



## Help Us Open the Door to Life

**“The patient isn’t the only one to suffer. It would have been nice to have someone hold me up so I could help my daughter.”**

— **Marleen, mother of heart transplant recipient**

Organ and tissue transplantation has grown dramatically in our region over the last decade. In 2008, *Gift of Life Donor Program* coordinated 1,152 adult and pediatric organ transplants in partnership with transplant centers in the greater Philadelphia region. With approximately 6,000 people listed on our region’s waiting list, thousands of families are in need of the services being developed by **Gift of Life Family House**.

*When the diagnosis is an organ transplant, the whole family experiences sudden changes in their lives. Everyone is affected – emotionally, physically, spiritually and financially.*

### Housing/Lodging

For families living nearby, daily trips to and from the hospital are draining. Those traveling greater distances often have no other option but to stay in hotels, incurring costs that are well beyond their means.

Families with limited financial resources become fixtures on the hospital units where their loved ones are being treated, sleeping in hospital chairs or on floors.

### Financial

Many families are faced with significant costs related to loss of income from a spouse who is the primary breadwinner, extended unpaid leave of absence for caregivers, and out-of-pocket costs for items not covered by insurance.

Out-of-pocket expenses related to travel, lodging, meals and incidentals might range from \$60 to \$300 per day. Consider that over a six month period, these costs can range anywhere from \$10,000 to more than \$50,000. Could your family afford this?

### Emotional

Family members often experience this period in isolation, away from home, without an adequate support network of friends or families in the same situation who understand.

**“I had no idea it would be so overwhelming. I would cry in my car on the way to work... and cry on my way home. That was my only downtime.”**

— **Gerri, wife of liver transplant recipient**

While our region’s hospitals offer remarkable medical care for transplant patients, presently there are no programs dedicated to providing housing and other focused supportive services for transplant families and caregivers.

### Help us “Open the Door to Life”

Gift of Life Family House is a unique – and desperately needed – resource for the growing number of families choosing to come to Philadelphia for their loved ones’ life-saving transplant.

Our capital campaign theme, “Open the Door to Life,” embodies the celebration of life and the spirit of hope that these patients and families embrace, and further underscores our commitment to promoting awareness of the critical need for organ and tissue donation.

**“If someone had told me that this girl from Brooklyn, who never drove beyond her neighborhood, would tackle I-95 twice each day for four months, on my own, crying all the way home each night, overwhelmed by the fear and loneliness of leaving Mark in the hospital, I would have told them that they had the wrong woman.”**

— **Terry, wife of heart transplant recipient**

Help us “Open the Door to Life” so that we can be there for our transplant families and they can be there for their loved ones. Help us make a difference in thousands of peoples’ lives.

## Gifts that Sparkle

Nine-year-old Madeline Leamy has been creating beaded jewelry for years, just for fun. It wasn’t until recently, however, that she decided to turn her hobby into a way to help raise money and awareness for organ donation. Madeline, a student at Bradford Heights Elementary School in Doylestown, has always been inspired by her aunt, Martha Chase-Reisinger, who received a kidney in 2000 (her brother was a living donor) when Madeline was just an infant. This year, Madeline decided to sell her beaded jewelry at her school’s Fall Festival in October and donate the proceeds to help transplant families through the Gift of Life Family House. Through her efforts, Madeline raised \$200 for the Family House.

*continued on back*



*Madeline, with her aunt, Martha, (l) and her mother, Victoria (r), served as an ambassador for Gift of Life, proudly wearing a Team Philadelphia t-shirt and sharing information about the Family House and the importance of organ donation at her school’s Fall Fest.*

## 42nd Street: A Remarkable Family Affair

ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, a special performance of David Merrick’s award-winning show, *42nd Street*, will be held at The Ritz Theatre Company to celebrate the life of Joe Bottino, Jr. Sadly, Joe passed away on February 11, 2007 while hospitalized with liver failure due to Hepatitis C. At the time of his death, Joe was #1 on the waiting list for a liver transplant. During the months that Joe was hospitalized, his family traveled back and forth between New Jersey and Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia to be by his side.

In addition to commemorating Joe’s life, this event is also being held to raise awareness for organ donation and the devastating impact that this situation places on the patients and their families. About 125 other New Jersey residents like Joe die each year waiting for donated organs. Currently, more than 4,200

New Jerseyans remain on the waiting list. Last year, Dianne Bottino testified in support of the “New Jersey Hero Act”, a bill that makes New Jersey the first state to require all new drivers and those renewing their license to either sign up as a donor or indicate that they have designated someone to make the decision for them after their death.

