



*"Your home away from home."*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Meet our VIPs
- From old to new
- How you can help
- Upcoming events

## OUR NEXT ISSUE...

will be all about our new house — photos of our grand opening events, thank you's, major contributors, move-in activities, photos of the house and more photos! We're excited and very proud and want to share it all with you!

## BOUQUETS

*from Family House guests*

"We want to sincerely thank you for giving us a place to stay while our son was at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. Our little boy was born with a heart defect, and we had no idea how this little guy would change our lives forever! Thanks again for helping us through this exciting yet difficult time in our lives. ►M.H. "

## Meet our VIPs

*(Volunteers Incredibly Performing!)*

What can be more stressful and upsetting than a loved one's serious injury or illness?

"It's even worse when that person is in the hospital far from home, making visiting difficult, expensive or just impossible," says Peg Murphy, Family House executive director. "That's why we exist, to provide safe, comfortable, low-cost lodging for guests whose family members are being cared for at one of our local medical centers."

Family House has always operated on a bare-bones budget, with a very small staff, and that's why volunteers are so critical to our mission. Here we profile a dynamic duo, Cynthia Kennedy and Harold Dikeman. We hope their inspirational stories will encourage others to lend a hand!

### Simply Marvelous Cynthia

When we interviewed Cynthia Kennedy, she was heading off to vacation in North Carolina. And what would she do there? Visit family? Enjoy the sunshine? See the sites?

Yes ... and tour other hospital hospitality houses. Even on vacation, our volunteer coordinator is working (without pay of course!) for Family House. "I'm excited to see other similar operations," Cynthia said. "Now that we're moving to bigger, more modern quarters, we need all the ideas we can get."

A retired teacher, Cynthia became a Family House volunteer seven years ago. Why Family House? "I wanted to serve where I was really needed," she said. And she's not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get gritty. "I help with the housekeeping, office work and mailings," she said. "Recently I helped out at the Home Show, too."

Cynthia also loves meeting the guests. "Absolutely. So many are from out of town," she said, "so sometimes our conversations are just simple, like where to go to eat. Others just want to talk about their day with a sympathetic listener. Either way, it's a joy!"

### Our Hero, Harold

In retirement, Harold Dikeman enjoys taking long walks and playing golf. And cleaning rooms, washing sheets, running the sweeper, taking out the garbage and, in good weather, doing a bit of yard work. "Whatever it takes," says Harold, a Family House volunteer for over two decades.

"I think it's just the right thing to do," he added. "As a Christian, I believe the Lord wants us to pay back by helping other people."



### VIPs

*Volunteers Cynthia Kennedy and Harold Dikeman take a break from their duties to look through the Family House scrapbook.*

*Continued on page 2 ...*

## A Salute to our Board

*...never bored ...or boring!*

They organize races for runners and holiday luncheons for families. They serve prime rib dinners and host golf tournaments. They balance our books, write our brochures, supervise construction of our new house and help fill it with furniture.

They are the members of our board, 23 volunteers in all. We appreciate their time and talent and generous financial support as well.

Thank You, Family House Board, you're the best!

### BOARD OFFICERS

*President* ▶ Gail Eaton  
*Co-Vice President* ▶ Robert Dewey  
*Co-Vice President* ▶ Andrea Dean  
*Secretary* ▶ Jill Terry  
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### DIRECTORS

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John Kelly  
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Vickie Parry  
Mary Peterson  
Shelly Rapp  
Janet Stephens  
Marilyn Strickfaden  
Zack Weaver

## Out of the old and into the new

*If walls could talk ...*

The ones in the house at 1509 N. Knoxville would have story after story to tell. The 117-year-old structure originally housed a well-to-do Peoria family, but it was destined for a more important role.

In 1985, as Family House, it began opening its doors to thousands of out-of-town families in need of a place to stay during a loved one's hospitalization, as well as outpatients and recently discharged patients who need to remain in Peoria.

### Reflections on our original location

"I give it great credit for being here for us when we needed it," Peg said of the house that will soon be vacated. "It has served us well over the years."

