



*A Family When You Need It Most*

SPRING 2025

# NEWS

FROM OUR HOUSE

## PHILIP HOLTZAPPLE: SHARING WISDOM, JOKES, AND A SMILE

Philip Holtzapple grew up in the Amish Country of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. His family taught him valuable lessons of hard work and compassion for nature and others. He graduated from Hempfield High School in 1955 and had an array of jobs in his community before he started his schooling at university.

He learned about nature from his grandparents and still has a green thumb, often sharing his knowledge with the caregivers at Francis House. He recalls going down to the stream with his grandfather, where they would cut saplings into 8-foot poles. They would use them to make teepees for his grandmother's garden for her beans to grow. "They'd grow up the poles and produce the greens. I didn't have to leave, I'd just pick them from the ground, and they weren't bad from the top either," says Philip with a chuckle. In high school, he worked on his grandfather's farm and helped butcher hogs, make scrapple, and bag seeds with his uncles.

After high school, he attended Franklin and Marshall College and married his wife of 63 years, Della. Della attended Hood College and would drive girls from Hood to Franklin and Marshall games in her station wagon – the two schools had a strong connection. She saw Philip at one of the basketball games and looked up at the wall to see his name, Holtzapple. They began talking that day and went for a walk that led to their long marriage. "It was a spark," says Della reminiscing about that day.

When Philip was asked why he was interested in medicine, he points to his head and says, "It was always up in here

when I was going to grade school." He also speaks highly about his uncle, Dr. George E. Holtzapple, and the stories he heard about him growing up. George was a physician and later in his career, discovered the first effective treatment for pneumonia. There is still a mural of the scene in York, Pennsylvania.

Once his residency was completed, Philip did a gastroenterology fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania Health System and then worked on research at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for two years. He continued to work at the Children's Hospital for 12 years before moving to Syracuse, New York to practice and teach at Upstate University.

At Upstate, Philip taught classes to all types of students in general medicine from beginning to end – classroom to clinical. His students, colleagues, and patients spoke highly of Philip, his care, and how he is a teacher in and out of the classroom. "If you go to Upstate, anybody from age 30-50, has been taught by him in a way. Whether it was in passing conversation or in the classroom," says Philip's grandson, Wylie. "And there's not a single narcissistic bone in his body. It's all humility. He cared about his patients in a way that not many people care about their patients. He would have done it for free," he looks at Philip, "if you could have. You're just so generous." When Philip retired, the room was filled with people who admired Philip and whose lives he greatly impacted.

When Philip wasn't working or teaching his students, he and Della enjoyed time with their two daughters and grandchildren. "I think we had a lot of fun with ourselves and our girls," said Philip. His daughter, Ali, shared a story about their annual father-daughter trip to Kingston,



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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



Dear Friends and Family of Francis House,

I am honored and humbled to serve as the Interim Executive Director of this beloved ministry. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I step into this role. I hope to follow in the footsteps of the Sisters of Saint Francis, Saint Marianne Cope, Sister Kathleen Osbelt, and among the many who have nurtured this ministry with compassion, acceptance, respect, and dignity.

As I’ve begun to reconnect and meet with the extraordinary people who make up this community – our staff, volunteers, supporters, and, most especially, those we serve – I’ve been struck by the spirit of welcome and the profound commitment to the values that are at the heart of our Franciscan tradition: relationship, simplicity, service, and deep reverence for the dignity of every person.

One of my favorite stories about St. Francis is the moment he embraced a man suffering from leprosy – a man others would have avoided. For Francis, that moment was a turning point. He later wrote, “What had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body.” For me, that simple act of compassion and courage reflects the very heart of ministry. In drawing closer to human suffering and the needs of others, we are able to find the essence of universal love – and that feels good and can become a source of joy. Out of bitterness we can develop, as Francis says, the sweetness of soul!

