



UPDATE

HEROES AMONG US

CELEBRATING THE HEROES WHO MAKE THE MISSION POSSIBLE

For 13 years, Gift of Life Howie's House has been a welcoming safe haven for organ transplant patients, caregivers and their families. It is a place where loved ones can relax and share a meal after enduring a long day at the hospital. A place to connect with others who share similar experiences. A place of comfort during a tumultuous journey.

The mission of the House would not be possible without the heroes who remain dedicated to its important work. From generous contributors to compassionate volunteers, the services provided at the House rely on their ongoing support.

To show gratitude for the vital role they play in the mission, a special breakfast, themed "Heroes Among Us", was hosted to celebrate the heroic impact supporters have on the transplant families. The community came together and unveiled their capes for a morning of stories shared, memories made, and connections built.

Rick Hasz, President & CEO, along with Jan L. Weinstock, Chief Administrative Officer & General Counsel, expressed their thoughts on the incredible strength of the Gift of Life Howie's House community. They also provided insights into some exciting House updates, milestones, and happenings.



As Rick Hasz said, "Whether you are a contributor, a volunteer, a partner, or a friend of the House, your involvement holds immense value for us and the families we serve. The impact you've made is a shining light for those on the transplant journey, and I am so grateful to celebrate you."

continued on Gift of Life Howie's House page 2



TOP L-R: Diane Milbourne, Bridget Hanna, Gail Clegg, Annette Levecchi, Donna Shinn
BOTTOM: Patty Nelson

Past guest, Rogina, shared her story and her experiences at the House. Rogina's daughter, Kemiyah, is 16 years old and has been in the hospital since November of 2023 while she waits for a life-saving heart transplant. Rogina, and her youngest son, Kane, have been staying at the House to remain close to Kemiyah during her wait.

"Staying at Gift of Life Howie's House has been a true blessing. Kane, my 19-month-old son and I have been here since March. We have met so many other families in similar situations and heard so many stories. Everyone here are warriors. I don't know what we would do if we didn't have a place like this," Rogina says.

It is because of our community that families like Rogina's have a comfortable place to stay, warm meals at night and a supportive network of people who know what they are going through.

The House is grateful to have provided over \$13 million in subsidized care and services over its 13-year history, never turning a family away who cannot afford the nightly fee. Whether you are a Home Cook Hero cooking meals for the guests, a generous contributor, an active participant in events or another one of the amazing community members – the success of the mission is owed to you.

L-R: Scott Hartman, Leah Lambe
Alexa Lustig, Bill Soloway,
Danny Santos, George Vivacqua



Thank you for making a difference in the lives of transplant patients and their families. Your support makes our mission possible.

Now you can support Gift of Life Howie's House by DONATING YOUR CAR!

The House is thrilled to announce that it's now accepting car donations. Have an unwanted vehicle sitting around? Whether it's a car, RV, boat, motorcycle, or more, the House will gladly accept it!

Scan the QR code or visit **GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org** to begin the donation process.

Arrange a free pick-up then all the paperwork will be handled for you – and you may even qualify for a tax-deduction. It's an easy way to support the mission and make a difference in the lives of transplant families.

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE PICK-UP TODAY.



SPRING CAMPAIGN UPDATE

THANK YOU for helping continue the commitment to safety. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the transplant community, the House exceeded the goal to raise the funds needed for the enhancement of the security system at the House.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of guests is the House's utmost priority. The upcoming upgrade to the security camera and public announcement systems will commence this year, providing an added layer of security and peace of mind for transplant families. The House is immensely grateful for the support of all the contributors in making this important project a reality.

Stay tuned for more updates on the progress of the security system upgrade and other initiatives as the House continues to partner with the community to support transplant patients and their families.

Celebrating Success:

Strokes of KINDNESS ART CONTEST & FUNDRAISER

Gift of Life Howie's House is thrilled to announce the tremendous success of the Strokes of Kindness Art Contest and Fundraiser! A heartfelt thanks goes out to all the talented artists who shared their creations and to the hundreds of community members who generously contributed to the voting process.

