

A second home base

Playroom brightens stays for families, kids in treatment

BY VALERIE KELLOGG
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One room at the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island in New Hyde Park brought a certain kind of amazⁿ joy to Michael Avitabile as the 8-year-old underwent four rounds of intense chemotherapy at the hospital next door.

Throughout his four-month treatment at the Steven and Alexandra Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York, the Wantagh boy and his family often retreated to the facility's so-called Mets Room. There they would turn on the 50-inch flat-screen television and settle into the orange and blue beanbag chairs as they watched the team's run for the pennant.

The Mets' 20-8 record in August was an especially welcome diversion for Michael, who was there until September and is now in remission from Burkitt's non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, said his father, Anthony.

"Michael's happiest memory in the Mets Room was being able to watch his favorite sport with his brothers," said Anthony, 41, a risk manager for Major League Baseball. "It was a true escape from reality and created a sense of normalcy."

Families who have seriously ill children being treated nearby can temporarily live at the Ronald McDonald House at no charge. A room has been devoted to the Mets since 2006 in honor of the team's support of the nonprofit.

With the 42-bedroom facility currently full, "our resident families have been gravitating to the Mets Room, a baseball fan's paradise these last few weeks," said House president Matthew Campo, adding that plans are under way to hold a World Series party there.

Two years ago, the Mets Room received a professional makeover



Designer Matthew Patrick Smyth created the baseball-themed Mets Room at the Ronald McDonald House of Long Island in New Hyde Park.



Baseball cards and photos line the walls of the Mets Room at the House, where Anthony and Brenda Avitabile stayed with their son, Michael.



from Manhattan designer Matthew Patrick Smyth as part of a show house to make the facility lighter, brighter and more comfortable for the families who stay there. Smyth, who has collaborated on several projects with design icon Gloria Vanderbilt, used a loud and proud Mets logo rug in the 300-square-foot space. Around it, he added such high-end and custom-crafted touches as molding worked into a baseball diamond design.

"Of anything I've done, this was the most rewarding," said Smyth, who launched his firm in 1988.

Now that the Mets are headed to the World Series, Smyth said, he plans to update a hallway where he carefully curated and artfully displayed a collection of Mets memorabilia, photographs and artwork. "A framed pennant," he said, "or a poster, or the cover of a magazine, or Newsday."

househunting

Open houses in **BAYPORT** this weekend



BY JESSICA LEWIS
Special to Newsday

This four-bedroom, 2½-bathroom Colonial on Academy Street in Bayport is on the market for \$799,000. Listing agent Mary Olsen of Century 21 Bays Edge Realty (631-563-1616) says the home has been rebuilt. "The owner was able to keep the quaint feel while incorporating the open floor plan and high-end modern conveniences," Olsen says. The eat-in kitchen features custom cabinetry, granite countertops and high-end appliances. "It is open to the great room and dining room," she says. The master suite is on the first floor and has an attached bathroom and walk-in closet. The additional three bedrooms are on the second floor, along with a full bathroom. This home also features a heated in-ground pool and a Jacuzzi.

It is one of several Bayport homes holding open houses this weekend:

SATURDAY
NOON TO 3 P.M.
Colonial for \$539,990 at 340 Renee Dr.

SUNDAY
11:30 A.M. TO 1 P.M.
Homeowners Association Unit for \$399,000 at 10 Cheshire Ct.

NOON TO 2 P.M.
Colonial for \$599,000 at 16 Slone Ct.

NOON TO 3 P.M.
Colonial for \$539,990 at 340 Renee Dr.

1 TO 3 P.M.
Colonial for \$799,000 at 95 Academy St.

1:30 TO 3:30 P.M.
Ranch for \$379,000 at 510 N. Gillette Ave.

CHECK FOR ADDITIONS, cancellations and changes at mlsli.com

BEFORE



AFTER



Looking for home makeovers

Have you done a room makeover with a designer or on the cheap? Tell us about it and the room might be featured in Newsday and newsday.com. E-mail **Valerie Kellogg** at kellogg@newsday.com.