

# URDate

**GIVE THE GIFT OF** 





We provide a warm and caring 'home away from home' at holiday time and year-round.

When Elsy and Walter Atencio got the call that a donor match had been found for their 11-year-old daughter Sofia who desperately needed new lungs, they raced from their home in North Jersey to get to Philadelphia in time.

Once Sofia was in surgery, the Atencios' next hurdle was figuring out where they would stay for the days, weeks, or months of posttransplant care. Thankfully, we had a room for them at Gift of Life Family House.

LEFT: Elsy Atencio with her twin daughters, Sofia and Stefani.

But their story doesn't end there. Just as Sofia was recovering from transplant surgery, her identical twin sister, Stefani, who is currently listed for transplant, became ill and had to be hospitalized in Philadelphia. When Stefani was well enough she, too, came to the Family House.

Five years ago, Sofia and Stefani were diagnosed with Childhood Interstitial Lung Disease (chILD), a rare respiratory disorder that encompasses a range of diseases with different outlooks. In their case, doctors determined that both of them would eventually need lung transplants.

\*\*Continued on Family House page 2\*\*





"In the beginning we were shocked that this could happen to not one, but both of our daughters," says Elsy. "After a while, though, we started to have faith that everything would turn out okay. Faith in God, optimism, and seeing results with Sofia have made it much easier."

Sofia is back in school and doing well. Stefani is still waiting for her own precious gift of life. They turned 12 in September.

"The whole environment of the Family House helped take a huge weight off of our shoulders, and allowed us to solely focus on Sofia's recovery," adds Elsy.

#### Feeling welcomed like family

Joan and Bob Shuck could not possibly have prepared themselves for what happened to their son, Daniel, a high school senior, athlete and honor student. In May, just weeks before graduation, Daniel developed a viral infection that caused his heart valves to fail and severely damaged his heart muscle.

Daniel was flown to Philadelphia for treatment from the hospital near their home in Bethlehem, Pa. When he was deemed strong enough, he was placed at the top of the organ transplant waitlist because of his urgent need. Daniel received his gift of life, a heart transplant, on August 9th.



"I absolutely loved it at the Family House."

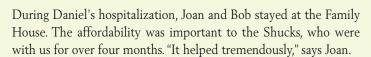
—Daniel Shuck

#### Knowing you're not alone

Darryl Price's wife, Terri, spent 42 nights at the Family House this past summer while he recovered from a life-saving double lung transplant.

Connecting with other patients' wives staying at the Family House aided Terri's own wellbeing as a caregiver, she says. "It helped me realize I wasn't alone. Even though we were talking about our husbands and their illnesses, we were also talking about how we had to take care of ourselves. We were encouraging and supporting each other."

# "We didn't feel like we were a burden on anybody, we felt welcomed — like we were family."—Bob Shuck



When Daniel was stable, the Shucks would eat dinner at the Family House and then return to the hospital. They are very thankful for the Home Cook Heroes volunteers who prepared and served the meals. As it turned out, staff from the hospital where Daniel was being treated made dinner one night.

"We didn't feel like we were a burden on anybody, we felt welcomed – like we were family. It's a place you can relax, as much as you can relax with what's on your mind." explains Bob.

Knowing that his parents' needs were being met put Daniel's mind at ease and helped in his care. "They were able to be with me and focus on what I needed." Later on when he stayed at the Family House himself, he says it was a great experience. "I absolutely loved it at the Family House. Everybody greeted me like I had been there for months."

Now Daniel is working to build up his strength so that next year he can attend the University of Scranton, which granted him a deferment due to his health crisis. He'll be entering a five-year master's degree program in Occupational Therapy. "I enjoy knowing that someday I can help people like me get back to doing all the things that they like to do."

An all-around athlete and avid tennis player, Darryl began feeling ill about three years ago. It took a while for doctors to pinpoint what was wrong, but when they did, it was serious – Pulmonary Fibrosis, a disease that causes scar tissue to build up inside the lungs, making it hard to breathe. Sometimes, as it was in Darryl's case, there is no known cause.

As his health deteriorated over time, it became clear that Darryl needed a lung transplant – and soon. Terri and Darryl endured five dry runs from their North Jersey home to transplant centers in New York City and Philadelphia where he was dually listed. Each time, donor lungs were available, but ultimately not accepted by the surgeons.

