

UPDATE

GIVE THE GIFT OF

Home

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



to transplant families far from their own

Asher has a laugh that can light up any room. "He's such a little goofball and loves to make you laugh," his mom, Kendra, says.

However, Asher wasn't always the happy, expressive baby he is today. He's had to make it through some tough medical challenges.

At just six weeks old, Asher was placed on the transplant list to wait for a new heart. Before he was born, he was diagnosed with a heart disease after a test revealed something wasn't quite right.

While Asher waited for his second chance at life, he went into end stage heart failure. His kidneys and liver also began to shut down. His doctors placed him on a Berlin heart to keep him alive until he could receive a heart transplant.

Asher's strong spirit surprised everyone. "He began doing normal baby things," Kendra says. "He jumped from 10 to 15 pounds and became so much more expressive. He would smile and laugh while he watched people in the hospital."

The day finally came when Asher and Kendra received news that he would receive his new heart. **Asher received his precious gift of life because of a compassionate family's decision—one that saved his life.** Although Asher was able to leave the hospital, he and Kendra weren't able to return home to their family right away. His doctors needed him to stay close by so they could monitor his progress. Thankfully, they were able to stay at Gift of Life Family House... a place that became Asher's *first* home.



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FINDING HOME AT THE FAMILY HOUSE

Kendra and Asher live about two hours away from Philadelphia, where they need to be to monitor Asher's progress. Traveling back and forth several times a week would be difficult. Thankfully, they can find the comforts of home here at the Family House.

"I love that the Family House is so clean and that it's safe for immunosuppressed patients like Asher," Kendra says. "Dinner is always made every night, which is wonderful. The last thing I want to do is cook when I get back from the hospital. It's also so family-oriented. It was so easy for me to be a mom spending time with my children."

While Kendra took care of Asher, her father and other two children came down to spend time with them on the weekends.

"One day we sat down in the Activity Center and watched movies all day," she says. "We also eat dinner together in the garden and go on walks. We even went to a festival at one of the parks nearby. My children really need their family to be together, too. I love seeing them healthy and thinking to myself that one day, that will be Asher."

At the Family House, Kendra is also able to take care of herself. She takes bubble baths in her private bathroom, uses the gym, reads in the library, sits outside, and participates in the evening activities with her daughter.

Kendra was grateful to be surrounded by a community of other transplant families who get it.

"Learning from [the other transplant families] gives me hope," she says. "I'm less stressed because there are so many people to talk to. I didn't realize how nice that'd be."

GETTING THROUGH IT TOGETHER

Dennis has lived with lung disease for almost 40 years. As his lung function declined, he required inhalers and oxygen to breathe. His doctor told him he needed a lung transplant to save his life.

Dennis and his family traveled from their home in upstate New York to Philadelphia for medical care. He was placed on the transplant waiting list and was told he would need to return to Philadelphia every three months so doctors could monitor his health. Dennis and his family were so grateful to receive the call that a set of lungs donated by a selfless donor was a match for him. He and his wife, Kathy, raced to Philadelphia for the surgery.

While Dennis was in the hospital, Kathy was able to stay close by at the Family House. He was later able to join her while he recovered, as was their young son, Austin.

"The Family House is our safe haven," Kathy says. "It's been such a blessing to have a place to sleep at night and knowing that you can have your family with you to get through a difficult time."

At the Family House, Dennis, Kathy, and Austin were able to meet other families on the transplant journey and talk about what they were going through. **"The first day we got here, we met someone who had a lung transplant," Austin says. "He told us about his story and it made me feel really good about my dad's transplant."**

Dennis, Kathy, and Austin were also able to spend time together as a family. "Dennis and Austin like to play pool downstairs and Austin and I like to go shopping," Kathy says.

"I don't think I could go through this process without them," Dennis says. "Without Kathy, I wouldn't be here. She's my stone."

At the Family House, not only do Kathy, Dennis and Austin have each other, but they have a warm meal each evening, transportation to and from the hospital for Dennis' follow-up appointments, and a supportive community by their sides.



"I don't think you can get anything like this anywhere else," Dennis says.

Dennis and his family continue to utilize the Family House as they return to Philadelphia for follow-up care. "I've experienced some complications from my transplant," Dennis explains. "The Family House has been such a blessing to us."



