



Family House's Three C's: Care, Comfort, & Convenience

Many of the challenges parents continue to face during COVID-19 are well documented. Among them is balancing one's own job responsibilities while helping a child adjust to a new online learning environment. And if that isn't stressful enough, imagine when those circumstances are interrupted by a medical emergency and you suddenly find yourself in a hospital emergency room while doctors and nurses attend to your child.

That was the situation in which Jackie Schwindler and John Grover found themselves in the midst of the ongoing COVID chaos in mid-September. Their daughter, Julianna, was flown to UPMC Mercy Hospital after suffering severe burns as a result of a fire at her boyfriend's house. Upon learning of the accident, Julianna's parents dashed from their Bradford, PA home and raced across the state to be with their daughter.



They were aware of the "phenomenal" hospitals located in Pittsburgh and they knew that their daughter would be in the healing hands of world-class physicians and nurses. "The doctors and team members pay attention to every detail," John said. "Julianna has been making great improvements."

Understandably, where they'd stay while in Pittsburgh was not top of

mind when Jackie and John first arrived. Initially, they stayed with relatives in Oakdale, PA. But within days it became clear that the lengthy commute and lack of public transportation would continue to add to the couples' already stressful situation.

Thankfully, John and Jackie were introduced to Family House, where the couple has since found a safe, home-like atmosphere in which they are welcomed each night after long days at the hospital. Additionally, their new "home away from home" is just two miles from where Julianna is recovering.

"Family House is perfect in every aspect of the word," Jackie said. She added that as soon as they arrived, "John and I knew immediately that Family House is where we are meant to be."

Both parents describe their daughter as a strong young woman, who continues to push forward with her recovery so she can soon return home and get back to her studies at Pitt-Bradford. Julianna's career ambition is to be a veterinarian. "Ever since she was a child, that is what she has wanted to be," Jackie said of her daughter, adding "she already has helped deliver a litter of puppies."

Visitor restrictions brought about by the coronavirus pandemic have been "a little bit aggravating" since only one parent at a time is able to visit Julianna in the hospital. But John and Jackie understand those restrictions and are quick to praise the exceptional care provided by Julianna's medical team at UPMC Mercy.

While one parent visits Julianna, the other remains at Family House to rest and plan for the long-term stay that lies ahead. During that time, they connect with other guests at Family House, trading stories and sharing experiences. At Family House, they feel welcome and safe, not to mention appreciative for the staff and volunteers who keep the house comfortable and clean.



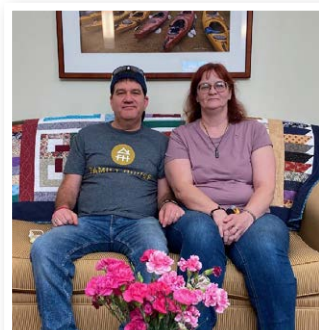
Family House has been a blessing, going above and beyond our needs.

The convenience that Family House has afforded John and Jackie is immeasurable. Being so close to the hospital and staying in a safe and supportive environment has brought a sense of calm and comfort that would not have been available anywhere else.

"We are able to get a roundtrip Uber ride to the hospital and to Target for our groceries," Jackie said. "It would have been impossible to visit Julianna at Mercy Hospital every day if we had stayed in Oakdale."

Jackie said that Family House is the place to be for caregivers like she and John, as it served as their home away from home during their months-long stay.

"Family House has been a blessing, going above and beyond our needs." ●



DEAR FAMILY HOUSE FRIENDS:

I'd like to take this opportunity to share something very personal with you. Without warning or symptoms, three months ago I was diagnosed with glioblastoma, brain cancer. Within days of my diagnosis, I was undergoing a 9-hour open cranial awake brain surgery, where my tumor was completely and successfully removed by a UPMC neurosurgeon.

Since my surgery, I have been and will continue to undergo treatment that is intended to prevent the return of my tumor. While this is a difficult diagnosis, I have so much to be grateful for, beginning with the clinical care I have been receiving. One thing I do know is that my clinicians want for me to lead a long and happy life just as much as I do; and that is the plan!

My situation has given me a deeper perspective and closer connection to our patients and their families who stay at Family House. I look forward to sharing our experiences, hopes, and fears with one another. Most of our guests at Family House have a long trip to receive their medical care; for me it is just a 15-minute drive from my home. Yet, we consistently hear from them that their commute to Pittsburgh for our region's world-class medical care and what all we provide for them at Family House is worth it.

