Clara’s House recently welcomed members of the award-winning Pinecrest High School choir and their director, Erin Slenk. These young men and women helped ring in the holidays by sharing their beautiful voices with the Parkinson’s Support Group.

From the moment the music began, we knew we were in for a real treat. They presented a mix of traditional and contemporary music, all a cappella. A few tears were shed not only at the beauty of the harmonies but also at the grace of living in a community where love and support are shared across generations.

The Parkinson’s Support Group of the Sandhills meets on the 2nd Monday of every month at 4pm at the Clara McLean House. The group is for patients and care partners and features a combination of speakers and small groups. For more information contact Laura Kuzma at lkuzma@firsthealth.org or 910-715-4230
Volunteers Mary Gehrig, Sis Mann, and Sandra Pretty work for hours to create a miniature dream village that delights guests and visitors throughout the season.

Volunteers Kathy Lannon, Marcia Krasicky, and Lydia Healy decorate the sunroom and children’s area with a special sparkle.

Volunteer Nancy Manley works overtime to get the Shadowlawn tree just perfect.

Helping Hands Deck the Halls at Clara’s House

Volunteers Pat Healy and Patti Moffatt put the finishing touches on the library at Clara’s House.
Volunteer Appreciation a Success

We were thrilled that so many of you were able to join us for the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event – our largest crowd yet! It was an especially moving evening as we were able to hear from a Clara’s House guest as well as an Oncology survivor about the importance of what you do and how your many different efforts ease the suffering of others. Whether it’s creating a beautiful garden, cooking a meal, or providing a listening ear, it truly makes a difference.

In addition, many of you asked about the handmade gifts that were distributed at the end of the evening. Those were created by our wonderful staff member, Kelly Pritchard. Kelly works part-time at Clara’s, most often in the evenings and on weekends, and was gracious enough to share her artistic talents to make each and every gift. If you did not receive a gift, please feel free to stop by Clara’s House.

Clara’s House Occupancy Soars During Busy Season

If you have visited Clara’s House in the last few months, you may have noticed the buzz of activity in the kitchen, the hallways, and the garden.

In October, the occupancy rate at Clara’s House was 75%, and in November it was 83% - with many nights being completely full!

We are so appreciative of each and every one of you and the many ways you support Clara’s House and the growing number of programs and services provided.

Staff member, Kelly Pritchard, our very own artist-in-residence. Kelly also creates the beautiful signs in the kitchen telling our guests about meal options. Thank you Kelly!
A Note from the Director by Rebecca Ainslie

As we begin the new year at Clara McLean House, we want to express our sincere appreciation to our stakeholders including volunteers, advisory board members, donors, and community partners.

Throughout the last year, 158 volunteers provided 4,700 hours of service to Clara’s House, the Healing Garden, the Hospice House Garden, Hospital Patient Visitation, Oncology CARE-Net, and the Tea Service at the Cancer Center and Hospice House.

With the support of our volunteers and donors, the last year was one of tremendous growth and accomplishment including:

• An increase in the Clara’s House average rate of occupancy to 66% with 37 days at full capacity
• Increased Clara’s House utilization by Oncology patients and Hospice families.
• Increased hospital patient visitation by 23%.
• Parkinson’s Support Group attendance increased by 25%
• Dementia Caregiver Group completed first full year of monthly meetings
• New Support Groups developed for gynecological cancer and breast cancer
• Began hosting Aphasia Groups on weekly basis (TAP)
• Provided a home for Nursing Enrichment programs

Even with this impressive list of activity, we never lose sight of our mission to care for people. It is a true honor to be able to walk alongside individuals in the very tender moments of their lives, whether it be cradling a fragile infant in the NICU, undergoing life-saving cancer treatments, or saying good-bye to a special loved one. Supporting one another through these experiences binds us together and makes us a better community.

So we invite you to join us as we look forward to 2017 with the anticipation of meeting and serving many new and familiar faces along the way!

In Appreciation,

Rebecca

Looking for a way to support Clara's House?

How about purchasing a bottle of wine from Triangle Wine? Proceeds from artist and philanthropist Jeff Hanson wine bottles benefit the Clara McLean House.