With its late 19th century charm characterized by ornate woodwork, beautiful stained-glass windows and decorative fireplaces, the Victorian-style house certainly has some desirable features and has offered a homey environment. But there are quite a few things that Family House staff, volunteers and guests will not miss.

Let's start with the raccoon family that has taken up residence in the attic and has disrupted sleep now and then by scampering around. Then there are the outdated pipes that sometimes make showering a challenge because of poor water pressure. And there's the fact that the house is heated unevenly, with some rooms feeling like saunas while others need supplementary heating from space heaters in order to be habitable in the winter. A major drawback is that the old house is not handicapped-accessible.

### Past challenges turned into dreams come true

Those problems will be history once Family House relocates to 1339 E. Nebraska in May. Plus, with the original facility, it was a matter of making do with existing conditions, according to Peg. But because it was designed specifically for accommodating families in need of a home away from home, the new Family House will offer many advantages over its predecessor.

"It will be a higher level of hospitality," she said. "We will be meeting more of the needs of guests with this house. We have been trying to think what would be the things you would want if you were in these families' situation. A comfortable bed, kind people and a safe environment are just a few of the things that you would want to be able to count on. That's why we put the whole service together."

Each guest room will have a private bath, which was not the case in the former location. Like a hotel, the new facility will allow guests to control the temperature in their room. The new house will have an

## Our VIPs ... *continued*

When you're about to celebrate your 86<sup>th</sup> birthday, nobody could fault you for settling into a rocking chair. But that's just not Harold's style. In addition to his weekly stint at Family House, he reads the newspaper for WCBU listeners.

"At Family House, you meet a lot of wonderful people," he said. "You're not there to solve any problems; just lend an ear and be a good listener. And I love the staff. Peg, Keke and Toni are just great!"



### VIPs needed!

*In our new home we'll be able to serve more guests in a more comfortable convenient environment. But we'll also need more volunteers. Like to pitch in? Give us a call at 309-685-5300 or email us at [directorpeg@familyhousepeoria.org](mailto:directorpeg@familyhousepeoria.org).*

improved phone system, too, allowing guests and callers to leave messages for each other. In addition, each guest room will have a wall-mounted TV with cable service.

"For a lot of people, TV becomes their ability to keep up with the world when they are so centered on their own," Peg said. "Also, it's a form of relaxation for folks. When they are so pulled out of their routine, it helps them maintain some sense of normalcy if they can come back and watch a show."

At the new house, access to laundry services will be improved by separate washers and dryers for staff and guests. Each of the three floors of the house will be equipped with two washers and dryers exclusively for guest use.

A major improvement will be the fact that the new Family House will have "more lounge-type spaces so that people will have an opportunity to meet other people in the same situation," Peg said. "That's huge. As a hospitality house, that's an important part because if people can share their burden, it becomes less, and that's what guests can do for each other."

The location of the new facility is a definite improvement over the original one, which is a small lot on a busy street near an interstate. Donated by Dr. Dale Geiss, the new Family House property is wooded and secluded, but, like its predecessor, is in close proximity to OSF Saint Francis Medical Center and Methodist Medical Center. "It's going to be a very peaceful, respite area at the end of a dead-end street," Peg said. "There are woods in the back, and you can see the river in the distance."

With two large kitchens and more storage area for food and supplies, Peg hopes that meals provided by community and church groups will be offered more frequently. The new house also has a large meeting room that will be available for use by those groups, she said, adding, "We want to pay it forward."

With the opening of its new home, Family House will introduce day services. Family members who are staying with patients at one of Peoria's three hospitals will be able to take a shower and do laundry at Family House at no charge. Another change will be the acceptance of reservations for some of the 20 rooms. "At every turn, we've been trying to see how this can be more helpful, how we can anticipate the needs of people coming here," Peg said.

### A million (or two) thanks!

The director can't say enough about the people who saw the need for a new Family House and donated more than \$2 million to make it a reality.

