

Our Family's Transplant Journey

In her own words, Kelly Green shares her experiences during her mother's recent transplant. Kelly understands first-hand what the Family House program represents – and why it needs to happen – now.

“I remember the longest drive of my life, filled with guilt, stress and sadness. It was the first time I dropped my mom off at the hospital and left her to return home. I just couldn't afford one more hotel stay. After over a year of unplanned, non-stop expenses, I just had nothing left.

On January 19, 2007, mom had an incompatible kidney transplant at Johns

Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, receiving a kidney from her sister, Sandy. They had the same tissue type but not the same blood type. My mom needed a transplant and the wait list was too long for her to wait for a compatible transplant.

Although Baltimore is not too far from Philadelphia, it wasn't home. And over a period of several months, commuting to

another city for treatment, even the smallest expenses begin to mount up. Mom's insurance covered all of the costs related to the surgery and each hospital stay but not all of our other expenses were covered. To be near the hospital, Mom and I rented a hotel/apartment for three months at a reduced rate of \$89.99 per night. I stayed there for a month while Mom was hospitalized, prior to her transplant, and Mom returned here for several months immediately following her transplant because she needed to be close to the hospital for daily and then eventually weekly check-ups. That 3-month apartment stay set us back over \$8,000.

Due to various complications, several return trips to Baltimore were necessary for brief hospitalizations. I would stay in a hotel, usually for three nights, the average hospital stay for Mom during these return trips. Between gas, tolls, lodging and food, each trip cost us about \$550. And while the hotel had all of the amenities, no one there really understood what I was going through. I cried all the time. I had moments of complete exhaustion and “chilled-to-the-bone fear” that mom was not going to be all right. And I was alone!

After a month of missing work, I had to return to Philadelphia. (Luckily I had a job to return to!) Eventually, our money ran out and I could no longer afford to stay in the hotel near the hospital.

I would work all day, leave my office at 5PM, pick up my mom, drive her to Baltimore in the early evening, settle her into the hospital and hit the road again that night for my return trip to Philly.

Thankfully, mom is doing well now. We recently celebrated the second anniversary of her transplant and we are grateful for her renewed health! I am thankful that my daughter will have a chance to know her Grammy and mom will have the opportunity to watch her granddaughter start kindergarten in September.

But there has to be a better way! The financial and emotional impact to families touched by transplant is devastating. My story is similar to thousands of other families across our region that travel to Philadelphia so that their loved one can get their second chance at life. With healthcare improving the medical side of transplantation, the journey for family members shouldn't have to be so difficult.

That's why I'm committed to making the Gift of Life Family House a reality. It's time. ”

Kelly Green is Director at the Institute for the Study of Civic Values. She also serves as President of the League of Women Voters in Philadelphia.



Kelly Green (left) celebrates with her mother, Ilene, (center) and Ilene's sister and living donor, Sandy Wright.

~ Young Friends ~ of the Family House

Young Friends of the Family House is an auxiliary organization of Gift of Life Family House, consisting of young professionals, men and women, couples and singles from across the region who are making a difference in the lives of transplant patients and their families. But don't be put off by the name “Young Friends”. All ages are welcome to join Young Friends and attend Young Friends events because “...it's just a state of mind!”

On October 16, 2008, their kickoff event featured Councilman at Large Bill Green speaking on the topic, “Organ Donation: Healthcare, not Politics.” followed by a wine and cheese reception.

On January 29, 2009, sixty Young Friends members and guests traveled to North Bowl Lounge 'N Lanes to bowl for a great cause and raise \$1,200 for the Family House. And we want to especially

acknowledge John Browne, who recently celebrated his 65th birthday, for joining the Young Friends at North Bowl for an evening of bowling fun! John truly signifies the Young Friends motto that “Young Friends are not limited to ‘twenty-somethings’,It's a state of mind.”

Young Friends of the Family House is currently seeking new members to get involved in our upcoming April events.

Membership Information

Individual annual YF membership: \$35
Annual Couples membership: \$50

YF Members can participate in social events, meetings and community service projects – at a special reduced YF rate. All proceeds from annual membership dues and fundraising events go directly to benefit Gift of Life Family House.



April 2 Young Friends present
A Night with the Sixers

For \$20, entitled to:
One (1) ticket for April 2 game,
Sixers vs Milwaukee Bucks,
including hot dog, popcorn and soda

YF members pay only \$15 to attend this event!

April 19 Join the Young Friends
Team for this year's Dash for Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness

5K and 10K runs, and a 3K Family Walk.
Held rain or shine at the Art Museum!

Check out Young Friends information on
www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org.

Many Thanks to our Generous CONTRIBUTORS

You are helping us build Gift of Life Family House!

Melinda Barber
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Gifts Received
January 1 – February 28, 2009

*Donations from 2008

We apologize for any errors or omissions
and ask that you report them to
Kathy Szczepanski at (215) 557-8090, ext. 1312
or info@GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org.

Special Performance of 42nd Street – A Family Affaire

Anonymous
Donna Aceto
David and Lorian Arena
Atlanticare Health System
Marie Ballantine
Broderick and Geraldine Barber
Melinda Barber
Paul and Evelyn Barber
Dianne Bottino
John Brown
Samuel and Marianne Cass
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Carl and Patricia Innocenzo
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Herman and Margaret Knoll
Christina Leahy
Joanne Lortie
Jonathan and Rhonda Markoe
William and Margaret Morris

In Honor of...