COMFORT FROM FAMILY

After a routine physical revealed spots on Anthony's lungs, he was diagnosed with lung disease in 2005. He was referred to a doctor in Philadelphia, two and a half hours away from his home in the Poconos.

Because Anthony's condition wasn't improving, his doctor told him he would need a double lung transplant. Before he could officially be placed on the waiting list, he had to go through rounds of testing which required several trips to and from Philadelphia.

At the hospital, Anthony and his wife, Wanda, were referred to a few places to stay, but they chose to come to the Family House. "It just stuck out," says Wanda. "It felt like the place to come."

Anthony and Wanda stayed at the Family House intermittently during Anthony's pre-transplant treatment and again for three months while he recovered from his transplant surgery. They were joined by their two youngest children, Tanasia, 11, and Charles, 13. Their son, Kavon, 18, was also able to join them on the weekends.

"Having my family here made it so much easier mentally and emotionally," says Wanda. "I didn't have to worry about where my young children were."

While Anthony received the care he needed in the hospital, Wanda and their children were able to talk to other transplant families and participate in our support groups. "It was very easy to chat with other caregivers," Wanda says. "We all have a major life change in common." They were also able to take the shuttle back and forth from the hospital to visit Anthony.

When Anthony joined his family at the Family House, he agreed: "I felt so comfortable here. All of the people here, we come from

different backgrounds, but we all have one common goal, which is to get better," he says.

Anthony and Wanda's stay also fell during the holidays—they spent Thanksgiving and Christmas at the Family House.

"It felt like we were at home for the holidays waking up in our own bed," Anthony says. "Our family and friends were able to come visit us, too."

"My heart was so overwhelmed to see Christmas presents outside of our door," Wanda says. "My kids were so happy. The Family House made our time away from home very special with an extended family."

GIVE THE GIFT OF Home

Many of our transplant families are far from home and far from their families.

This holiday season, you can give them the gift of home. At Gift of Life Family House, transplant families are surrounded by people who care—whether it be their own family members, Family House staff, or the other transplant families staying here—they never have to feel like they're on their own.

At the Family House, families can be together...and when families are together, they can hope together, fight together, and recover together.

You can help 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 \$40, you can help provide a family with lodging, meals, transportation, counseling, and support for one night, \$80 for a weekend, or \$120 for three nights. You can also help ensure that no family is ever turned away from the Family House due to an inability to pay. Gifts of every amount are appreciated and will make a difference in the lives of the transplant 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.

To make a contribution to support families like Asher, Dennis, Anthony's, please use the enclosed envelope or visit us online at GiftOfLifeFamilyHouse.org.

Gifts postmarked by December 31st are tax-deductible in 2019.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

Raise \$80 by Giving Tuesday to support two room nights at the Family House and win a Family House tee!

Will you help kick off the season of giving by supporting the Family House and the transplant families we serve through our '80in8' fundraiser?

All you have to do is set up a Facebook fundraiser on or after November 26th and raise at least \$80 in 8 days. We ask families to pay \$40 a night to stay at the Family House. Your fundraiser will help give the gift of home for two nights.

Do it by midnight on Giving Tuesday 12/3 to win a Family House t-shirt that you can proudly wear to support our mission!

STARTS:
Tuesday,
NOV. 26
(anytime)

ENDS:
Giving Tuesday,
DEC. 3
(midnight)

Once you've successfully completed your Facebook fundraiser, let us know by emailing info@gifttolifefamilyhouse.org so we can send you your t-shirt!

80in8 fundraiser is an easy way to help support transplant families who cannot afford the nightly fee at the Family House.



Thank you for supporting the 15TH ANNUAL KIDNEY OPEN

On August 26, 2019, *Gift of Life* President and CEO Howard M. Nathan and Dan Sinnott co-hosted our 15th annual Kidney Open Golf Outing at the DuPont Country in Wilmington, DE.

More than \$103,000 was raised for Gift of Life Family House's Adopt-A-Family Program, which subsidizes the cost of staying at the Family House to keep the room fee low. The program also covers costs for families who cannot afford the nightly fee, ensuring no family is ever turned away due to an inability to pay.

Gift of Life Family House is grateful to all of the generous sponsors, volunteers, and the 138 golfers who supported our event!

