



GIFT of LIFE
Howie's House

UPDATE

Securing COMFORT FOR Transplant Patients AND THEIR Families

**HELP CONTINUE THE COMMITMENT TO SAFETY this Spring
by supporting the enhancement of the security system at the House.**

Families traveling from far away for medical care face numerous concerns while navigating the challenging transplant journey.

For those coming from out of town, feeling safe and secure while in an unfamiliar environment such as a large city is essential for their peace of mind.

AT GIFT OF LIFE HOWIE'S HOUSE, ENSURING GUESTS FEEL SAFE during their stay has always been a top priority and an integral part of the overall mission. That's

why multiple measures are in place to make sure guests feel as comfortable as possible when walking through the House doors.

From the secure perimeter gate that encloses the facility to the overnight security officers and video monitoring system, the goal is to ease the mind of the families who stay at the House as soon as they arrive.

As part of our commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment for guests, House staff regularly assess our systems for the most up-to-date improvements.

This year, an upgrade to the existing security camera and public announcement system is planned, **and the House is calling on the SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY to help complete the project in 2024.**

Your support of this important project will help families like the Bachers, who said they relied on the safety and security that the House provided during their stay.

continued on Gift of Life Howie's House page 2



Heather Bacher, Mike Bacher, Jo-Ann Bacher,
and Melissa Rodriguez

SECURING COMFORT, continued from Gift of Life Howie's House page 1

MIKE BACHER was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy over 16 years ago, a heart disorder which he contracted from a viral infection. Mike and his wife Jo-Ann live in Lewes, Delaware, a rural beach community over 2 and half hours away from Philadelphia.

For years Mike managed the disease until his condition started to quickly worsen at the beginning of 2022. Mike's doctors suggested he get listed for transplant, so they made the journey to Philadelphia to begin his evaluation.

Traveling into the city from a rural setting, they didn't know what to expect before arriving at the House. Mike shared that as soon as he saw the facility, he knew he had made the right choice.

"It was a huge relief. I couldn't have imagined anything nicer and safer. I was pretty apprehensive about coming into Philly at all, and I didn't know what area we were going to be in until we got there," Mike said. "We were pleasantly surprised to find what a nice place it was."

"I couldn't have imagined anything NICER and SAFER."

Mike at the hospital post-transplant, waiting to be discharged



Mike Bacher with his two daughters, Melissa Rodriguez (left) and Heather Bacher (right), waiting to be admitted at the hospital

Mike's wife, Jo-Ann, said that the **SECURITY MEASURES IN PLACE** were one of the first things she noticed.

"During check-in, I noticed the extensive security camera system, which made me feel very secure. Even pulling into the gated parking area and knowing I had a safe place to leave my car made a huge difference."

After Mike was admitted to the transplant waiting list, he didn't have to wait long. Only 11 days after being listed, Mike received his life-saving heart transplant thanks to an organ donor hero.

While he recovered in the hospital, Jo-Ann remained at the House to stay close to him while their two daughters, Heather and Melissa, would visit periodically to provide support.

Mike said that the **PEACE OF MIND** the House brought him made all the difference in his recovery.

"This facility was a lifesaver, providing a safe environment for my family to allow them to visit through this whole ordeal. I spent a total of 56 days in the hospital, and they were there through almost all of that," explains Mike.

Mike's family was so grateful for the services the House provided that they have since given back to the mission by hosting a successful Facebook fundraiser, serving a meal through the Home Cook Heroes program, and now support the annual fund!

"This facility was a LIFESAVER, providing a safe environment for my family..."

Post-transplant, Mike and his family have been traveling as much as possible, including a recent trip to the Florida Keys that had been rescheduled twice due to his health complications. Jo-Ann and Mike say they are trying to make the most of every day to honor their donor hero.

"We want our donor to know that we're not wasting one day, WE'RE LIVING EVERY DAY TO THE FULLEST because you just never know when it's going to be your last," Jo-Ann says.

THIS SPRING, HELP SECURE THE COMFORT OF FAMILIES LIKE THE BACHERS by supporting the upgrade of the security camera and public announcement systems.

This project will further modernize the current security camera system at the House, allowing for enhanced picture quality, more centralized monitoring, better views of the building, and more. It will also include an upgrade to the current public announcement system within guest rooms, simplifying the process to make guest and safety announcements.

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution today to help reach the goal of \$40,000 to complete this important project.

Gifts of all sizes are needed and appreciated. As Jo-Ann says, "Even a small gift goes a long way."

For your convenience, you can use the enclosed envelope or donate online at GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org.

SCAN HERE to make your gift today.



