



# Women of DISTINCTION

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## HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Lori Cassia-Decker*

Lori Cassia-Decker co-founded the nonprofit organization, Angels of Light, with the mission of assisting families in the Hudson Valley whose lives have been upended by serious illness, accident or loss.

In 2016, Angels of Light became an official 501(c)(3), and has since served over 1,300 children. While the initial mission was to assist Hudson Valley children and families with life-threatening illnesses during the holiday season, it has now expanded to helping those in need, year-round, with medical bills, utilities, food, gas and more. This past holiday season, the organization provided more than 2,500 gifts to 300 children. Angels of Light works closely with Maria Fareri and Blythedale Children's Hospitals, Ronald McDonald House and MidHudson Regional Hospital's Pediatric Unit, and has initiated a campaign to purchase over 400 pairs of pajamas, pacifiers, cups, books and swaddles for pediatric units.

What began as an effort to take the stress of holiday shopping off the shoulders of parents impacted by illness quickly grew into a community effort to help other families throughout the Hudson Valley. Over 20 years ago, her husband and co-founder of Angels of Light, George, was coaching a CYO basketball game where he met a young player who was battling a life-threatening illness. The Deckers immediately began looking for a way to assist the family during the upcoming holiday season.

At 23, Ms. Cassia-Decker opened her first business, a Poughkeepsie fitness facility, and is currently co-owner of FORZA fitness in Millbrook. She is dedicated to community service, including chairing events for the Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation, American Heart Association, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and more. She is also a member of the board of the Mid-Hudson Road Runners Club.

For her dedication and efforts on behalf of her community, in 2019, Ms. Cassia-Decker received the prestigious Red Shoe Award from Ronald McDonald House, and was this year's "Community Spirit" Awardee at the DCRCC Gala.

Ms. Cassia-Decker is a triathlete and has run ten marathons to raise thousands of dollars for pediatric cancer. A mother of six children and a grandmother of 10, her greatest joy is her family, who have all been a special part of Angels of Light from the beginning.

***Lori Cassia-Decker was selected as a  
2022 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Sue Serino***

