My Mitzvah Project: Volunteering at Ronald McDonald House

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For my mitzvah project, I decided to volunteer at the Bend Ronald McDonald House, which is located right near St. Charles Hospital. Most of the people who stay there are parents and siblings of babies in the NICU. The parents are at the hospital all day with their babies, so they don’t have time to cook. Ronald McDonald House provides free dinner every night for 15-20 people, and they rely on volunteers to cook dinner.

Cooking dinner was my favorite job at Ronald McDonald House. It was pretty cool using their fancy kitchen. They have a big food storage area in the garage, where they store lots of donated ground meat for volunteers to cook with.

I invited Evie Lerner, Kathy Schindel, and Terry Reynolds from our temple to help me cook a few of the times. One of the dishes we made was moo shu pork with cabbage and ginger. Another time we made Texas hash, a stew with ground beef, peppers, and onions. The volunteer coordinator told us it was very popular with the guests! Other times, I baked cookies instead of a whole meal. Sometimes guests would come by the kitchen and thank us for cooking.

Other times, my job was to sanitize surfaces and vacuum the floors. It is important for parents not to bring germs to their babies, who have very weak immune systems. On Valentine’s Day, I helped hang up dozens and dozens of colorful cards people had mailed in to cheer up the guests. I enjoyed volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, and it made me feel good to contribute to others every week.

