



A Family When You Need It Most

SPRING 2024

NEWS

FROM OUR HOUSE

A CENTURY OF FAMILY LOVE

The year 1924 was notable in many respects. Lenin died and Marlon Brando was born. The first Winter Olympics took place in France, Calvin Coolidge was elected U.S. president, and Caesar Cardini created the first-ever Caesar salad at his restaurant in Tijuana, Mexico. A baby destined to also become president, Jimmy Carter, came into the world on October 1.



Nancy Edinger began her own earthly journey that year as well. The Francis House resident, who turned 100 on May 4, reflects on living a full life these past 100 years, filled with memories of family, hobbies, learning, and volunteering.

Nancy grew up on Syracuse's Northside. Her father co-owned the Muench-Kreutzer Candle

Company, which was nearby the original MacArthur Baseball Stadium, and she recalls watching games from the upper windows of the factory.

When she was six, her family moved to the Strathmore neighborhood. She graduated from Onondaga Valley Academy in 1943, and then attended the Katherine Gibbs School in New York City and Hobart William Smith College, followed by serving as an executive secretary in banking before marriage.



Nancy says the proudest achievement of her long lifetime is the five children she and husband, Roger, raised in the same house where she grew up. Dan, Betsy, John, Sue, and David attended city schools, where their mom was an active volunteer.

"I can't take much credit," Nancy claims. "Their father and I gave them the tools to succeed, but they did it themselves. I was lucky that my parenting style — my daughters call it 'benign neglect' — matched the safety of the time." The Edinger family was close, spending summers on Otisco and Skaneateles Lakes, celebrating major holidays together, attending services at Most Holy Rosary church, and enjoying big dinners at home. "Today the cottage is shared by all five families and my great grandchildren enjoy it just as their parents did," she says.



Hobbies filled Nancy's life with creativity and friendships. Knitting and playing Bridge have been consistent activities in her life, as was reading as a member of the Strathmore Book Club for many years. Later in life she took up jigsaw puzzles, computer card games, and became a volunteer with Contact Community Services.

"Probably one of the biggest challenges I have had to overcome is losing my eyesight to the extent had to give up many things I once enjoyed," says Nancy. "But I have had a very easy life, so I can't complain. You can't expect life to be perfect."



On her coming to Francis House, Nancy says "I was sad about leaving my home. And while I thought I was leaving my family, I didn't realize I'd find an even bigger one here. We could not have imagined the love and care that is here at Francis House."

Written by Cheryl Abrams

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News From Our House is distributed free to friends of Francis House.

We invite you to notify us of name, address, household, or contact information changes:

Email: info@francishouseny.org
Phone: 315-475-5422

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Change can present itself in many ways. We of course enjoy the change of seasons in Central New York. Here at Francis House we have experienced changes internally with the addition of new and talented staff, we have welcomed new volunteers, and are now offering a robust calendar of supportive and educational programs.

Our purchase of properties around Francis House has prompted the Francis House Board of Directors and its House and Grounds Committee to work thoughtfully and diligently on a multi-year timeline that could bring greater change to fruition.

Our Education and Mission Outreach team – Rev. Jana Biesanz, Sally Manahan, Sr. Colette Walter, SOSF, Sr. Geraldine DeLuca, SOSF, and Victoria Smith, continue to provide a wealth of educational resources for family members, volunteers, staff, and the wider community. These resources are designed to increase awareness and dialogue about the end-of-life journey, as well as to offer support and education for people with terminal illnesses and those who care for them. To stay updated on these offerings, please email education@francishouseny.org.

Our event, *There's No Place Like Home*, moved to a larger venue in 2022; and in 2023 the event reached near-record attendance. The event was recently named Central New York's Outstanding Fundraising Event at the CNY Business Journal's Nonprofit Awards. This is a testament to the history of the event, and the dedication through the years of the staff, volunteers, donors, and sponsors.