Over \$16,500 Raised for Gift of Life Howie's House!

Thanks to your support, over \$16,500 was raised and will help the House continue to offer affordable lodging, meals, transportation, and supportive services to transplant patients and their families who travel to Philadelphia for life-saving medical care.

Congratulations to the Contest Winners!

Let's celebrate the remarkable talent showcased in this year's contest. Congratulations to the winners:



FIRST PLACE
Nancy St.John
Renaissance, Study #2



SECOND PLACE
Kelly Brown
From Loss, Comes Hope



THIRD PLACE
Jeff Feeny
Postcard

Stay tuned for more updates and events
as we continue our mission of sharing kindness and supporting the transplant community.



Q&A with Mothers whose Children are Awaiting Heart Transplants

Balancing caregiving for a transplant patient and being a mom can feel like an overwhelming task. Three superhero moms share their experiences of caring for children facing the unimaginable challenge of heart failure and the urgent need for a heart transplant.



REGINA mother of Kemiya

Q: Your daughter, Kemiya, was healthy her entire life, and then at 16 years old she unexpectedly had a stroke. Since November 2023, she has been hospitalized, received an LVAD (left ventricular device, which is implanted in the chest and helps pump blood from the lower left heart chamber, and is life-sustaining), and is now listed and waiting for a heart transplant. As her mom, how do you emotionally adjust to this major traumatic event?

A: At first, I was angry. Then I was in denial. Then I was sad and upset. Throughout it all, I have been setting aside my emotions and focusing on Kemiya so that I'm not an emotional wreck in front of her and her 19 month old brother, Kane. I have had a couple meltdowns, but I am trying to stay strong for her because she is the one going through this. My husband and mom have been here for me to help support me emotionally.

I would advise a mom who is in a similar situation to lean on their support system, ask a lot of questions, and prioritize getting enough sleep. It's hard to sleep as a parent as it is, but as a mom, you need it to be your best self and to be there for your kids.



Kemiya, heart transplant candidate

Q: How do you support a teenager who may see her future differently than she did when this all began?

A: I try to focus on the positives with Kemiya. Even though her life has changed, it is still intact and I believe a new heart is on the horizon. She will have a "new normal" and hopefully even be back to her previous self. I try to remind her that we are just going to adapt, and nothing is permanent. I have always encouraged her to talk to me about anything, which has been so important at a time like this. Despite the challenges of parenting a 16-year-old, I cherish our ability to communicate openly. I'll continue to have hard conversations with her and not avoid discussions about our feelings, especially about subjects as scary as her health and future.



JESSICA mother of CJ

Q: CJ has had a heart condition since birth; he's now 11 years old, with an LVAD and has been waiting for a heart transplant for almost three years. You also have four other daughters (13, 12, 9, and 6 years old). How do you balance being a mom to your son and three daughters with everything going on?

A: It's very hard. Our church family helps us with so many things. There were times where he was hospitalized for really long periods. Between 2022 and 2023 he was hospitalized for just about an entire year, and we had family to support our other daughters. My husband and I try to work as a team to be there for the kids, though it's hard when we can't be there

together when CJ is at the hospital and the girls are at home. We try to find the little things and moments, like all of us FaceTiming every morning and every night and visiting on weekends.

Q: How have you managed emotionally since CJ has been sick for so many years?

A: It's hard because I've seen him go through this for years, and I can't fix it. Especially because he wants to be normal and do normal things, and he can't. It's mentally and emotionally draining after all these years. I try not to stretch myself too thin, which is important for any mom. When he is hospitalized, I try to take a walk when he is doing well. I have also met other moms with kids in similar situations, which has been helpful. I have people checking in on me every day by phone and text. As a family we try to focus on the positives and enjoy the times we do have because things could be so much worse. I want to preserve the time we have with CJ and focus on the good things as long as I can.

Q: How has it been for you knowing another mom and family will be grieving a loss when CJ receives his heart transplant?