I am meeting with each person here and already they have opened themselves up, trusting Sister Kathleen and the deep roots of Francis House. They are showing that this is so much more than a place, it is a living expression of love in action. Whether walking with someone at the end of life, offering comfort in times of crisis, or simply being a peaceful presence, the work this team does together is sacred. And they know it. I am excited to support this beautiful legacy and to continue shaping a future rooted in hope and compassion. And moreover, working with this team and the board of directors to refine our strategy for the future.

In the coming months, I also look forward to doing more listening, learning, and journeying alongside each of you. Your stories and support are the foundation of everything we do, and I’m eager to walk with you as we continue to serve with open hearts.

Peace and all good things,

*Rob Myers*

Rob Myers, Ph.D.  
CEO, Partners in Franciscan Ministries  
Interim Executive Director, Francis House

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 experiences as a resource for others.

CORE VALUES OF FRANCIS HOUSE

Compassion, Acceptance, Respect, and Dignity.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Ontario. The two would ride a ferry to Wolf Island, and once there, ride their bikes as fast as they could because her dad would say they were going to miss the next one to Kingston. They would finally get to the marina and watch the boats go by while eating Fig Newtons and peanut butter together. “I can picture that now that I have kids. I’ve been on that ferry, and there’s one about every 20 minutes,” Ali says with a laugh.

They often came together as a big family to celebrate, share their love of music, and watch the grandkids at their sporting events. Philip used these times to enjoy the company of his loved ones, share a good joke, or offer his knowledge on others like the teacher he is. Wylie remembers the times his grandfather picked him up from high school in his teal Prius to bring him to soccer practice. “Those 10-minute conversations each day are a big contributor to who I am today. Just the random knowledge that I’m able to scatter now,” says Wylie.



I am today. Just the random knowledge that I’m able to scatter now,” says Wylie.

Philip is known to some as Dr. Philip Holtzapple, to others simply as

Philip, and to his loved ones as Dad or Grandpa. All of them share their collective respect and admiration for him and his wealth of knowledge, kindness, and care. When asked what advice he has to share with others, Philip says, “Just be as you are.”



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: PAM BOOTHROYD

Pam first learned about Francis House when her husband’s grandmother, Loretta, was one of the early residents. While Loretta was here, Pam would bring her 3 children to visit and spend time together. Pam was a caregiver for many members of her family, and while working at St. Joseph’s Church Outreach Ministry program, she would often come to Francis House to visit one of their parishioners, Wilma. Pam knew that she would become a volunteer at Francis House.

She now enjoys making meals for the residents and getting to know them on a personal level. On quieter shifts, Pam will spend time with family members, sharing stories and caring for them, sometimes over a cup of coffee or fresh baked cookies. “The time I spend with family members is cherished time for me, learning more about our residents than just their likes and dislikes for meals,” says Pam.



One evening when Pam arrived for her 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. kitchen shift, Sister Colette asked her to sit with a resident who was a local priest and stay with him so he wouldn’t be alone. She sat with him in his room, holding his hand, and prayed with him until her three-hour shift was over. Pam says, “this experience and many others that I have had at Francis House, make me count my blessings daily.”

Pam feels that caregiving is her calling, and she is able to do that at Francis House. “Pam is a person who spends her time here not only serving meals to residents but also takes time to spend with them and their families. Listening and relating to their circumstances and making a difference,” says Rea Carver, Volunteer Manager.

Currently, Pam’s mother is living at home with her and Pam’s husband Brian, surrounded by family and grandchildren. Every night, Pam and her mother share a glass of wine at 7:30 p.m. and toast to the family and friends that they are blessed to have.





## Congratulations

To the recently elected Auxiliary Board of Directors Officers:

Fran Albala, President  
Ann Marie Warner, Vice President  
Marion Rogers, Treasurer  
Cathy Bonacci, Assistant Treasurer  
Kate Bushnell, Secretary  
Sue Petrocci, Assistant Secretary

## Welcome

To the Auxiliary Board of Directors new members:

Caroline Calimlim  
Lynda Convertino  
Laura Minnoe  
Jessica Schneckenburger

## Thank You

We are grateful to the 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:

Kathleen Conway  
Denise Usherwood

## 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 webpage at [francishouseny.org/auxiliary](http://francishouseny.org/auxiliary) for emerging details, including announcements of the grand prizes and information on how to buy raffle tickets (\$10 each or three for \$25).