With this important legislation successfully passed, the entire Bottino family has now turned their focus to raising funds and awareness for the Family House because they understand firsthand why the Family House is such a critical resource for transplant families. Sandi Petrelli, Joe’s mother, was previously employed at The Ritz Theatre Company as Director of Group Sales, so when she and her husband, Mike, approached Bruce Curless, the Director at the Ritz, it was an easy sell. Easy for a Remarkable Family!

## Make a Gift Today... and Help Open the Door to Life!

With more than 6,000 individuals currently on the waiting list in our region for an organ transplant, Gift of Life Family House meets an urgent need to provide support to families traveling to Philadelphia for their life-saving transplant treatment and care.

“Our community of transplant recipients, donor families, volunteers, healthcare partners and vendors has wholeheartedly embraced this project and is committed to seeing this dream become a reality,” says Debra Roberts, Director. “They have been unbelievably generous, working very hard to ensure that our transplant families have the resources that they need.”

### Please consider making a gift:

- to honor a family member, physician or donor family
- to commemorate a loved one
- to celebrate a birthday, wedding anniversary or noteworthy occasion

**Naming Opportunities within Gift of Life Family House begin at \$500 and are often established through a multi-year commitment.**

**Gifts can be made in the form of cash or checks, credit card, or appreciated securities.**

**For more information, please contact:**

**Debra Roberts, Director,  
Gift of Life Family House  
215-599-2044  
droberts@donors1.org**

**Or check out  
www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org**

# Many Thanks to our Generous CONTRIBUTORS

You are helping us build Gift of Life Family House!

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**Diane and Paul Alessi's Anniversary**  
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**Kathie and Bill Arena's 40th Birthdays**  
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Gifts Received  
August 1 - December 31, 2008

## Family House Events

### January 29

#### Young Friends - A Night at North Bowl

**Location:** North Bowl Lounge n Lanes  
909 North 2nd Street (Old City) Philadelphia, PA 19123

**Time:** 6:30-8:30 PM

**Tickets:** \$10 YF member rate  
\$15 non-member rate  
(includes bowling and shoe rental)

**RSVP:** 800-438-5093, ext. 6101

### February 8

#### 42nd Street: A Family Affair

**Special Performance benefiting Gift of Life Family House in memory of Joe Bottino, Jr.**

**Location:** The Ritz Theatre Company  
915 White Horse Pike, Haddon Township, NJ 08107

**Time:** 2 PM Matinee  
1PM Light Refreshments

**Tickets:** \$25/ticket  
General Admission Seating

**Information:** www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org

### April 23

#### Spring Fling 2009 - Juried Art and Crafts Show

**Benefiting the Family House**

*Featuring Liza Chen Jewelry and other artists*

**Location:** Gift of Life Donor Program  
401 N. 3rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

**Time:** 3 - 8 PM  
*Perfect for Mother's Day, Graduation and Spring gift-giving!*

### May 7

#### Charity Cask Night

**The first Thursday of every month, a keg is brewed for the featured charity and sold by the pint, with 100% of proceeds benefiting the Family House. Raffles! Silent Auction!**

**Location:** Bethlehem Brew Works  
& Steelgarden Lounge  
569 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018

**Time:** 6 - 8 PM

**Information:** www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org

### May 18

#### Jackson's 5th Annual Mulligan On Life Golf Outing

**Sponsored by Hennion & Walsh to benefit Gift of Life Family House**

*Includes golf, lunch, dinner and cocktails, raffles and awards!*

**Location:** Brooklake Country Club  
139 Brooklake Road, Florham Park, NJ 07932

**Time:** 10 AM - 8 PM

*Details to follow.  
Mark your calendars for a great event!*

For more information regarding these events benefiting the Family House, contact

**Kathy Szczepanski**  
at  
**kszczepanski@donors1.org**  
or call  
**(215) 557-8090, ext. 1312**

[www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org](http://www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org)

We are proud to announce that we have recently launched our new Gift of Life Family House website. We hope that you enjoy experiencing the site.

**MEET our families...** Their remarkable stories underscore the compelling need for the Family House

**LEARN about the Family House...** Who, what, where, why and when

**CHECK OUT our Calendar of Events...** and News and Noteworthy to see what's going on!

*We welcome your feedback at [info@GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org](mailto:info@GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org).*

*Sparkle, continued from front*

Madeline had another reason to be inspired by her aunt in August when Martha participated in her fifth US Transplant Games in Pittsburgh, representing Team Philadelphia in both track and swimming events. Martha came home with four medals from her swimming events; two gold medals, one silver and one bronze medal.