What our guests value most—what makes it “worth it”—is the compassionate delivery of the services Family House has provided for 37 years. Consistently

fulfilling our mission in a thoughtful, empathetic, guest-focused manner, especially in the most challenging of times, is at the heart of what we call Family House's “charitable care commitment.” That commitment extends far beyond discounted prices: it encompasses a shared belief among our hospital partners, donors, volunteers, staff, and guests that Family House provides an essential, unduplicated service in a safe and supportive environment for those receiving medical treatment in Pittsburgh.

It is our pleasure and good fortune to serve the patients and families who make the sacrifice of traveling to a strange city in order to receive the highest standard of care available. We have kept our doors open for them whenever it's necessary. The critical role Family House plays in the lives of our guests has been reinforced to me in a unique and powerful way. And I know that we could not do any of this without your continued, generous support.

Thank you and best wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season and 2021.

Jennifer N. March, Executive Director



Family House declared September as **Families Helping Families** month! Retained Polo Sponsor support and the month-long campaign raised nearly \$200,000 for the mission of Family House.



SAVE THE DATES!



Spring Event 2021

► **Date & Location:**
TBD

38th Annual Family House Polo Match

► **Saturday,**
September 11, 2021
Hartwood Acres



Due to COVID-19, Family House had to make the difficult decision to cancel the 37th Annual Polo Match, originally scheduled for September 12 at Hartwood Acres.

To make up for the losses incurred with the cancellation, Family House proclaimed September 2020 “Families Helping Families” month and conducted the organization's first-ever month-long crowdfunding campaign, with a fundraising goal of \$37,000. The campaign benefited Family House's charitable care commitment, which ensures that all Family House guests pay discounted rates when they stay with us. With the retained support of our long-term Polo Sponsors and the success of the *Families Helping Families* campaign, Family House was able to raise nearly \$200,000 in lieu of the annual Polo Match! **This could not have been done without the help of our generous sponsors, donors, volunteers, and staff. ●**



Our ongoing commitment to ALL Family House guests

Since our founding in 1983, Family House has been steadfast in its commitment to charge a room rate significantly below what it costs to operate and maintain a guest room.

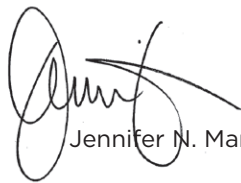
That difference between our real cost and what our guests actually pay per night is approximately 25%, and that savings is extended to all Family House guests. That is Family House's "Charitable Care" commitment.

To fulfill that commitment each year, we raise funds from our board, volunteers, staff, former guests, healthcare partners, regional foundations, and local and national corporations. Special events, grant proposals, and donor appeals help Family House secure contributed revenues — both cash and in-kind — that help cover our annual operating expenses. As you'll see in the accompanying chart, in FY20 that total exceeded \$1.5 million, ensuring that the Family House commitment to charitable care continued.

As part of our longstanding commitment benefiting all of our guests, we also have provided even deeper discounts to help further alleviate the financial burdens brought about by the medical crisis that brings patients and families to Family House. These additional room rate discounts are based on household income and length of stay. They are awarded through Family Assistance grants and allow nearly one of every 10 of our guests to afford their stay.

In recent years, we have witnessed that the profile of those qualifying for additional support continues to change, and many needs of our guests increased significantly in FY20 at the height of the coronavirus pandemic. Responding to these growing needs, we have determined that Family House will expand Family Assistance grant eligibility criteria starting in FY21 to cover unanticipated guest needs that arise during their stay, such as food, transportation, and personal care items.

