

## "Jill's House Saved Our Lives" Family Spotlight: The Schmecls

*"Before Jill's House, my husband Dick and I came very close to giving up on our marriage. To the outside world, we probably seemed to manage our lives well, but the reality is we were dying inside. We lived in a cocoon, exhausted, with no one to turn to.*



*Our oldest daughter, Katie, has a rare brain defect. As is common with people like Katie, she doesn't sleep. On a typical night she goes to bed around 9 p.m., then she is up and ready for the day around 1:30 a.m. She sits at the kitchen table, looking for the school bus for hours until it comes. During the summer it is especially difficult, as Katie cannot speak, and there is no way to tell her the bus isn't coming. She is heartbroken every day. Managing her and our full time jobs is unbelievably difficult. We basically save our sleep for weekends.*

*Before Katie was born, Dick and I had it all figured out. We both had great careers; we traveled, were footloose and fancy-free. We thought our perfect lives would go on forever. Then we had Katie and everything changed. Caring for Katie, raising our other daughter Tori and performing well in our full-time jobs with virtually no sleep nearly brought our marriage to an end.*

*As Katie entered her teenage years, things became even worse. Her frustration levels at not being able to share her needs are extremely high, and her sleep patterns are becoming more complicated. In addition to being up with her all night, she's very needy during the day; she needs to be with you -- on top of you -- all the time.*

*Four years ago we were beside ourselves and ready to give up. Then we heard about Jill's House. It was just too good to be true. We were sure we had the story wrong. How could such a place exist? And how could they care for Katie, who doesn't sleep? As it turns out, Jill's House was able to provide excellent loving care to Katie and so much more. Jill's House has been our lifeline, and has kept our family together.*

*Katie's first visit to Jill's House was during March Madness. Dick and I came home from dropping Katie off and actually watched the game together. For the first time in what seemed like forever, one of us didn't have to go to bed so we could get up in the middle of the night to care for Katie. We got to see what it's like to spend a weekend with each other and with other people. During Katie's stays, we now go together to Tori's field hockey games and give her 100% of our attention. And, of course, we sleep.*



*You can help save marriages like the Schmecls'. Be their lifeline and [give](#) your best gift today.*

*"Four years ago we were beside ourselves and ready to give up. Then we heard about Jill's House. It was just too good to be true."*

*- Tricia Schmechl*

*For Katie, going to Jill's House is like a typical child going to Disney World. When we get there, she runs through the front door and physically pushes us out of the way. When we pick her up, it takes her forever to say goodbye to her friends and caretakers. It's a love affair. Katie loves Jill's House! And it has opened up her world tremendously. Recently Katie and I were in a shopping mall, and she became very animated and excited, pointing to another child. I introduced myself to the child's mother, and after a brief conversation we figured out that our children knew each other from Jill's House. Thanks to Jill's House,*

*Katie's world has expanded, and she now has friends of her own.*

*We now build our family's schedule around Katie's visits, and since Jill's House came into our lives, we have been able to reconnect all of our relationships -- to ourselves as individuals, as a couple, and as parents to Tori.*

*Jill's House saved our lives."*

-Tricia Schmehl

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