

Marty Lyons

Marty Lyons played 12 years as a defensive lineman for the New York Jets football team. While with the Jets, he was part of the famed “New York Sack Exchange”, one of the top defensive lines of all time. A hero both on and off the field, Marty eventually came to an unusual crossroads.

“In March 1982, three events altered my life. In the period of one week, my father, Leo passed away suddenly; Keith, a little boy to whom I was a Big Brother, passes away from leukemia and my first son, Rocky was born. Imagine being on top of the world and in the period of seven days you are forced to see the frailty, unfairness and the wonder of life. I decided to use my name and my God-given talent to make a difference in the lives of terminally-ill children.”

With the encouragement, support and assistance of family and friends, Marty was determined to establish a foundation dedicated to helping children find the courage and strength to fight their illnesses. His idea was that through the granting of a wish, he’d foster hope and inspiration in a child by making possible what had been perceived as impossible. So in December 1982, he founded The Marty Lyons Foundation, and for over 30 years Marty and Foundation volunteers have not slowed in their commitment to helping those in need.

The Marty Lyons Foundation is a not-for-profit, charitable, tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization. We provide wishes to children aged 3 to 17 years old who have been diagnosed as having terminal or life-threatening illnesses. We are unique in that we will consider granting a second wish to a deserving child. Over the past 30 years, we have granted over 7,000 wishes and are proud to have 10 chapters covering 13 states. For more information on The Marty Lyons Foundation, please visit our website at martylyonsfoundation.org.