Finally, on June 24th, on their sixth try, and after many hours of waiting at the hospital in Philadelphia, they got the good news that the donor lungs were suitable and Darryl would receive his gift of life. He continues to get stronger each day and hopes to return to work soon. He has already gotten back on the tennis court

Staying at the Family House helped Terri focus on Darryl's needs because her needs were being met. "It took a load off my mind." she says. "I didn't have to think about the day to day: where am I going to eat, how am I going to get laundry done, and all that other routine stuff. It gave me peace of mind."

#### Finding strength in community

Darryl believes that helping other patients and family caregivers who need to be uplifted or reassured has helped him in his own recovery. The Family House, he says, is a unique place that fosters this kind of person-to-person support.

"At the Family House, you can ask a person, 'Are you alone?' which would be an odd question to ask a total stranger in any other setting. But in the context of the Family House, not only can you ask that question, but you can expect a long, meaningful conversation that both parties benefit from." explains Darryl.

The strength of being in a community at the Family House is fostered by the daily interactions with fellow transplant patients and families, volunteers — many of whom are transplant or donor families — and the staff.

"When I stay at the Family House, I can speak in a kind of shorthand. It's much easier to deal with the issues that come up. For example, if I ask for a refrigerator in my room, the staff knows that it's likely that I'm taking medication that needs to be refrigerated. I don't have to explain why or give justifications, they just understand it."

#### Honoring a lifesaving gift

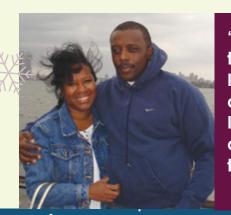
It's hard for transplant patients and families to put into words their gratitude for the gift of life that they have received, or for them to express the pain that they feel for their donor family's tragic loss.

"Somebody passed away and gave you the ultimate gift – they gave you another chance at living," says Darryl. "So you have to be mindful

of them, mindful of the loss that the family suffered." Each day he spends time thinking of ways that he can show his gratitude.

"Every morning when I take my temperature, every time I make decisions about what I eat, every time I give a kind word to somebody, or volunteer, or do something to extend myself to other people, I think about honoring the gift."

In September, Darryl and Terri participated with family and friends in an annual run/walk for Pulmonary Fibrosis. Their team wore t-shirts that read "O2 Addict," a slogan that Darryl coined and is even on his license plate. It's all part of his mission to engage people in a serious discussion about lung disease, finding a cure, and promoting organ donation. "When we did this recent walk, I asked my friends and family not only to contribute to the cause, I asked them to consider organ donation because it's the ultimate gift that you can give someone." adds Terri.



"When I stay at the Family House, I can speak in a kind of shorthand. It's much easier to deal with the issues that come up."

— Darryl Price

## GIVING THE GIFT OF 'HOME'

Families of transplant patients often have no idea how long they will need to stay at the Family House. So much depends on the success of their loved one's progress after transplant. The longer a family is uprooted from their everyday lives, the more help they will need from us.

Charitable support from friends like you enables us to provide financial subsidies to families who can't afford our low \$40 nightly fee. Your generosity also helps us bridge the gap between our nightly fee and our actual cost, which is \$165 per room per night.

You can help us give the gift of 'home' this holiday season and year-round to families in need by making a tax-deductible contribution to our Adopt-A-Family Program. For just \$40, you can provide a family with lodging, meals, transportation, counseling, and more for one night, \$80 for a weekend, or \$120 for three nights. Gifts of every amount are appreciated and will make a difference in the lives of the families we serve.

If you are able to give a special gift of \$250 or more, you will become a member of our Family Circle. As our way of welcoming you into this prestigious group of supporters, we will send you our Family House holiday collectable – a gift from our home to yours.

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM, please use the enclosed envelope or visit us online at www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org.

Gifts postmarked by December 31st are tax-deductible in 2016.



### Students at The Lawrenceville School

in New Jersey come together to support transplant families and the Family House

You might recognize Arthur Thomas, a heart transplant recipient who walked his donor's daughter down the aisle at her wedding last August. That sweet moment became a viral video sensation. It has been viewed by millions and has made a lasting impression on people around the world. But Arthur's story and impact hits closer to home in a small community in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, where a group of students came together to support the Gift of Life Family House and raise awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation.

Twenty-six years ago, Arthur "Tom" Thomas was diagnosed with ventricular tachycardia, a condition that causes the lower heart chambers to beat too quickly. During most of that time, Arthur was able to live comfortably without any serious problems. But in 2006, his condition worsened and he was in congestive heart failure. He finally received the news shortly after that a match had been found and he'd be receiving his precious gift of life with only hours to spare.

