

UPDate

Giving Rays of Hope

and Helping Brighten Transplant Families Lives This Summer...and Year-Round

Transplant families find respite, renewal, and a helping hand at the Family House.

Little Esther Grace Liu, a spirited five year old with big brown eyes, danced happily as a musician performed at the Family House after dinner one evening. No one would have guessed that Esther was the recipient of a double lung transplant. Esther is a symbol of the hope that shines through what is often a long and difficult journey for the transplant patients and families that stay with us. Now that the weather is warm, Esther is outside running and playing with her two brothers, Ezra, 10, and Ezekiel, 3, says her mother, Michelle. Esther has been learning to swim, hoping to keep up with Ezra, who swims competitively. She is also looking forward to going to summer camp. But what is most special about this summer is that on July 21st, the Liu family will celebrate Esther's one-year transplant anniversary.

The common bond among transplant families staying at the Family House was particularly comforting to Michelle and her husband, Moses. "You know that everybody understands the illness, in general, like having to deal with precautions surrounding immunosuppression," Michelle, a physician and commander in the Navy, explains. "Talking to a transplant recipient or family member while taking the Family House shuttle to the hospital, we heard many stories that were very encouraging to us."

continued on Family House page 2

Michelle with her 5 year old daughter, Esther Grace – double lung transplant recipient.

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Feeding body and soul.

The common bond shared among our guests shines through at mealtimes. Whether it's coffee or tea, a snack from our well-stocked pantry, or a hot dinner prepared and served by our Home Cook Heroes, families find comfort eating together at the Family House. Last year we served over 30,000 meals to our guests.

"We've met families that we are still in touch with, just by eating with them. It's wonderful!" says Michelle, whose husband and parents took turns staying at the Family House while Esther was in the hospital. "We didn't have to worry about grocery shopping. We could eat snacks all day, or even leftovers from the meal the night before."

Raquel Ross, who underwent a liver transplant, found a similar bond through meals at the Family House. Raquel's sister, Yolanda Adams, a retired Navy lieutenant, stayed with her most nights. Their teenage sons, Latrelle Ross, 15, and Stephen Adams, 16, remained at home in Virginia, except for brief visits, so they would not miss school. **Raquel (left)** – liver transplant recipient – with her sister and caregiver, **Yolanda**

"Sometimes Yolanda would get back to the Family House at 10 o'clock at night, after being with me at the hospital, and she could still get something to eat," remarks Raquel. When Yolanda went home for a few days over the holidays, she returned with

G It's like family here."

Ath Annual President's Reception An Evening of Recognition

This year's 4th Annual President's Reception, honoring the generosity of the Family House Founders' Circle and 2014 Family Circle members, was truly an affair not to be missed. Our community's dedication to helping transplant families and their commitment to the Family House mission have ensured that we are able to continue offering a "home away from home" for families traveling to the Philadelphia area to receive life-saving transplant care. The annual event – held this year at the Family House, and hosted by *Gift of Life's* President and CEO, Howard M. Nathan, along with the members of the Family House Advisory Board – was a night filled with recognition and gratitude.

Nearly 150 guests were in attendance at this year's reception – along with incredible guest speakers, the Honorable Ed Rendell and Ron Jaworski. The Family House was a sight to be seen with beautiful hydrangea, sunflower and tulip centerpieces and a backdrop of spring colors –



ABOVE, L-R: Jan L. Weinstock, Esq., VP Administration & General Counsel, *Gift of Life Donor Program,* Howard M. Nathan, President & CEO, *Gift of Life Donor Program,* Honorable Ed Rendell, Dhillon Shah, Ron Jaworski, Deb Shah, Mary Pat Kessler

the perfect complement to the celebratory atmosphere surrounding the President's Reception. Guests posed for pictures in a fun photo booth, enjoyed the delicious hors d'oeuvres, and indulged in the lovely desserts, generously donated by the Hyatt at the Bellevue.

We've met families that we are still in touch with...It's wonderful."

all of Raquel's favorite dishes. They shared their holiday treats with another guest returning late one night. "It touched my heart knowing we were able to do that."