What remains the same at Francis House is the compassionate presence that we offer every day. As I walk through Francis House, the doors of the private rooms are open, families are gathered around the beds of their loved ones, and calm and peace prevail. The compassionate staff and volunteers provide a safe harbor in a sea of many emotions. Our staff and volunteers find joy and beauty in every day and in the gift of each other's presence. So many beautiful caring people bless the Francis House ministry.

We continue to pray for God's blessing on this home. As we assess and anticipate whatever changes may come, may we carry on with faith, hope, love, and trust as we have for 33 years.

Blessings and peace,

Mary Anne Hankins
Executive Director

HOT DIGGITY DOG! IT'S A FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC



You're invited! Join us to celebrate the life and legacy of Sister Kathleen Osbelt on her birthday, Sunday, June 23, from 12–3 p.m. The indoor/outdoor event will be held at Bella Domani, 5988 East Taft Road, North Syracuse, NY 13212. All guests must register on the Francis House website. There is no cost to attend. We hope to see you there! If you are unable to join us in person, we invite you to send messages, memories, and notes in honor of Sister Kathleen to events@francishouseny.org and we will display them at the event.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: *

Robin Cerro

Robin Cerro is one of the few current volunteers who remembers when residents stayed on two floors in the “old house,” the two-family home that now houses our administrative offices. She started volunteering in 1993, just two years after Francis House opened. At that time, volunteers were helping to care for residents 24/7.



Robin was a nurse, and her expertise was invaluable in her role as a volunteer. She assisted Sr. Kathleen and Sr. Geraldine with admissions, helping new residents to get settled into the home.

Robin still fondly remembers the old house, even with all its quirks. “There were three rooms on each floor, so you ran up and down the stairs a lot. Getting residents upstairs to the second floor was a real challenge until the chair lift was installed,” she remembers. Robin took some time off from volunteering to raise her children and work full time. She returned in August of 2018 as a kitchen volunteer. We sat down with Robin and asked her to reminisce on her years as a Francis House volunteer.

What brought you to Francis House?

My husband learned about Francis House at church one day. He came home and told me about how they needed volunteers, so I decided to see what it was all about. I was able to volunteer a few hours a week around my kids’ schedules and my work schedule. Specifically, I helped new residents feel comfortable at Francis House after they first arrived. Helping people to feel at home was so fulfilling. I had to stop volunteering after about six months because it no longer worked with my family’s schedule. I always knew that I wanted to come back to Francis House and volunteer again, and I was so happy to return as a kitchen volunteer in 2018. It’s very different from what I did before and from my career in the medical field, and I really enjoy the change of pace. I love feeding people, so it’s a perfect fit.

What do you enjoy about volunteering at Francis House?

Working at Francis House has been the most meaningful work I’ve ever done. I get much more than I give. You walk out after your shift is over and you feel full. This has become my work. You develop relationships with residents and their families and make a lot of connections with other volunteers too. I love working with the other volunteers on Sunday afternoons. There is a core group of us who usually work together each week and we have a certain rhythm in the kitchen. I wouldn’t want it any other way.

Do you have any memorable moments from your time as a volunteer?

There was one beautiful spring afternoon my first year as a volunteer. The volunteer coordinator and I helped get a couple of the residents into wheelchairs, and we took them around the block together. It was a lovely day, and it was so nice to see the residents enjoying themselves outside. They loved the fresh air and the sunshine.



Another memory that really sticks out is the Blizzard of 1993. I was scheduled to volunteer that day. Did you know that you can’t walk through 43 inches of snow? I’m not originally from Syracuse, so I had no idea what that much snow was like. I drove in from Liverpool and they hadn’t plowed Michaels Avenue

yet. I parked behind Francis House where the sisters were living at the time and I thought I could walk through the snow to Francis House because it was so close. I think I ended up crawling out because I couldn’t walk through it, but I got to the parking lot and was able to make it to the door.

