



Balloon Angels

Lifting Children's Spirits

Winter
2008

Quarterly Newsletter
For volunteers and contributors

Focus on our Volunteers...



Julie Rhoad is this month's Volunteer of the month! Julie was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. This is great news – why? You'll find out later ☺.

Julie grew up on the east side of Indianapolis and

attended Warren Central High School. Following graduation, she attended Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, where she received a BS degree in telecommunications with a minor in Political Science. She met her future husband, Scott, at Ball State through a good friend. Scott and Julie have been married now for almost 15 years. They have 3 sons, Jacob is 10, Nate is 8 and Matthew is 4. The older boys attend Brooks School Elementary in Fishers, IN. Julie enjoys



being a "stay home mom". Scott is a Senior VP and Commercial Real Estate Sales Executive with Regions Bank for Indiana, central Illinois and



Kentucky. For hobbies, Julie says that "her greatest joy comes from spending time with my family." She also enjoys reading, running and sharing time with her closest friends.

Julie discovered Balloon Angels in the fall of 2006 through Northeast Christian Church in Louisville, KY (<http://www.necchurch.org/>).

She had been looking for volunteer opportunities within the community and when she contacted Northeast, they told her about Balloon Angels. Julie says that she was "instantly hooked." She still remembers the first balloon that she gave out. "My first balloon was given to a little boy who appeared to be about 4-years old. When I entered his room, he leapt off his hospital bed and sprinted towards me with a gigantic smile on his face. He was so excited to receive a balloon. My heart soared!" When asked why she keeps coming back, she responds, "I enjoy



Balloon Angels because of the delight I see in the children who receive the balloons. Being sick is so scary and confusing to a child. The balloons seem to give the children something happy to focus on. Their smiles and joy are my motivation."

This last summer, Julie and her family had an opportunity to relocate back to her hometown of Indianapolis. This was a great opportunity for Julie & her family, but a loss for Balloon Angels – but maybe not.

Julie contacted us about starting Balloon Angels in the Indianapolis area. Julie explains, "Two of my three children have been hospitalized, twice each. I learned through them how difficult a hospitalization can be for a child. Any gesture of kindness shown to them while in the hospital meant so much to them and to Scott and me. Balloon Angels provides that simple kind gesture that brightens the day of an ill child. I enjoyed volunteering with Balloon Angels so much while in KY that I wanted to help launch it here. I am confident that Balloon Angels will help touch the hearts of the patients at Riley Children's Hospital, too."



She has high goals, to bring Balloon Angels to Riley Children's Hospital and also to branch out to other area hospitals, like the Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent. We are looking forward to helping Julie start Balloon Angels in Indianapolis!



What It's All About...

"I just wanted to thank you for always brightening our stays at Kosair! My daughter is almost two, and you've been bringing smiles to her face since she was only a few months old. When she had open heart surgery, she accumulated quite a few balloons from our extended stay. Every single one was tied to her crib and she would gaze at them even though she was too weak to sit up. When the day came that she could prop up



in the crib, she pulled on those balloons and laughed at herself! Every single time she's been in Kosair, your organization has lifted her spirits - as well as mine. It was great to feel so loved when we were so far from home. I can't even think about it without tears streaming down my face! God bless you and each and every one of your volunteers."

- T.B. Parent

"Happy Anniversary To Us..."

Happy Anniversary! November of 2008 marked the 6th anniversary for the Balloon Angels organization! 6 years ago the first volunteers for Balloon Angels went out, bought 10 balloons and took them into the pediatric unit of Baptist East Hospital. Now, 6 years and close to 65,000 balloons later, Balloon Angels is a non-profit charity that delivers free balloons to children at four different children's hospitals in Louisville and Lexington and is now expanding to the Indianapolis area. A very special thanks to those of you who have been involved in one way or



another since the beginning. Whether you're one of the great volunteers who have helped us give out balloons, one of the many people that have made regular donations to help us fund our efforts, or if you've just supported us with your prayers and kind words, we REALLY APPRECIATE all that you've done! THANK YOU!!!

WE NEED YOU!!!

As you will read in our updates for each hospital that we serve, we are truly in need of additional volunteers. We're currently serving and providing free balloons to hospitalized children at three hospitals in Louisville (Baptist Hospital East, Kosair Children's Hospital, Home of the Innocents), one



hospital in Lexington (UK Children's Hospital) and are starting up at one hospital in Indianapolis (Riley Hospital for Children). OUR #1 NEED right now is additional volunteers to serve at any of the hospitals we serve. If you have volunteered with us in the past, we would

strongly encourage you to give us a call and get back on the schedule – we need you! If you have ever thought that giving out a free balloon to a child in the hospital sounds like something you would like

to be part of – NOW is the time to give us a call! What it takes to be a volunteer?

