

February 1, 2010

Mr. Joseph F. Curto, Jr. & Staff
Yonkers Indoor Tennis Center, Inc.
493 Sprain Road
Yonkers, NY 10710

Dear Mr. Curto & Staff,

Rep of YTC family,

Thanks to your generosity and your compassion, the 16th annual Toy Drive was a very happy day for hundreds of families whose children receive their medical care at Sound Shore Medical Center's Pediatric Clinic. The children who attended the SSMC Holiday Toy Drive Party visited with Santa, played with their new toys, tasted delicious refreshments and danced with lively cartoon characters. Sounds of laughter filled the room and the true meaning of the Holiday Season was alive and well for all to enjoy!

Support from friends like you and the overwhelming response from corporations, schools, scout troops and civic organizations throughout the region allowed us the opportunity to sponsor such a well received and recognized event. Over 100 community volunteers offered their time, including students from New Rochelle, Pelham, White Plains, Somers, and Cold Spring schools. Members of the New Rochelle Police Department also volunteered their time to provide a safe and organized event.

In November, just a few weeks before our big SSMC Holiday Toy Party, we distributed over 320 bags of groceries and 892 new winter coats to children in need. This is the third year we were able to offer food to families thanks to a magnificent partnership between the Westchester Coalition of the Hungry and Homeless, Steiner Foods, Yonkers Indoor Tennis and Sound Shore Medical Center. Also, now in its fourth year, the SSMC/Adriana Jude Community Service Scholarship offered us the chance to work with dedicated student interns whose interests include community organizing and humanitarian efforts. This year we added an additional element to our events. Jean Marzollo, author of the *I Spy* books, collaborated with us so that we were able to give out 1,000 new *I Spy* books.

Your thoughtfulness embodied the spirit of the holidays and we thank you for remembering our very special mission. On behalf of those lives that have been touched by you, we are most appreciative.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Devine

Patricia A. Devine, MD
Co-Chair SSMC Toy and Coat Drive
Acting Co-Chair, Obstetrics & Gynecology
Chief, Maternal-Fetal Medicine

Kathy Curto
Kathy Curto
Founder & Co-Chair, SSMC Toy and Coat Drive

*Thank you for all
that you do*

Thanks to all the great helpers at YTC. We appreciate your hard work.



Tania Savayan/The Journal News
Kathy Curto, grateful for the care she received at Sound Shore Medical Center during a high-risk pregnancy, launched an annual Toy & Coat Drive.

In New Rochelle, grateful patient gives back

Hannan Adely
hadely@lohud.com

NEW ROCHELLE — Catherine Jimenez held on tight to her son's hand as his eyes darted from Santa to the table of snacks to the new rattle toy on his wrist.

The holiday party at Sound Shore Medical Center was coming to an end, but she wanted a break from the action to say hello to organizer Kathy Curto.

"I just want to thank you. This is a wonderful thing you do for the children," Jimenez told her.

Earlier in the week, Jimenez had received a bag of groceries and a

LOCAL HERO

new snowsuit for her 1-year-old son. The family was one of hundreds who were given food packages and new coats through the hospital's 16th annual Toy & Coat Drive.

Curto, 42, helped found the Toy & Coat Drive 16 years ago as a way to help low-income families who had used the pediatric outpatient clinic. Before she was a volunteer at the medical center, though, Curto was a patient.

In 1993, Curto received a diagnosis of a parasitic disease called toxoplasmosis, and she worried that she would pass it on to her unborn child.

On LoHud

Read more news about New Rochelle and the Sound Shore area on our new local blog:
soundshore.LoHudblogs.com.

The case was rare, and Curto's doctor, Patricia Devine, reached out to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to get Curto some needed, but still experimental, antibiotics.

Her daughter, Adriana Jude, was born healthy and without complica-

SEE HERO, 2D

HERO: Former patient helps new ones

CONTINUED FROM 1D

tions in September of that year. Curto was flush with gratitude and wanted to give back, so she asked Devine how she could help.

Curto then collected toys at her daughter's christening to donate to children in need who used the hospital.

"It's part of my sensibility to say thank you, and I felt like this was the right way to do it," said Curto, who lives in Cold Spring and now has four children.

Since then, Curto has worked with Devine and husband, Joseph, to lead the program every year.

In its first year, 60 toys were distributed. This year, more than 1,000 toys were given out at two holiday parties, and families also got 800

new coats and 300 bags of groceries.

Students also volunteer at the event, and a scholarship is awarded annually in Adriana's name.

Curto's work with the Toy & Coat Drive has helped inspire the whole hospital community, said John Spicer, chief executive officer of Sound Shore Medical Center. He said Curto had spent countless hours organizing and leading by example.

The event also helps the community become more comfortable with the hospital environment and more willing to use the clinics they need, Spicer said.

"I think it makes everyone in the hospital certainly feel good," he said, "and I think the community has become remarkably appreciative."

Who's your local hero?

The Journal News is seeking your nominations for a "Local Hero" so we can spotlight community members of all ages who deserve credit for going beyond the call of duty to help their friends and neighbors.

We expect to receive many nominations, and will do our best to write up as many people as possible. If we can't cover your nominee, we'll give them a shout out on LoHud.com.

Nominees must be willing to be photographed and interviewed by The Journal News. Send a brief e-mail explaining why your person should be a "Local Hero" to Liz Anderson at ecanders@lohud.com.