Raquel's mother, Beverly, also came to stay at the Family House to be with Raquel. One morning, when Beverly went to make her breakfast in the Family House kitchen, another guest starting chatting with her about Raquel's favorite morning meals. "My mother chuckled that these total strangers know what I like every morning. I think it's funny that people who are stressing about their own loved ones remember little things like that about someone else. It's like a family here."

A comforting experience.

Sometimes, little things make a big difference in a transplant family's ability to cope. Whether it's a festive holiday celebration, or a quiet conversation with a member of our professional staff, we're always focused on making life better for our guests.

Spending the holidays away from home is especially difficult for our transplant families. Because Raquel was

transplanted on November 26th, required additional surgery on December 30th, and wouldn't return home until January 9th, it meant that she would be staying at the Family House throughout the holidays, from Thanksgiving through New Year's.

Spending the holidays at the Family House had its pleasant surprises, notes Raquel. "I woke up Christmas morning to find two parcels at my door. It wasn't about the type of gift or the value of the gift, it was the sentiment that the Family House thought to do something like that. They had a Christmas tree, and decorated the facility. It felt like home."

A social worker herself, Raquel says she especially appreciated the knowledge and sensitivity of Talia Giordano, MSW, LSW, the Family House social worker. "Talia was wonderful. She was able to tune into when we needed a moment. And she did it with such finesse, such respect, and such confidentiality." Talia also provides a wide range of educational and supportive services to transplant families outside of the Family House through our Caregiver *Life*line Program.

Giving families in need a helping hand.

Since the Family House opened in 2011, we have never turned away a family who could not pay, though one in every five transplant families cannot afford our modest \$40 nightly fee. Thankfully, our Adopt-A-Family Program is available to provide a helping hand to families in need. The program also helps to bridge the financial gap between our actual costs — \$160 per room per night — and the \$40 nightly fee we ask of families who are able to pay.

Many transplant families stay with us for weeks and months at a time, and then return regularly for follow-up care. During that time, we provide them with shelter, meals, transportation, laundry, and many other needed services. In order to keep our nightly fee affordable, and ensure that we can continue to help struggling transplant families this summer and year-round, we depend on charitable support from caring individuals, businesses, and foundations.

"The gift of life is the first gift," notes Michelle. "We always encourage people to be registered organ and tissue donors. To contribute to the Family House is another level of giving because you're not giving to just one person, you're giving to the family who is supporting the person who needs, or who has had, a transplant."

"By supporting the Family House," adds Raquel, "you are giving families a sense of one less thing to be concerned about. You're giving them peace of mind."

Your contribution of \$40 will adopt a family for one night, \$80 will cover a weekend, and \$120 will give a family three nights of peace of mind at the Family House. **Gifts of every amount will help bring rays of hope to our transplant families,** ensuring that they have a wonderful place to stay – and all the comforts of home this summer.

To make a gift to our Adopt-A-Family Program, please use the enclosed envelope or visit us online at www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org

PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION, continued from Family House page 2



The night's program began as Howard took the stage for his opening remarks. Almost four years ago, Howard's vision for completing the circle of care for transplant patients and their families was realized as Gift of Life Family House opened its doors in 2011. Howard's profound gratitude was evident, for it was with the support of the attendees, and all of our generous contributors, that the Family House has been able to provide this necessary resource to transplant patients, such as current Family House guest, Dhillon Shah.

Dhillon approached the podium and spoke with poise and grace far beyond his 12 years. Dressed to the nines in a velvet jacket and bowtie, Dhillon shared with the audience his personal experiences at the Family House. "Everyone here is like family to me now, and they make me smile and laugh many times a day. I am so happy we found out about the Family House and are able to stay here. Thank you for helping to make the Family House possible for families like mine." Dhillon captured the hearts of everyone at the event, closing his speech by saying "I love the house, but really hope to get my heart soon so I can go back home." Dhillon and his mom, Deborah, are from Chapel Hill, North Carolina and have been staying at the Family House awaiting a life-saving heart transplant for Dhillon since August 2014.

Ron "Jaws" Jaworski took the stage after Dhillon. Jaworski, a football legend, businessman and part owner and team president of the Philadelphia Soul, congratulated Dhillon on an incredible speech and even invited him to a Philadelphia Soul game as an honorary captain! Jaworski then spoke of the strong sense of social responsibility and community pride in Philadelphia. "Sometimes we all get caught up in sports and other things, but what you're doing is very, very special... to give people a peace of mind who are going through difficult times is something you can't put a price tag on."

