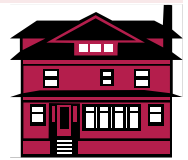


# SHARING THE *gift*

A NEWSLETTER OF GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE

SPRING SUMMER 2015

*gift of life*



GIFT OF LIFE  
TRANSPLANT HOUSE

A HOME THAT HELPS  
AND HEALS

## A Different Kind of House Call A collaborative Journey To Stay Home

Lori Ewoldt, Mayo Clinic



Blood Draw at 705 House

Enhancing service to those who experience transplantation is a goal shared by Gift of Life Transplant House and Mayo Clinic. Providing a blood draw service at Gift of Life Transplant House has been on the *wish list* of both organizations for several years. However, it was thought to be impossible because of the numerous regulatory challenges associated with providing a clinical service outside Mayo

Clinic campus. After two years of collaboration between the two organizations, combined with a very persistent implementation team, helped transform this project from dream to reality. The permanent blood draw service opened on Monday April 6th.

A three week pilot conducted in April 2013, provided insight into the numerous logistical challenges associated with this unique service. The old adage, the *devil is in the detail*, certainly held true for the pilot team. Issues included staffing, how to transport the blood samples to the lab, and where to put a temporary router so that the Mayo team would have access to the patient's medical record during the pilot. Persistence, teamwork and a collective sense of humor helped the pilot team work through these and many other details. The team collected data related to patient satisfaction, staff satisfaction and

the impact of the service on follow up visits to the clinic/hospital. This data was beneficial in making the case for providing the service on a permanent basis.

After the successful pilot, the long road to project approval officially began. Individuals from the Transplant Center, the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Department of Nursing, Pharmacy, Infection Prevention and Control, Quality Management Services, Contracting & Payer Relations, Revenue Cycle, Financial and Accounting Services, and Medicare Strategy Unit worked extensively to ensure that the project met the numerous regulatory, accreditation and billing requirements from various state and federal agencies. With these issues addressed, it was time to formally request project approval from the Gift of Life Board of Directors and a variety of committees within Mayo Clinic. The final phase of the project focused on remodeling, and teamwork was once again the key success factor. Staff from Information Technology, Telecommunications, Facilities, Environmental Services, General Service, and Central Supply partnered with leaders from Gift of Life House to address the logistical issues associated with the newly identified space at each house.

Guests are given information regarding the service when they first arrive at Gift of Life Transplant House. Registered Nurses from Mayo Clinic's Eisenberg 94 partner with Phlebotomists from Laboratory Services to staff the blood draw room. The service is currently offered Monday through Friday mornings. Weekend service is expected to start later this year. Feedback from guests using the service has been favorable, with many comments about the convenience that the new program offers.

## Spotlights Goodbye and Welcome

**Follow Your Dream** - It is always hard to say goodbye to a friend and co-worker but we at Gift of Life Transplant House had to bid farewell to Deb Raduenz, our full time Desk Receptionist, so she could pursue one of her dreams. After Deb retired from Mayo Clinic, it had always been her wish to work at Seasons Hospice in Rochester. Just recently, the perfect job was available and she was lucky enough to score her dream gig!

*We sent Deb on her way and with the best of wishes and we will always have a special place in her heart for Gift of Life Transplant House.*

**Welcome** - Gift of Life Transplant House would like to welcome an old friend Debbie Niemeier as our Resident Night and Weekend Manager, at the 705 House. Many of you know Debbie as she is the mother of Mindy Niemeier.



Mindy is currently waiting for a heart and liver transplant and Debbie has been staying at the House for a year.

Debbie has two children, Mindy and Travis, with her husband, Keven. She is originally from a small town in Missouri. Before coming to Rochester with Mindy, Debbie worked for Scholastic

Children's Books. Debbie loves to read, take walks, knitting, doing Sudoku Puzzles but most of all loves to help other peoples.

*When you are at Gift of Life Transplant House please stop and say hi to Debbie.*

## National Donate Life Month



## President's Letter

By Mark R. Litzow, M.D., Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Spring has finally arrived in Rochester and we are pleased to see the warmer weather and everything turning green. In early May, the crabapple trees and lilac bushes are in full bloom to the happiness of those of us without significant allergies.

Gift of Life Transplant House remains extremely busy as we serve patients and families coming for life-saving procedures at Mayo Clinic.

