

# The Star-Ledger

jersey'shelpinghands

## Hoop dream nets thousands for children's charity

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Last summer, Ed Zimmerman decided to take a shot at raising money for charity, and The Valerie Fund is more than \$50,000 richer for it.

"I was playing basketball in my back yard and it occurred to me that if I could get 10 of my friends to shoot foul shots, we could raise money for a charity," he said. So Zimmerman and his wife, Betsy, created Hoop-A-Paluzza, a not-for-profit organization designed to support charities serving children with health problems.

"By the end of the day, the idea was formalized and we had a board of trustees with nine people. That was July 28 and we held our first event at our house on Sept. 28," said Zimmerman, a partner in Lowenstein Sandler PC, in Roseland.

"We are glad that our first event is benefiting a local charity," Betsy Zimmerman said.

More than 50 people shot "hoops," with sponsorship for each basket that was made. The family-style gathering also featured children's musician Bill Deltz, face painting, a moonwalk demonstration and refreshments. There were more than 200 visitors to the Zimmerman home that day.

"My 4-year-old daughter, Beca (Rebeca), came up with ideas for things kids would enjoy and, to keep expenses to a minimum, everyone was asked to bring a dish to share," Betsy Zimmerman said. "It was great. People from different cultures and religions coming together for a good cause and a lot of fun."

Hoop-A-Paluzza generated more than \$50,000 for The Valerie Fund, a Millburn-based not-for-profit organization that treats more than 5,000 area children with cancer and blood disorders. "We'll actually surpass \$60,000, based on the pledge sheets," Ed Zimmerman said.

Although they initially considered contributing to a couple of charities, it was decided to focus on just one. "We chose the Valerie Fund because of the excellent work it does helping children," he said.

"My older sister (Julie) was born with spina bifida, so I have first-hand knowledge of how a severe illness can affect children and their families. I guess you could say that was part of my motivation. Secondly, Betsy and I



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Betsy and Ed Zimmerman hosted Hoop-A-Paluzza at their Short Hills home to raise money for The Valerie Fund.

have two children ourselves now, ages 2 and 4, so we are keenly aware of the responsibilities parenthood entails," Zimmerman added.

"The Valerie Fund does so much for kids on a regular basis and also provides a week-long summer camp experience (Camp Happy Times) for free," Betsy Zimmerman said. "The kids have such fun together at camp, so we thought it would be great to raise money so as many as possible could get together again during the winter for one day - either attending a sporting event or some other type of entertainment."

"We are thinking about holding an annual event and franchising it, so people across the country could join in and raise money for a charity of their choice," Ed Zimmerman said.

Hoop-A-Paluzza sponsors include Lowenstein Sandler PC; Archive Systems Inc. & Strategic Outpatient Services Inc.. To learn more about the not-for-profit organization, e-mail [ezimmerman@lowenstein.com](mailto:ezimmerman@lowenstein.com).

The Valerie Fund was established in 1976 in New Jersey as a not-for-profit agency in memory of Valerie Goldstein, a Warren resident who died of cancer at age 9. The organization has eight children's centers, comprising one of the nation's largest networks of health-care facilities for children with cancer and blood disorders.

Information on the Valerie Fund can be obtained by calling (973) 761-0422 or visiting the Web site at [www.thevaleriefund.org](http://www.thevaleriefund.org).