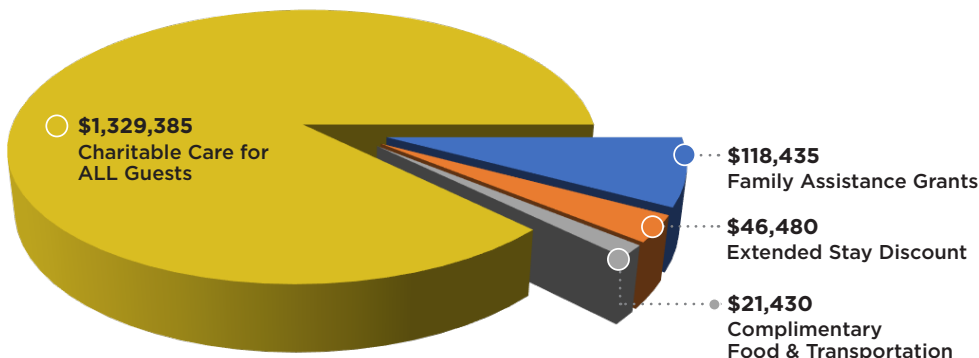
Room rate changes, Family Assistance grant eligibility requirements, and all expenditures we invest as part of our charitable care commitment will continue to be assessed throughout the year by our executive leadership team. We are committed to ensuring that all who make Family House their "home away from home" will continue to benefit from our charitable care.



Jennifer N. March, Executive Director

Family House Charitable Care Commitment FY20

Total: \$1,515,730



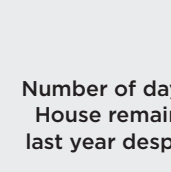
“This is an awesome place to stay. They have fridges and freezers for use, rooms are very spacious, they have 2 TVs and comfortable furnishings. Staff is GREAT and very kind and helpful.”

—KARI S.



\$1,515,730

Total contributions raised to support Family House's charitable care commitment last year



365

Number of days Family House remained open last year despite CV-19



4,554

Guest nights subsidized with additional financial assistance



1,549

Volunteers who supported mission fulfillment



37

Years that Family House has served as Pittsburgh's "home away from home"

Family House was delighted to welcome a new partner in 2020: First National Bank

Ronald Donatelli, President, Pittsburgh Region First National Bank, shared with Family House Board Chair Alfred Vallano why First National Bank decided to give back to the Pittsburgh community through Family House.

“Supporting Family House ties directly to our mission of improving the quality of life in our communities we serve. We strive to make sure people have what they need to overcome challenges and thrive. And that’s what Family House does — it helps people who are going through what may be some of the toughest challenges in their lives.”

Family House was thrilled when First National Bank signed on to be the presenting sponsor of the 2020 Polo Match, and even more pleased when they retained their commitment despite the cancellation of this year’s event. Being able to rely on the generosity of community partners, like FNB, allows Family House to continue to fulfill its mission. ●



Alfred Vallano, Family House Board Chair, and Ronald Donatelli, President, Pittsburgh Region First National Bank, pose in front of Family House’s Neville location.

“I came up here in one of the worst times in my life. I never felt so welcomed, and comfortable. They could see the pain I was in and they were able to give me a sense of relief. I will be coming back and forth to Pittsburgh and I hope to be lucky enough to get a room there. When they say ‘home away from home,’ they mean it.”

— ROSE F.

“Please continue doing the good work that you’re doing. Your mission is an incredible one. Thank you for giving me a place to lay my head this year. My partner and I have collectively spent around a month at Family House over the last two years — your team is just the best.”

— FORMER GUEST

Family House is grateful to all of its annual donors whose gifts, grants, and in-kind support in FY20 (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020) enabled us to fulfill our mission. We are especially pleased to recognize the following Individuals in our Founders Circle for their gifts to Family House last year that totaled \$1,983 or more.

Donors listed alphabetically

Anonymous (2)
 Shirley Blood
 Jeannine Blyth
 Robert and Irene Bozzone
 Helen Cestra
 G. R. and Linda Clark
 David DeShong
 Joel and Joan Ettinger
 Glen Feinberg
 John and Charlene Innocenti
 Donald Judy
 Patricia Keating
 Dennis Kelleher
 Cary and Kathryn Klein
 Robert and Susie Kopf
 Claude and Laura Kronk
 Peter and Alice Leone
 Holly Lorenz
 James and Lisa Lorenzi
 Judy McQuiston
 Donald and Claire Meredith
 Kelly Moore
 Eugene and Sandy O’Sullivan
 A.J. Poole
 Sandy Rader
 Jesus and Sulema Rodriguez
 Michael and Amanda Rost
 David and Julie Russo
 Mark and Marcia Sherwin
 Jeannine Spinola
 Randolph and Kim Struk
 Steven Sushner and Adam Kirschenbaum
 Panchiwan Tangkea
 Walter Turner
 Linda Uber
 Alfred and Jeanne Vallano
 John Wilds
 Dr. John and Valerie Williams

Delivering the mission of Family House during an uncertain time

When COVID-19 struck early in the spring, Family House was forced to make a number of difficult decisions, not the least of which was whether to remain open while the impact of the crisis grew. Recognizing that individuals in need of life-sustaining and urgent medical care still needed a place to stay while they were in Pittsburgh, Family House remained steadfast in its commitment to provide these patients and their caregivers with a “home away from home.”