Written by Michelle Kirsh, Volunteer Coordinator

Are you or someone you know interested in volunteering at Francis House? Contact us today to learn more about how you can get involved. Email Michelle or Rea at volunteer@francishouse.org or call 315-475-5422.



WERE YOU A MEMBER OF THE FRANCIS HOUSE YOUTH AUXILIARY?

Let’s stay connected! Scan the QR code to provide us with your contact information. We are eager to hear your memories, tell your stories, and from time to time we will send you opportunities to volunteer, mentor, or serve the Francis House mission.



AUXILIARY NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS

To the recently elected Auxiliary Board of Directors' Officers:

President Melissa Braun
Vice President Fran Albala
Treasurer Liz Griffith
Assistant Treasurer Marion Rogers
Secretary Kate Bushnell
Assistant Secretary Pam Quinn

WELCOME

To the Auxiliary Board of Directors new members:

Mary Beth Davis
Barb Houk
Amanda Riley

THANK YOU

We are grateful to Auxiliary Board members who have generously given their time and talents to the board and whose terms are ending. **Thank you for your loving commitment to the mission and ministry of Francis House:**

Lynda Convertino
Karen Gross
Kathy Martin

Sally O'Herin
Vickie Olcott
Bette Thoreck



Bev & Co.
Shop For Fashion...Leave With Style!

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

AUXILIARY LUNCHEON & FASHION SHOW

The Auxiliary hosted its 2024 Annual Spring Luncheon & Fashion Show at the Double Tree by Hilton in East Syracuse on May 16. Thank you to Chair Melissa Braun and the entire planning committee for a wonderful spring afternoon. Bev & Co. Boutique owners Renee Neiderman and Ashley Neiderman provided the fashions for the models, who included Sister Colette Walter, eight Francis House staff members, and seven Youth Auxiliary members. Visit the Auxiliary web page at francishouse.ny.org/auxiliary for more details and to see the photos.

FALL FUN

The Auxiliary's Fabulous Fall Raffle, their largest annual fundraiser supporting Francis House, will kick off in August and conclude in September with a drawing for three grand prizes and six gift baskets. Visit the Auxiliary web page for emerging details, including announcements of the grand prizes and information on how to buy raffle tickets (\$10 each or three for \$25).



YOUTH AUXILIARY

MEET JOSIE BUTLER

Vice President of the Francis House Youth Auxiliary



High School:

Baker High School, Class of 2026

Hometown:

Josie lives in Baldwinsville with her mother and father, her sister Anna, brother Owen, and their dog Gracie.

What are your favorite school activities?

Orchestra and chorus are my favorite activities. Music is a big part of my life; I play the viola in my high school orchestra and the Baldwinsville Pep Band, and I sing in the school choir. I enjoy being a part of my high school musical productions both as a cast member and student producer. I am also on the Baldwinsville Varsity Crew Team and I hope to row in college.

How did you learn about Francis House and why did you join the Youth Auxiliary?

I learned about Francis House from my neighbor, Mrs. Kristen Foote. She told me about what Francis House was and about the Youth Auxiliary. I decided to get involved so that I could volunteer regularly and also meet students from other schools. It has been a fun way to spend Sunday afternoons.



Tell me about your most memorable experience with the Youth Auxiliary.

I volunteered at the Auxiliary Luncheon & Fashion Show. I helped by selling raffle tickets and it was great because I got to talk with so many guests. They were all super sweet! I also had a good time bonding with the other Youth Auxiliary members.

At every meeting, we hear from a speaker. What speaker had the most impact on you?

At our first meeting this year, Sister Colette came and spoke to us about the mission and history of Francis House. During her presentation, she talked about Sister Kathleen, but also a bit about St. Marianne Cope. I was very moved by this talk, and when it became time for me to choose my Confirmation Saint, I thought back to this presentation and decided that I had to choose St. Marianne Cope! I still think about how amazing Sister Kathleen was to create such an incredible home.

