



A Family When You Need It Most

SPRING 2020

NEWS

FROM OUR HOUSE

Resident Spotlight



HELEN PEPE

The Blessing of Family

“I felt like I walked into God’s House,” said Helen Pepe, as she described the first time she visited Francis House. She wanted to see the place she was considering to call home. As soon as she walked in the door, she looked to her right and saw the chapel. The sense of peace overwhelmed her. The very next day, Helen became a Francis House resident.

Helen was born and raised in northern New York State. She was born in Carthage and her family moved to Watertown when she was a toddler. Helen was the youngest of 7 siblings. Life was simple and family came first. Helen has many fond memories, especially attending Holy Family Elementary School and Immaculate Heart Academy, where she graduated.

It was in high school where Helen met her husband to be, Richard. They began dating during their senior year. Helen says, “Richard was a soft-spoken man with a gentle soul, that is what I loved most about him.” Richard served in the Navy for two years and in April 1952 they were married. The following January they welcomed their first born, Michael. They went on to have two more children, Cheryl and Laurie.

The family moved to Syracuse when Richard was offered a job with General Electric (GE), where he worked for the next 38 years. Helen stayed at home with the children. “They found a friend in Jesus at very early ages. It was how we wanted to raise them, and having my faith helped me throughout my life.”

After their children graduated and moved out, Helen and Richard kept busy. They enjoyed playing cards and socializing at the Mattydale/Hinsdale Senior Club. They also travelled with friends from the club. Ireland and Aruba were Helen’s favorite places to visit.

Richard passed away in 2015. Although it was a tremendous loss, Helen has focused on the blessings of her family, which has grown to include 14 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and a great-great grandchild!

Helen says her family has also grown to include Francis House staff and volunteers as her extended family. Caregiver, Jessica Soulier, shares “Helen has taught me a lot through her stories about her family life. She was married 53 years, so I always listen to her marriage advice. She says the key is to love deeply, be faithful and always compromise.”

Helen can usually be found in her bedroom, watching the Turner Classic Movie station. Caregivers and staff often check-in and Helen will update them on the plot and the famous stars on the screen.

When asked how she would describe her journey at Francis House, Helen says, “I am surrounded by Angels. They are forever known to me as St. Francis Angels.”

Our hearts were saddened to say goodbye to Helen on May 22. We were blessed to have her a member of our family.



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News From Our House

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“Decision making is a struggle, and yet the Ignatian approach accepts the struggle whole heartedly...It claims that the signs of God’s direction for our lives are found precisely in the shifting movements of the divided heart...The battle is the problem, but it is also the solution.” J. Michael Sparough, SJ, Jim Manney, Tim Hipskind, SJ. What’s Your Decision?

It was precisely through those shifting movements of my heart, prayerfully considered over many months, that in January I shared with our Board of Directors my decision to retire from my position as Executive Director effective at the end of this year. While leaving my role is personally difficult, the time is right.

Recently, I stepped along the Walkway of Blessings surrounding our gazebo. I looked over the blessing bricks and remembered. I remembered the names of our residents, recalled their faces and thought about where I was in my life when they came to spend their last days with us.

Some of the names were people I went to visit in their homes or the hospital when I was the new Resident Care Coordinator in 1998. I remembered their stories, families and pets. There was “John,” a wonderful man of Irish descent who always greeted me with a joke and looked for one in return. There was “Richard,” who loved to sit in the sunshine outside of our entry door, serving as an unofficial greeter. He always called my dog “sidewinder” because of the funny way she walked down the hall. So many beautiful people. I remembered the 22 years of names, faces, laughter, tears and hope.

As Francis House grew, so did the walkway. Although we grew in size, we maintained our core values of compassion, unconditional acceptance, respect and dignity. I saw the names of volunteers and supporters and my mind went to the hundreds of people who have given and continue to give selflessly of their time, talent and treasure to ensure the success of Francis House and the values we share. The Walkway of Blessings is well named. Each name is a blessing and those blessings fall on everyone who is a part of the mission and ministry that is Francis House. Over 29 years of compassionate care told in the unending circle of names.