We are pleased with a significant new enhancement to our services, which was just implemented in April 2015. We have developed a program for our guests to have their blood drawn in the morning at both the 705 and 724 houses. We had successfully performed a small pilot program for blood draws last year. We have now moved forward to implement this program between 7:00 a.m. and 9:45 a.m., initially Monday through Friday, with the goal to have a daily service, including weekends, later in

2015. This will allow our guests to have their blood drawn at the house and not have to travel down to the clinic for this service. This project required significant logistic, regulatory and re-modeling efforts.

Many staff from Gift of Life Transplant House as well as many individuals from the Mayo Clinic Department of Laboratory Medicine and the Mayo Clinic Transplant Center were involved in bringing this project to fruition.

So far, the feedback from our guests has been positive, and we look forward to continued expansion of this project in the coming year. We believe this is a unique program and are pleased to have the opportunity to offer it to our guests.

We want to wish you all a happy summer and hope you will be able to join us for our 31st Annual Golf Tournament on Monday, June 29th, followed by our Awards Banquet that evening.



## Executive Director's Letter

By Ginger Holmes



*"We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives."*

*~ John F. Kennedy*

Often I am asked the question, "What is your typical day like?" I am like "What!" who has a typical day." But I would like to share a story with you about what has often happened to me in my "typical day".

A cold blustery winter night and it is about 7:00p.m., end of a long day, I have my coat on and ready to head out the door of my office. As I start to close my door, one of our long staying guests and caregiver walks past the office. I asked them if they had had a good day. Their response had been "a great day". I said "come in and tell me about it". The guest continued on and the caregiver walked into my office, sat down and began to cry. All of a sudden it was now no longer important to head out the door to go home. I took off my coat, sat down, give her the Kleenex and in the silence of sobbing, waited for her to talk.

She talked about their journey to Rochester, Mayo Clinic and Gift of Life Transplant House. Her tears were of joy and the good news they had received. They were getting to go home. They were so thankful for Gift of Life Transplant House, their "new" family and her husband's "new birthday." But they were scared. They were scared of leaving their new home, new friends and their medical care. She said to me "we can't thank you enough for all of you at Gift of Life Transplant House have done for us." I told her she had just given me the most meaningful "thank you" ever and explained what a joy and privilege it is to each and every one of us to be able to be part of their new life journey.

On a personal note, I know I often joke about "who was my friend, how did I get here to this office, to do what I do every day", but I am so thankful each and every day that I come to help do my part at Gift of Life Transplant House and bring support, joy and Kleenex to all of our guests and everyone we interact with during this journey we call life.

Now it is 8:00p.m., and I can put my coat back on and head home, knowing I have fulfilled one of my dreams; to help make a difference in one person's life.

## House Happenings

*By Sarah Edgerton and Ron Kreinbring – BSAG Committee*

Thanks to a generous gift from the 2014 Trails 4 Transplant trail ride/fundraiser of more than \$30,000, we are pleased to announce that the 705 House kitchens have been refreshed and remodeled. All of the cabinetry and countertops have been replaced and the walls have been patched and repainted. There is also a new ice maker in the east kitchen. Please check out the bright new look in each of the kitchens at the 705 House.

We have also installed all new coin-operated washers and dryers in the 724, 705, and Founders Houses. These are high efficiency, front loading LG machines and **will require the High Efficiency laundry soap for washing**. Each load of washing or drying will cost \$1.25 and there are coin machines available to make change. The new machines were paid for in part by a grant from Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation and we

are looking for donations to cover the rest of the cost of these new machines.

The North Wing on the 705 House was built in 1995. Its existing roof system was starting to show its age. Thanks to the generosity of Robert and Debra Rodell in memory of Ron Patrias, we were able to replace the roof with a longer life shingle system. We will also add ventilation in the attic space for better shingle life; reduce snow build up, and increase energy savings. Work was also needed to repair the rubber on the roof where it ties into the original Judd House Wing. Work should be completed by the end of May

We hope our guests will enjoy using the refashioned 705 House kitchens and believe the changes will make cleaning the kitchens much easier. We also hope the new washers and dryers will make laundry day a little more efficient.



