Clara’s House and Healing Garden Volunteers Honored

We are pleased to announce that the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) officially honored the wonderful work of the Clara’s House and Healing Garden volunteers with the presentation of an award for Excellence in Community Service.

In general, this award is given out once or twice a year and is usually presented to a single person. However, an exception was made this year because Clara’s House and the Healing Garden truly exemplify a team effort and a community of people working together to serve others.

We greatly appreciate nominating chairperson, Kay Lund, and the entire DAR organization for recognizing the work of these special volunteers.

Foundation Volunteer Coordinator, Laura Kuzma, and Clara’s House Director, Rebecca Ainslie, accept the Excellence in Community Service award from Kay Lund of the local DAR chapter.

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Clara’s House is supported solely by philanthropic donations through the Foundation of FirstHealth.
Volunteers Share Their Wisdom

In an effort to capture the great wisdom of our many volunteers, Clara’s House kicked off the **VEW program (Volunteers’ Everyday Wisdom)** in April. Our first class was Pine Needle Basket Weaving and was taught by Clara’s House and Healing Garden Volunteer, Teresa Hessler.

The class was held on 4 consecutive Mondays in April at Clara’s House and gave us all lots of laughs. The work was challenging, and we did have a few drop outs (including 1 or 2 staff members who will remain unnamed). However, we did have 6 talented souls who persevered and completed beautiful baskets. Their creativity and focus were very impressive! Many thanks to all who participated and to our fabulous instructor, who was willing to share her wisdom😊


Healing Garden Volunteers Welcome Spring

One of the best things about spring is the return of our wonderful Healing Garden volunteers. These dedicated men and women work hard to create a very special oasis for this community, and every day we see patients and guests enjoying this garden and expressing their thanks to the unseen heroes who have created it. Please know how much your hard work matters!

Healing Garden Volunteers (from l to r): Pat Rackowski, Sally Olson, Sue Kinney, and Marjorie Ludwig
Grateful Guests

Recent guest, Amy Del Valle, enjoys the garden and the beautiful weather.

March 4, 2015

To the staff and volunteers who help run the Clara McLean House: There aren’t enough pages in a book or positive words in the dictionary to express how we feel about our experiences here. So we will just say – YOU HAVE BEEN AN AMAZING GIFT. THANK YOU!

- The Millans

April 2, 2015

The Clara McLean House is such a beautiful respite for hospital patient families. It greatly reduces the stress involved in this time. The rooms are lovely and relaxing, the kitchen is sunny, and the staff is wonderful. Your spring garden is just beautiful. Thank you to all for everything you do to make this easier for so many families.

- The Burtons
A Note from the Director. . .

“Dad, how come it was more fun when you were a kid? You’re always talking about your woods and tree houses, and how you used to ride that horse down near the swamp….Like many parents, I do tend to romanticize my own childhood. But my son was serious; he felt he had missed out on something important. He was right. Americans who are Baby Boomers or older enjoyed a kind of free, natural play that today seems like a quaint artifact. Kids are aware of global threats to the environment – but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature is fading.”

Excerpted from Richard Louv’s, Last Child in the Woods

You will have an opportunity to learn about Mr. Louv’s important work on May 20th at 5PM (see article on pg. 6). It could be life-changing for you, your children and grandchildren. This author/researcher has been personally endorsed by Lynda Acker, Co-Creator of The Healing Garden. It has been her desire for several years to introduce our community to his landmark work. If you haven’t reserved your spot yet, please call Lynn at 910-695-7510. I hope to see you there!

Rebecca Ainslie, Director, Clara McLean House

Return the Kindness Program Thrives

Return the Kindness, a new Clara’s House program, allows guests and donors to pay in advance for someone less fortunate. While we were hopeful the new program would capture the kindness of Clara’s House, we have been overwhelmed by the generous response.

It has been amazing and humbling to see so many guests who stay here during emotionally tough times, reach into their own pocket and pay for someone coming after them in order to make sure they, too, can receive the comfort Clara’s House provides.

In one month’s time, we have received $7,340.00 from our guests and donors to help pay for others who cannot afford the $35/night fee. We have truly witnessed kindness at Clara’s House stretching from person to person, supporting one another, and building a path together.

