



A Family When You Need It Most

SUMMER 2023

# NEWS

FROM OUR HOUSE

## *Fran Fragola:* GIVING & RECEIVING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

*All you  
need is love,  
Love is all  
you need.*

~ John Lennon/  
Paul McCartney

Nowhere can unconditional love be witnessed more than at Francis House — extended by the staff and volunteers to residents and families alike.



In her own individual and special way, Frances Fragola, now 92, has become the embodiment of unconditional acceptance and affection. This is only fitting because, according to her son, Dale, it's how she's lived her life.

Fran joined the Francis House family as a resident before the holidays last fall. Upon arrival, she had one request: that strings of Christmas lights be put up and that her collection of Christmas décor fill her room. She loves the holiday so much — and expressing it — that over the years she earned the nickname “Mrs. Christmas” by family, friends and neighbors. Sharing the joy of the season was how Fran came to be embraced by everyone in the house.



Fran grew up on Syracuse's north side and began working at age 16. She eventually married and settled in Liverpool. Years later, after a divorce, Fran embraced her role as a single mother and sole provider to the couple's two young boys, John Jr. and Dale. To keep the little family together, Fran worked two jobs: at a local pharmacy and then at Sam Dell Dodge as a bookkeeper until her retirement in 1995.

During her life, Fran Fragola extended unconditional love to her two boys, sacrificing as she raised them and as they became adults. Dale describes his mother as having wisdom, recalling that he and his brother would often say “mom was right” and “we should have listened to mom.”

Growing up, John Jr. and Dale came to admire Fran's loving nature and her work ethic, as well as everything she did to take care of her family and her home. She enjoyed mowing the lawn and shoveling snow and loved to bake, especially her signature Pizzelles, traditional Italian waffle cookies.

While John Jr. moved to California, Dale remained at home, returning the same unconditional love to his mother that he had received as a son. Dale, who retired several years ago from Chrysler – New Process Gear, had purchased the family home where he still resides and where he cared for Fran for many years.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



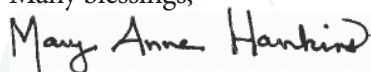
I have met so many wonderful residents, family members, volunteers, and community members in the two-and-a-half years I have been at Francis House. Each person is eager to share a story about the impact Francis House has had, or is having, on their life. To listen to each experience has been a blessing to me. Sister Kathleen Osbelt's beautiful vision and mission continues.

As you read our newsletter, you will see how Francis House has grown with the addition of new staff. As Sr. Colette would say, "You are not here by chance, God has placed you here at Francis House." Each person has brought to Francis House not only their talent, but a heart of compassion and a genuine commitment to carry forward our mission; honoring the past and bringing fresh ideas and perspective to the future. Each staff member has a job that makes a difference in the lives of others. As Mother Theresa once said, "I can't do what you can do—and you can't do what I can do—but together we can do something beautiful for God."

That beauty is seen in little moments every day. The family members who experience peace and comfort after their loved one is welcomed to Francis House, the special milkshake or ice cream sundae prepared by a volunteer and delivered to a resident, or the youth auxiliary member who delivers a bountiful supply of paper towels after a school fundraiser.

Francis House is so grateful and appreciative of every person and group that is part of our family—and everyone in our community who supports us. Mother Theresa was right... together we can do something beautiful for God. As you read through our newsletter I hope that you feel a sense of pride for being part of the beauty that is Francis House.

Many blessings,



Mary Anne Hankins, Executive Director

## OUR 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.

Keeping Dale and Fran company over the years were their beloved canine companions: Magic, then Curly, both Sheepdogs. Missing the companionship and loyalty a dog shares with its owner, they acquired a six-week-old Goldendoodle four-and-a-half years ago and named him Maneater, after one of Dale's late golfing buddies. Manny, as he's called, has become a regular visitor to Francis House and beloved by everyone at the residence. Dale visits his mom daily for four to five hours, and Manny nuzzles with Fran and awaits affection and treats from the staff.

