

## *The Curtins: Connecting Philanthropic Teens and Patients*

Barbara Curtin wants her three children to see beyond what she jokingly calls the “Basking Ridge bubble,” where wealth abounds and large homes and luxury cars seem the norm.

“I want my children to be less self-concerned, especially living in this area where everyone has so much,” she says. “I want to open their eyes to see that a lot of people don’t have as much as they have.”

One way Mrs. Curtin popped the illusion was by starting a teen philanthropic council – now called Kids4Kids – with her friend, Maria Weber, to link community children with Goryeb Children’s Hospital.

“We wanted to get our children involved raising money for the hospital and doing special projects for the kids at the hospital, like throwing Halloween parties or a spa day,” says Mrs. Curtin. “Kids in the area are dying to get involved with community service, and the children’s hospital is a natural place to go for them. I believe it’s important to start philanthropic tendencies early on and carry it on throughout your life.”

Over the years, Mrs. Curtin has worked for other charities targeted to specific issues or causes. For her, Goryeb has a broader appeal.

“The children’s hospital is a place everyone uses; everyone in our community benefits from it,” she says. Thankfully, she and her husband, Thomas, haven’t visited the hospital for anything serious, although their three children, Christopher (7), Kylie (12), and Katherine (15), were all born there.

The Curtins started fundraising for Goryeb six years ago, when Mr. Curtin joined the Health Foundation’s Pediatric Philanthropic Council. The couple hosted a dinner in their Basking Ridge home for friends and business acquaintances, raising over \$30,000. Michael Gerardi, MD, director of pediatric emergency medicine, addressed the group. Their next party, held at La Campagna Restaurant in Morristown, followed a tour of Goryeb led by Nader Youssef, MD. In 2008, Mrs. Curtin volunteered for the Women’s Association’s Mansion in May fundraiser, arranging private parties to benefit the Valerie Fund Children’s Center at the hospital.



Thomas and Barbara Curtin

Mrs. Curtin first included her eldest daughter, Katherine, in her efforts in 2007 by throwing a tea for mothers and their teen daughters at the Grain House, a restaurant owned by her family.

"I thought adolescent girls were a good target; a woman doctor came from the hospital to talk to the group about puberty and girls' health," she says. "This wasn't about the money; we raised awareness about what the hospital has to offer."

Through Kids4Kids, Mrs. Curtin hopes to broaden that connection. Not only will teens learn about Goryeb, they will also claim a piece of it through their efforts.

Lisa Ciarrocca, child life manager for Atlantic Health, says that teens can hold school events, like bake sales or basketball games, to raise funds for needed medical equipment or to provide a wish-list item, such as a laptop or a game system.

"It's wonderful that people want to instill philanthropy in their children," she says. "We need contacts in the community to do the fund-raising work; it's hard for us to do. We deal with the kids when they're admitted. This gives children outside the walls of the children's hospital a way to feel connected with the patients inside."

-Alice Roche Cody