A: I would never want another child to get ill or be hurt, especially since having my own children and a child who has an illness. When CJ was getting listed for a heart, a nurse encouraged us to think of it differently, that we're not praying for another child to die for CJ to live, we're praying for that child's loved one to have the strength to say yes to donation by blessing CJ with the gift of life in their time of their tragedy. I still struggle thinking about it, especially during the times when CJ has gotten "calls," but we still pray for those families regardless of whether they would go on to become a donor for CJ.



L-R: Casey, Natalie, Alexia, CJ, Jayda, Tara and Jessica



AMBER mother of Gavin

Q: On February 28, (Amber's birthday) Gavin, at just 18 years old, underwent open heart surgery during which he received an LVAD after unexpectedly being diagnosed with heart failure, despite having no prior medical issues. Gavin was living a normal life as a teenager, preparing to graduate high school and attend Penn State University. How do you manage the balance between letting him experience a "normal" teenage life while also being cautious as a pre-transplant patient?

A: We follow the same precautions that everyone should be following: washing hands, using sanitizer, and avoiding touching our face. For Gavin, who has an LVAD, our main focus is making sure we do sterile dressing changes and monitoring his numbers while managing his medications. The device is actually helping him to lead a normal life. We are grateful for that.

Q: As Gavin prepares to graduate from high school soon and plans for college, how do you anticipate aspects of being his caregiver to change?

A: Gavin is very self-sufficient and intelligent and has taken it upon himself to learn every aspect of his care. His Dad works on campus at Penn State where Gavin will be attending, and is trained in LVAD care, so we do have that "comfort cushion" that some other parents might not have. When Gavin goes off to college in the fall, I have the same worries that every parent does, compounded with the stress of a future transplant. Gavin is a great scholar, so he has learned all about his condition. However, when you first hear the words "your child needs a heart transplant," it feels like you've just dropped several floors in an elevator. While we understand that the world of transplants has come a long way over the past several decades, and the odds stand in his favor, it's still very scary. As his parents, we stand on our Faith, but we're still human and have the fear of the worst-case scenarios and the "what ifs." On the other hand, Gavin has complete confidence in his medical team and science, and sees a transplant as something that will fix him so he can go on to lead a full, long life.

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



Gift of Life Howie's House marked a significant milestone with a celebration recognizing AmeriHealth Caritas "Care Crew's"

100TH visit!

Since 2017, Care Crew volunteers from AmeriHealth Caritas have been an integral part of the Home Cook Heroes program and recently celebrated their 100th visit! They've been baking cookies, muffins, and other delicious treats for the guests of the House, ensuring they have wholesome and comforting meals during their stay.

The Home Cook Heroes program relies on culinary champions like the Care Crew, who generously donate their time and talents to cook, bake, arrange catering, or contribute items to stock the pantry. Their commitment to providing nourishing meals is truly appreciated and makes a meaningful difference in the lives of transplant families.



A special shout-out to the MTF Biologics team for coordinating a

STUFF the SHUTTLE Drive for the House!

The staff at the MTF Edison, NJ location organized a collection of wish list items that were most needed at the House. President and CEO, Rick Hasz, drove the shuttle with members of the Development team, Abby Wells and Sara Cohen, to stuff the shuttle and bring it back to the House!

MTF Biologics is a valued partner of Gift of Life and also supports the House through the Kidney Open, the Donor Dash, and by regularly volunteering as Home Cook Heroes.



THANK YOU to our generous partners in supporting transplant families

Contributions of \$250 or more received between JANUARY–MARCH 2024

Legacy Society
New members

Sean Rhoads and Keri Fisher
Lori Smith

Founders' Circle

[GIFTS OF \$10,000+]

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

Richard K. Beltz
Cornerstone Advisors Asset Management, Inc.
CSL Behring, LLC
Global Transplant Solutions, INC.
In Memory of Daniel Thomas Klaus
Harry Roth, Esq. and Lisa Heller, MD
Quick Courier Services, Inc.
Venture Jets

2024 Family Circle

[GIFTS OF \$250+] to support the annual fund

HONOR IN PLATINUM [\$5,000+]