Today, Fran continues to delight in several indulgences: candy, sweets and having her hair and nails done weekly by Kathy, who provides these services as a volunteer. Dale, who describes his mom as determined, strong willed and good natured, is inspired by her continued embrace of life and sharing of her joy.

Fran says it was divine intervention that she became a resident of Francis House. She credits sharing her name with St. Francis of Assisi. He is known to have said, "Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received, only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage."

Over many years, Fran Fragola has embodied the qualities St. Francis ascribed to a life well lived. These same qualities have been returned to her — unconditionally — by the Francis House family. As the song says, all you need is love; love is all you need.

*Written by Cheryl Abrams*

## Volunteer Spotlight: MEET TOM RICHARDS

### When did you begin volunteering for Francis House?

I learned of Francis House in 2002 through my employer, Agway. Francis House was a beneficiary of our golf tournament. In 2006, I moved to South Carolina, where I had previously been stationed when I served in the Air Force. I returned to Syracuse in 2018 and came back to Francis House as a maintenance volunteer.

### What drew you to volunteer at Francis House?

The impact that Francis House has is tremendous. We help people when they are most vulnerable. It's about helping the families as much as the residents. Francis House rejects the idea of turning away from people at the end of their life, which so many people seem to do. Francis House is all about unconditional love.

### What is your favorite part about volunteering here?

It's the people, including the residents. There's one resident I remember well. She was from the Dingle Peninsula of Ireland, and she was a resident here just when I was planning a trip there. We bonded over travel. I also enjoy visiting with the residents who are veterans.

### A passion of yours is woodworking. You built and installed a book lending library, modeled after the original Francis House. And, you have also built a bookcase, Tau cross, and cherry frames for us. How did this passion start?

I originally learned from my father. I was a high school Spanish teacher for seven years and started building with wood over the summers. I would make different things to sell for extra income. I remember one year I made wooden rocking horses that my wife and I sold all the way up until Christmas.

The Francis House book library was a big project. It took about five months to build. At first, the plan was for it to be just a regular book lending box. Then we decided to design it to look like the original Francis House at 108 Michaels Ave. I used historic photos we found in Francis House brochures as references. Then I had to think about how to weatherproof it. So I took siding from the original house and cut it into strips, and used original house shingles for the library roof. Then we thought, how will people know what it is? So I cut the big windows into the side. My son asked, what about when it's dark? So we added the light inside. At first it was just going to be battery powered, but then I found the solar panel.

*Note: The Francis House Little Library is located behind Francis House, near the 114 entrance.*



# AUXILIARY NEWS

## 2023 AUXILIARY ANNUAL MEETING, LUNCHEON & FASHION SHOW



*Bev & Co. Boutique owners Ashley Neiderman (l) and Renee Neiderman*

Thank you to Melissa Braun (center) and Kate Bushnell (right) for co-chairing the 2023 Auxiliary Luncheon & Fashion Show held on May 18. They are pictured here with Auxiliary President Alicia Burgun (left).



We are grateful to Bev & Co. Boutique owners Renee Neiderman and Ashley Neiderman for providing the fashions for the models and for setting up a mini-boutique at the 2023 Auxiliary Luncheon and Fashion event.



*Francis House staff modeling the fashions were (left to right) Michelle Kirsh, Paige Defreitas, Sister Colette Walter, Laura Grasselli, Patty Kirwan, and Tom Wilcox.*



The 2022 Fabulous Fall Raffle raised an impressive \$14,380 for the Auxiliary. Raffle prize winners were Cynthia Kizer, Lisa Fournier and Nancy Skahen. Basket winners were Fran Zirilli, Kathy Bagnett, Kristin Wendler, Janiece Lorey, Lisa DiMiceli and Dawn Falge. Congratulations to all!

The 2023 Fabulous Fall Raffle is coming up soon! Check the Francis House website and social media pages for announcements!

Thank you to Kathy Sportelli and Mary Virgil for their years of dedicated service to the Auxiliary Board. And a warm welcome to new board members Cathy Bonacci, Lisa Kanerviko, Sue Petrocci, Pam Quinn and Ann Marie Warner.