No stranger to *Gift of Life Donor Program*, or to the Family House, Honorable Ed Rendell was next to take the stage. During his time as mayor of Philadelphia, Rendell announced the start of the 4th Annual Donor Dash – 16 years ago! And more recently, he was instrumental in supporting the construction costs associated with the Family House after approving a RCAP Grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the amount of 2 million dollars in 2011. Rendell spoke to the donors and volunteers, giving words of encouragement and inspiration. He urged volunteers and donors to go out and tell others about the incredible work that they do. "Good works are their own reward, but it's great when they can be reinforced. My charge to you? Go forth and multiply!"

After many rounds of applause and as the evening came to a close, Howard eloquently summed up the event saying, "Once again – thank you for helping us continue to brighten the lives of transplant patients and their families by providing comfort and hope here at the Family House."

The 4th Annual President's Reception was an amazing night held in recognition of our generous Founders' Circle and 2014 Family Circle Members. The Founders' Circle consists of those who have generously given \$10,000 or more to the Family House. The Family Circle consists of individuals who have graciously donated \$250 or more in a calendar year to support the Family House Annual Fund. If you would like to join the Family Circle or Founders' Circle, please contact Sara A. Cohen at scohen@giftoflifefamilyhouse.org or visit www.giftoflifefamilyhouse.org/support.



ABOVE: Founders' Circle members, Team Spiers, pose with Ron Jaworski at the 4th Annual Gift of Life Family House President's Reception. L-R: Lauren Spiers, Shannon Bowie, Ron Jaworski, Joan Spiers, Joan Spiers.

ABOVE LEFT: Family House guest, Dhillon Shah, at the podium with *Gift of Life Donor Program's* President & CEO Howard M. Nathan.





Baksy Family receives **Rays of Hope** at the Family House

"We were treated with care and compassion beyond anything we could have imagined."

John Paul Baksy had been sick since birth with a syndrome that

affected his digestive system and caused many health complications – and at the tender age of just nine months old, he contracted a serious virus that began to shut down his liver. His care team at their local hospital in Virginia declared the situation life threatening and his case was officially transferred to a children's hospital in Philadelphia. John Paul and his mother Bridget were flown by an emergency medical aircraft while his dad, Tibor, quickly drove by car to meet them in Philadelphia.

Soon after arriving in Philadelphia, John Paul was stabilized and officially listed for a lifesaving liver transplant. While Bridget stayed by John Paul's side, her husband Tibor was unsure of where he would be able to spend the night – until doctors referred him to Gift of Life Family House.

Tibor initially arrived at the Family House hoping for nothing more than a place to lay his head. What he found, he said, was so much more. It was just what he needed after the stressful days he had been through – it was a place where he could rest and regain his strength.

The day after John Paul was listed for a transplant his parents were notified that, miraculously, there was an organ match. John Paul was prepped for surgery and received his gift of life, a liver transplant, on January 25, 2015 at 3:00 A.M.

Just one month after his transplant, John Paul was released from the hospital and the Baksy Family checked in at the Family House to be close to his doctors for follow-up appointments. "My wife Bridget, John Paul and I showed up again a little nervous about how we were going to do so far away from home in a strange city. We were treated with care and compassion beyond anything we could have imagined."

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Tibor returned to Virginia and began commuting from their home state to Philadelphia, all while supporting their family financially and caring for their other five young children, all under 12 years of age.

> But he knew that his son and wife were in good hands. As Bridget explains, "It was so nice, even so far away from home. There were no worries. It's gated, protected, and there's the van. You can just sign on for the van and get to the hospital. They even helped with the car seat and stroller. It was a lifesaver...the Family House provided everything you can think of."

> The Family House shuttle service was able to help Bridget and John Paul to and from all their appointments at the hospital thanks to the dedication of our guest services volunteers and through financial assistance from Family House contributors.

> "It would have been so emotionally hard—we wouldn't be able to form connections with people." Bridget says of what she imagined John Paul's transplant journey would have been like without the Family House. "There'd be no community bonds. The House is like one big family. There's always someone to sit with. You don't even have to talk with them, sitting with them is enough. You never feel alone."