"There are a lot of special folks who had the vision to understand how needed our services are," Peg said. "These are local people who look beyond their needs and their own families' needs because they will never use this house. They are being good neighbors by supporting Family House. You hope there are people like them in other communities so they'll have a place like this where they can stay if they ever need it."

Just as the size of our house has grown,  
*so has our wish list...*

The people and business of Peoria have been good to Family House. Over the years, they have donated their time as well as their money. We will still have some of those same needs — towels and tablecloths, linens and laundry soap. But, now we have bedrooms to fill — 20 of them — as well as three comfy lounges, two kitchens and a spacious deck.

### Here's how you can help:

- Contribute gift cards and discount coupons from local vendors.
- Host a "Housewarming Shower" — invite friends/family/co-workers to bring gifts and a Family House representative will speak to your group.
- Visit our website to see our Wish List ([www.familyhousepeoria.org/getinvolved](http://www.familyhousepeoria.org/getinvolved)).
- Volunteer — we rely on many wonderful volunteers to keep the House running, but we can always use more!
- Contact us for more information!

*Won't you help us fill our new home with love!*

## Family House Staff

### Executive Director

Peggy Murphy

### Office Manager

Wykisa Odom

### Housekeeper

Toni Frakes

### Clerks

Thomas Aguilar  
Mary Genzel  
LuHenri Johnson  
Steve Katlack  
Christina Odom  
Dolores Ortiz  
Georgia Stevenson

## Contact Us

- 309-685-5300
- [directorpeg@familyhousepeoria.org](mailto:directorpeg@familyhousepeoria.org)
- [www.familyhousepeoria.org](http://www.familyhousepeoria.org)
- Facebook: Family-House

## DONOR LIST

We are very grateful for the support all of our donors have given to Family House — and there are many of you. So many that we're unable to include the list in our newsletter. For the complete list, please visit our website and click on "GET INVOLVED."



## Family House Events ... Tour our new home!

Grand Opening ... May 9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>

1339 E. Nebraska Avenue

- **Medical Community Days**  
Monday & Tuesday, May 9 & 10 • 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **VIP Night (by invitation only)**  
Wednesday, May 11 • 5:30 to 8 p.m.
- **Chamber After Hours & Ribbon Cutting**  
Thursday, May 12 • 5 to 7 p.m.
- **Neighborhood Associations Open House**  
Saturday, May 14 • 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- **Public Open House**  
Sunday, May 15 • 12 to 4 p.m.

### 22nd Annual Carolyn Mannlein

## Memorial Race for Family House

Saturday, May 21 at The Clubs at River City

We invite runners and walkers of all ability levels to participate in this Illinois Valley Striders Grand Prix sponsored 5K run, 1 mile fitness walk or children's fun run. This year we have added a school division with six age brackets. Trophies will be awarded for all levels.

Our great raffle prizes include a mountain bike and a summer pool membership to The Clubs at River City. Nick & Willy's Pizza, Apple' Bakery and Smoothie King are providing delicious treats for all participants. The Methodist Wellness mobile facility will be there for blood pressure checks and more.

To sign up, visit our website at:

[www.familyhousepeoria.org/getinvolved/events.html](http://www.familyhousepeoria.org/getinvolved/events.html)

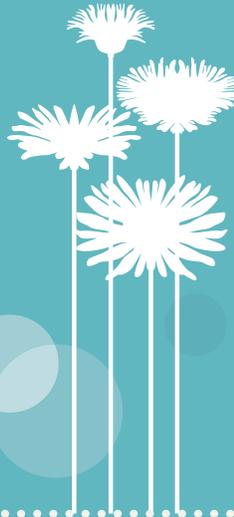


## BOUQUETS

*from Family House guests*

"God Bless Everyone at Family House. You were all very friendly and kind to us. We hope you stay as nice as you are now and have fun in your new home. ▶D.J. "

"You mean the world to us, because you are so close to the hospital. It made it easier for us to get back and forth to see our daughter. All the staff is really nice and everyone is very helpful. ▶M.C. "



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