CHEERS!!
Straight from the Heart

Our Guests Say It Best…

December, 2016

Thank you so much for the kindness we experienced during our stay at the Clara McLean House. I have never experienced such kindness from complete strangers. May God’s grace and love continue to pour down on Clara’s House.

Nancy W.
Laurinburg, NC

December, 2016

Thank you to everyone for your generous hospitality during this season. It is especially difficult to say goodbye to a loved one. Having this place of comfort, peace and joy meant so much to us. We can’t thank you enough.

Merry Christmas to all.

The Miller family
Fuquay Varina, NC

Our stay here has been such a blessing to my family. The staff and volunteers have been so attentive to my family’s needs and compassionate to our feelings. They make you feel like members of their own family.

This is a haven where you can be at peace with your feelings and anxiety of the battle your family is experiencing. I found such comfort in the Healing Garden – my favorite space is sitting on the bench at the waterfall.

I have prayed many prayers and shed many tears during our 14 day stay. Words can’t ever thank you enough for your compassion and hospitality.

The Hyatt family
Bennettsville, SC
Creating a Win-Win Investment in a Volatile Market

Wednesday, February 1, 2017
10:00am
Lunch Following Program
Ballroom, Country Club of North Carolina

If you are worried about low interest rates and a volatile market, you may want to take advantage of this upcoming seminar through the Foundation of FirstHealth.

Financial planning expert, William T. Sturtevant will explain options and benefits associated with funding a charitable gift annuity, including the use of real estate.

If interested in attending, please contact Pam Tighe at ptighe@firsthealth.org by January 27th to ensure a reservation.

Spring Book Club

The Clara’s House Hospitality Book Club will resume in February. The group meets the first Thursday of the month at 10am at Clara’s House, and all are welcome. Based on group suggestions, the schedule is as follows:

Thursday, February 2nd
The Girls of Atomic City by Denise Kiernan

Thursday, March 2nd
The Bartender’s Tale by Ivan Doig

Thursday, April 6th
The Summer Before the War by Helen Simonson

Thursday, May 4th
Elephant Company by Vicki Constantine Croke

Hospitality Tea Volunteers pinch hit as temporary grandparents for 8-year-old Elaina, whose mother was getting chemotherapy in December. (from l to r: Sharon Robinson, Kathy Lannon, Sandy MacIntyre, Jackie O’Connell, Mary Kay Baker, and Linda Guerra.)
Clara’s House: A Community Treasure

Your support makes stories like this possible

Nick and Amber Birkner live in Sanford, North Carolina. Nick is a member of the elite Golden Knights, U.S. Army Parachute Team, and Amber is a nursing student. Together with their 2-year old daughter, Ayden, they were looking forward to welcoming their new baby boy.

However, due to pregnancy complications, Amber was forced to have a C section at 34 weeks and their son, Connor, arrived at Moore Regional Hospital weighing a mere 3 pounds, 3 ounces. With baby Connor in the neonatal intensive care unit, Clara’s House provided a home away from home for the Birkners during this holiday season.

“It was hectic trying to go back and forth, and I still cannot drive because of the C-section,” explained Amber, “Being here (at Clara’s House) has been such a weight lifted off our shoulders. It was certainly helped with my healing process.”

Become a Friend of the Clara McLean House and/or Healing Garden

Please support the many patients, families, and community members who benefit from Clara’s House and the Healing Garden. Every donation makes a difference and allows us to continue to enhance our health care system by providing compassionate hospitality and support for our community.

Yes, I want to support the mission of the Clara McLean House and/or the Healing Garden with a gift of:

- $25
- $50
- $100
- $250
- $500
- Other: ________

Sign me up as a Friend of the Clara McLean House and/or the Healing Garden with my recurring gift:

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Annually

Payment Method:

- Check (Payable to The Clara McLean House and/or The Healing Garden)
- Credit Card (Fill out information below or call 910-695-7500)
  - Visa
  - Master Card
  - American Express
  - Discover

Card Number: ___________________________ Exp. Date: __________ Verification Code: __________

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

City: __________________ State: __________ Zip: __________

Phone: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

Mail to: The Foundation of FirstHealth, 150 Applecross Rd., Pinehurst, NC 28374