In 2007, just one year after receiving his life-saving transplant, Arthur decided he wanted to give back. He set out to educate students about the transplant process at The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey where he used to be a college advisor to students. His wife, Nancy, currently serves as a Dean of the school. Arthur's story inspired students to take the initiative to help spread awareness, and support those whose stories are similar to his. As a result, students created the Lives Saving Lives Club and asked Arthur to mentor as a faculty advisor. The Lives Saving Lives Club is completely student-operated and hosts a number of fundraisers and benefits, which all raise money for Gift of Life Family House. Students have turned what started as a small club into a community-wide effort to raise awareness and funds - and their success has been truly remarkable! The club's devotion to the Family House began back in 2009 when the initial campaign to start the House began - and has since raised over \$30,000! Their outstanding support and dedication to our mission helps provide our guests with comfortable lodging, hot meals, a fully stocked pantry, a free shuttle service and so much more. Such support helps alleviate stress transplant patients and families face day-to-day – mentally, physically and emotionally.

When the students of the Lives Saving Lives Club learned that construction for the Family House was breaking ground in 2011, they began to focus on both donation awareness and supporting transplant patients and families who come to Philadelphia for transplant-related care. The club hosts an annual Organ Donor

Awareness Benefit Dinner where students, parents, family members and guests can enjoy a four-course meal and live string quartet. Proceeds raised from the event went toward programs at the Family House – such as the Adopt-A-Family Program. This program, thanks to generous supporters like the Lives Saving Lives Club, allows the Family House to keep nightly fees low, and ensures that no family will be turned away because they can't afford to pay. In addition to their benefit, the club frequently visits the Family House to prepare and serve meals for transplant families through the Home Cook Hero Program. Arthur knows that visiting with transplant families and patients lets his students see the impact they have on their community. "The students are seeing folks who are going through this. It's very real to them, and that's special."

The members of the Lives Saving Lives Club are truly making a difference in the community, and have helped many who are going through a similar journey that Arthur went through ten years ago. This experience is not only beneficial for the Family House and transplant families, but also an incredible eye-opener for members in the club. "With this club, I wanted to give the students a different perspective, and to show them just how precious life is," said Arthur.

Groups and clubs, like the Lives Saving Lives Club, are one of the reasons the Family House is able to offer a "home away from home" to thousands of transplant patients and their families. Arthur and his students are an example of how one small step can lead to helping the greater good.





To recognize the commitment of the students of the Lives Saving Lives Club, Gift of Life Family House is proud to name the South Fountain in the Legacy Garden in their honor. This is permanent recognition that will be seen by thousands of families, volunteers and visitors each year.

Find out ways you can make a difference in the lives of others

by visiting us at www.giftoflifefamilyhouse.org/support.

UPPER LEFT: Nancy and Arthur "Tom" Thomas.

LEFT: Lives Saving Lives Club students outside The Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, NJ.

ABOVE TOP: Lives Saving Lives Club students at their yearly dinner fundraiser. BOTTOM: Lives Saving Lives Club students volunteering as part of the Home Cook Heroes Program at Gift of Life Family House.

# MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION WITH A PLANNED GIFT TO GIFT OF LIFE FAMILY HOUSE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Have you ever wondered how the people and charities you care about will fair when you are no longer here to help them? A good way to make certain that your values live on is by writing down what's important to you. Another is by making provisions in your estate plan to ensure your charitable support continues.

By including the Family House in your will/bequest you can help to ensure that the Family House is able to maintain their affordable fees and broad array of services for all who need support— now and in the future. It is an easy and simple way that you can support the future of the Family House, and continue care for transplant patients and families. Bequests can be a percentage of the remainder of your estate or a specific dollar amount. If you already have prepared a will, you can simply add a codicil amending it to include the Family House.

IS YOUR WILL DUE FOR AN UPDATE? Here are a few reasons that individuals or couples may need to update their will:

- · A change in marital status
- The birth or adoption of a child or grandchild
- The death of an individual included in your will
- Retirement or relocation to another state
- A change in assets
- The start of a new business
- New tax laws

#### ALREADY INCLUDED THE FAMILY HOUSE IN

**YOUR WILL?** Let us know so we can celebrate with you now! Enjoy recognition today as a Legacy Society member. Donors who notify us that they have made arrangements for planned gifts will be recognized as members of our prestigious Legacy Society. Visit **www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org** for more information.