The Dukes Family

Chris and Lynn Fallon
Fenley Family
Donor Advised Fund at Rancho Santa Fe Foundation
Grace Elizabeth Fenley
Donor Advised Fund at Rancho Santa Fe Foundation

J. Bryan Fenley
Donor Advised Fund at Rancho Santa Fe Foundation
Leslie Premo
Sean Rhoads and Keri Fisher

HOPE IN GOLD [\$2,500+]

Gillespie Electric, Inc.
TRIO Philadelphia

CARE IN SILVER [\$1,000+]

Anonymous in memory of John Moretto

Larry and Diane Beard
The Bogle Family
Allen and Carol Drucker
Patricia Garno
Annetta Good
Krysta Hanke Memorial Fund
Carrie Leitzell
Devin Mader
Masonic Blood and Organ Donor Club
The Raymond Family
Susan Sherrerd
Gordon St. John
Dr. Neal Stansbury
Nancy Tindall
Walmart #1921

GRACE IN BRONZE [\$500+]

Christopher Amorello
Raymond and Maria Aviles
Buzz Duzz
Kim Davis
Harris and Debra Devor
Florence and Robert Dolceamore
Mary Lou Eckerle
Everett and Suzanne Ferri
Ronald Hannon Family
Claire Hardon
Dr. and Mrs. Mehdi and Christine Haririan
Dr. and Mrs. Richard D. Hasz, Sr.
Jean and Sam Jones
Ann and Jim Kroh
Anne Lovett
Lauren's Foundation
The Malvezzi Family
Burton and Patti Mattice
Ronald and Heather Michaud
John and Eleanor Michele
Ann Marie Muschultz
Robin and Fred Robbins
Katrina Sherrerd
Wendy St. John

COMFORT IN COPPER [\$250+]

Jeffrey Adels
AmeriHealth Caritas Family of Companies
Justine Applegate
Arthur J. Gallagher Foundation
Athena Chapter #201 OES
Mary Ann Barlow
Debjani and Satya Bhoomik
Eugene and Patricia Blum
Richard Bradley
Kathleen Bryant
Patricia Cable Perkins
Jim and Karen Carns
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Give Lively Foundation
June Harden
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Robert and Beverly Hoyer
Independence Blue Cross
Lawrence Johansen

Mary Jo Kot
Frank Lambert
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Marion Lassen
Luther Memorial
Evangelical Lutheran
Kathy MacDougall
Magnolia Board of Education – Student Activity Account
Michael McVey
Mt. Holly Elks #848
Scott Z. Noye and Family
Kirtish Patel
Michael Perrotti
Andrea and Sean Reynolds
Jeffrey Reynolds
Velma Scantlebury, MD
St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church
Sule's Collision Center Inc
Patrick J. Swanick
Joanne Talarico
Upper Adams Jaycees
Christine Tierney
John Visconi
Robert G. Walsh, Sr.
Watsonville Centennial
Lioness Lions Club

Shawn B. Wild
Diane Wilson
ITALIC = upgraded member
BOLD = renewed member

We apologize for any errors or omissions and ask that you contact us at 267-546-9819 to report any corrections.

Processing times for check donations may vary. For faster payment processing, please consider making your gift online at GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org.



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

NEW Members

Lucille Zirpoli
Abiola Ijalana
Lori Smith

To make a contribution to Gift of Life Howie's House, please visit GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org or use the enclosed envelope.

The official registration and financial information of Transplant House d/b/a Gift of Life Howie's House may be obtained from PA Dept. of State by calling toll free 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

MORE WAYS TO SUPPORT THE HOUSE THIS SUMMER

GIVE THROUGH YOUR DONOR ADVISED FUND

A donor-advised fund (DAF) is a charitable giving account designed exclusively to invest, grow, and give assets to charities like the House.

JOIN THE LEGACY SOCIETY FOR PLANNED GIVING



By making a "planned gift" — a gift through your estate — you can ensure the future success of the House and have the satisfaction of knowing that your values will live on through the care we provide.

For more information visit GiftofLifeHowiesHouse.org or call 267-546-9812.