Francis House has never been a job for me. Rather, it has been the ultimate extension of my vocation as a nurse. Even though my recent responsibilities have been administrative, the opportunity to expand and grow at the core of my soul, to be a healer, has been a gift of untold value. I have made lasting friendships and have enjoyed the treasure of knowing goodness in its most pure form.

While I may be stepping away from “official” duties, I will always remain close and connected to this ministry. To be present, as a resident takes the last earthly breath, is indescribable. To be present to and comfort the loved ones left behind, is a gift to the vocation I chose so many years ago. Francis House is and will always be a part of my life.

The work that I have done through the past 22 years has been the most humbling and rewarding of my professional life. To quote Christopher Morley, “There is only one success...to be able to spend your life in your own way.” It has been my way to spend much of my life in service to our dying brothers and sisters. My heart remains full of love for this ministry. I am more grateful than I can say for all the graces and blessings that have been bestowed upon me during my time at Francis House. I wish all of you peace, joy, and more love than you can imagine. I miss you already and will continue to pray every day for your good and the good of Francis House. I ask that you pray for me. May God bless you.

In Peace and Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Nancy Light". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Light

FRANCIS HOUSE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC



Sally Manahan (left), resident care coordinator, and Kristie Meyer, assistant resident care coordinator.

In March, the COVID-19 pandemic turned our lives, indeed our whole world, upside down. Our Spring events, our bi-annual symposium and volunteer dinner, were canceled. Social distancing meant the hugs and holding of hands that were part of our everyday interactions had to stop. We were also faced with the decision of whether or not Francis House could even remain open.

Our ultimate goal was to insure we could safely provide care to our residents and protect our staff while fulfilling our mission to provide a home and extended family. We knew we would be without the support of volunteers. Care staff scheduling had to include a contingency in case of staff member illness. Following CDC guidelines, we had to be even more stringent in our cleaning and disinfecting procedures. We ultimately decided that we would remain open under limited conditions.



Beth Lynn Hoey, director of development

By the second week of April, we had consolidated our care into one 8-bedroom home. Administrative staff who could work from home were doing so. We were practicing the recommendations from the CDC including wearing masks and gloves at all times. We temporarily suspended offering bedrooms to new residents. Staff provided care, served meals, and performed the duties usually accomplished by our volunteers.

Throughout these months, we have continued in our mission to care for our residents. It has been possible because of the understanding, prayers and support of our Francis House family. Donations of meals, desserts, supplies and financial support have kept us going. Daily calls and cards have inspired us. Our resident family members have abided by revised visiting hours and temperature taking. And we have been able to slowly bring new residents into our home.

While we miss our hugs and physical connections, we recognize this is the sacrifice we must make to keep all of us safe. Despite our masks, the smiles, kind words and love shine through. Franciscan

writer David B. Conturier, OFM, Cap. Says of this pandemic, “We must strengthen the ties that bind us and appreciate the insights, discoveries, good will and compassion that circle the globe even more profoundly than any virus can.” Those words describe how we have approached this pandemic at Francis House. With God’s grace we will come through this trial with a greater appreciation for what it means to be present to each other.



Annie Wilcox (left) and Jessica Soulier, caregivers

During times like this, Francis House realizes the importance of staying connected. Please email Adrienne Kelley at akelley@franchishouseny.org and we will include you in future communications from Francis House.

CONNECTING WITH OUR VOLUNTEER FAMILY

Every day, our volunteers enter our home bringing endless energy, joy and compassion. The pandemic has forced us to temporarily suspend our volunteer program. Although this has been a profound loss, we remain connected despite our physical distance. Many of our volunteers, along with staff, have committed to say a special daily prayer for our ministry. We continue to receive messages and gifts of support and wanted to share some of them with you.

“It has been quite a while now since I’ve rung the doorbell and said “I’m here to volunteer”...But every day at 11am I pray. I pray for a better time when we can all be together again; when our souls will be full with joy and purpose only Francis House can give us... Once we are reunited...we will see everything with fresh eyes and have a softer kind of peace in our hearts. I hope these words find you and your loved ones near and far as well and healthy as they can be. Virtual hugs to you all!!

