



Appellate Practice Section's Good Deeds Committee Delivers

The State Bar Appellate Practice Section's Good Deeds Committee recently hooked up with the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit and everybody was lovin' it.

APS volunteers provided families staying at the Ronald McDonald House with a full banquet meal that included rotisserie chicken, roasted vegetables, cheesy potatoes, antipasto salad, burritos, and rice. The volunteers designed the menu, provided all the food, served it to the families, and even cleaned up afterward. But perhaps most importantly, they got to spend time with the families whose children are hospitalized for varying reasons at Detroit Children's Hospital.

Good Deeds Committee member Marilena David-Martin of the State Appellate Defender's Office, who was one of the committee's founders and one of the members who came up with the idea of serving the families at the RMH, said getting to know the families and their stories was undoubtedly the most rewarding part of the endeavor.

During the meal, David-Martin sat down with the mother of six-year-old Gabrielle, who had been hospitalized for quite a while. Gabrielle's body was rejecting a heart that she was lucky enough to receive as a transplant more than a year earlier. David-Martin said the young mother seemed to welcome the company.

"We talked for a while and, just like any mom, she loved to talk about her daughter and show pictures of her playing dress-up," David-Martin recalled. "She told me how one of the nurses bought Gabrielle a squirt gun, so the staff now knows to run past Gabrielle's door whenever it's open because they know she's a good shot!"

Courtesy photos



APS Council members provided a variety of warm, home-cooked food for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit.

Lawyers make a difference for people and society. They solve problems, provide free legal help to the poor, and give time to many other community efforts.

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David-Martin said Gabrielle had been in and out of the hospital since she was a baby, and the mother was thankful she was able to stay at the RMH and be close to Gabrielle while at the same time getting to sleep in a comfortable bed.

"Even though she didn't have much of an appetite, she was thankful that groups like ours brought in hot, homemade food so she could have the energy to do it all again the next day," David-Martin said.

The idea to team up with the RMH was the brainchild of David-Martin and fellow APS and Good Deeds Committee members Danielle Schoeny of Sommers Schwartz; Anthony Caffrey of Cardelli, Lanfear & Buikema; Phil DeRosier of Dickinson Wright; and Beth Wittmann of Kitch Drutchas Wagner Valitutti & Sherbrook. David-Martin said they chose the RMH because the APS council members come from a variety of fields, walks of life, and experiences and she wanted to choose a charity that everyone could get excited about.

"The RMH is one charity I think everyone agrees is very deserving and serves our community in an invaluable way," David-Martin said.

David-Martin said it was a great experience and expressed gratitude for the team of APS volunteers who paid for everything out of their own pockets.

"From the beginning, everyone was just willing to do anything that was needed to make this a successful event," she said.

"At every section meeting, I am impressed with the intelligence, professionalism, and collegiality of my fellow council members, but participating in this event with them took it to a new level. To see the kindness, enthusiasm, and compassion these lawyers have for helping people is, to me, the most impressive of all." ■



Members of the Appellate Practice Section Council relax in the backyard after providing dinner to families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Detroit. Posing with Ronald McDonald, from left to right: Phillip DeRosier, Marilena David-Martin, Beth Wittmann, and Danielle Schoeny.

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