



Dee Baker, Richard Murphy and Jaymie Deo help to prepare dinner for families at Ronald McDonald Longfellow House

For years, Holy Family Catholic Church served the greater Kansas City area through the Catholic Worker House. When this establishment closed its doors in 2016, it left a void not only in the ministry work completed by Holy Family, but also in those who love to serve our community and look to the church for a way to do so.

The Service Outreach Committee, who facilitate various service projects throughout the year, searched for a little over a year to find a suitable place to serve meals in the Catholic Worker House's absence, but struggled with what would be a good fit for our parish. Then parishioner Jaymie Deo came back from visiting family with an inspiring idea.

Jaymie has been a member at Holy Family for 11 years and a member of the Service Outreach Committee for six years. He had recently gone to visit a sick grandchild in Denver, Co. While visiting, he and his family stayed at the Ronald McDonald House, which allowed them to be able to be bedside in the hospital at a moment's notice. His family did not have to worry about food, lodging or any of the bills that go along with the two. They could concentrate solely on the wellbeing of their beloved sick child. This is when Jaymie had an 'aha' moment: We, as a parish, could provide the same comforting service in our community.

After touring several of the Ronald McDonald facilities around Children's Mercy Hospital, the Service Outreach Committee decided the Longfellow House was the best fit for Holy Family's ministry work. The Longfellow House, one of three Ronald McDonald houses in the Kansas City area, has 41 rooms available for families, including 12 immunosuppressed suites. In addition to the lodging, families are able to either

store and cook their own food in the facility's pantries and gourmet kitchen, or eat from one of the meals served at any of the facilities. They rely upon the generosity and financial support of individuals and organizations in the Kansas City area.

For Jaymie's family, the Ronald McDonald House had been a Godsend. His daughter has had to utilize their services on four different occasions, one hospital stay extending to about a year. A cooked meal and smiling faces made a world of difference for them.

While there, Jaymie was in and out, not making many connections. However, he still felt immense comfort knowing there is a place to go other than the hospital. This experience has allowed him to connect with those families staying at the Longfellow House; he understands their suffering. Jaymie has been there. He can provide that friendliness he craved while tending to sick family.

Some people want to eat and head straight back to their child. Others need a mental break from the duress and want nothing more than to share their story or chat about light-hearted issues. Either way, Jamie feels Holy Family parishioners can provide what they need.

"One mom had three other kids besides the one in the hospital. She needed help with the meals and with the kids," said Jaymie. "Some people just want another person to sit with them and visit." This ministry provides an enjoyable opportunity to get to know those you are serving.

Baiju John, Holy Family parishioner who serves regularly on various ministries, admits this service is not a direct replacement from the work we did at Catholic Worker House. The Catholic Worker house was mainly servicing adults and saw a high volume

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COOKING FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

HOLY FAMILY BEGINS NEW MINISTRY WORK HELPING FAMILIES AT RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES KANSAS CITY, LONGFELLOW HOUSE

of meals delivered with each serving opportunity. The Longfellow House works with a smaller group of families, including small children; it is a very family-friendly environment. Although the atmosphere is very different, the work is just as important.

“We are meeting humans with Christ on the road, showing Christ in others. [People are] always in their own bubble. Then that bubble bursts, and things change in no time. They need help too,” said John of the families who make the Longfellow House their temporary home.

Jaymie and John both agree that there has been a wonderful unexpected benefit to this ministry: fellowship among parishioners as well. Just one time serving and you will feel it. During the meal preparation, Holy Family parishioners laugh while sharing stories from their own families while getting to know each other on a more intimate level. It is very much a family atmosphere as everyone gathers in the kitchen, cooking dinner for those in need.

Holy Family prepares and serves dinner on the third Sunday of each month. Parishioners have the opportunity to prepare and serve a meal or bring in food items to the church. Knowing the volume of food served, the Service Outreach Committee chose a more simple meal to prepare, allowing for any parishioner, no matter the cooking skill-level, the opportunity to join. On the

menu is spaghetti and meatballs with garlic bread, salad and dessert.

If you want to help, but you are still uneasy regarding cooking for others, Holy Family has an opportunity to bring in the food items needed to make dinner. Through a link under the “outreach” tab on our website, or in periodic emails sent to registered parishioners, there is an opportunity to sign up to purchase and bring food items to the church by 3 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month. Those items include a large bag of frozen meatballs, uncooked spaghetti noodles, jars of pasta sauce, pre-made frozen garlic bread, large pre-mixed bags of salad, cookies or brownies and beverages.

No matter what your comfort level is in the kitchen, Jaymie encourages parishioners to step out and get involved. This ministry provides a wonderful opportunity to meet people within our own parish as well as those in our community.

“We don’t go to preach but to be a smiling face, friendly ears and fellowship for these families,” said Jaymie.

For more information on the Ronald McDonald Houses in Kansas City, visit rmhckc.org. To sign up to volunteer or to bring in food items, visit holyfamily.com/outreach and click on the link under the Longfellow House section.



Photos taken at Longfellow House on April 15, 2018
From left to right: Richard Murphy and Dee Baker, Jack Kammerer, Dee Baker, Janeen Kammerer