painful, chronic disorder that causes inflammation, bone erosion, joints to fuse improperly and the possibility that bones will grow where they shouldn't.

Emily remembers Anna's early days with the disease. As a toddler she would be exhausted after a short walk around the block. "I have no more runs left," she would say, or "my engine ran out."

Four years later, Anna's case is being followed closely at the NIH where she participates in a research study. The family hopes to find new medications and clues to what triggered her disease at such a young age. For Anna, another trip to The Inn is exciting.

"I love that my daddy is running for The Children's Inn because I love The Children's Inn," she says. Anna and her mom hope to be waiting at the finish line.

"I see my daughter's face when I run and that motivates me," Justin says. "When I cross that finish line, that will be the best feeling."

Kathy's Kids (continued from page 1)

In addition to the high-tech floor game, Kathy's Fun Fund supported a summer concert series, which brought four kids rock bands to The Inn in July. Caio Pereira, seven, from Brazil, still raves about the concert by Grammy nominee Brady Rymer. He particularly enjoyed the woman who made balloon animals at the concert. He and his little brother Leo, three, got "doggie" balloons, packed them into a little red wagon and pulled them all over The Inn. Caio admitted that later that evening, he straightened out the balloons into long swords, much to his brother's chagrin.

Caio was excited to go home after three months of cancer treatments, but says he will miss all the fun at The Inn. When he returns, he will find all the games awaiting him as Kathy's gift will keep on giving.



Inn resident, Stacy Paulin, enjoys one of our new interactive games



Inn resident, Dillon Papier, posing with Nationals Pitcher, Stephen Strasburg

K's for Kids Program Raises \$50,000

For the past four years, the Washington Area Toyota Dealers have generously supported the mission of The Children's Inn at NIH through their K's for Kids program. Every time a Washington Nationals pitcher throws a strikeout, Washington Area Toyota Dealers donate \$37 to The Inn. The \$37 is in reference to Nats star pitcher, Stephen Strasburg, who wears number 37.

Prior to the Nationals game on September 23, Washington Area Toyota executives presented a check to The Children's Inn for \$50,000. Inn CEO, Jennie Lucca, accepted the gift on behalf of all the families who have come to know The Inn as "A Place Like Home." Throughout the year, Washington Area Toyota Dealers and the Washington Nationals play an integral role in providing a homelike environment for Inn residents by enabling families to attend ballgames, watch batting practice, meet the Nationals players, and enjoy dinner.

"We are so appreciative of the commitment that Washington Area Toyota Dealers and the Washington Nationals have made to helping the children and families that depend on The Inn. The need for children and families to have a place to escape and just be a family is so important in the successful treatment of rare diseases," says Jennie.

The highlight of the evening was when Inn resident Jonathan Spencer threw the opening pitch in front of hundreds of fans. "Special moments like this really make a difference for our kids and their families. They were so happy, and most importantly, were able to forget about the rigors of the testing and treatments that their children are undergoing. Getting a break and just having fun is so incredibly important to our families. We cannot thank the Nats and the Washington Area Toyota Dealers enough," Jennie says.

Inn Families Enjoy Christmas in July

While The Inn celebrates Christmas in July annually, this year was extra special. It was the first time Santa Claus and his friends from the Montgomery County Police Department joined the celebration.

On July 22nd, children patiently waited outside of The Inn for a surprise visitor; they knew it was Christmas in July, but they had no idea who was coming to help them celebrate. In the distance, the familiar ring of Police sirens could be heard. As the sirens approached, the children became more and more excited as they realized the sirens were for them. It was an amazing sight to see so many faces light up with pure delight when they saw that more than a dozen officers on motorcycles were escorting Santa to The Inn.

After a warm welcome and many smiles and laughs with Santa, the motorcycle cavalcade escorted Santa and two buses filled with Inn residents to Toys "R" Us for a shopping spree, followed by dinner with Santa and the officers.

While most would think the toy store was the highlight of the trip, it was apparent that the police escort was the kids' favorite part. It made them feel special and important. One child exclaimed, "Everyone was stopping on the side of the road and taking pictures of us. I think they thought we were famous!"

Thanks to a donation from St. Luke's Episcopal Church, each child received a Toys "R" Us gift card which gave them the opportunity to shop with a cop. Some kids left with dolls, others with video games, but all of them, including their parents, left with huge smiles.



Colt and Debbie Broce shop with Santa at Toys "R" Us during Christmas in July Program

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The Children's Inn at NIH

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A Special Thanks to our Donors

The Children's Inn is deeply grateful to the more than 5,723 donors who contributed \$4,562,657 between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015 to help provide "A Place Like Home" for the more than 1,500 families who stayed 13,118 nights at The Inn last year. These gifts helped us provide updated sleeping rooms and facilities; more than 1,600 therapeutic, recreational, and educational programs; and many other priority projects to enhance our residents' experience at The Inn.

The following contributions are a selection of major gifts of \$20,000 or more received between April 1, 2015 and June 30, 2015: Passion Food Hospitality, Washington Area Toyota Dealers, Philip L. Graham Foundation, Booz Allen Hamilton, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Clark-Winchcole Foundation, ProShare Advisors, LLC, Battelle, Mead Family Foundation, and the Neall Family Charitable Foundation.

In addition, The Inn would like to thank the hundreds of individual and corporate donors who supported the *An Evening for Hope* gala on May 2, 2015, which raised \$925,136. We would also like to thank the thousands of individual donors whose generous financial contributions throughout the year make a huge difference in the lives of the courageous children and families we serve each day. For more information on The Inn's fundraising priorities and ways to make a gift, please contact Fern Stone at 301-451-9453 or stonefj@mail.nih.gov or visit our website at childrensinn.org.



Washington Area Toyota Dealers executives present check to Inn CEO, Jennie Lucca, and board members, Ryan Riel and Molly Matthews.