



FAMILY HOUSE

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER



A 27-Year Relationship with Family House:

Liliane's Story



In April 1998, Liliane Johnson made a risky trip from Morgantown, WV to Pittsburgh with a failing heart and little hope of survival. She received a new heart—but was told her chances of living beyond six months were slim. After surgery, she recovered at Family House Neville, arriving in the back of a U-Haul with a 600-pound heart machine she called “Big Mama.” It was meant to be her final move.

“It was a surreal moment,” Liliane remembers. “But the staff at Family House welcomed me with open arms and a lot of support. It was truly a miracle to receive so much love from strangers.”

Despite the machine's size, staff built a custom ramp to ensure a smooth arrival—just one example of the thoughtful care she received. In the days that followed, Liliane found healing in life's simple pleasures: reading in the library, exercising in the quiet fitness room, and sitting on the porch with family. She especially loved the living room piano, which reminded her of her father's classical music.

Over the next 25 years, Liliane stayed at every Family House location, including the recently consolidated location in the Shadyside neighborhood. Through ongoing treatments at UPMC Presbyterian, Montefiore, and Magee-Womens Hospital, she has always returned to Family House.

“I have the support of the entire staff every time I roll in and out of here,” she shared during her April 2025 visit.

For Liliane, Family House has never been just a place to stay—it has been a refuge. Her story reflects that of so many others: a journey of healing, connection, and care within a place that truly feels like home. ●



How YOU can help us serve patients and families

To support our mission, please consider donating or volunteering. Your help can expand our programs and enable us to reach more families in need.

Together, we can ensure every family has a “home away from home” during their medical journey.

Volunteer:

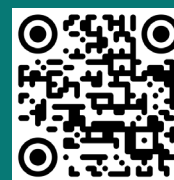
Visit us online to sign-up:
familyhouse.org/volunteer

or scan the
QR code:



Donate:

Visit familyhouse.org/donate



or scan the
QR code.

**A LETTER FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

Behind the Scenes of Healing

Providing comfort and support for our guests in an intimate and welcoming environment remains central to Family House's mission.

By reducing stress—both emotional and financial—in the lives of the patients and families who stay with us, we hope to help accelerate the healing process for all those we serve.

Last month, Family House held a retreat for our Board of Directors and leadership staff. That gathering focused on the ever-changing health care landscape in which we operate and the challenges it poses for our long-term sustainability, and how our organization must remain nimble and responsive to our guests' diverse needs.

Among the critical outcomes was the launch of a strategic planning process that I am confident will, ultimately, help further strengthen and guide Family House long into the future. As we look ahead to enhance and increase the programs and services we offer to our guests, as well as continue to plan, prioritize, and undertake improvements to our facility, we do so while never losing sight of our mission: to provide a "home away from home" for the patients and caregivers who choose to stay with us while they are in Pittsburgh receiving medical care.

I am grateful for the confidence and support that you and all the members of Family House's global community continue to invest in our mission. As we move forward in our shared vision, I eagerly anticipate updating you on the progress we will accomplish together in the coming days, months, and years ahead.

Best Regards,



John Plante
Executive Director



Family House News

DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

Sandy and Eugene O'Sullivan

Did you know that Family House recognizes donors who contribute \$1,983 (the year Family House was founded) or more in a fiscal year as part of the Founder's Circle?

While there are many to profile, two donors who embody supporting the mission of Family House are Sandy and Eugene O'Sullivan. Sandy has been a house volunteer for 23 years, served on the Board of Directors for 13 years, and generously supports Family House annually. Her husband, Gene, is a dedicated Annual Family House Polo Match volunteer and connector within the community.

Would you like to become a member of the Founder's Circle?

Reach out to Sarah Surace, Director of Development, at 412-647-5893 or ssurace@familyhouse.org.



2025 Family House Gala Recap

At the 2025 Family House Gala, hosted at The Duquesne Club, we raised an impressive \$167,158. Thanks to the over 200 generous supporters in attendance, and to our top sponsors, UPMC, UPMC Health Plan, Lamar Advertising, and Baird. Special thanks goes to Gala planning committee co-chairs, Carlos and Sandra Etheredge.

For photos from the evening, visit familyhouse.org/gala.

Keeping Family House Affordable

Through our Family Assistance Program—budgeted at \$360,000 for fiscal year 2025—we help cover room costs and provide essentials like meals, toiletries, and transportation. For guests who qualify, we provide options to discount room rates even further. We recently increased our Medicaid housing discount to \$50 per night.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Valerie, Front Office Specialist

How did you become involved with Family House?

I became curious about its mission and began volunteering at Family House in 2009. After a 14-year career with UPMC Children's Hospital, I was hired by Family House in 2024 and began working at its front desk.

What do you enjoy most about working at Family House?

Some of our Family House guests only stay with us for one night, while others stay many months, but I'm honored to be part of each guest's journey and aim to inject love into every shift that I work.

What do you wish other people knew about Family House?

By the time our guests have checked out, they realize that Family House had been not only their place of lodging while in Pittsburgh, but also their safe harbor in a storm.



COMMUNITY PARTNER PROFILE:

Liver Education Advocates

Liver Education Advocates was established to increase public awareness and education about liver health, specifically fatty liver disease, which is quickly becoming a public health crisis.

The organization was founded by a liver transplant, liver cancer, and nonalcoholic cirrhosis patient who went through every stage of fatty liver disease from simple fatty liver to cirrhosis.

LEA partners with Family House to provide informational support sessions for liver transplant patients and caregivers who are staying at Family House while going through transplant medical journeys.

To learn more about Liver Education Advocates, visit familyhouse.org/partners. •



Connect Corner at Family House, and Other Guest Programs

Sometimes you just need to talk to someone who gets it. That's why Family House offers "Connect Corner."

Every Wednesday in the Dining Room, Family House staff and guests gather to enjoy a snack, share stories, and support one another. It's one of many things Family House offers that's made our space feel a little more like home.

Other guest programming includes crocheting, neighborhood walks, movie nights, holiday events, and so much more! •

Help Provide Items in Need



Support patients and families by donating essential supplies and healthy, non-perishable pantry items through a group pantry drive.

We need the following items:

- **Travel-sized** shampoo, conditioner, body wash/gel, dental floss, deodorant, and hairbrushes/combs, etc.
- **Non-perishable pantry items**, including breakfast items (fruit cups, granola bars, oatmeal packs, etc.), canned goods, soup, sauces, broths, peanut butter, etc.
- **Household items**, including to-go/food storage containers, tissues, disinfectant wipes, etc.
- **We also need non-perishable, gluten-free pantry options.**

Please deliver donations to:

Family House
ATTN: Development Department
5308 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224



To learn more, scan the QR code or visit:

familyhouse.org/volunteer



FAMILY HOUSE

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TO GIVE

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




TO VOLUNTEER

- > Visit us online to sign-up:
familyhouse.org/volunteer
- > For questions: volunteer@familyhouse.org

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 2025
NEWSLETTER

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday
September 6
Hartwood Acres



Visit familyhouse.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn for details on the 42nd Annual Family House Polo Match.

Interested in becoming a
Polo sponsor?

Email ssurance@familyhouse.org.



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