*The 2022 Fabulous Fall Raffle committee members Auxiliary President Alicia Burgun, Mary Virgil, Sally O'Herin, Kathy Martin, Patte DeStaffan, Kathleen Conway, and Denise Usherwood.*



## YOUTH AUXILIARY NEWS



The Francis House Youth Auxiliary, led by Advisor Kristen Foote, has grown to 26 members representing most area high schools. Recent meetings have featured educational presentations and participation in group service projects. On March 26, the group assembled Easter baskets for residents.

### MEET CO-PRESIDENT MARY SULLIVAN



Mary just recently graduated from Christian Brothers Academy. She is the daughter of Deb and Charles Sullivan of Jamesville, New York.

Mary's high school interests included running as a member of the Cross Country and Track teams; participating in Mock Trial and band; skiing; and volunteering at Francis House.

Mary joined the Youth Auxiliary because she watched her mother care for her grandparents at the end of their lives and she wanted to be part of an organization that carries out this much-needed ministry with compassion and love. Mary loves being part of FHYA because it gives her an opportunity to meet students from other schools and form friendships rooted in the spirit of compassion, openness and understanding. She also enjoys being able to get her hands dirty and help out with activities such as pie baking, making home cooked meals for residents, and the annual spring garden clean up.

This fall, Mary will be a freshman at the University of Notre Dame, where she will major in Biology.

### YOUTH AUXILIARY UPDATE



The April 16 meeting featured a presentation by Chick Fil-A owner Betty Szatkowski. Mrs. Szatkowski started the presentation by posing a question to the group, the same question she asks each potential employee during an interview: "What makes you remarkable?" Youth Auxiliary responses included, "I am easy to talk to," "I'm dependable," "I am able to balance school, extracurricular activities and social life," "I have good time management skills," and "I am a good brother."

She then presented the company's "Winning Habits" that not only develop leadership skills, but also provide a "remarkable experience" for each customer and strengthen camaraderie among co-workers. The presentation provided great "nuggets" of advice that Youth Auxiliary members will undoubtedly find useful in school, places of employment, during interviews, and through life in general.

#### Chick-fil-A Employees Winning Habits

- Radical Accountability
- Proactive Communication
- Intense Focus
- Positive Attitude
- Relentless Hustle
- Personal & Collective Responsibility



#### *Congratulations to our Graduating Seniors*

Brian Trivison  
Chloe Ward  
Grace Catalano  
Jack Albala  
Jack Griffith

Logan Battaglia  
Luke DeLorenzo  
Mary Sullivan  
Sean Lowther  
Sydney Lodato



## Thank you to our 2022 Sponsors!

Your contribution to our event, combined with proceeds from our auction, raffle and prize houses, enabled us to raise more than \$290,000.

The event committee, together with the Francis House family of caregivers, volunteers, board members, auxiliary, youth auxiliary, and staff extend a heartfelt thank you to our 2022 sponsors.

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St. James Church  
The Capraro Perry Team

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Tucker-Haskins and Associates



*the Date*  
**TNPLH PLACE LIKE HOME**  
 October 11, 2023  
 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

October 11, at 5:30 p.m. at the New York State Fair  
 transform our venue into the familiar and  
 event that the community has loved and

The auction — featuring hundreds of items — will be held  
 digitally and in-person as a centerpiece of the event.  
 \$50 per person and includes six gourmet meals, wine, and  
 and desserts.

**INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING**

To join this event as a sponsor, advertiser, or exhibitor,  
 contact **Laura Grasselli** at [lgrasselli@francis.org](mailto:lgrasselli@francis.org).  
 You can save Francis House the cost of printing and  
 mailing an invitation and register anytime.

Visit [TNPLH2023.givesmart.com](https://TNPLH2023.givesmart.com) or scan the  
 QR code on this page to register or to view details on  
 our 2023 sponsorship packages!