Staying open throughout the pandemic was not easy. Numerous challenges surfaced throughout the height of the crisis. Among them: ensuring that each Family House facility was appropriately staffed and prepared to provide comfortable, affordable, and safe lodging as the organization adhered to the ever-increasing safety protocols mandated by the CDC.

Family House leadership also had to balance the needs of its staff and dedicated volunteers, many of whom faced their own personal challenges, ranging from caring for their own children to providing support for relatives who were at risk and susceptible to COVID-19.

Fortunately for Family House, several volunteers were able to remain active, helping to support operations during this most unpredictable period of time. Paula Engel was among the dedicated volunteers who continued to provide hours of shift coverage at Family House, helping leadership address ongoing scheduling challenges brought about by the pandemic.

A Brooklyn, NY native and mother of three, Paula has been a volunteer at Family House for 14 years. She has also served as a longstanding volunteer usher in the performing arts community until COVID-19 forced the temporary closure of several theaters in the region. In addition to her volunteer commitments, Paula takes classes through the University of Pittsburgh, where she often chooses courses to fulfill her love of history.



Throughout the pandemic, Paula maintained her two weekly house volunteer shifts at the University Place and Shadyside locations, while most of her other extracurricular activities have been affected by COVID-19. Paula says that she “hasn’t really felt afraid” during the pandemic because she’s been able to stay safely connected with friends and community members through Zoom and daily walks.

Like so many Family House volunteers, Paula is a strong advocate for the organization, promoting our mission and recommending our services to people from outside of the region who are seeking medical care in Pittsburgh.

“ I tell others about our mission and why people come to Family House,” Paula said. “I love to tell them about our ‘home away from home’ and that we have groups come in to provide dinners. ”

Dedicated volunteers like Paula helped ensure that Family House’s unduplicated services were not interrupted despite the pandemic. Her hard work and commitment to Family House’s mission, especially during these difficult and unpredictable times, exemplify why volunteers like Paula are the lifeblood of Family House. ●

HOLIDAY WISH LIST

HELP US COLLECT
GIFTS FOR FAMILIES
SPENDING THE
HOLIDAYS WITH US!

Full-sized toiletry items

Winter wear
(hats, scarves, gloves)

Lap blankets

Slippers and slipper socks

Candy

Puzzles and Puzzle Books

Travel-sized Board Games

Books

Family Friendly DVDs

Travel mugs

Gift cards (CVS, Giant Eagle, Subway, Panera, Aldi, American Express)

Pittsburgh Memorabilia

Hot Chocolate Mix/Packets

Hand Sanitizer

Facial Tissues

Stationery

DELIVER TO:

Family House
Administrative Office
5001 Baum Blvd., Suite 545
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For further questions,
contact 412-647-0389



FAMILY HOUSE

5001 Baum Blvd. | Suite 545
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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U.S. POSTAGE
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TO GIVE

- > Online at: www.familyhouse.org
- > By phone: 412-647-5893
- > Designate Family House through your workplace:
United Way: #859

TO VOLUNTEER

- > Email us at: volunteer@familyhouse.org
- > By phone: 412-647-4917

TO BOOK YOUR STAY

- > Visit us online: www.familyhouse.org
- > By phone: 412-647-7777

TO CONNECT

- @FamilyHousePittsburgh
- @FamilyHousePGH



Thank you for supporting Family House!
YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Thank you, volunteers!

This September, Family House welcomed a small group of volunteers from Alcoa to cook and serve dinner to guests at Shadyside. The volunteers abided by the new volunteer COVID protocols and were able to bring smiles to the faces (albeit under masks) of our guests.



If you are interested in cooking a meal, please reach out to Leo Bake, Volunteer Program Manager, at lbake@familyhouse.org.



Visit www.familyhouse.org to learn more about how you can support our families.

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