What do you think makes Francis House so special?

It is special to me because I know that every time I am here, I am brightening someone's day. I know I am making an impact by making a craft to go in a resident's room, dropping off donations, or just having a nice conversation with a staff member or volunteer. Being at Francis House puts a smile on my face and helps me feel better than before I walked in the door.

MISSION OUTREACH AND EDUCATION NEWS

The community of Francis House has truly been the inspiration for the work of Mission Outreach and Education. We are privileged to witness incredible generosity, compassion and care from our residents and their families, from our volunteers and auxiliaries, and from our benefactors and donors. It is only fitting that we return the knowledge, wisdom and experience of Francis House to support and be a resource for our community.

With this as our goal, Sr. Colette Walter, Sr. Geraldine DeLuca, Sally Manahan and I continue to offer a variety of in-person and online community programs. We have presented about Francis House in classes for high school and college students. We have organized groups and workshops for those working through grief. We have served as facilitators of discussion groups, inviting people to share their experiences and questions about death and dying. We have offered classes and seminars on caregiving, the end-of-life journey, and Franciscan spirituality.

These events, free of charge to the community, have been workshops and presentations on end-of-life, self-care, grief and grieving, spirituality and moral injury, among other topics. It has been an honor to host such a fantastic roster of professional people, who generously share their expertise, wisdom, and insight.

We will continue to offer programs throughout the year. **Scan the QR code below** with your smartphone camera and follow the links to our Eventbrite page and our website. You can also email us at education@franchishouseny.org and we will add you to our email list for education news and updates. We are very grateful for your support, and hope you will be able to join us soon!

*Peace and blessings,
Rev. Jana Biesanz*



A REFLECTION ON 70 YEARS AS A SISTER OF SAINT FRANCIS

— *By Sister Colette Walter*

On March 1, 1954, I participated in an Investing Ceremony at 1024 Court Street in Syracuse, signifying my reception into the Sisters of St Francis. The outward sign of this reception was receiving the name Sister Colette Walter (my baptism name was Donna Lee). That was 70 years ago and since then I have ministered to God's people through teaching, administration, and pastoral care in various places. I have been blessed to have met so many wonderful people along the way. Francis House has allowed me to continue my ministry of being present to those who are terminally ill. This has given me the opportunity to extend the list of people with whom I feel very much connected; the residents, families, caregivers, staff, and volunteers. It has been a privilege and honor to serve God's people these past years. God has given me good health and the ability to be present as I journey through this life. I thank each of you for being a part of this journey as my mentors, friends or acquaintances. I also thank my family who have loved and supported me all the way. I ask for your prayers as I continue serving God's people.



NASCENTIA HEALTH FILM CAPTURES THE FRANCIS HOUSE MISSION

"If everyone in the world knew how much unconditional love God has for them, they couldn't help but take that love and give it to other people." —Sister Colette Walter



We are grateful to Nascentia Health for recently featuring Francis House as a community partner and for producing a short film that beautifully captures our mission. In their words...

"At Nascentia Health, we are deeply inspired by the compassionate mission of Francis House. For more than 30 years, Francis House has been a sanctuary of love and care, providing a home where people with terminal illnesses are embraced with compassion, acceptance, respect, and dignity. We honor the essential role Francis House plays in our community, offering not just physical care but emotional and spiritual support. Their commitment to cherishing each moment and treating every individual with the utmost respect is an inspiration to us all."

To view Sister Colette Walter's outstanding interview in the film, visit: franchishouseny.org/our-care.



MARK & SANDY BAKER, 2024 EVENT CHAIRS

“This is truly a special event for the Central New York community, and we are honored to be a part of it. There’s No Place Like Home has special meaning to thousands of families whose lives have been touched by Francis House. The end-of-life journey should be spent in peace and dignity, surrounded by love and compassion. That’s exactly what Francis House offers. The community’s support ensures that their mission continues.”