Sponsor-A-Room Program

THANK YOU 2024 ROOM SPONSORS Generous room sponsors support families by keeping the nightly fee low and covering costs for families who cannot afford it.

AltruVision: A Lions Eye Bank
Anonymous
Karen and Stewart Cohen
Friends and Family of Ken Connolly
David Courtwright and Shelby Miller
The Forline Family
The Fremont Family

Betsy Horen
Patrick and Ann Marie Mullan
Neshaminy Ice Hockey: The Gannon Cup
The Prasad Family
Quick Courier Service
Sean Rhoads and Keri Fisher
Sam's Spirit

Scott and Vickie Sayles
Smith Family Memorial Fund
Thomas and Kathleen Subranni
Transplant Alliance Foundation
The Yanick Family

SECURE YOUR SPONSORSHIP FOR 2024! When you sponsor a guest or common room through our Sponsor-A-Room Program, you will be helping the hundreds of transplant patients and families who rely on our services each year. The Sponsor-A-Room Program allows supporters to sponsor a guest or common room at the House for a period of up to 3 years. Room sponsors will have their name placed on a sign next to the room in addition to other recognition opportunities throughout their sponsorship period.

For more information on how to sponsor a room, visit [GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org](https://www.giftoflifehowieshouse.org) or call 267-546-9812.

Thank you to Jefferson Health, Short Procedure Unit for hosting the 1st "Stuff the Shuttle" drive

Host a **STUFF** the SHUTTLE Wishlist Drive

Can't make the trip? We'll come to you!

To keep Gift of Life Howie's House well-stocked with essential items, we rely on generous donations of food and household supplies. You can play a vital role in this effort by hosting a "Stuff-the-Shuttle" event, a fantastic activity that can engage your family, colleagues, religious community, or friends!

Here's how it works:

- 1 Organize a Wishlist or food drive collection at your workplace, school, house of worship, or neighborhood.
- 2 Choose a convenient date and time for our House Shuttle to visit your location.
- 3 Rally your group to fill the Shuttle with the collected items.
- 4 Our House staff will then transport the donations back to Gift of Life Howie's House for distribution.

Your support in hosting a Stuff-the-Shuttle event is greatly appreciated and helps ensure that Gift of Life Howie's House remains well-stocked with the essentials it needs.

Strokes of KINDNESS

ART CONTEST

VOTE TODAY for your favorite masterpiece!

Earlier this year, Gift of Life Howie's House launched the first ever Strokes of Kindness Art Contest & Fundraiser. You can participate today by voting for and sharing your favorite pieces.

Each gift of \$5 will count for 1 vote. The artist with the most votes at the end of the voting period (April 30, 2024) will win the contest. No limit on votes. All proceeds will benefit the Adopt-A-Family Program to continue providing transplant families with an affordable home away from home during the transplant journey.



SCAN HERE to view art work submissions and to cast your vote!



Caregiver Lifeline Spotlight

by Talia Giordano, LCSW
Family Services and Caregiver Lifeline Manager

Preparing for a TRANSPLANT

Preparing for a transplant can be overwhelming for patients and families alike. Below are some ideas for topics and questions you can discuss with your team as you begin to anticipate the transplant journey and life afterward.

1. Learn about your transplant

- Navigate the transplant process with help from our Caregiver Lifeline Program: [giftoflifehowieshouse.org](https://www.giftoflifehowieshouse.org)
- Visit other trusted websites for information about transplant, such as [TransplantLiving.org](https://www.transplantliving.org), [UNOS.org](https://www.unos.org), [Organdonor.org](https://www.organdonor.org), and other trusted disease specific organizations

2. Ask your medical team questions

- "What is required during a transplant evaluation?"
- "What will the surgery be like?"
- "How much time do I/patient have to get to the hospital when we get the call?"
- "What will the hospitalization for the transplant and recovery be like?"
- "Where will I/patient go after discharge?"
- "How many medications will I/patient be on after transplant and what are the side-effects?"
- "How often and for how long will I/patient need to be seen at the transplant center after my transplant?"
- "What will my/patient's physical limitations be after the transplant?"

3. Plan for the financial impact of transplant

- For the transplant financial coordinator – "What will the cost of the transplant be, what will my insurance cover, what will be the new RX cost?"
- Research additional financial support opportunities through health insurance
>> Some insurances may have a caregiver stipend or a travel and lodging benefit – contact them directly or your transplant social worker
- Research fundraising for transplant through trusted organizations like Help Hope Live, National Foundation for Transplants and Children's Organ Transplant Assistance

4. Ask your employer questions about being out of work

- "How much paid time off/vacation time will be available?"
- "Can co-workers donate PTO/vacation time to me?"
- "How do I apply for Family Medical Leave Act benefit (FMLA)?"
- "How long can I maintain my health insurance benefit if out of work and what will the cost be?"
- "What is my/patient Short Term Disability and Long Term Disability benefit?"