> "We are happy to report that John Paul is home with family and doing well," says Tibor. "We continue to have follow up appointments and stay at Gift of Life Family House. John Paul recognizes the staff and lights up when

he sees them. We will always view the staff and residents as part of our extended family and remain extremely grateful. Please know that the work you do is meaningful and changes lives, not only for the recipients, but also for the families that support them. I cannot imagine what we would have done without the Family House."

Tibor and Bridget with their six children: Isabel, Tibor, Matthew, Mark, Ann Marie, John Paul



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Caregiver Lifeline Spotlight

by Talia Gio<mark>rdano, MSW, LSW</mark> Gift of Life Family House Social Worker

PLANNING FOR VACATION!

During the warmer months, many caregivers may wonder "Will I get a vacation this year?" Coordinating vacations can be difficult, especially if you are a caregiver to a transplant patient. It is common for caregivers to have fears about taking a transplant patient on vacation far from their primary care doctor, transplant team and pharmacy. Caregivers may also feel guilt when taking a vacation without the patient. A vacation can be vital for many people because it allows for relaxation from a hectic schedule. It also can allow a caregiver to regroup and re-energize for whatever their tasks are when they return. Below are some tips that may be helpful when planning for time away.

Galk to the medical team and ask for resources

The medical team may have suggestions for prescriptions or other medical issues you may encounter while you and the patient are away. Your medical team may also be able to direct you to medical assistance in the area to where you will be traveling. Lastly, if you are traveling without the patient, it is important to inform the medical team that you will be away and that someone else will be assisting the patient during your absence.

2 Talk with friends, family and other support systems Similar to talking with the patient's medical team, it is important you let your support systems know of your plans so they can step in to assist as needed. Caregivers sometimes find it difficult to ask others for help, but your friends and family want to help, they just may not know how. Be specific with your requests – don't just say "I could really use your help while I'm away." Instead ask, "Would you be able to help me by taking [the transplant patient] to their doctor appointment at [this time]." Being specific about your needs will give you relief, knowing certain tasks are being handled, and it will help others to understand exactly how they can help.

3 Take time off even if you can't take a vacation

Many caregivers feel that time off needs to be spent taking care of the patient and this is untrue. All caregivers must take time for themselves to relax. Even if you are unable to take a vacation you may be able to take a "staycation." A "staycation" is when you take time off for yourself and stay local. During this time you can still do things you love and plan for local trips to museums, parks, or events in your area.

4 RELAX!

A vacation is a time for you to relax, re-energize and regroup. Use these tips to plan ahead so that during your time off you can focus on yourself. Enjoy the people, places and things you love and HAVE FUN!

For more information, email CaregiverLifeline@GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org

Support Families with your Selfie



Summer is finally here and that means great weather, fun activities and – of course – selfies! Show transplant families you care this summer and join us in spreading Rays of Hope by posting your very own sun selfie!

Gift of Life Family House is shedding new light on the typical self-portrait in celebration of summer and in honor of the transplant families we serve. Grab a friend or a whole group, a pet, a fun prop or just put your best selfie face on and head outside. Then, try to get the sun's rays behind you, strike a pose and snap a picture – it doesn't have to be perfect, just have fun!

Once you've selected your favorite sun selfie, upload it to Instagram, Twitter, Facebook or directly to our sun selfie gallery. Don't forget to use the hashtag #FHraysofhope and tag our page. If you post it on your own social media page, and your profile is public, your photo will also appear in our Rays of Hope photo gallery page, so be sure to check it out!

Will you be the one to help us reach our goal of 100 #FHraysofhope sun selfies? Not only will you help us spread awareness about the Family House, but you will also help us brighten the lives of the transplant families we serve. Even something as simple as sharing a picture and tagging the Family House helps us in our mission to provide a comfortable and bright "home away from home" for those traveling to Philadelphia seeking the gift of life. So what are you waiting for. Head outside and snap a pic! And encourage your friends and family to do the same!

Have fun, be creative and help us bring #FHraysofhope to transplant families this summer!