Golfers from JeffSTAT at the Kidney Open Golf Outing



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Venture Jets
Waters Medical Systems



Butterflies, I.N.C.



Temple University Health System



Rowan Volunteers

Home COOK HEROES

The Family House is proud to recognize volunteer groups who supported the Home Cook Heroes program from May-August 2019

4West, Jefferson Health Northeast
AG Friends
Allen Family
Alpha Omega Epsilon- Beta Mu
April and Roman
AtlantiCare – Compliance Team
AtlantiCare Customer Experience
AtlantiCare Emergency Department – Patient Access Team
AtlantiCare ICU
Beth O'Brien's Giving Group
Bidwell Family
Blank Rome LLP
Blue Mountain Ambassadors
Bonnelle Family
Brigid and Friends
Busillo Family
Butterflies I.N.C.
CAC Women Ministry
Care Crew (AmeriHealth Caritas)
Carson Valley Children's Aid
Charu's Champions
CHOP 5 South
CHOP Pulmonary Nurses
Christiana Care – Surgical Critical Care
Clark Hill
Comhar
Congregation M'Kor Shalom
Dave's Dinner
DCCC Surgical Tech
Donna Sykes

Elizabethtown College Alumni
Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church
Farmsworth Foodies
Feeding Team at CHOP
Fiorelli Family
Five Below Candy Create Merch Team
Four Ladies and Friends
Friends of John Clyde
Gallagher Benefit Services
Gamma Sigma Sigma – Drexel University
Gift of Life TIC-HD Crew
GLDP Transplant Coordinators
Good Shepherd Penn Partners
Gwynedd Mercy University
Hearts of Gold
Home2Suites by Hilton
Iannelli Family
Jefferson Avenue Insurance
Jefferson Health NJ Surgical Services
Jefferson HF/Cardiac Transplant
Jefferson Hospital Center City Med ICU
Jefferson Northeast Frankford Campus ED
JHN NICU ICU
Joshua's Legacy
Kemmerer Family and Friends
La Famiglia Dei Fratelli
Laura and Friends

Lodge No. 2 – Pennsylvania Free Masons
Marquis vvv Dot Foundation
Morgan Stanley
MTF Biologics
Nagorsky Family
Nazareth Hospital
NCL – Valley Forge Chapter
Neumann University Nursing Alumni Association
New Vision Pioneers
PA Masons (#52)
PA Masons (Lodge #751)
PA Masons Lodge 751
Pat and Peter's Pals
Pat's Wings
Penn Medicine Chester County ER Nurses
Penn Medicine Chester County Medicine
Penn Medicine Chester County Nurses
Penn Presbyterian Trauma Intensive Care
Peruto Family and Friends
Philadelphian
Prism Career Institute – PN 36 Students
Pross Team
Randon Family
Redd Foxes Hockey Club
Rowan Volunteers
Rutgers Gang

RyanStrong
Sandy Run Middle School
Seer Interactive
Silverstein 10
Sonesta Hotel Philadelphia
St. Augustine Parish
St. Johns No 115
Stephanie and Friends
TD Bank Consumer Bank Analysis
Team Evie
Team Luca
Team Ruelta
Team SayLess
Team Shea
Team Spiers
Team Vinciguerra
Temple CICU
Temple Transplant Team
Temple University Health Systems
Community Health Workers
Temple University Hospital
The Barrilli Family
The Bellevue Hotel
The Bombshells
The Cook Family
The Episcopal Academy
The Marcinek Family

The Nagorsky Family
The Tazmanian Angels
Third Sunday Crew
Tierney
Timberbirch Women's Club
TJUH – 7 West
Transplant Pregnancy Registry International
Trion Group
Tuddenham Family
UNICO
University City Kiwanis
UPMC Susquehanna Williamsport
UPMC Susquehanna Williamsport Hospital
UPMC Williamsport Hospital
Villanova SRNA
Wawa
White and Williams
Wilmington Emergency Department
Wyndham Philadelphia Historic District

BOLD = Home Cook Hero All Star
All-Stars are committed volunteer groups who provide a meal to Family House guests through the Home Cook Heroes program at least 12 times in a calendar year.

