



FAMILY HOUSE
40 years

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024



Honoring the Heart of Family House:

Volunteers

As the sunny days and spring flowers emerge, April marks a special time to celebrate the compassionate heroes in our communities: **volunteers.**

During April's National Volunteer Month, Family House is shining a spotlight on the individuals who selflessly dedicate their time, energy, and talents to making a difference in the lives of the patients and families that stay with us.

Join us as we honor the incredible volunteers who are the lifeblood of our organization all month long, and beyond. ●



Want to learn more about volunteering with Family House?
Reach out to us at volunteer@familyhouse.org!

The Spirit of Volunteerism at Family House

As the Executive Director of Family House, I am continually awed by the profound influence our volunteers have on our mission. Family House serves as a safe space for patients and families traveling to Pittsburgh for medical care. Yet, none of this would be achievable without the tireless dedication of volunteers.

Family House volunteers undertake a variety of tasks. One of the first and most essential among them is welcoming guests with open arms and compassionate hearts. Whether offering smiles at the front desk or simply providing a listening ear, their presence radiates warmth and hospitality.

Volunteers also participate in the preparation of meals for our guests. On select evenings, the aroma of home-cooked dinners or baked goods fills our dining room and foyer, providing not just nourishment, but a sense of warmth and familiarity to those far from home.

These caring individuals lend their expertise to maintain our serene landscaping in our patio area as well — creating a tranquil environment for families to enjoy amidst the stress of their healthcare journeys.

Family House volunteers embody the essence of compassion and camaraderie. They form bonds with our guests and staff that transcend

time and distance, offering unwavering support through our guests' healthcare highs and lows.

As we celebrate **National Volunteer Month**, I extend my deepest gratitude to these remarkable individuals. Their kindness, generosity, and unwavering commitment make a huge impact on the lives of those we serve. Together, we will continue our mission of providing a “*home away from home*” for patients and their families who travel to Pittsburgh for medical care.



John Plante
Executive Director



Cheers to 40 years!



We Are Fam-A-Lee House: The Story of Sister Sledge, the Pittsburgh Pirates, and Family House's Origin

In the summer of 1979, the airwaves pulsed with the infectious beats of Sister Sledge's “We Are Family” as disco fever swept the nation. Little did anyone know that this catchy tune would become more than just a chart-topper: it would weave itself into the fabric of baseball history. The Pittsburgh Pirates, riding on the waves of this anthem, adopted it as their team song during their journey to clinch the 1979 World Series Championship. But beyond the realm of sports, the Pirates and this iconic song played a pivotal role in the establishment of the first Family House in Pittsburgh.

As the Pirates were basking in their triumph, initial discussions were being conducted to create a haven for families facing medical challenges in Pittsburgh. In 1981, the

founders of Family House, alongside representatives from the Pirates organization, convened to shape the vision of providing a “*home away from home*” for patients and their loved ones. The Pirates pledged crucial seed funding to kickstart the initiative, aligning perfectly with the ethos encapsulated in the song “We Are Family.”

Fast forward nearly four decades, and Family House continues to embody the spirit of compassion and support that inspired its inception. As we celebrate Family House's 40th anniversary, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Pittsburgh Pirates for their contribution to our inception and history, reminding us that in the journey of healing, we are all part of one big family. ●



Dr. Thomas Starzl, one of Family House's founders, throws out the first pitch during a “Family House at the Park” night at Three Rivers Stadium in August 1993 to celebrate Family House's 10th anniversary.



The Campaign for Family House

Family House has been an essential partner in our region's healthcare delivery system for 40 years,

offering a safe, affordable "home away from home" for patients and families on their medical journeys. As Family House endeavors to complete our *Under One Roof* capital campaign, we invite your support to help us finish strong. With a one-time special gift today, you will help Family House continue to provide peace-of-mind to patients and their families "under one roof" for decades to come. ●

To make a one-time special gift to the *Under One Roof* campaign, scan the QR code or visit familyhouse.org/capital-campaign. For more information, email development@familyhouse.org.



Family House Ruby Jubilee Gala

The Family House Ruby Jubilee Gala, held on March 23, was a resounding success, capping a milestone 40th year for our organization.

The evening was an elegant affair as guests, adorned in their finest cocktail attire, gathered to support our mission. Our annual spring fundraiser proved to be more than just a night of celebration — attendees participated in a variety of giving opportunities, including a silent auction, prize package raffle, and our signature gifting board. The *Ruby Jubilee Gala* was a true testament to the unwavering generosity of the Family House community. The Gala raised more than \$205,000—the highest-grossing spring fundraiser hosted by Family House over the past 15 years. All Gala proceeds will make a significant impact in providing comfort, care, and support to patients and their families, ensuring that no one faces the financial and emotional challenges of a medical crisis alone.

A highlight of this year's Gala was the introduction of the *Cocktails for a Cause Reception*, a new feature designed to engage young professionals in volunteerism and giving opportunities at Family House. The Reception provided a platform for the next generation of Family House supporters to learn about the vital work being done by the organization and explore ways to get involved.

Perhaps the most memorable portion of the evening was shared by the Gala's Mission Moment guest speaker, Beth Filer. Ms. Filer gave a heartfelt and compelling retelling of her and her family's experience with Family House while her husband, Mark Filer, was hospitalized in UPMC Shadyside. During the closing of her remarks, Ms. Filer also announced to Gala attendees that donations raised from her own fundraising efforts exceeded \$22,000 in gifts from family and friends throughout her community in support of Family House's mission.

Thank you to all of our friends, families, donors, staff, volunteers, sponsors, and Gala attendees for their contributions to this year's event, and for continuing to advocate for our mission to provide a "home away from home" for patients and their caregivers. ●



Beth Filer (above), the featured speaker for this year's Family House Gala Mission Moment, shares her journey of finding solace at Family House and her dedicated fundraising efforts honoring her late husband, Mark Filer.



View more photos from the celebration: familyhouse.org/gala



FAMILY HOUSE

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TO GIVE

- > Online at: familyhouse.org/support
- > 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: familyhouse.org
- > By phone: 412-647-7777

TO CONNECT

  @FamilyHousePGH



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

SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

Support Family House with a Collection Drive!

Help us support families with a collection of essential items and healthy non-perishable breakfast items:

- Travel-sized hygiene products (*soap, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.*)
- Non-perishable breakfast and pantry items (*fruit or granola bars, canned goods, pasta, sauces, peanut butter, etc.*)
- Household items (*tissues, disinfectant wipes, etc.*)



For more needed items, scan the QR code or visit:
familyhouse.org/donate/ways-of-giving



Deliver donations to:
Family House
Attn: Development Department
5308 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Volunteer Appreciation Evening

**Wednesday, May 8, 2024
6:00 - 8:00 P.M.**
*Family House,
5308 Liberty Avenue*

For more information or questions, contact
volunteer@familyhouse.org.

41st Annual Family House Polo Match

**Saturday,
September 7, 2024**
Hartwood Acres



Visit familyhouse.org/polo for more information.



Bring the vibrant spirit of spring to Family House!

Embrace the season of renewal by sharing homemade meals that spread warmth and joy to our guests. Reach out to volunteer@familyhouse.org for details on how you can contribute a dinner or baked goods, adding a touch of springtime cheer to their time. Join us in making their stay at Family House a memorable one!