

FAMILIES

You help replace deep isolation with meaningful friendships.



Hope (left) and Julia met at Jill's House and are now best friends.

At this time of year, some people experience feelings of loneliness. For children with special needs and their families, extreme isolation is something they experience every day of the year.

The Hoffman family is no exception. "When Julia's brothers and sisters would leave to play with friends, she would stand at the door crying 'I want to have friends, too! Why can't I have friends?'" said Holly Hoffman, mother of Julia, 12, who has Down syndrome. "It broke our hearts," added Julia's father, Mark.

Julia started coming to Jill's House in 2011. "She would come home and talk non-stop about a little girl named Hope," said Holly. "I didn't think much of it until one day when I dropped her off at Jill's House. She dashed away from me, running with open arms to Hope! Julia loves Hope so much."



[Watch](#) how Jill's House stands beside two families, builds friendships and eliminates isolation.

The daughter of Bill and Sheryl Warne, Hope is 10 years old and also has Down syndrome. "The girls speak their own language," said Sheryl. "They understand each other in ways no one else can. It is such a blessing they have each other."

When possible, the Hoffmans and Warnes request the girls visit Jill's House on the same weekends. The girls start counting down the weeks to their next visit, when they will be able to play with their best friend and have their very own sleepover, just like other kids. "Hope starts packing for the next visit to Jill's House almost as soon as she gets home!" said Bill.

The parents have also connected, building a friendship based on a deep



The Hoffmans, left, and Warnes are lifted up by Jill's House.

understanding of what it's like raising children with special needs. "Mark and I immediately connected with Bill and Sheryl," said Holly. "We have taken the girls to the zoo together, invited each other to the girls' birthday parties and had picnics and other fun outings. This would never have happened without Jill's House and the way it brings families together."

"Holly and I especially love the family dinners Jill's House hosts," added Mark. "It allows us to connect with other families and--more importantly--begin our respite on the spot. We can relax, let go and begin to connect immediately with each other and

other parents." The families also attended the Jill's House Joy Prom, and Mark recently greeted Jill's House children as Santa during the Jill's House Family Christmas Party.

"Jill's House is a blessing to all of us," said Sheryl. "It gives us meaningful experiences and deep friendships we just don't find anywhere else."

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