**Art & Anne Palermo,**  
 2023 Event Chairs

*"We actively support the mission of Francis House. The staff, caregivers and volunteers provide exceptional compassion and care to the residents. We look forward to working with the Francis House steering committee and event vice-chairs, Mark and Sandy Baker, to plan this year's event. We want to thank the community for their overwhelming generosity in supporting this event."*



**Mark & Sandy Baker,**  
 2023 Event Vice Chairs

*"The work that Francis House does in our community is one of the greatest gifts people can receive. We are honored to be serving with Anne and Art Palermo in support of the exceptional staff, caregivers, and volunteers who make the mission of Francis House a reality. There's No Place Like Home has special meaning to the thousands of families whose lives have been touched by this organization."*



# WELCOMES NEW STAFF



**DEB CLARY**  
Finance Administrator



**DAVID FORREST**  
Menu Coordinator



**LAURA GRASELLI**  
Event Manager



**TESSA HARPER**  
Human Resources



**MICHELLE KIRSH**  
Volunteer Coordinator



**EMILY MINNOE**  
Development Assistant



**STEPHEN RUSINKO**  
Donor Data Specialist



**TOM WILCOX**  
House & Grounds Manager



**REBEKAH ZARNOWSKI**  
Referral Administrator





A Family When You Need It Most.



**FRANCIS HOUSE EDUCATION  
PRESENTS**

**THE *BOUNDLESS COMPASSION* RETREAT  
AUGUST 25-29, 2023**

**Begins Friday evening - Tuesday afternoon  
4 night in-person residential retreat  
Commuter option also available**

Explore what it means to embrace oneself and all beings within the circle of compassion

*Experience the opportunity to deepen and expand your innate capacity for compassion*

The *Boundless Compassion* retreat is a transformative process developed by well-known author Joyce Rupp. The retreat explores the many-layered components of compassion, including compassion as a way of life, self-compassion, and compassion related to suffering, marginalization, and creation. Presentations include insights from theology, spirituality, sociology, science, ecology, and psychology. Led by Certified Boundless Compassion facilitators Sr. Mary Dean Pfahler and Deacon George J. Welch, the retreat offers quiet reflection time, small group process, community prayer, and serves as a catalyst for a renewed commitment to becoming a compassionate presence.

**Christ the King Retreat Center  
1500 Brookford Road, Syracuse, NY 13224**

Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera  
for more information and registration  
or call 315-475-5422, ext. 348



SCAN ME

## GRATEFUL FOR GRANTS

We are honored to have received grants from the following organizations this past year:

- ▶ The Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation
- ▶ The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation
- ▶ The Saint Agatha Foundation
- ▶ The Richard Mather Fund
- ▶ The Wikstrom Foundation

## FRANCIS HOUSE AWARDED 2023 YOUR CAUSE CHARITY

Thank you to Upstate Medical University for selecting Francis House as the University's 2023 Your Cause charity!

## HOSPICE SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Francis House caregiver Margaret Drew for receiving the Nascentia Health Hospice Specialist of the Year award for her work as a Francis House health aide.



## YOUR KINDNESS IS A BLESSING TO US

Thank you, from all of us at Francis House, for your notes of appreciation. Notes and cards we receive are posted where all staff and caregivers can read them.

*"To me, Francis House is a House of Angels. Please know how much I appreciate everything you did for my wife."*

*"Thank you for the love, care, and compassion you gave to my beloved daughter. We loved her dearly and know that you all did, too."*

*"It's nearly impossible to express my gratitude for the care and compassion my Dad was shown from the staff and volunteers. Their kindness and dedication was remarkable."*

*"I've been going to Francis House for 30 years as a Deacon. Sister Kathleen was a dear friend. I know she is so proud of the work you are doing every single day."*

## Car Donation Wizard

Your donation of a car, truck, van, or motorcycle can directly support the Francis House mission. Thanks to our trusted partner, Car Donation Wizard, the donation process is easy.



Call the Car Donation Wizard at 877-957-2277 or visit the Francis House website for more information.

## SISTER KATHLEEN OSBELT'S BOOK

We're sure you'll find inspiration in "Glimpses Of God...In You And Me," authored by our beloved founder, Sister Kathleen Osbelt.

It's available for purchase through Amazon.com. All profits from book sales are donated to Francis House.