TO DISCUSS MAKING A PLANNED GIFT TO GIFT OF LIFE FAMILY HOUSE OR IF YOU HAVE ALREADY NAMED US IN YOUR WILL, please contact Sara Cohen, Development Manager at 267-546-9812 or email scohen@giftoflifefamilyhouse.org.

Please consult your attorney, tax advisor or financial advisor before making a bequest or updating your estate plan.



# HOME COOK HEROES

## Caregiver Lifeline Spotlight

by Lisa Beth Maguire, Founder and CEO of GetRealGetRaw. GetRealGetRaw was born out of Lisa's belief that real, raw, organic foods can heal the mind and body.

#### Raw Food Diet Can Make a Difference for Caregivers

Caregiving can cause so many stressors, which can often lead to physical health issues. The last thing you want is to have your own health concerns when you are caring for the health of your loved one! I want to share my story with you. Six years ago I was nearly crippled with arthritis. We had just installed a home elevator because I could barely climb stairs. My daughter wanted to try a raw food diet, so I decided to try it with her. After four weeks on this diet I flew to Colorado, forgetting my arthritis medicine. I thought after a day or two without my meds I wouldn't be able to walk. To my amazement that never happened. From that day I have never taken another arthritis pill or any other medication for pain. I didn't know that my arthritis was reversible, but I soon found out!

This was my wake-up call! It was such an "in my face" message – it is ALL about food! It is as much about what you do eat as what you don't eat. By week six, I knew I had to share my experience with everyone I could reach. That was when I decided to create Get Real Get Raw (GRGR).

It starts with adding two words to your vocabulary: Raw Foods. These are plant-based foods "eaten in their whole, natural, uncooked and unprocessed state." This way, they contain all the minerals and vitamins that our bodies need to function and thrive. I encourage you to research "Raw Foods" online. You will find a world of information on the healing power of raw food and many stories from others who have gone on a raw food diet

Although I believe in the power of a raw food diet when ill, my goal is to educate people on the illness prevention power of raw food. Though every single raw food you add to your diet is powerful and important, adding GREENS is the real magic. Just adding one daily organic green smoothie, like the Groothie I created, is a giant step forward.

The Standard American Diet largely consists of processed junk food that hurts your body. When I started GRGR, I created an easy, delicious way to provide the body with a powerful dose of real nutrients. That was the beginning of the Groothie. Greens are the perfect food and when they are blended, they are healing. I wanted to find a way to get people to consume more greens and I believe the best way to do so is by adding greens to a fruit-filled smoothie.

Since I created the Groothie, I have heard countless stories of improved health by making a healthy green smoothie a part of everyday life. I encourage you to try the Groothie at home, before doctors' appointments or long days in the hospital. It can be a great addition to your life to help to maintain healthy practices while you are caring for your loved one.

#### **Groothie Smoothie Recipe**

#### Ingredients

2 organic apples (diced)

3-4 bananas (frozen)

2 cups pineapple (diced)

2 handfuls of organic dark leafy greens (chopped)

2 cups filtered water

#### Instructions

1. Wash all ingredients.

- 2 Peel bananas and pineapples.
- 3. Dice all fruits.
- 4. Add water.

5. Place ingredients in blender and blend until smooth. Recipe makes 4 (16oz) servings

You can read more about Get Real Get Raw and the Groothie Smoothie by visiting www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.com/resources

Always consult your physician before altering or starting a new diet.



of GetRealGetRay

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### MAKING A DIFFERENCE -ONE MEAL AT A TIME!

Thank you to all the Home Cook Hero program volunteers who prepared healthy, home-cooked dinners each night to support transplant patients and their families at Gift of Life Family house.

#### We are proud to recognize Home Cook Hero volunteer groups from August-October 2016

Kelly Antczak and Friends

Kraft Crew



# To our most gracious contributors:

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

#### Contributions of \$50 or more received between AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2016

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1st Annual Gift of Life Beef and Beer in memory of Kevin Norris

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The Lawrenceville School's Lives Saving Lives Club Fundraiser

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Smyrna High School Softball Fundraiser in Memory of Donnie Shaner

Team Matt collection benefiting Gift of Life Family House

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Team Faith, Hope, Love hosted by Suzanne Rockovits

An online fundraiser is one of the easiest and most effective ways to help

support the Family House. Simply create a personal or team fundraising page

on the Family House's CrowdRise page and share it with your friends, family

Visit www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org for more information.

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soliphant@giftoflifefamilyhouse.org

to report any corrections.

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