If you are interested in contributing to this ongoing effort, donations may be dropped off at Clara’s House or mailed to the Foundation of FirstHealth at 150 Applecross Road, Pinehurst, NC 28374. Please indicate Return the Kindness in the memo line.
Bring on the Birds

Clara’s House was pleased to welcome Jon Davis, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited, as our speaker for First Connections.

Jon had a terrific presentation filled with stories and tips for attracting and enjoying backyard birds. He also shared photos as well as actual products for all to examine. Jon’s passion and vast knowledge for the topic of birding captured the group’s attention.

But perhaps what made the afternoon so special was the knowledge that Jon donates bird seed and feeders to the Healing Garden. Cassie Willis, Healing Garden Co-Founder, shared her heartfelt gratitude for all that Jon has done to help create such a beautiful place.

Jon’s store has moved and is now located in the Kohl’s shopping center near Hobby Lobby. If you haven’t visited, you are missing something special.

Stand Up 4 Nurses!

The staff and volunteers of the Clara McLean House and the Foundation of FirstHealth recognize that quality patient care begins and ends with excellent nursing. We know these nurses work tirelessly day and night to provide the care that distinguishes FirstHealth, and we strive to offer support on a regular basis including hosting lunch for the new nurse orientation, delivering homemade brownies to various units at the hospital, and inviting nurses to use Clara’s House and the Healing Garden as a personal respite from their hectic schedules.

With Nursing Enrichment as one of the Foundation’s Five Pillars of Support, we are committed our nursing staff and invite you to take a minute to view this video and consider joining us in our efforts to Stand Up For Nurses! For more information contact the Foundation of FirstHealth at 910-695-7500

https://youtu.be/vrBW_TXZj3A

Jon and Rebecca Davis, owners of Wild Birds Unlimited in Southern Pines.

Clara’s House Volunteers Sonia Wriglesworth and Cynthia McIver serve lunch to new nurses.
Health, Healing, and the Humanities Series: The Restorative Powers of Nature

It’s frightening how often we miss the beauty around us as we become increasingly immersed in advancing technology. In his books, Last Child in the Woods and The Nature Principle, author Richard Louv argues that this phenomenon is leading us farther and farther away from the essential healing power of nature. Through his writing and actions, Louv has inspired an international movement to reconnect kids (and adults) with nature. We are excited to welcome him as our next speaker in the Health, Healing, and the Humanities series hosted by the Clara McLean House Advisory Council and the Foundation of FirstHealth on May 20th at 5:30pm at the Country Club of North Carolina. For more information, contact Lynn Holland at 910-695-7510 or lholland@firsthealth.org.

Centering Prayer

Does your life move by fast? Is your time more than full? Are you someone who “cares for others”? If so, then you are cordially invited to Clara’s House for a gift of time for silence…

Please join us for a time of Centering Prayer as we pause from our daily lives and practice the art of silence. The group is open to all and meets in the Reflection Room at the Clara McLean House on Tuesdays at 7pm and on Wednesdays at 4pm.

In this busy, busy world, please plan to join us for a time of sitting still in peace. We hope to see you!
A Peace of the Spirit by Pam Hudson

For many of us there is something about springtime that draws us to gardens. Maybe it’s the new growth appearing and color returning to the landscapes. But as I dig deeper, I think about all that a garden represents. For one thing, it is the opportunity to try my hand at tilling and planting and watering, and then watching what I have done take shape. After all, were it not for my doing, well, there would just not be the growth. Isn’t that so?

In my family there are farmers, folk who made their living by the land. And I cannot help but remember how hardworking and humble they were. Makes me wonder why they were not more arrogant and full of self-praise? After all it was what they did that allowed growth to even be possible, isn’t that the case?

Now we all know that is not the whole story and that there is a great deal of mystery involved. In fact, being able to take a seed and plant it and have it turn into so much more is one of life’s miracles. Growth happens around us every day with many opportunities for us to join in the mystery. And maybe that is what continues to draw us in, the opportunity to be a part of one of life’s mysteries. In this age of having much at our fingertips that we control and organize and even manipulate, I believe there is a part of us that wants and even desires to be filled with wonder and all that a miracle evokes within us. As miracles occur, we are connected to one another in our wonderings and curiosities and stand in awe at the greater scheme this life has to offer. And so we need both pieces. We need our energies and involvement, and we need the mystery and wonder and awe. It all works together as we too may work together and share. Isn’t it amazing how that works? We do love a mystery don’t we?