One reader posted on the Francis House Facebook page, "I will be re-reading this book... forever. Do yourself a favor and enjoy this book."

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE

### Become a Francis House Volunteer

If you have a desire to share your time and talents as a volunteer, please consider Francis House. We offer morning, afternoon, and evening shifts seven days a week.



Contact Rea Carver, volunteer manager, or Michelle Kirsh, volunteer coordinator, at [volunteer@francisshouseny.org](mailto:volunteer@francisshouseny.org) or call 315-475-5422.

## GIVE TODAY!

As a community care home, Francis House does not receive insurance reimbursement, nor do we receive any federal, state or local funding. We rely solely on the generosity of our donors to operate.

We invite you to support our mission by scanning the QR Code with your smartphone camera or by mailing your contribution in the envelope provided. Your gift will support our highest priorities: to ensure every resident can be welcomed into Francis House regardless of their ability to pay, to ensure that we continue to attract and retain the very best care staff, and to expand our role as an educational resource for all individuals and families facing end-of-life care.

On behalf of the many residents and family members whose lives will be touched by your generosity, we thank you.

### DONATE



## THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

We are grateful to the growing list of donors establishing recurring donations through our website. Giving 'automatically' with a gift of any amount supports Francis House year-round and reduces our printing and

mailing costs. Donors can choose to give monthly or quarterly and may designate donations in memory or in honor of someone special.



## WALKWAY OF BLESSINGS

Dedicating an engraved brick is a beautiful way to remember or honor someone who has been a blessing in your life. To have a brick installed this fall, we invite you to place your order by July 15.

You can complete an order form and make your gift of \$100 online or call Francis House at 315-475-5422. Scan the QR Code with your smartphone camera or find the Walkway of Blessings information under *Giving Opportunities* on our website.

### BUY A BRICK



## WISH LIST

### FOOD

- Campbell's Soups (10.75 oz): Tomato, Chicken Noodle
- Coffee: Decaf, regular
- Cookie Mixes: All Types
- Cooking oils: Canola Oil, Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Fruit and Granola Bars
- Hellman's Mayonnaise (30 oz)
- Individual Snack Items: Nuts or Dried Fruits, etc.
- Juice (64 oz): Apple, Cranberry Juice Cocktail
- Pancake Mix
- Pancake Syrup
- Pudding Snack Packs: Vanilla, Chocolate
- Soda (2-Liters): Ginger Ale, Pepsi/Coke
- Sugar: Confectioners, Granular, Light Brown
- Tuna (5 oz Cans): Solid White Albacore in Water

### HOUSEHOLD

- Dishwasher Tablets
- Fabric Spray
- Fabric Softener Sheets
- Febreze Air Freshener Spray (Linen & Sky)
- Hot Liquid Cups with Lids
- Hydrogen Peroxide Toilet Bowl Cleaner
- Laundry Detergent Liquid
- Laundry Detergent Sheets
- Liquid Hand Soap
- Liquid Fabric Softener
- Napkins
- Paper Towels – Always in Need
- Room Deodorizers
- Swiffer Sweeper Cloths: Dry and Wet
- Toilet Paper: Septic System safe
- Trash Bags: Unscented 13 and 30 gallon

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Batteries: 9-Volt
- Copy Paper (8.5 x 11): White and Color
- Food Gift Cards: Aldi, Price Chopper, Tops, Walmart, Wegmans
- Home Improvement Gift Cards: Lowe's, Home Depot
- Postage Stamps

### SUPPLIES

- Adult Briefs with Tabs (Not Pull-Ups): Unisex, Extra Large
- Baby Wipes: Unscented – Always in Need
- Chapstick/Lip Balm
- Denture Cups
- Essential Oils: Eucalyptus, Lavender, Peppermint
- Exam Gloves: Latex-Free, Powder-Free, Size Large
- Microwavable Heat Packs (Neck and Shoulder)
- Medical Chucks
- Mouthwash (No Alcohol)
- Shampoo Caps
- Toothpaste
- Unscented Lotion
- Women's Deodorant (No Aerosol)



