Start the Year Right: Pain Free!

If you have ever muttered the phrase, “Ugh, my aching back…”, we hope you will join us for First Connections at Clara’s House on January 22, 2014 at 11:00 am.

Our speaker this month is Dr. Paul Kuzma, Medical Director of the FirstHealth Back and Neck Pain Clinic. Dr. Kuzma is a board-certified, fellowship trained anesthesiologist with a specialty in pain management from Johns Hopkins University.

Dr. Kuzma will share information and answer questions about the prevention and treatment of back and neck pain. A light lunch will follow the presentation.

In addition, we will unveil a brand new program for Clara’s House (See page 2) at First Connections so we hope you can join us for an educational and enjoyable afternoon.

January/February, 2014

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Recent visitors to Clara’s House over the holidays were thrilled to receive giant teddy bears donated by Clara’s House volunteer, Debbie McGahey.

Thank you Debbie!!
New Year, New Program: *Clean House for Clara’s*

We all love a bargain and we all love to give so . . . we are going to try a new venture called *Clean House for Clara’s*. We invite everyone to donate any “very lightly” used item that you no longer need or want but which you think someone else would enjoy. We will store these items for you throughout the month. These items will then be made available in a silent auction at the following First Connections. All monies made during the auction will go directly to support Clara’s House operations and we will report back exactly how the money was spent (e.g., dishwashing refills, paper towels, to offset room costs for a guest family in need, etc.).

This is new and untried but we know you are a *patient and kind group of folks* and we can all work together to iron out any kinks. A few answers to questions that have been asked:

**Q: Will there be starting bids?**
A: No, we will not have a starting bid unless the donor requests one. Therefore, you may be able to get a real steal!

**Q: Will donors be recognized for the donation?**
A: Yes, we will list the item with the donor’s name.

**Q: What if I can’t make it to First Connections?**
A: You will need to change your plans. (Just kidding☺)
All items donated will be photographed as we receive them. You are welcome to come and review the book and items on the Monday or Tuesday before First Connections and enter a bid. Just know that you may be outbid at First Connections.

**Q: What if I have a large item that is difficult to store?**
A: The item can be photographed and we will display the photograph with any additional information.

We will be doing a demonstration at our January First Connections using items donated from staff so you can see how it will work. After the January First Connections, we will begin taking any of your donations and the next auction will be at the March First Connections.

Our goal for this program is simply to have fun while raising money to help support the important day-to-day operations of Clara’s House.
Clara’s House Hospitality Book Club
We are excited to resume the Clara’s House Book Club in the New Year. Our next meeting will be Thursday, February 6th at 10am at the Clara McLean House. We will be discussing the book, Me Before You by JoJo Moyes. Anyone who is interested in participating is welcome to attend, and please let us know if you would like us to order a copy of the book for you.

Last Call for Electronics
Thank you to everyone who donated old electronics for recycling. We will be sending in one last shipment at the end of February so if you have any old handheld electronics you no longer use, feel free to drop them off and we will recycle them.

Many thanks to our wonderful volunteers who worked tirelessly to make Clara’s House beautiful and welcoming throughout the holiday season.

Clara’s House volunteers, Mary Gehrig and Joel Rich, did a great job assembling and breaking down the snow village.

Terri Birkhauser and Kathy Lannon relax after working with Lydia Healy and Marcia Krasicky to decorate the children’s area.
Expression Through Art

The Clara McLean House is excited to announce a new program entitled, Art for Cancer Survivors and Their Loved Ones. In partnership with the Artist League of the Sandhills, we will host 5 monthly art sessions for cancer survivors and their loved ones. Volunteers from the Artists League along with Clara’s House volunteer, Magda Sonderfan, will guide participants in artistic techniques.

There will be a different topic (e.g. watercolors, acrylics, colored pencils, knitting, etc.) each month, and sessions will be held in the Family Kitchen and Dining area of Clara’s House. The group will meet from 10am - 11:30am on the following dates: January 28, February 25, March 25, April 22, and May 27.

For more information or to register for the group, please contact Laura Kuzma at 715-4230 or lkuzma@firsthealth.org.

A Note from the Director...

Dear Friends,

Ahhh...we have finally arrived at mid-January, that sweet spot in time when memories of the holidays are still fresh as we reflect on the past year, and look forward to the new. For Clara’s House and the Healing Garden, that means that we are continuing to build momentum in participation and utilization of Clara’s House. Here is a brief summary of the numbers to date:

- Room nights: 1921
- Overnight guests: 1278
- Day visits: 931
- Average Length of Stay: 3.29 nights
- Awareness Events: 71
- Event Participants: 3245

As you know, these numbers are only a small part of the story. More important are the many lives touched during their care of a loved one or themselves. It is truly an honor to be present here with them, and to offer them hospitality that promotes healing.

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares.”

Hebrews 13:2.

Best Wishes for 2014,
Rebecca Ainslie, Director
Making a Difference

As we begin 2014, the Foundation of FirstHealth invites you to participate in two very special events:

**Life Planning Program for Women**

**Friday, March 14 - 10 a.m., CCNC**

Nationally renowned speakers - Deborah Jacobs, author of Estate Planning Smarts, and Suzie Humphreys, motivational and inspirational speaker, breast cancer survivor and celebrated radio host - will provide tips on how to plan for the future and enjoy life along the way. For more information or to register for this event, call or email Lynn Holland at 695-7510 or lholland@firsthealth.org.

**Run for the Ribbons**

**Saturday, April 5 - 5K at 9:00 a.m. and 1K at 10:30 a.m.**

Join us for a day of celebration as we host the 5K and 1K Family Fun Walk at the Carolina Horse Park. The races will be held prior to the 63rd Stoneybrook Steeplechase. Each registrant will also receive a general admission pass to the steeplechase races that begin at 1:30. For more information go to www.runfortheribbons5k.com.
A Peace of the Spirit by Pam Hudson

As is usual for me, I am again amazed that we have entered another ‘New Year’, 2014, and my how time does fly! And when I stop and think about this past year and Clara’s House, the feeling that I have is as if we have been here a good while and that the year 2013 was just one of many years of Clara’s House being in operation. The fact is that we have been in operation for only 22 months, a little less than a full two years, but to me the ‘feeling’ feels like it has been much longer. So I ask myself these questions; is that because we are already so well seasoned with all we are doing, or is it because we have such a difficult time being here and doing all we do, or is it because time has been dragging by? None of those satisfy me and I think that may be because the reason isn’t about the amount of time that has passed but about the quality of time that has passed. And that ‘quality of time’ is directly related to the care shared and the many wonderful relationships that grow in this house. We are so fortunate to be here together day after day. The amazing spirit of all staff and volunteers and guests that come our way is a wonder! And the time we share together has its own measurement…..as time here at Clara’s House is all about the love among and between us. Happy New Year everybody!