## Upcoming Events 2015:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>May 29</b>    | <b>Start of the 3rd Annual Trails 4 Transplants</b><br>Starting in Mandan N.D. Finnish June 12, Belle Fourche, S.D. |
| <b>June 7</b>    | <b>6th Annual Gift of Life Transplant House 5K Run/Walk</b><br>Bear Creek Park                                      |
| <b>June 29</b>   | <b>31st Annual Gift of Life Golf Tournament</b><br>Rochester Golf and Country Club                                  |
| <b>August 29</b> | <b>Gala of the Decades – The 1940's</b><br>Signature Flight Support (airport hangar)                                |
| <b>October</b>   | <b>Zombie Pub Crawl</b><br>Downtown Rochester   |

*For more information on these events, please visit our website [www.gift-of-life.org](http://www.gift-of-life.org)*

## An Inspirational and Beautiful Project

By Karissa Wright, Triton High School, Dodge Center, MN



Jackie Rasmusson, Karissa Wright and Steve Rasmusson

Being a senior at Triton High School, it is required that everyone completes a senior project to meet his or her graduation requirements. The intensive ambition of my project stems from the loss of my cousin, Tim Rasmusson. Tim passed away unexpectedly on April 9th, 2014 due to an ascending aortic aneurysm, and has since saved countless lives through the donation of his organs and tissues. My passion to focus on the immense gains being a donor can have on individuals was accomplished by organizing The Timmay 5k. As race director, I organized a committee of about ten members who were all close friends and family of Tim's, and were equally excited to help make the event as successful as possible.

My goal was to turn this tragedy into an inspirational and beneficial event. The Timmay 5k took place on Saturday, April 11, 2015, around Silver Lake and the goal was to target organ donation awareness. It was a way to honor Tim's life, and brought friends, family and the surrounding communities together- which was one of Tim's most treasured qualities," bringing people together for a great time". More than 450 individuals participated in the race and helped to spread our message on the importance of

being an organ and tissue donor, and being aware of the responsibility this title brings with it. In addition to the incredible number of participants, the Tim Rasmusson Foundation's first ever, The Timmay 5k raised \$16,500 to be donated to the Gift of Life Transplant House.

Being the Race Director for The Timmay 5k was the most stressful, yet most rewarding experience I have ever been involved with. Reflecting back on my journey, I can now see just how large of an impact it has made, not only on the community, friends, and family involved, but also the immense influence it has made on me. I am more confident and am pleased to note that putting your full effort, heart, time, and self into something truly makes the end result that much more gratifying.



Tim Rasmusson Foundation

Having organized an event of this magnitude was a genuinely life changing learning experience. I got to fulfill one of my most treasured goals: to impact hundreds of individuals by simply spreading positivity for a great cause. Prior to tackling this project, I had no realization of just how influential I could be. This experience has made me a sincerely humble, ambitious, and uplifting individual.

*On May 20, 2015 Karissa and the Tim Rasmusson Foundation presented a check for \$16,500 to Gift of Life Transplant House from the proceeds of The Timmay 5K.*

### WISH LIST

Lazy-Z Boy Recliners – new or slightly used

Laundry Baskets



New Commercial Vacuum Cleaners



\$30 for a guest room night

Paper towels

Paper Napkins

Forever postage stamps



Ziploc bags, assorted sizes

Liquid hand soap – large refill bottles

Liquid dish soap

Hand Sanitizer refills

Regular & decaffeinated coffee



Wrapped candy, especially chocolates



Scrubbing Bubbles

Soft Scrub – Lemon

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

## Gala of the Decades – The 1940's

By Bonnie and Chuck Potter



We are excited to introduce our new fundraising event, **Gala of the Decades**.

The inaugural event's theme will feature the forties, a decade of heroes, celebration and glamor.

This event will take place at Signature Flight Support, located next to and part of the Rochester International Airport on Saturday, August 29, 2015.

The day's event will begin with a family friendly open house from 11:00am to 3:30pm. It will be an opportunity for you and your family to walk on the tarmac amongst rare vintage planes and vehicles of the 40's and to talk with their owners. Additional family activities will be held with concessions available by the Canadian Honker. The cost for the open house will be \$5.00 per person or \$25.00 for the family.

The evening's activities begin at 6:00pm with a cocktail reception on the tarmac. At 6:30pm the planes departure signals the start of an evening of elegance, a salute to the golden age of glamor. The hanger doors open to welcome the guests to the evening's formal Gala featuring a four course dinner paired with wine courtesy of Pinnacle Catering. Following dinner, guests will be taken through a transplant journey starting with the donor, to aviation's

role transporting the organ after procurement and the transplant to the grateful patient.

A small unique live auction follows and the evening concludes with dancing to the sounds of the St. Louis Big Band. This 18 piece swing band from St. Louis, MO will have everyone on the dance floor. Attire is semi-formal and guests are encouraged to dress to the era, the forties – wide brimmed fedoras, pleated pants, wing tips, wide ties, gorgeous gowns, full skirts, cinched in waists – the 40's was an era of glamorous style and elegance. Celebrate it on the dance floor with ballroom dancing, the Lindy Hop and jitterbug.