— Michele Luysterborghs

“The care, concern, love and inspiration that permeates our houses on Michaels Ave I truly miss. I am hoping that soon we can join each other again in that spirit of kindness and love. Miss you.”

— Teresa Colwell

“Working with you all at Francis House has made me a better person, and I thank you all for that. Please stay safe and healthy. We’ll all be working together soon.”

— Joanne Capella



Staff walks in the shoes of volunteers. Since the pandemic began, staff members have been completing the work previously done by volunteers. It has given us a new appreciation of the hard work and inspiration our volunteers give daily to enable us to fulfill our mission. Above, Nancy Light, executive director (left) and Lauren Chacon, FrancisCorp volunteer, prepare breakfast.

GOODBYE HELENE AND ED: TWO OF OUR SHINING EVENT VOLUNTEERS

We recently lost two of our beloved event volunteers Helene Miglierina and Ed Koolakian. They had been part of our There’s No Place Like Home committee for over a decade. Our hearts are full of memories from event preparation and the celebration night where Helene and Ed were there supporting us. Helene also served on our Auxiliary Board, volunteering at every activity and event. For several years, Ed participated in the Auxiliary fashion show, featuring styles from his shop, Koolakian’s Menswear. We hold their family and loved ones in our prayers.



Helene (left) celebrates *There’s No Place Like Home* with Adrienne Kelley (middle) assistant director of development and volunteer, Christine Connors.



Ed is surrounded by his models at the Auxiliary Fashion Show and Luncheon.



Tara and Pete DiLaura, will Co-Chair our 2020 *There's No Place Like Home* event.

Donor Spotlight

PETER & TARA DILAURA

Last year, when Peter and Tara DiLaura agreed they would become Vice Chairs for *There's No Place Like Home*, they felt it was more than supporting an event. "As soon as we walked into Francis House, we felt the love of this ministry," says Pete. Tara adds, "this isn't just an event, it is a way for our community to come together to help others in their last weeks of life."

Adrienne Kelley, assistant director of development, shares, "Pete and Tara bring an honest love for this ministry to everything they do. They have inspired our staff and event volunteers. They have also generously supported us personally and through their business."

The DiLauras have made Syracuse their home since they graduated from Le Moyne College. They have three grown children and now stay busy with their five grandchildren. They have also owned their family business for over 30 years. CADimensions, Inc. is an engineering and manufacturing software and 3D printing systems, sales and service company.

Pete and Tara realized the value of giving back many years ago. As active alumni of Le Moyne College they have served on several boards and committees that have benefited Le Moyne and as well as their local community.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IN SOMEONE'S LIFE:
BECOME A
VOLUNTEER!**

If you have thought about sharing your time and talents as a volunteer, please consider Francis House. We are in need of people who have maintenance experience, who love to clean, cook or answer phones. There are many other volunteer opportunities as well. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Rea Carver at 315-475-5422 to discuss how you might become part of our invaluable volunteer family.

Save The Date



Wednesday, October 14, 2020

We are moving forward with our plans for our signature event *There's No Place Like Home*. Although we are not certain how the next weeks and months might change the structure and scope of the event, we do know that we will celebrate.

We ask for your support as a sponsor, advertiser or prize donor. For more information please go to our website www.francishouseny.org.

We will continue to update you on our plans and progress. For questions, contact Adrienne Kelley, assistant director of development at 315-475-5422 or email akelley@francishouseny.org.

"We believe in the mission of Francis House and the benefit that *There's No Place Like Home* helps in support of that mission. We are excited to be able to continue to work with the leadership team at Francis House and their incredible network of volunteers.

We feel that Francis House provides such a welcoming environment for so many families that it is a perfect way to give back to others when they need it most. Bringing peace and joy to someone in the final days is a gift that everyone at Francis House provides every day."

"We look forward to a very successful event in October and we are grateful for your support."

THANK YOU...

We express our thanks to the following for helping us through this time with various gifts and efforts:



~ Thank you Maureen Drescher for your years of service on the Francis House Board of Directors.

~ Thank you to Carnegie Catering/Nick & Angelo's Ristorante for their generous donation of food for our residents and pantry items.