BRIAN MACRAE, & JANE AMICO-MACRAE, 2024 EVENT VICE CHAIRS

“We are honored to support the exceptional staff, caregivers, volunteers, and event chairs, Sandy and Mark Baker, as vice-chairs of There’s No Place Like Home. We understand firsthand the importance of providing dignity and compassion, as those you love face the end of their lives. As a community, we are truly blessed to have such a critical organization that provides a home, an extended family, dignity, and peace to those facing the end of life. Francis House is such a special place for so many and we are grateful to be a part of this incredible event to raise awareness and financial support for this organization.”



Save the Date

THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE HOME 2024

Wednesday, October 16, 2024 | 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
NY State Fair Exposition Center



Recognized as the



2024 OUTSTANDING FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, October 16. We will transform the Exposition Center into the familiar and fun lock and key progressive event that the community has loved and supported for decades. Our auction – featuring hundreds of items – will again be offered digitally and in-person as a centerpiece of the event. Registration is just \$50 per person and includes six gourmet food stations, an open bar, and desserts.

INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THE EVENT?

To join the event as a sponsor, advertiser or to donate an auction item, contact Francis House Event Manager Laura Grasselli at lgrasselli@franchishouseny.org.

REGISTER TO ATTEND TODAY!

Visit TNPLH2024.givesmart.com or scan the QR code to register or review our 2024 sponsorship packages!



WALKWAY OF BLESSINGS... BUY A BRICK TODAY



Dedicating an engraved brick along the Francis House walkway 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 August 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 on our website at francishouseny.org.

RECURRING GIVING IS GROWING

Did you know? In 2022, 57 percent of American donors were enrolled in a recurring giving program, up from 46 percent the previous year. Of those, 94 percent prefer to give monthly. The average monthly recurring gift amount nationally is \$25. The ease and security of technology makes this sustainable and budget-friendly way of giving a preferable option for many donors.



We invite you to join hundreds of donors at Francis House that participate in recurring giving. Donations can be a gift of any amount, at an interval that you decide, and can be set up on the Francis House website. Donations can be changed or canceled at any time. Donors who prefer to mail checks can request a special set of envelopes from Francis House. Visit our website at francishouseny.org to set up your recurring gift in our "Ways to Donate and Assist" section. Or, call the Francis House Development office for more information.

TOSSING UP FUN FOR FRANCIS HOUSE

We are grateful to John Bertolero for planning the 2nd Annual Jill Bertolero Memorial Beanbag Tournament benefitting Francis House. The event will be held Saturday, August 3, from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Clay Central Park, 4821 Wetzel Road, Liverpool, NY 13090. Registration is \$20 per team. Find all the details on the Francis House website or visit jilliedogs.com/memorialtournament.

NEW AMAZON WISH LIST



We are grateful for the house and care supplies we are receiving from donors near and far who are visiting the Francis House Wish List on Amazon. Link to the list from the Francis House website, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, or search for it directly on Amazon.

THANK YOU!

So many friends and supporters visited us at the Carol Watson Greenhouse annual open house and artisan fair on April 6 and 7.

The Celebration of the Senses event raised \$2,300 for Francis House.



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Francis House is excited to announce our new partnership with Bottle & Can Retrieval Centers in New York State.



When you drop off your bottles and cans at one of their convenient locations, just ask to have your redemption donated to Francis House. The Retrieval Centers will tally all donations and regularly send funds to Francis House. It's easy to do 'twice the good' with no extra work! Visit bottleandcanrc.com for locations and hours.