Votes will be cast during the evening for the decade to be featured in the 2016 **Gala of the Decades** and an announcement will be made at the end of the evening revealing next year's theme.

- The cost of the evening's event is \$150.00 per person
- Parking on site and shuttles available to the area parking lots
- Some hotels in the area have offered discounted rates
- Please visit Gift of Life Transplant House website, [www.gift-of-life.org](http://www.gift-of-life.org) for more information and updates on this exciting premier event.

*We look forward to an evening of celebration with you!*

## Rise in Occupancy First Quarter 2015

By Steve Tarara – Operations Manager

The first four months of 2015 have been very busy at Gift of Life Transplant House. We have seen a higher occupancy over all, especially in the month of April, compared to a year ago. We were running at 100% occupancy 3 to 4 days every week.

Unfortunately when we do run full we need to find alternate accommodations for our guests. For those of you that we needed to send to a hotel during that time, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation with us. We do our best to get everyone into Gift of Life Transplant House. However there are times when we need to find another place for you to stay. We would like to thank the hotels for your generosity and

hospitality by offering a discounted rate to our guests when the House is full.

Looking ahead, the summer is always a busy time for everyone! As a reminder to all of our guests, please get your reservations in as we never know if we are going to be full. There are times when we may not know if we have a room for you until the day of your arrival, so we will always stay in touch with you. If we are running full the reservation for your discounted rate at one of the hotels needs to come through the Gift of Life Transplant Office.

*The entire staff at Gift of Life Transplant House is here to help out guests in any possible way. Thank you to our entire staff!*

## Events



• *Follow us on Facebook to stay connected* •

**GIFT OF LIFE  
TRANSPLANT HOUSE  
MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Gift of Life Transplant House is to provide transplant patients and their caregivers with high quality, affordable accommodations in a supportive, home-like environment.



GIFT OF LIFE, INC.  
705 Second Street, Southwest  
Rochester, Minnesota 55902



STAFF: Back Row: Cory, Debbie, Steve, Mark, Mark, Bob  
Front Row: Missy, Brittany, Rita, Ginger, Tami, Brandy  
Missing: Ladd & Dennis



**GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF**

**Executive Committee**

- President* – Nick Pompeian
- Vice President* – Rodney Anderson
- Past President* – Mark Litzow, MD
- Secretary* – Sarah Edgerton
- Treasurer* – Jesse Buhl
- Founder* – Edward Pompeian

**Board Members**

- Roger Erickson, RN, CNP
- Joe Forrer
- William French
- Bob Groettum
- Kathy Jensen
- Ronald Kreinbring

- Cheryl Lavin-Meyer
- Sheila Nelson
- Charles Pagenhart
- Bonnie Potter
- Thomas Schwab, MD
- George Smith
- David Talen

**Honorary Lifetime Board Members**

- Mary Davie
- Sylvester Sterioff, MD

**Gift of Life Transplant House Staff**

- Executive Director*  
Ginger Holmes

*Manager of Finance and Administration*  
Rita Hawkins

*Facilities Manager*  
Ladd Baldus

*Operations Manager/  
Volunteer Coordinator*  
Steve Tarara

*Business Office Assistant/  
Receptionist*  
Tami Konakowitz

*Technology Coordinator/  
Receptionist*  
Mark Stadtherr

*Receptionist*  
Brittany Bones

*Resident Night & Weekend Manager  
724 House*  
Dennis Lamers

*Resident Night & Weekend Manager  
705 House*  
Debbie Niemeier

*Facilities Groundskeepers*  
Bob Himmer, Cory Cody

*Housekeepers*  
Brandy Conway, Missy Johnson,  
Mark Stoning

*Sharing the Gift*, a newsletter about events and issues of interest to friends and supporters of Gift of Life Transplant House, is published twice annually by Gift of Life, Inc. at Rochester, Minnesota. Article topics and story contributions from guests are always welcome. Please submit them (preferably) via email to [rta@gift-of-life.org](mailto:rta@gift-of-life.org); include your name and all relevant contact information. Questions may be directed to Rita Hawkins at the same email address or by phone at 507-288-7470, or by mail at 705 Second Street, SW, Rochester, MN 55902. The name, *Sharing the Gift*, and all newsletter contents are copyrighted 2010 by Gift of Life, Inc. Permission to reprint or use any aspect of this newsletter must be obtained in writing from Gift of Life prior to use.