

SERVING

Volunteer Spotlight: Richard Pierce



Long-time volunteer shares what the children at Jill's House have taught him about patience.

Richard Pierce has been a Jill's House volunteer since we opened in October 2010. He serves almost every week as a buddy volunteer, playing with the children and assisting the childcare staff. We're grateful for his faithful service and excited to share his volunteer story with you.

How did you hear about Jill's House?

I'm a regular attendee at McLean Bible Church, so I first heard about it before it was built. At the time I was a volunteer at MBC's day respite program, and I really enjoyed it. I liked working with the kids, and was touched by how grateful their parents were. So when Jill's House opened, it seemed a natural thing to add Jill's House to my volunteer schedule.

What have you learned through your service at Jill's House?

When my wife and I were raising our boys, I expected them to do what I asked of them right away. But when I started to volunteer at Jill's House, I quickly realized that would not be the case. At Jill's House, when I ask a child to do something, and he doesn't want to do it, I have two choices: back away from the request for a while and ask again later, or ask differently, in a way that will make the child want to obey. This practice in patience and flexibility has made me a better grandparent. I don't think my grandkids realize how lucky they are that I've had this experience.

What has surprised you about working at Jill's House?

Nothing has really surprised me. But I'll tell you two things that impress me at Jill's House. I'm impressed by what a great job Jill's House does selecting fellows. The fellows are talented and learn quickly how to care for the children. And the other thing I'm impressed with is the loving care the children who stay at Jill's House must get at home. Of course, I never see them with their parents, but I've seen how well-dressed and groomed each child is, and I've seen how many skills each child has learned. I know that's no small task. I'm impressed with the parents who care for these kids so well.

What is your favorite Jill's House memory?

I know I'll always, for the rest of my life, remember walking with Albert. He's one of the young men I work with almost every week. When I walk through the door to the play area, I get a big smile from Albert. He jumps up, takes my arm, and we speed walk around the play area for the next few hours. Just about every minute he's not in the pool or eating, we're walking.

What would you say to someone who is considering volunteering at Jill's House?

I'd say, "Do it. You'll love it." I've been working in the helping professions my whole life, and I've found this to be as rewarding as anything I've ever done.

To learn more about serving at Jill's House, visit jillshouse.org/serve or email maryrachel.robbins@jillshouse.org.