WISH LIST

FOOD

- **Coffee: Decaf, Regular**
- Cookie Mix
- Cooking Oils: Canola, Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- **Food Gift Cards: Aldi, Nichols Supermarket, Price Chopper, Tops, Walmart, Wegmans**
- Fruit and Granola Bars
- Individual Snack Items: Nuts or Dried Fruits
- Juice (64 oz): Apple, Cranberry Juice Cocktail
- Mayonnaise (30 oz): Hellman's
- Pudding Cups (Snack Pack): Chocolate, Vanilla
- Soda (2-Liters): Ginger Ale, Pepsi/Coke
- Sugar: Confectioners, Granular, Light Brown
- **Tuna (5 oz Cans): Solid White Albacore in Water**

HOUSEHOLD

- **Paper Towels – Always in Need**
- Dish Soap
- **Dishwasher Tablets**
- Fabric Spray
- Fabric Softener Liquid & Sheets
- Febreze Air Freshener Spray (Linen & Sky)
- Hot Liquid Cups with Lids
- **Hydrogen Peroxide Toilet Bowl Cleaner**
- **Laundry Detergent Liquid & Sheets**
- **Liquid Hand Soap**
- Napkins
- **Simple Green Spray**
- Swiffer Sweeper Cloths: Dry
- **Toilet Paper: 1-Ply**
- **Trash Bags w/drawstrings: Unscented 13- & 30-Gallon**

SUPPLIES

- **Adult Briefs with Tabs (Not Pull-Ups): Unisex, Medium, Large, Extra Large**
- **Baby Wipes: Unscented – Always in Need**
- **Barrier Ointment: Baza Clear Moisture**
- **Chapstick/Lip Balm**
- Denture Cups
- Essential Oils: Eucalyptus, Lavender, Peppermint
- **Exam Gloves: Latex-Free, Powder-Free, Size Large**
- Lavender Eye Warmers
- Microwavable Heat Packs (Neck and Shoulder)
- Medical Chucks
- Mouthwash (No Alcohol)
- N-95 Masks
- **Shampoo Caps**
- **Unscented Lotion**
- **Women's Body Wash (Unscented or Sensitive Skin)**
- Women's Deodorant (No Aerosol)

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Batteries: C**
- Book Gift Cards: Barnes & Noble, Amazon
- Copy Paper (8.5 x 11): White and Color
- Crafting Gift Cards: JOANN Fabrics and Crafts, Michaels
- Home Improvement Gift Cards: Best Buy, Lowe's, Home Depot, Target, Walmart
- Postage Stamps
- Straws
- Visa Gift Cards

We accept donations to Francis House anytime, seven days a week! Our most-needed items are indicated in BOLD text.

Please bring items to our 108 entrance (left side, behind Francis House) and call ahead if you are making a large donation. We will gladly greet you and accept your items.



108 Michaels Avenue
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Support Francis House.



Scan here to make a gift.

~ OUR MISSION ~

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.

**WE PRAY FOR OUR RESIDENTS WHO HAVE DIED
FROM JANUARY 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2024**

Janet Beach
Katherine “Kitty” Burns
Terri Christo
Louis Ciarla, Sr.
Thomas Crippen
Dianne Cunningham
Dannie Dantuono
Cary DiCosta

Phyllis DiSalvo
Dale Franz
Doris Friedli
Francis Galimi
Charles Henry
James Keene
Lorri Kelley
Robert “Bob” Kelley

Patrick King
Mark Larabee
Jean Lathey
Colleen May
Barbara Morgan
Joan Neufang
Terrell “Terry” Patala
David Radziseski

Roberta Sampson-DeMaso
Mildred Siminoff
John “Jack” Snyder
Walter Thompson
Rebecca Turner
Fabio Valenzuela Sosa
Leslie Ventura

We Feel Your Love

Quotes from donors

“We are deeply grateful to support the incredible work Francis House is known for. Your commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion line up with our company’s values. Thank you for all that you do and will continue to do to serve our community.”

“We had heard of Francis House and its wonderful reputation but could not have begun to comprehend the depth and breadth of the gift it is, until we were immersed in the community for four months. You are a team of extraordinary people.”