A Passion for Helping Children. Many of our volunteers are parents and have spent time in the hospital with their own children. They know how tough it can be for a little child to be stuck in a hospital bed, hooked up to various machines and monitors for days at a time. As a parent, they also know the wonderful feeling of watching their child smile and laugh and appreciate anything that can bring this about – including our balloons.



Servant's heart. Our volunteers love to serve and help. They walk down hospital halls with as many as 200 brightly colored balloons at a time – this is quite a sight and quite an experience. Watching the excitement and the smiles as each child gets to pick out that special balloon is just as rewarding to our volunteers as it is for the children and parents.

Compassion. As we enter each of the hospital rooms, there are really two groups of people that are hurting – the child and the parents. By spending time with both, we hope that our gift of a free balloon will help to lift the child's spirits, put a smile on their face, and if only for a little while, help make that stay in the hospital a little brighter place to be for both the patient and the parent.

Time Required. Our volunteers donate one evening each month – that's it! Most volunteers arrive at about 6:15pm and are on their way home by about 8:15pm.

Send an email to gary@balloonangels.org or call Gina at (502) 253-0855 with questions or comments about volunteering.

Kosair Children's Hospital Update

We have bad news. After bringing balloons to Kosair Children's Hospital every Tuesday night for the last 4-5 years, we have to cut back on our trips to this hospital. We just do



not have enough volunteers to be there every week. We do have 7-9 very dedicated volunteers who have been trying to go, sometimes as much as 3-4 times a month, to help us keep up our schedule at Kosairs. To ensure we don't "burn out" these wonderful volunteers we will start our trips to Kosair twice a month starting in January.



Kosair Children's Hospital Team Leader
Colleen Nethery

If you have ever thought about volunteering just one night a month, give us a call at (502) 253-0855.

UK Kentucky Children's Hospital Update

February 22nd, 2009 marks the 2 year anniversary for Balloon Angels at Lexington's UK Kentucky Children's Hospital. We are currently looking to expand our efforts at this hospital but need additional volunteers before we can make this commitment to the hospital. If you have friends or family in the Lexington area, please contact us to find out more information about volunteering at UK Kentucky Children's Hospital.



UK Children's Hosp
Team Leader Tammy
Tipton

Riley Hospital for Children Update

As reported earlier, Julie Rhoad, is helping us start Balloon Angels at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis, IN. Set up logistics are almost complete and the first set of volunteers are completing the orientation process.



Riley Hosp for
Children Team Leader
Julie Rhoad

Just a quick note to say a big **THANKS** to Julie for her persistence, her hours of volunteerism, and for working out all of the many details with the staff at Riley Hospital for Children. For those of you living in Indy or with friends & family in the area help us spread the word and find volunteers for Balloon Angels for Riley Children's Hospital.

Baptist Hospital East Update

This was the original location that we started bringing free balloons to about 6 years ago. We continue to deliver balloons to Baptist Hospital East on a weekly basis. This is usually done during the week during daytime hours.



Baptist Hospital East
Team Leader Colleen
Nethery

Home of the Innocents Update

The Kosair Charities Pediatric Convalescent Center at the Home of the Innocents is a home away from home for 46 medically fragile children, ages birth to 21. They provide skilled nursing facility for short-term, long-term and respite care for children with severe developmental and/or physical disabilities. We deliver balloons once a month to this facility.



Home of the Innocents
Team Leader Brenda
Wood

Norton Volunteer Appreciation Reception

On November 9, 2008, Norton Healthcare held a reception for the more than 1,000 volunteers who serve at any of the four Norton hospitals in the Louisville area.



(L to R): Joe Crawford, Colleen Nethery,
Richard Galana, Gina McQuillen

The goal for volunteers is to help make a positive difference in the lives of more than 1,000,000 patients Norton facilities see annually. Several Balloon Angels volunteers attended the brunch and reception and were surprised to hear Norton Vice President of Operations, Kyle Green, identify and talk about one specific group of Kosair volunteers – the Balloon Angels team! He discussed how we got started and told stories of how we had helped bring a smile to the patients at Kosair Children's Hospital.

We're So Sorry!

We are so very sorry for the long delay in getting out this updated newsletter. I'll just remind everyone that our organization is completely staffed and ran by volunteers. We hope you understand. If you would like to get involved with Balloon Angels, contact us at gary@balloonangels.org or at (502) 253-0855.

Make A Donation?

If you would like to make a donation to Balloon Angels, make checks payable to Balloon Angels and mail to Balloon Angels, 910 Bridgecreek Rd., Louisville, KY 40245. Thanks for your consideration!



Do you have a heart for kids?

If so, we would love to have you on our team! We can always use your help. If you or someone you know has a heart for children and may be interested in helping us get started give us a call! If you live in Louisville, Lexington, Cincinnati, Indianapolis we need your help! If you live outside of this area and you or someone you know may be interested in helping get started in your area, let us know!

Comments – If you have an idea for our newsletter, contact Gary McQuillen at gary@balloonangels.org.