

History and Mission

The Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation was founded in 1962 by Ira and Eva Gottscho in memory of their daughter, Ruth Gottscho, who died of kidney failure at the age of 15. The mission of the Foundation is to provide services to benefit children and adults who suffer from kidney disease. Over the years, the Foundation has remained flexible in its programs in order to meet the most pressing needs of this population. However, as program needs have changed, the Foundation's underlying ethos has not – to get help quickly to those most in need and to use virtually 100% of funds raised on direct service costs.

In the 1960's, the Gottscho Foundation funded the development of the first home dialysis machine, revolutionizing the field of nephrology and improving the quality and life expectancy of thousands of people. Throughout the decade, the Foundation donated more than 120 kidney dialysis machines for homes and hospitals and provided training to patients and family members in their use. They re-furbished previously owned machines for use by new patients. The Foundation was responsible for creating one of the largest home dialysis programs in the country.

Ira Gottscho drafted a bill to create funding for the care of dialysis patients, which was passed by the New Jersey State legislature. Following this victory, The Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation turned its focus to another serious and unmet need. In the 1970's and 1980's, the Gottscho Foundation initiated a 24-hour answering service for New Jersey that helped to match kidney patients awaiting transplants with kidneys as they became available. Eventually new communication and technology systems thankfully made this program obsolete.

The good news is that there have been many advances in treatment and medication for kidney disease and post-transplant patients. Today, the prognosis for people with kidney disease is better than it has ever been. The unfortunate news is that a greater number of people are experiencing kidney failure as a result of an increase in adult onset diabetes. Many of these people are low-income and members of minority groups and are less likely to have private insurance. All people, but especially those living without private medical insurance, experience a tremendous financial burden as a result of chronic kidney disease. The Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation seeks to ease this burden through an Emergency Transportation and Medication Program.

The Gottscho Foundation continues to provide a one-of-a-kind experience to children, ages 7 to 17, who are living with kidney disease. Through a 31-year partnership with the Frost Valley YMCA, we provide a mainstream summer sleepaway camp experience to children who rely on regular dialysis to live. This program provides full camperships to all children who meet the medical criteria.

Forty-four years after its founding, The Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation remains dedicated to its mission of improving the quality of life for those who are seriously ill with renal disease.