LEGACY SOCIETY

Making a planned gift is easy

Planned gifts can take many forms including cash, stocks, bonds, or other property. People who make charitable gifts through their estate plans may find that they are able to commit to larger gifts than they thought possible. And there are often tax advantages that benefit the donor, the estate and the beneficiaries.

Here are four options to consider for making a planned gift to Gift of Life Family House:

1. Bequests – Name us as a beneficiary when you write your will or, if you already have a will, add a codicil amending it to include us.

2. Charitable Gift Annuities (CGA) – In return for your irrevocable gift to us of cash or stock, we agree to pay you an annuity (a fixed rate of return) over your lifetime. The annuity can also include your spouse or other beneficiary.

3. Life Insurance Policies – Name us as a beneficiary to a new or existing life insurance policy by completing a beneficiary designation form provided by your insurer.

4. IRAs and other Qualified Retirement Plans – Designate us to receive all or part of your IRA or other qualified retirement plan.

Thank you to all the Home Cook Heroes

who generously donate their time to serve meals to the transplant patients and families that call Gift of Life Family House "home."

The Home Cook Heroes program was designed to provide an opportunity for volunteer groups to prepare and serve nutritious meals to the transplant patients and families staying at the Family House. Recognizing the fact that most transplant patients and their families do not have the resources, time or money to prepare a healthy home-cooked meal, this program has been crucial to our mission of providing care to families in their time of need.



We are so grateful for "Ellen Abrohms and Friends," a Home Cook Hero team that frequently provides delicious meals for transplant families. L-R: Louise Berlin, Maxine Morgan, Gail Moldover, Ellen Abrohms.

It is a pleasure to recognize Home Cook Hero groups from January - April 2015:

7NE Jefferson Transplant Team Abington Hospital AIG Benefit Solutions American College of Physicians Amjed Family Angels of Christmas Ann, Dina, Jon and Wanda **Anonymous Groups** Arcadia for a Better Community Arden Theatre Company **Ascend Temple Chapter** AtlantiCare **Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP Bauernschmidt Family Bethany AME Church Women of Faith Bethel Church - April's Friends**

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FOR PLANNED GIVING

Enjoy recognition during your lifetime as a Gift of Life Family House Legacy Society member

Donors who notify us that they have made planned gifts will be recognized – during their lifetimes – as members of our prestigious Legacy Society. Members will be recognized in the quarterly newsletter and on our website, and will be invited to our yearly President's Appreciation Reception. While gifts of all amounts are appreciated, donors who have made planned gifts of \$10,000 or more will also be recognized on our Legacy Society Wall that will be located in Family House's living room.

Start planning for the future, today

To learn more about making a planned gift, or if you have already named us in your will, please contact Sara A. Cohen, Development Manager at 267-546-9812 or scohen@giftoflifefamilyhouse.org.

As with any tax-deductible gift, you should consult with your tax advisor to determine the degree to which your gift may result in tax advantages for you, your estate, and your beneficiaries.

Already have us in your will? Let us know so you can celebrate with us now!

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for your loyal support and continued generosity in helping us care for transplant patients and families at Gift of Life Family House

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Thank you to those who dedicated an engraved paver

Susan Bonner Jean and Stanley Chenoweth

We apologize for any errors or omissions and ask that you contact Allison Hoffman at 267-546-9800 ext.114 or ahoffman@giftoflifefamilyhouse.org to report any corrections.

A Special Thank You to Our Volunteers in the Community for Coordinating Fundraising Events to Support the Mission of Gift of Life Family House

3rd Annual RyanStrong 5K Beef and Beer Fundraiser hosted by Angels for Ally Dress Down Day coordinated by School Lane Charter School Staff Family House Fundraiser hosted by Weidner's Deli New Garden Elementary 4th Grade Class Penny War The Project Management Institute, Inc. Employee Holiday Luncheon Valentine's Day Craft Sale hosted by the 3rd Grade Students at Bingham Elementary School Wish List Drive coordinated by the American College of Physicians Wish List Drive coordinated by the CHOP Respiratory Department Wish List Drive coordinated by the Lehigh Valley Coalition for Organ and Tissue Donation Wish List Drive coordinated by the McGinty and Brusich Families Wish List Drive coordinated by Wasntrong Wish List Drive coordinated by Wilson Karate Academy

To make a contribution to Gift of Life Family House, please visit www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org.

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