## REMEMBERING GIA MYERS

In February, the Youth Auxiliary experienced a personal loss when Gia Myers passed away in a tragic car accident with her best friend and younger brother, Gavin. Her parents share that "Gia was such a positive light in our home and always looked at the bright side of things. She knew what she wanted and then went after it." They were constantly amazed by her drive and maturity. Gia had a love for life, bounced into every room she entered, was generous, made others feel special, and looked out for her friends.

Gia was at the top of her class as a senior at Fabius Pompey High School and was planning on attending college to fulfill her dreams of becoming an elementary school teacher, and eventually a principal and superintendent. She was in the National Honor Society, High School Top 10, and made the High Honor Roll for every marking period of her high school career.

She was just as dedicated to her extracurricular activities and her job at Wegmans. She was a Girl Scout, ran varsity cross country and spring track, participated in Future Teachers Club, and was a varsity cheerleader, just to name a few.

Gia has been a part of the Francis House Youth Auxiliary for three years and this year, was very excited to take on the leadership position of Vice President. She was a wonderful leader and was looked up to by other members. Her mother shared that "her time working with Francis House was important to her. She took days off from work so that she could be at meetings and events. She thought the mission of Francis House, although hard for a teen to comprehend, was important. She was happy to make cards for residents, bake pies, drop off baked goods, and serve at the Memorial Mass at St. Daniel Church."

Gia will be deeply missed by the Francis House Youth Auxiliary, her family, and all who knew her. Her inner-light and positive attitude made the world a better place for everyone she met. Gia would tell her family and friends to "create a life you can't wait to wake up to."



## AUXILIARY LUNCHEON & FASHION SHOW

It was wonderful to see so many friends at the Auxiliary's Spring Luncheon & Fashion Show. It was held on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at the Double Tree by Hilton in East Syracuse and was a sold-out event! Thank you to Chair Denise Usherwood and the entire planning committee for a lovely afternoon. A big 'thanks' to Bev & Co. Boutique who provided the fashions for the models and got everyone excited for their spring wardrobe. Visit the Auxiliary webpage at [francishouseny.org/auxiliary](http://francishouseny.org/auxiliary) for more details and to see the photos.

## JOIN OUR AUXILIARY!

We invite you to renew your membership or join our Auxiliary. We offer three memberships: Annual Member for \$20, Senior Annual Member (62 or older) for \$10, and a Lifetime Membership for \$250 (one-time payment). Use the QR code or visit [francishouseny.org/auxiliary](http://francishouseny.org/auxiliary) today!



## GOSPEL SERVICE AT FRANCIS HOUSE CLAIRE SCHOMOgyi FRANCIS CORPS VOLUNTEER – AUGUST 2024 – JUNE 2025

*Claire has been an exceptional presence here at Francis House. From the tender care she offers residents, to her faithful leading of our Tuesday prayers, to her willingness to help with creating beautiful invitations for volunteer events, Claire is always present with a heart that lives and breathes ministry. We asked her to write about what she has learned here this year, which we share below, but truly she has modeled love and faith for us in so many ways. To say we are grateful is an understatement. She will end her time at Francis House in June, but she will always be a special member of the Francis House family, and we wish her all the best on her journey.*

In October of 2024, I embarked on the journey of learning how to be a caregiver for our residents. A week-long, intensive academy took me from my initial base-level knowledge of how to put on a Band-Aid, to the new level of fulfilling the intricate and evolving care plans of each resident. In my caregiver courses, taught by the exceptional Francis House staff, I entered a realm I had never been to before.

Not only did I learn the physical aspects of caregiving, such as personal care, feeding residents, giving baths, and cleaning rooms, but I also learned emotional and spiritual caregiving – how to be with a resident, or the family, as they grieve their life and dance with new feelings and experiences. The class was not just technical training, but rather, formation in how to be a good family member to every new resident we welcome in.