Rev. James C. Burton
Dennis W. White

Santos Felix
Joseph and Pauline DiNoia

Bethany and Joel Friedlander
Shira Weinstein

Ruth Hallowell
Kathi, Drew, Paul and Sarah Clapham

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hendricks'
50th wedding anniversary
Harold and Christine Delhagen

Richard Kerwin
James and Charity Kerwin

Pauline Marie McGann, M.D.
Pauline McGann

Mark Meade's 65th Birthday
Maxine Finger

Brian and Martha Reisinger
Patricia Chase

**Dr. Daniel Westawski, Shannon,
Michelle and Staff**
Melissa and Amy Ciment

In Memory of...

Stephanie Barry
All About Women of Christiana Care
Bernice Adu Amankwa
Jessica Apel
Betsy Bailey
Dennis and Mary Barclay
Anthony and Jenna Baffone
Casey Bedder
Vishal Bedi
Brian and Jo Ann Begrowicz
James and Wanda Berrigan and the
Beach Gang (DeEmedio, Reardon,
Geiszler, Feeney, George, Agne,
Slavish, Delp and Berrigan families)
Jeffrey and Elizabeth Boles
Robert and Loretta Burton
Pamela Butler
Patrick and Jennifer Callahan
Steven and Nancy Campbell
Mark and Marielle Carlson

42nd Street: A Remarkable Family Affaire

ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, a special performance of David Merrick's award winning show, *42nd Street*, was held at The Ritz Theatre Company in memory of Joe Bottino, Jr.

On this afternoon, the Ritz Theatre had a full house of 342 guests, enjoying the unseasonably warm afternoon and celebrating Joe's life. "It was wonderful to have this event," said Sandi Petrelli, Joe's mother. "As we approached this second anniversary, it was good to be busy. There were some tears but there were so many parts of the day that made me think of Joe and smile. I know he was with us!" This event truly became a Family Affaire when friends and family members got involved – selling tickets and corporate sponsorships, securing

raffle prizes, handing out programs and manning the concession stand!

In addition to commemorating Joe's life, this event was held to raise awareness for organ donation and the devastating impact that this situation places on the patient and their families. Joe passed away on February 11, 2007 while waiting for a liver transplant. Last year, Dianne Bottino (Joe's wife) and their children, Joey and Meghan, and Sandi and Mike Petrelli, appeared to support passage of the "New Jersey Hero Act."

With this important legislation successfully passed, the entire Bottino family has turned their focus toward raising funds and raising awareness for Gift of Life Family House because they understand the need for the Family House. Dianne

recalls the time she spent in the hospital with Joe, sometimes sleeping on a window ledge in his hospital room. On other occasions, she remembers commuting between Absecon and Philadelphia or having to make plans for Joey and Meghan to stay with neighbors while she remained at Joe's side in the hospital.

Special thanks go to this year's Marquis sponsor – AtlantiCare; and Encore sponsors – Wegmans and The Ritz Theatre Company.

All proceeds from this year's *42nd Street: A Family Affaire*, close to \$11,000, will benefit Gift of Life Family House and will go to underwriting a guest room in the Family House in Joe's name. Plans are already underway for next year's Family Affaire at The Ritz Theatre Company!

Family House Events

April 2

Young Friends present
"A Night with the Sixers"

Game: Sixers vs Milwaukee Bucks

Time: 7:00 PM

Tickets: \$20; YF Members pay \$15/ticket
(includes game admission, hot dog, popcorn, soda)

To purchase tickets online, or become a Young Friends member, go to www.GiftofLifeFamilyHouse.org. Tickets can also be purchased by check, cash or credit card by contacting Kathy Szczepanski at 215-557-8090, Ext. 1312.

April 27

Second Annual
Anthony Jensen Memorial Golf Outing
Benefiting Gift of Life Family House

Location: LuLu Country Club
1600 Limekiln Pike, North Hills, Pennsylvania

Time: 11:30AM	Registration
12 Noon	Lunch
1:00 PM	Shotgun
5:00 PM	Cocktails
6:30 PM	Silent Auction
6:45 PM	Dinner

Cost: \$150 per golfer (includes golf, lunch, and dinner)

Information: Tim Griffin (215) 416-7656
Debbie Griffin (215) 518-4770

May 1

Spring Fling 2009 – Art and Crafts Show
Benefiting Gift of Life Family House

Featuring Liza Chen Jewelry, Keppie's Barrettes
and other artists

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

Time: 3 - 9 PM

Perfect for Mother's Day, Graduation and
Spring gift-giving!

May 7

Charity Cask Night

This first Thursday of May, a keg will be brewed for
the Family House and sold by the pint, with 100% of
proceeds benefiting the Family House.
Prizes! Drawings! Fun!

Location: Bethlehem Brew Works
& Steelgaarden 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

Mark your calendars for a great day!

For more information regarding these events
benefiting the Family House, contact
Kathy Szczepanski at kszczepanski@donors1.org
or call (215) 557-8090, ext. 1312



Dianne Bottino and Sandi Petrelli, Joe's wife and mother respectively, address the audience at the theater.