Research Plan for Ronald McDonald House Charities Evaluation

Nicole Wallace

Old Dominion University

McDonald House Charity that I will be evaluating The Ronald is located at 404 Colley Avenue in Norfolk, Virginia. The mission statement of the charity house is to provide lodging for families of seriously ill children in order to keep families close to the children facing the medical challenges. The charity house is located directly across the street from two of Norfolk’s hospitals, the Children’s Hospital of the King’s Daughters and Norfolk Sentara Hospital. The two hospitals are within walking distance from the Ronald McDonald House Charity (RMHC). The services of the RMHC are offered to families of seriously ill children who are 22 years of age or younger, who live more than ten miles from the hospital, and who meet the financial requirements to qualify for stay there. Usually a social services agent will recommend a family to stay at the charity house. The goal of keeping the families close during the child’s treatment is to help aid in the healing process of the child and to provide some relief for the families using the charity house. This relief comes in both the form of financial relief and emotional relief.

Stakeholders

 There are many stakeholders involved in the Ronald McDonald Charity House. A few of these stakeholders would be the families that stay at the RMHC, the people who donate to the nonprofit charity, the staff who work at the charity house, the Department of Social Services, and the children staying at the nearby hospitals. There are others who donate time and supplies and still others who hold groups at the charity house for emotional support for the families staying there. My evaluation will involve both the families that are staying at the Ronald McDonald Charity House and the House Manager who is in charge of the charity house. The evaluation questions will be concerning the families’ children who are being treated at one of the local hospitals.

Type of Evaluation

 According to our text, there are two different areas where the evaluation focuses on improvement. When the evaluation is in the early life of the program and focuses on improvement of the program by attempting to correct mistakes or unanticipated problems it is known as a formative evaluation. When an evaluation is towards the end of a program or even once a program has ended is called a summative evaluation (Posavac, 2019). I will be conducting a monitoring evaluation. A monitoring evaluation measures a program that has already been implemented and it measures the program’s outcomes. Several evaluation models were given in our text. Rather simple and natural evaluations that make few assumptions of the program and basically focus on if the program participants are better off participating in the program are referred to as Black Box evaluations (Posavac, 2019). In the Objectives-Based model of evaluation, evaluators need to learn what the programs objectives are or what the mission is of the program and evaluate if the program is completing their objectives (Posavac, 2019). Programs are evaluated on what they claim they intend to accomplish. My evaluation is very simple and I believe it is a combination of both the Black Box method and the Objectives-Based evaluation. The survey that I will be distributing will be asking the participants if they are better off staying at the Ronald McDonald Charity House and why and my evaluation will be directly measuring the mission statement of the Ronald McDonald Charity House.

Research Questions

 I will be focusing my evaluation questions on two general research questions. The first question is “How does your staying at the Ronald McDonald Charity House influence the recovery process of your child who is staying at the local hospital?” The second question is “How has staying at the Ronald McDonald Charity House impacted the circumstances surrounding your child’s stay at the local hospital?” The second question highlights on other objectives stated by the RMCH as to providing financial burden relief and emotional support and the survey will be tailored to answer whether or not the charity house is meeting its goals and objectives in these areas. The evaluation questions are directly in line with the Objectives-Based model of evaluation. The questions asked are directly tailored to evaluate the Ronald McDonald Charity House’s mission statement and goals statements.

Data Collection

 I will be collecting data for my evaluation by distributing surveys to the families staying at the Ronald McDonald Charity House and by interviewing the Charity House Manager. The surveys will be based on variables relevant to the evaluation and will be based on the RMCH mission and goal statements. I will be distributing hard copies of the survey which is cost effective for me. The survey will be based on the participant’s perspectives on how the charity house has aided in the recovery process of their child and is highly qualitative. There will be no numbers measured or statistical measurements involved as in a quantitative evaluation. I do not have enough time or resources to conduct a quantitative evaluation of the questions posed. I consider my survey to be reliable in measures because all of the families staying at the RMCH are there for the same reasons and are going through similar situations. The surveys will be distributed to all of the families staying at the RMHC to eliminate the variable of poor sample selection. The capacity of the Ronald McDonald House Charity is 75 rooms. If the house is at full capacity I will distribute 75 evaluations. To respect the families’ privacy I will not be doing any direct observation. I will interview a member of the staff who is the House Manager. This interview may not reveal enough information to make an impact on the evaluation, but it will hopefully add to the evaluation by giving me an opportunity to see how the charity house is run and if there is any room for improvement from the manager’s perspective.

Research Method

 I will be using the qualitative research method since I am measuring the participants opinions to see if the charity is meeting its stated mission and goals. In a qualitative evaluation, an evaluator would use direct observations of the participants in the program, discussions with the participants, interviews with members of the staff, and artifacts from the program to distinguish it from a quantitative measurement (Posavac, 2019). It is a flexible form of evaluation that can be done quickly and it is used for programs with ill-defined objectives. My evaluation questions will be measuring something that is subjective to the participants’ opinions and is hard to measure numerically, however it will show a direct reflection of the program’s mission statement and if the program is meeting the goals it was intended to meet. In quantitative evaluations , an evaluator must use appropriate statistical analyses on the results (Posavac, 2019). My sample for data collection is not large enough and the information gathered is not quantitative enough to perform a quantitative evaluation. This research method works well for both the data that I will be gathering and the sample size. The interview will help me to understand the running of the RMCH and how families’ use the resources available at the charity house. The House Manager can also give me information concerning the occupancy rate within the house and how it has changed over time. The interview will add a different perspective to the evaluation. It will still be a one-group evaluation based on how the participants view their perceived outcomes of staying at the Ronald McDonald Charity House.

Linfield, K., Posavac, E. (2019). Program evaluation: Method and case studies. 9th edition.

 Routledge. pgs. 28-29, 77-79, 167, 176-177.