Home Cook Heroes team photos are available to view on the Family House's Facebook page at [Facebook.com/GiftOfLifeFamilyHouse](https://www.facebook.com/GiftOfLifeFamilyHouse). While you're there, don't forget to like our Facebook page, tag yourself and your teammates, and share your photo – in doing so, you're helping spread awareness about the Family House mission! Tag us and use #HomeCookHeroes for your chance to win a special gift from the Family House!

Make this your BEST BIRTHDAY YET

Pledge your birthday to support the Family House

Did you know that you can give the gift of home to transplant families on your birthday?

Through our "Best Birthday Yet" program, you can celebrate your birthday by hosting an online fundraiser for the Family House. Instead of a gift, ask your friends and family to support your fundraiser! It's really easy!

Pledge your birthday today and we'll send you a reminder as your special day gets closer to set up your fundraising page. We'll also send you some tips to help you make your fundraiser a success!

Visit [GiftOfLifeFamilyHouse.org](https://www.GiftOfLifeFamilyHouse.org) to pledge now!
We look forward to celebrating with you!

Caregiver Lifeline Spotlight

Therapy Dogs Bring Comfort to Transplant Families

Transplant patients and families staying at the Family House are under tremendous stress and away from their own support networks at home, including their own pets.

As part of our Caregiver Lifeline Program, we invite volunteers and their therapy dogs to the Family House to help our guests find comfort along the transplant journey. Therapy dogs give the families an opportunity to forget the stressful parts of the transplant journey for a few moments.

"I can see the guests relax when they start talking about their dogs or pets," says Denise, who brings her golden retriever Livi to visit the Family House. "It's nice to see them get respite from their daily routines."

The Family House has a dedicated group of volunteers who bring their dogs to spend time with our guests several times each year, many of who have connections to organ donation and transplantation.

"We are a donor family," says Mary, whose son Eric signed up to be a donor at 16 years of age. She brings in her dog Gem, who is a mix of a sheep dog and poodle. "Little did we know that a few years later, we would be honoring his wishes after he was declared brain dead due to injuries

Livi



Carmen



from a tragic accident. Gift of Life threw us a lifeline and coming to the Family House is a special time where I get to see the miraculous results of organ transplantation—something my son chose to give others."

"I've had family members that have gone through organ transplants," Denise adds. "When Therapy Dogs International mentioned Gift of Life Family House as a place to visit, I became happy to help."

All of them agree that their dogs make a difference in the lives of Family House guests.

"For a few hours, they can forget their difficulties and enjoy the 'serial kisser,' Carmen," says Debra, who comes by every few weeks. "She takes them back to happier moments—making them laugh and smile at a time when they need that most."

"Since many Family House guests are missing their own pets, Gem provides the TLC that they hunger for, including little kisses," Mary adds. "Gem will gladly accept belly rubs and always elicits laughter. Interacting with Gem allows the guests to step away from the physical and emotional burdens they carry, even if it's just for a short time. They have taken selfies with Gem, I've gladly snapped pictures of guests with Gem, and Gem has FaceTimed with relatives of a guest."

Not only are the volunteers happy to give back to the transplant community, but it's apparent that their dogs do, too.

"Carmen loves the attention and loves going – her tail wags the entire time she is there!" Debra adds. "It's a win-win situation all around."

Are you interested in bringing your therapy dog to visit our transplant families at the Family House? Contact our social worker, Talia, at tgiordano@giftoflifefamilyhouse.org.

The Caregiver Lifeline Program is supported in part by TD Charitable Foundation. We are thankful for their partnership and generosity.

Gem



SCOTT AND VICKIE ARE LEAVING A LEGACY ... Leave Yours Today

Scott and Vickie Sayles support the Family House to celebrate the life of their son Nicholas who tragically passed away in 2006 and was an organ donor.

"I felt like that's what we needed to do," Vickie says. "It helped us start to see the light of life again."

They recently joined our Legacy Society for Planned Giving, making the Family House a beneficiary in their will.

"We could see all the good that was coming from the Family House," Vickie says. "It fills our hearts to do this and gives us focus, allowing us to celebrate Nick's life."

The Family House was in the Sayles' will before they knew about the Legacy Society and joining was very easy to do. "They passed us along some information and all we had to do was scan and send some documentation," Vickie says. "It was so easy!"



