

Eva Gottscho (1913—2009)
Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation Founder

Thousands of people with kidney disorders who have received help from the Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation are mourning the death of its co-founder, Eva Gottscho. She and her husband, Ira, established the Foundation in 1962 in memory of their younger daughter, Ruth, who died of kidney failure at age 15 – before treatments for kidney failure were available.

The mission of the Foundation has always been to provide services to benefit children and adults who suffer from kidney disease. It helped develop the first home dialysis machine, which revolutionized the field of nephrology and improved the quality and life expectancy of thousands of people. The Foundation donated over 120 home dialysis machines to homes and hospitals. It also initiated a 24-hour answering service in New Jersey -- Operation Lifeline -- which helped match kidney patients awaiting transplants with kidneys as they became available.

But Eva had a dream that hadn't yet been realized. Ruth had always wanted to go to sleepaway camp but never could. Eva was determined to make that dream a reality for children in the future. It wasn't easy. She was turned down by many camps, but she didn't give up. One of her main goals was to establish a camp program that would allow "kidney kids" to enjoy all camp activities with well children.

Finally, in 1975, four years after her husband's death, Eva established a partnership with the Frost Valley YMCA Camp in Claryville, N.Y., and Montefiore Medical Center in New York City to enable children with kidney disorders to attend sleepaway camp with regular campers. To date, more than 1,500 "kidney kids" from across the country have been enriched by this life-changing experience.

The camp program is stronger than ever. This past September, Eva spoke at the dedication of the Ruth Gottscho Dialysis Center, a part of the new Guenther Wellness Center at Frost Valley.

The RGKF Board of Directors and Foundation supporters will continue to make Eva's dream a reality. This year, the Foundation is sponsoring 60 kidney campers and is helping to pay the cost of running the dialysis center.

Eva had one more dream: to set up an endowment fund that would enable the camp program to be permanently funded. The Foundation expects to raise enough through contributions to make Eva's final dream come true.

Donations in Eva Gottscho's memory can be sent to the Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation, 515 Warwick Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666