~ Thank You Patte! ~

We are grateful for the dedicated volunteer leadership Patte DeStaffan has given as Auxiliary President for the past two years. Patte, your hard work and passion for our ministry has guided our Auxiliary to tremendous growth over the past two years. We are blessed to have you in our Francis House family.

~ Thank you to Joe Russo, owner of Russo Produce for the constant donations of fruits and vegetables for our residents.

~ Thank you to Ted McMahon for weekly donation and delivery of milk.

~ Thank you to those who have donated masks to keep our staff safe.

~ Thank you to Starbucks on Marshall St. for the donation of milk and cream.

~ Thank you Sr. Christine Altman for the 16 new handmade bean bags for residents.

~ Thank you Norm Guinta, owner of Peter Guinta and Son Produce for the generous donation of fruits and vegetables



~ Thank you Matt Lumia for your years of service on the Francis House Board of Directors.

~ We thank the many volunteers, resident family members and friends of Francis House who have sent in meals for our current residents and care staff.

~ Thank you to our gardening group who continue to make our grounds look beautiful.

~ Thank you, Bernice Buck for hosting your annual Super Bowl party and raising over \$1,100 in memory of Helen Day for The Caring Fund, Francis House's Endowment.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY RAFFLE WINNERS!



Thank you to everyone who participated and supported our St. Patrick's Day Giveaway...all 600 tickets were sold! We are also grateful to our winners' donations. We raised a total of \$55,000 for Francis House.

Congratulations to our winners Shiela Coon, Patricia DiDomenico and Father Fred Daley.

A MESSAGE FROM SISTER KATHLEEN



In my over 30 years of commitment to the ministry of Francis House, I have been blessed to hold many positions: founder, executive director, Board member, director of mission outreach and household coordinator. And, through it all, I have always been a part of our fundraising efforts.

One position I have not held formally is that of volunteer, a role that is so vital to our mission and the residents we serve. Beginning June 1st, for health reasons, I will be transitioning from my role as a member of the staff to being a member of our volunteer family.

This change will allow me the flexibility to serve our home in a new way. I plan to offer our volunteers and staff programs in Franciscan Spirituality, Boundless Compassion circles of dialogue, and grief. I will also have more time to devote to my commitments as a Spiritual Director.

My love for the people and ministry of Francis House has never wavered. You will continue to see me regularly at the house as I teach, visit residents or maybe even answer the phone. I will never be far away.

I ask for your prayers as I begin this new phase of my Francis House life and I will continue to pray for all of you.

Gratefully yours,

Sister Kathleen

WELCOME KATE FLANNERY



Kate Flannery, LMSW, CSW joined Francis House in October 2019 as the Director of Mission, Outreach and Education. Kate has been a member of the Francis House family for many years: as a supporter, a family member, and as a Board member. In her new role, Kate has responsibility for creating opportunities for and facilitating

community education on end-of-life issues. She also provides outreach and resources to support social model homes in our region and across the country.

Kate is grateful for the blessing of her work at Francis House. "From a very early age, I knew my vocation in life would be to work for human dignity and social justice," explains Kate, "and I have been fortunate to be able to have that work in my career."

For the past seven years, Kate served as Executive Director of the Upstate New York Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Prior to joining Komen, she served as Executive Director of both the Rape Crisis Center of Syracuse and Vera House, Inc.

Kate knew the good work of Francis House, but admits her experience as a family member of a resident gave

her a new perspective. "My family didn't know what we were going to do or how we were going to care for our loved one. It was very complicated. Then he was able to come to Francis House. The last weeks of his life became a gift to our family. It was a time where our family could be together and heal; share memories and say things that needed to be said. It was transformative. We spent our days loving him."

Her experience has strengthened her belief in the need for education in end-of-life issues for our community. "It is such a crucial time," explains Kate, "a time that can be overwhelming with choices." She believes that education is a powerful tool to respond to this need. "It is the most powerful gift you can give someone. It is an agent of change and empowers people to better their life."