5. Prepare for being in the hospital or away from home for some time for the transplant surgery

- Discuss who will assist with daily household chores/items when away like mail collection, trash removal, or pet care
- Identify what will be in your "hospital bag"
>> A few changes of clothes; an entertainment source (iPad, music, games, books etc.); cell phone and cell phone charger; list of contact names and numbers for sharing updates; pictures of family, friends, and pets to keep in the hospital room; other items to pass the time (coloring books, knitting, crocheting, meditation, etc.)

6. Identify your support networks

- Who are your personal and professional support networks? Your list, which should include phone numbers, may include family, friends, spiritual or church community members, hospital/transplant social workers and other support professionals, as well as other community members within your home and transplant community.
- Visit our website to find in person or online support groups
The Caregiver Lifeline Program provides free transplant education and support through programs such as webinars and virtual support groups for transplant patients, caregivers, and professionals. Licensed social workers from the House developed two new, comprehensive resources available online at no cost:



SCAN HERE to download your free copy today!
"Preparing for Transplant:
A Guidebook for Transplant Patients
and Families"



SCAN HERE to download your free copy today!
"Returning Home After Transplant:
A Guidebook for Transplant Patients
and Families"

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



FACES OF THE HOUSE

Four-year-old Layla stayed at Gift of Life Howie's House with her family while her father received care in the hospital.

Layla had one big wish for Christmas: for her father to receive his life-saving heart and kidney transplant, something he has been waiting for since August 2023.

We are thrilled to share that Layla's Christmas wish came true and her father, Eric, received the best gift of all: the gift of life. Thanks to a generous organ donor hero, Eric received his heart and kidney transplant last Christmas.

Layla along with her mother, grandmother and baby brother were provided safe, peaceful lodging and access to all the other services of the House: home-cooked meals, a fully stocked pantry, transportation to and from the hospital, an on-site social work team, and a whole community of caring people.



Join David as a Legacy Society Member *Legacy Society* for Planned Giving

"Having been deeply involved with the organization, I witnessed the tremendous good that the House does."

When David Pierson became a donor family member in 2004 after losing his wife, he witnessed firsthand the compassionate work that is synonymous with the Gift of Life mission.

It wasn't until he began serving on the governing board that he truly understood the full scope of what *Gift of Life Donor Program* and its affiliates accomplish. This experience also gave

David greater insight into the services and care Gift of Life Howie's House provides to transplant families. "Having been deeply involved with the organization, I witnessed the tremendous good that the House does," he says.

Even after his board service concluded, David chose to remain close to the *Gift of Life* mission. He decided to include the House in his

estate plans to help ensure that families will continue to benefit from the House for years to come.

"The House truly provides families with an opportunity to be together during challenging times. I am happy and proud to keep that going."

Please join David Pierson as a member of the Legacy Society for Planned Giving. To learn more about making a planned gift, visit GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org or call 267-546-9812.

We also invite those who have already included the House in their will or otherwise made a planned gift to inform us so we can celebrate your commitment. The story behind your generosity may also inspire others to take action.

You should consult with your tax advisor to determine the degree to which your gift may result in tax advantages to you, your estate, and your beneficiaries.

Thank You to our generous partners in supporting transplant families

Contributions of \$250 or more received between SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2023

Legacy Society

New members
Jim and Karen Carns

Founders' Circle

(GIFTS OF \$10,000+)
New members who have made gifts of \$10,000 or more
Anonymous

Current members who have made renewed gifts of \$10,000 or more
David Courtwright and Shelby Miller
James and Paula Duva
Betsy Horen
Samuel and Jean Jones
Howard and Liz Nathan
Penney Girls Foundation
Quick Courier Services, Inc.
TD Charitable Foundation
Transplant Alliance Foundation, Inc.
The Wawa Foundation

2023 Family Circle

(GIFTS OF \$250+)
to support the annual fund

HONOR IN PLATINUM (\$5,000+)

Larry and Diane Beard
Beverly and Joseph Forline
The Makino Foundation
Cary Moritz, Esq. and Michael Moritz, MD
Sam's Spirit Inc.
Dr. Marshall and Michele Schwartz
Mary Smith
State Metal Industries, INC.
Thomas and Kathleen Subranni
Veloxis Pharmaceuticals
Dennis Yanick

HOPE IN GOLD (\$2,500+)

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Lauren's Foundation
Harold Goodman
Jefferson Transplant Institute
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Denise Fiel
Deirdra Fink
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