It was never just learning about the "how" for each action, but the "why." I vividly remember the first time Emily Young asked me, "Why do we reposition residents at least every 2 hours?" I replied so confidently and whole-heartedly, for I felt I knew this answer, "To prevent bed sores!" "Wrong!" Emily replied. I was dumbfounded. I thought I knew this! And then



her reply hit me and made me rethink every action I had learned; "We reposition every two hours for comfort."

And it finally struck me how we do this with every action. We don't brush a resident's teeth to prevent cavities, but because it is much more comfortable to have a minty and moist mouth. We do not fold blankets and make the

extra effort to adjust lighting and set up aromatherapy diffusers because it is a task we must do, but for comfort, and not just physical comfort, but the comfort that comes from knowing you are truly cared for and loved.



This concept of comfort and love is the invisible string within all my moments of learning here at Francis House. From the volunteers, I learned that we not only make residents' meals for their physical nourishment, but because of the joy found in seeing the tiny salt and pepper shakers nicely arranged on the tray, with the aromas of home-cooked comfort food wafting through the halls and from their plates. I learn something new every day from the caregivers, whether it be how to make people feel more comfortable, how to communicate with families, or how to find practices that support my own physical, spiritual, and emotional health when working in end-of-life.

Most importantly, I gained critical education from our residents, whether that be how to celebrate, how to live, or how to accept and progress through the journey of life. One resident, who I grew quite close to, would always impart her wisdom to me, urging me to go outside and experience the world, whether it's on a walk with your friends, or through a crisp Diet Coke. And just to really experience it.

My journey at Francis House is also rooted in the educational programming, such as the End-of-Life six-week series for new staff members, Deborah Welsh's Nurturing Self-Compassion meditations, and Cathie Aber's Grief Flow. In the End-of-Life program, I dove headfirst into the concept of what the residents' experience might feel like, through simulations, and learning the importance of integrative therapies through psychological studies, through seeing how to inform families and residents about changes in the signs and symptoms of dying, and then how to be a companion to people on their journey.

In my simple year here, I've learned to slow down. I've learned to praise God in gratitude for every humble minute and movement that I am blessed with. And I have learned to love unconditionally.

# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME 2025

## Save the Date!

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025**  
**5:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.**  
**NY STATE FAIR EXPOSITION CENTER**

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, October 15. We will transform the Exposition Center into the familiar and fun lock and key event that the community has loved and supported for decades. Our auction – featuring over a hundred items – will again be offered digitally and in-person. Registration is just \$50 per person and includes six gourmet food stations, an open bar, and dessert bar. Stay tuned for some exciting new features for this year's event!



### Brian Macrae & Jane Amico-Macrae, 2025 Event Chairs

Brian and I are honored to serve as this year's Chairs for the 2025 *There's No Place Like Home* event. Alongside our Vice Chairs, Dave and Laurie Wyman, and the exceptional staff, caregivers, and volunteers, we are dedicated to showcasing the incredible care that Francis House provides to so many families. Our goal is to raise critical funding to support their ongoing mission.

Having been the end-of-life caregiver for both my parents, I understand firsthand the importance of providing dignity and compassion to those you love as they face the end of their lives. As a community, we are truly blessed to have such a vital organization that offers a home, an extended family, peace, and dignity to those at the end of life. Francis House is a special place for so many, and we are grateful to be part of this incredible event to raise awareness and financial support for this remarkable organization.

### David & Laurie Wyman, 2025 Event Vice Chairs

We are excited to work alongside the Francis House event planning committee and Event Chairs Brian Macrae & Jane Amico-Macrae. Francis House is a gift to our community; the peace, dignity, and compassion it offers to those facing the end of life is extraordinary. We are honored to be able to assist in bringing the Central New York Community together and to aid Francis House in continuing its mission and contributing to the success of its *There's No Place Like Home* event.



### 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@francishouseny.org](mailto:lgrasselli@francishouseny.org).



### REGISTER TO ATTEND TODAY!

Visit [TNPLH2025.givesmart.com](https://TNPLH2025.givesmart.com) or scan the QR code to register or view our 2025 sponsorship packages.