Kate lives with her husband Dick Mulherin and daughter Emma on Onondaga Hill. Emma, a junior at CBA, is a Francis House Youth Auxiliary Board Member. Kate also has three grown children who live out of town: Courtney and Carey live in Boston; and Taylor lives in New York City. Kate enjoys spending her free time with family and friends, traveling when she can, and reading. She continues to devote her volunteer time promoting health and wellness for our community.

Welcome Kate!

AUXILIARY NEWS

Welcome New Board Members

Several Board members of the Auxiliary of Francis House made special deliveries to welcome the incredible women who have committed their time and energy as new Board members.



Alicia Burgun



Kate Bushnell



Kim Caldwell

Thank You!

We are grateful to the following women who will be finishing their terms on the Auxiliary Board. You have brought comfort and joy to the residents, volunteers and staff members of Francis House. Thank you for your service!

Lisa Collins

Mary Currell

Ellie Grooms

Betsy McLane



Liz Griffith



Carol Marshall



Mandi Rossignol

Auxiliary Virtual Spring Luncheon

Look for your email invitation for the Auxiliary Virtual Spring Luncheon coming your way in June! Although we can't meet in person, we can connect in support of the residents of Francis House.

Details are included on the Auxiliary page on the Francis House website: <https://francishouseny.org/auxiliary-virtual-luncheon>

GIVING MADE EASY

An Easy Way to Give Your Support

You can schedule monthly or quarterly gifts through ACH (Automated Clearing House) debits.

ACH debit allows you to make your donation electronically. It is a more efficient, cost-effective program for both you and Francis House.

For more information, please contact Beth Lynn Hoey, director of development 315-475-5422 or email blhoey@francishouseny.org.

Auto Donations

Did you know you can donate your car to benefit Francis House? Visit www.cardonationwizard.com and choose Francis House as your charity or call 877-957-2277 for more information.



YOUR LEGACY OF LOVE

The Caring Fund

Through The Caring Fund

We have received tremendous support from our benefactors who have named Francis House in their wills and other planned gifts.

By naming Francis House's Endowment *The Caring Fund* in your will or planned giving vehicles, you will be impacting the lives of our residents and family members for many years to come.

As with any financial decision, you should contact your accountant or financial advisor to discover what type of gift is best for you.

For more information on *The Caring Fund*, go to www.francishouseny.org or contact Beth Lynn Hoey, CFRE, director of development at 315-475-5422.

CRITICAL WISH LIST

(see our website for full wish list)

MISCELLANEOUS

- Grocery gift cards
- Home improvement gift cards

FOOD

- Juice: cranberry juice cocktail, apple

PAPER GOODS

- Paper towels

HOUSEHOLD

- Disinfecting wipes
- Hand sanitizer

SUPPLIES

- Alcohol pads
- Baby wipes (unscented)



A Family When You Need It Most

FRANCIS HOUSE MISSION STATEMENT

Francis House provides a home and extended family to persons with terminal illnesses so they can die with dignity surrounded by the unconditional love of God. We will use our lived experience as a resource for others.

Core Values Of Francis House

Compassion, Unconditional Acceptance,
Respect and Dignity.



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Attorney General's website
www.charitiesnys.com or by
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WE PRAY FOR OUR RESIDENTS WHO HAVE DIED FROM JANUARY 14, 2020 — MAY 14, 2020

Ann Beck
Christine Bird
Barbara Bradley
Micheline "Mickey" Brennen
Mary Lou Brown
Genevieve Bulus
Grace Callis
Daniel Carmichael
Michael Clark
Anne DiBello
Dr. William Drake
Nancy Eiffe
Cynthia Fiello
Maria Finizio

Stella Gianni
Doris Henry
Dorothy "Dottie" Howe
Rev. Leonard Johnson
Shirley Kent
Albert Kerr
Thomas Kimpton
Carolyn Knowlton
Dawn Kupfer
Karen LaGrange
Anna Liszewski
James Mack, Jr.
Catherine "Kay" McAndrew
Michael McDermott

Anna Myers
Nancy O'Neil
Joan Pierson
Marguerite Ruzycki
Johannes "Hans" Schilling
Richard N. Smith
Dy Soun
Walter Sweeney
Amy Tatro
Arlouise Tisdell
Edward Tucci
Jeannette Watkins
Diane Williams