To our generous contributors: THANK YOU

for your partnership in helping us care for transplant patients and their families at Gift of Life Family House.

Contributions of \$250 or more received between MAY 2019 – AUGUST 2019

Founders' Circle

[GIFTS of \$10,000+]

Current members who have made renewed gifts of \$10,000 or more

The Beneficial Foundation
Sam and Jean Jones
The Estate of Marie Kucowski

2019 Family Circle

[GIFTS of \$250+]

to support the annual fund

HONOR IN PLATINUM [\$5,000+]

Anonymous
Transplant Alliance Foundation, Inc.

CARE IN SILVER [\$1,000+]

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Walmart Facility #3252
Richard and Judy Yost

GRACE IN BRONZE [\$500+]
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John and Jeannie Moretto

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Salvation Christian Center

Seer Interactive

Robert Smith

Jay and Pat Souder

Thomas and Kathleen Subranni

Robert G. Walsh, Sr.

Kathy Yandle and Rick Miller

COMFORT IN COPPER [\$250+]

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Janet Azzara

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Tibor and Bridget Baksy

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John Burke

Yip Chan

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Michael Collins

Steven and Rhonda Cook

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Ellen Daly

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Nancy Doble

George Doty

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Denise and Ken Fegley

Elizabeth and Thomas Finocchio

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Vicki Goettel

Ellen and Bernie Gottlieb

Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart

Thomas and Lynn Hart

Betsy Horen

Kathy Hughes

Kathryn Kiesel

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Michael Leppo

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Albert Longstreth

Candace Mackersie

Marguerite Marcinek

Ken and Kara McNulty

Michael McVey

Christine Melone

Joann and Joseph Mozelewski

Judy Mueller

Joseph Murray

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Lesa Olson

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Charles Wiedmann

Michael Wolfgang

Douglas Woosnam

ITALIC = upgraded member

BOLD = renewed member

The Legacy Garden Paver Program

Thank you to those who dedicated an engraved paver

Elise Stasi on behalf of Gary Cataldo

in memory of Grandpa Cat

Kayla Hoffman in memory of

Ed "EH00T" Hudicek

Gift of Life Donor Program

Hospital Services Department

in memory of

Richard Michael Payne

Welcome Home Club Heart Members

Recognizing monthly contributors who donate \$21 or more per month

NEW Members

Brigitte Dale

Florence Dolceamore

Sylvia and Bob Herman

Norma Hernandez

Kate Kelly

Velma Scantlebury

David Schaubert, Jr.

Ashley Tran

Lisa Tull

Due to space constraints, honor/memorial gifts and supporter gifts are no longer listed in the newsletter.

We apologize for any errors or omissions and ask that you contact us at 267-546-9812 to report any corrections.

To make a contribution to Gift of Life Family House, please visit GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org or use the enclosed envelope.

The official registration and financial information of Transplant House d/b/a Gift of Life Family House may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

thank you to our volunteers in the community for coordinating fundraising events, wish list drives, and online fundraisers to support the mission of Gift of Life Family House.

Fundraising Events

10th Annual Bensalem Township Charity Challenge hosted by BEDC

11th Annual No Shower Happy Hour hosted by the David Nelson, Jr. Memorial Fund

15th Annual Jackson's Mulligan on Life Golf Outing hosted by Hennion and Walsh and the Heller Family

Dress Down Day coordinated by First Heritage Federal Credit Union

Dress Down Day coordinated by E.L. Smith Dunk Tank Fundraiser hosted MTF Biologics

Family Reunion hosted by Debra Aumon

Golf Outing hosted by Bradley Ward

Jefferson Heart Institute

Employee Movie Night at SugarHouse Casino

Pie in the Face Fundraiser coordinated by Gallagher Benefit Services

Smyrna High School Softball Fundraiser in memory of Coach Donnie Shaner

Wine Tasting hosted by Christina Taraborelli

York Area Transplant Support Group

Wish List Drives

Bernadette Nolen

Maureen Brotyman

Bruce Schleeweis

Lionville Middle School

Lives Saving Lives Club of

The Lawrenceville School

NEPA MMA

Philadelphia Firefighters

and Paramedics Union

Polish Beneficial Association

St. Lukes Hospital Monroe

Stefon Zonia

Tom Kohut

Ryan's Shamrocks