The Sound Report

NEW ROCHELLE

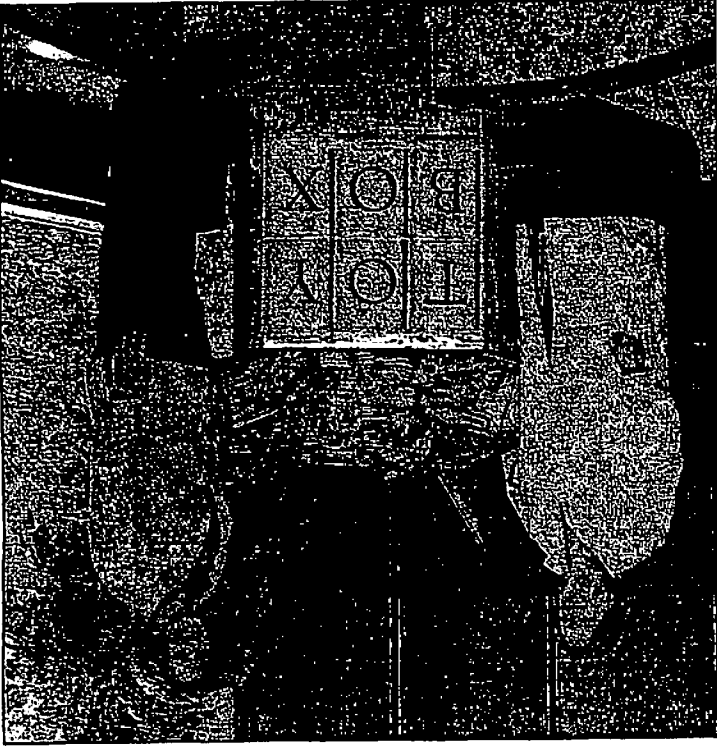
& TOWN

New Rochelle's Official Weekly Newspaper

www.mysondreport.com

November 20, 2009

Sound Shore Medical toy drive keeps on truckin'



Dr. Patricia Devine (left) and Sound Shore Medical Assistant Director of Communications Paul Feathers with toys from Sound Shore Medical's 18th Annual Toy Drive. Donations can be dropped off in the lobby of the hospital.

of volunteers as well as student interns who help make the drive work.

"Employees of the hospital are very generous with their time," Devine noted. "They see the event and where the money is going. The main reason this works is because a core group of people have their hearts and brains in the right place."

The drive has seen patients as well as people who were recipients of the drive as in to wrap gifts, while others arrange coats and pack bags of food. Also helping is A.J. Curto, the child whose birth initially inspired the drive, as well as teenagers who benefited from the drive as young children.

"The fact that my daughter and other children who benefited from this drive represent the cyclical nature of being aware of people who are not the only ones in it," Curto said. "We are not the only ones in it." Curto said, "We have many families helping. Getting young people involved is important because it says we have to take care of each other. This is an opportunity to reach out to others and learn about each other."

Tish Feathers, assistant director of community relations for Sound Shore Medical, has seen the event grow in her time with the hospital.

"They have reached out from just a toy drive and holiday party to recognize individuals who do not have winter coats," Feathers said. "These two industrious individuals went about finding out how to make a difference. This event has far-reaching effects of community service and mechanics that makes things like this happen."

Devine points to the personal dedication a gift, a photo with Santa Claus and an "I SPY" book.

men, Children who attend will receive levels correlate with the Medicaid requirements. Children whose income levels are eligible to receive items from the drive are families whose income levels correlate with the Medicaid requirements. Eligible to receive items from the drive are families whose income levels correlate with the Medicaid requirements. Eligible to receive items from the drive are families whose income levels correlate with the Medicaid requirements.

All the toys, coats and food go to family members in need.

learn more about the community and identify families in need."

Curto said, "We have worked closely with people at the clinic and it has helped us to learn more about the community and identify families in need."

"With each year the event has grown," Curto said. "We have worked closely with people at the clinic and it has helped us to learn more about the community and identify families in need."

At the original toy drive in 1994, 60 toys were given out. This year, 1,200 are expected to be given. Throughout the past 16 years, the program has expanded to collect coats and bags of food. Dr. Devine estimates that this year 800 coats will be collected along with 300 bags of food.

"I was grateful to the community," said Curto, who now lives in Putnam County. "I decided to do something for the surrounding communities as a way of saying thank you."

At the original toy drive in 1994, 60 toys were given out. This year, 1,200 are expected to be given. Throughout the past 16 years, the program has expanded to collect coats and bags of food. Dr. Devine estimates that this year 800 coats will be collected along with 300 bags of food.

8. day and will continue through Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Sound Shore Medical Center. She helped organize a toy drive, which continues to this day and will continue through Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Devine stepped in to treat Curto and delivered a healthy baby. To show her appreciation, Curto decided to do something nice for Sound Shore Medical Center. She helped organize a toy drive, which continues to this day and will continue through Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Sixteen years ago, Kathy Curto was on the verge of giving birth to her first child. With a high-risk pregnancy, Dr. Patricia Devine stepped in to treat Curto and delivered a healthy baby. To show her appreciation, Curto decided to do something nice for Sound Shore Medical Center. She helped organize a toy drive, which continues to this day and will continue through Tuesday, Dec. 8.