## YOU'RE INVITED TO A FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC!

Join us on Monday, June 23, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for a celebration of the life and legacy of our founder, Sister Kathleen Osbelt. The event will be held at The Gingerbread House gymnasium. Enjoy a picnic meal, ice cream, and games with the Francis House community on Sister Kathleen's birthday. All guests must register to attend on the Francis House website.

*We look forward to seeing you there!*



## WALKWAY OF BLESSINGS

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/support](https://francishouseny.org/support).



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: MIKE ZIEMANN

For many years, the Francis House caregivers and staff have enjoyed pizza and wings for lunch, thanks to Mike Ziemann, long-time manager and bartender at Swallow's Restaurant at 1914 South Ave in Syracuse. Mike has been familiar with Francis House for a long time but gained first-hand experience of the care that is provided when his friend, Neal, was a resident here. He brought pizza and beer for his friend and his family and discovered what a comfortable and peaceful place this home is. Mike says that he enjoys seeing how happy the donated food makes people when he walks in the door with it.

On behalf of the Francis House staff and caregivers, we want to thank Mike for his generous and delicious donations! If you are looking for some amazing chicken wings and pizza, make sure you stop by Swallow's Restaurant.



## WISH LIST OF IN-KIND DONATIONS

*Bolded items are currently most in need.*

### FOOD

- Brownie Mix: Fudge, Milk Chocolate
- Chocolate Chips: Semi-Sweet
- **Coffee: Decaf, Regular**
- Cookie Mix
- Cooking Oils: Canola, Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- **Food Gift Cards: 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

### HOUSEHOLD

- **Paper Towels – Always in Need**
- Dish Soap
- **Dishwasher Tablets**
- Fabric Spray
- Fabric Softener Sheets: Unscented
- Hot Liquid Cups with Lids
- **Hydrogen Peroxide Toilet Bowl Cleaner**
- **Laundry Detergent Liquid & Sheets: Unscented**
- **Liquid Hand Soap**
- Napkins
- Swiffer Sweeper Cloths: Dry
- **Toilet Paper: 1-Ply**
- **Trash Bags: Unscented 13- and 30-Gallon with Drawstrings**

### 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: 7.75"
- Visa Gift Cards

### 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
- Medical Chucks
- Mouthwash (No Alcohol)
- Shampoo Caps
- **Unscented Lotion**
- **Women's Body Wash: Unscented or Sensitive Skin**
- Women's Deodorant (No Aerosol)



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**~ 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, 2025 – MARCH 31, 2025**

Cheryl Abrams  
Rayjean Allen  
Albert "Al" Antonini  
Timothy "Tim" Brown  
James Bucher  
Brenda Cartee  
Steven Chappell  
Todd Cleeton  
Mark Collman  
Malcolm "Mike" Daignault  
Manfred Diflo

Ann Drake  
Jonathan English  
Esther Marie Forster  
Stephen Gauthier  
Lori Greenleaf  
Lee Guyette  
Sheila Hemler  
David Himiak  
Phyllis Jaffarian  
Judith Johnson  
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Elizabeth "Beth" Korzeniewski  
Suzanne Kowalczyk  
Roswitha Leonardo  
Diane Manning  
Mary Martin  
Coleen Masucci  
Marlyn Messina  
Arlene Milne  
Ann Mulholland  
Albert Nettuno  
Robert Neufang

Janet Niedzwecki  
Douglas Nightengale Jr.  
Shirley Quinn  
Susan Sisto  
Patricia Soule  
Beverly Stephens  
James Switzer  
Alex Ventrone  
Nora Vincent  
Loral Wilcox  
Michael "Mike" Wirtanen

*We feel your love.*

**QUOTES FROM RESIDENTS' LOVED ONES**

*"My family and I hold Francis House in a special place in our hearts... We always talk about the love, compassion, candor, and professionalism of all of you... Everything Francis House does comes from a place of caring, and what a great example for our community."*

*"Unconditional love holds the strongest for me because they didn't even know us."*