108 Michaels Avenue  
Syracuse, NY 13208-1718

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**Support Francis House.**



*Scan here to make a gift.*

## WE PRAY FOR OUR RESIDENTS WHO HAVE DIED FROM JUNE 1, 2022 – MARCH 31, 2023

Martha Albanese  
Nancy Albrecht  
Martha Anderson  
James "Jim" Antonacci  
Margaret Barry  
Kathleen "Kathy" Bartley  
Rose Bashaw  
Linda Baxter  
Barbie Beckley  
Teresa "Terry" Beresik  
John Berry  
William "Bill" Bertrand  
David "Dave" Bigsby  
James "Red" Borchik  
Rita Bova  
Elma Boyko  
Patricia "Pat" Brissett-King  
Mary "Pat" Bronner  
Terry Burak  
Patricia "Pat" Burke  
Michelle Burst  
Marion Byne  
Robin Carr  
Teri Castaldo  
Deborah "Debbie" Chapman  
Jean Chewens  
Willie Coker  
Genevieve Conboy  
Donna Condron  
Mark Contos  
Ethel Cooke

Edmond "Ed" Cooper  
Phillip "Phil" Dannible  
Charles "Chuck" Dattler  
Jennifer Davis  
Timothy "Tim" Decker  
John Delia  
Diana DeLong  
Sandra "Sandi" DiBianco  
Thomas Diorio  
Willa Dixon  
John Donohue  
Sharry Doyle  
Laura Drake  
Maime Duncan  
Genevieve Duszak  
Christine Edinger  
Virginia "Ginny" Egnoto  
Jean Endieveri  
Joseph "Joe" Falge  
Therese Fegley  
Nanette Fiaschetti  
Willie "Will" Florence  
Robert "Bob" Gang, Jr.  
Mary Gangemi  
Yvonne Gantley  
Louise Gentile  
John Gleason  
Kimberly "Kim" Grehl  
Gary Grieshaber  
Linda Grosso  
Marjorie Harrison

Joanne Heisler  
Elizabeth "Joyce" Hinkle  
Philip "Phil" Hogan  
Patricia "Patty" Hubbard  
Maximilian "Max" Jaegar  
Norma Janowski  
David "Dave" Joy  
Shirley Kalin  
Carolyn Kelleher  
Alice Kieffer  
John Klein  
Colleen Krause  
Joanne "Jake" LaCasse  
Gaetano "Guy" Lamacchia  
Anna Maria Lattanzio  
Mary Lawless  
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Edith O'Connell  
Edith Oliver  
William "Grady" Palmer  
Priscilla Patton  
Dennis Pealo  
Thomas "Tom" Perkins  
Bernard Pilger  
Sueann Pinkston  
Albert "Al" Pisegna  
Joann "Marie" Piston  
Stanislav "Stan" Ponca  
Annette Ponto  
Vincent "Ted" Prindle  
Shirley Procopio  
Nancy Prue  
Henry "Hank" Putz  
Virginia "Ginnie" Rand  
Gary Raymer  
Joanne Rittell  
David Robinson  
Andris "Andy" Rugelis  
Barbara "Barb" Sabatino  
Martha Schmidt  
Charles Schubert  
Palma "Parmie" Scicchitano  
Maureen Scripa

Martin "Marty" Sheridan  
Karen Sica  
Joseph "Joe" Slocum  
Constance "Connie" Smithers  
Barbara Stine  
Dr. Paul Stobnicke  
W. Porter Stone  
Parker Stone  
Penelope "Penny" Talomie  
Norma Tarbell  
Mark Teaken  
Peggy "Nakia" Thomas  
Donna Thompson  
Thomas "Tommy" Tinsley  
John "Jack" Tobin  
Paul Touranjoe  
George Uy  
Philip "Phil" Viau  
Pamela Way  
Graydon "Grady" Wheeler  
Barbara "Barb" Wilburn  
Patsy "Patti" Wilson  
Susan "Sue" Witteman  
Rebecca "Becki" Wood  
Thomas Zalewski