Clara’s House Newsletter

Clara’s House 5th Birthday Party
Sunday, April 30, 2017
1pm – 5pm, Open House

Drop in for an activity or simply browse the displays and enjoy a piece of birthday cake

Basic Cake Decorating with Shelley Cooper of Cooper Ford
1:30pm – 2:30pm

Yoga of the Heart with Cinnamon LeBlanc
4:00pm – 5:00pm

All About Monarch Butterflies with Lynda Acker
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Volunteer and Employee Art Exhibit
1:00 - 5:00 pm

Sabika Jewelry Sale
1:00 – 5:00 PM

“B”-Day Art Show

From April 30 – May 7, Clara’s House will be featuring works of art created by Foundation volunteers and participating hospital staff. All works of art are welcome, but there is a limit of one entry per person. Items can be delivered to Clara’s House between Monday, April 24 and Thursday April 27 at 5pm. Visitors may vote for their favorite item, and a People’s Choice Award will be announced.

For more information on participating in the art show, please contact Laura Kuzma at lkuzma@firsthealth.org or 910-715-4230.
Anne VanderWolk: A Legacy of Kindness

On January 31, 2017, our dear friend and volunteer Anne VanderWolk passed away peacefully in her own home.

Anne’s positive energy and loving spirit have been a constant at Clara’s House from the very first day. Through her guidance, encouragement and generosity, the concept of hospitality truly flourished. Anne was a fixture at the kitchen stove and never tired of cooking delicious quiche and soup for hungry and grateful guests. Even when her body began to tire, her spirit shone bright and she often had meals delivered from area restaurants so that guests could be assured a warm and comforting meal at the end of a long day.

However, even more important than the meals she prepared, was the kindness and warmth she shared with all who crossed her path. She will be greatly missed, but we feel confident she’ll always be with us, watching over her kitchen and smiling.

“Anne makes the best soup! She insisted I sit down for 10 minutes and eat her homemade veggie soup and egg muffins. It was then that I realized I had not stopped to eat a good meal in days because I was so busy running back and forth to the NICU. It was so appreciated. What a kind-hearted lady. I will never forget her.

- Lacey D., Clara’s House guest
Kindness with a Front Porch

Clara’s House opened its doors on April 30, 2012, and since that time, overnight accommodations have been provided for more than 7,000 patients and families in a variety of situations. Such care simply would not be possible without a true team approach. We are grateful for the seen and unseen heroes who work, often times behind the scenes, to provide care and compassion for so many others. These include our many dedicated volunteers, community partners, and generous donors. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with all of you.

My sister and I cannot thank you enough for providing such a great and caring place!! I looked forward to coming back here every night. The gardens and house are beautiful and so soothing. The people working here are warm, kind, and helpful. Thank you for making a difficult time easier.

Susan A., Wilson, NC

Jean R., Raleigh, NC

Recent guest, Vernell H., (left), shares a warm embrace with Clara’s House volunteer, Vernelle O. (right)

CARE-Net volunteer, Debbie F., spends time with Clara’s House guest, Paula E., during her stay.

Relief Manager, Maribel Alston, greets guests with a waffle and a smile
Generous Community Partners

When Clara’s House volunteers Sis Mann and Mary Gehrig found themselves without flowers, they got creative and sought help from Lowes Foods in Pinehurst, where the florist generously agreed to donate unsold flowers on Monday mornings to brighten the day for the patients and families staying at Clara’s House. Thank you Lowes for Making a Difference!!

Members of the Men’s Golf Capitol Chorus surprised Clara’s House guests and volunteers with a Valentine’s Day serenade.

And a special thank you to the Seven Lakes Neighbor to Neighbor Group. These wonderful women divide into teams and prepare a complete meal every month for the guests who always appreciate a hot meal.

Professional trainers and facilitators, Mark Stephans and Lynda Poll donated their time and expertise to lead a fascinating workshop on coping with life’s many changes.

Sabika, a company by women and for women, will be selling their unique jewelry at the Open House on April 30th and has generously agreed to donate a portion of all sales back to Clara’s.

www.sabika-jewelry.com/stellanicoleman
A Note from the Director by Rebecca Ainslie

Dear Friends,

It’s our 5th Birthday! So far, the journey has been magical. As one of our recent guests said, “Miracle places really do exist.” And truly, the making of Clara’s House has been a blend of just the right people at just the right times.

“It’s the spirit here that counts. The time may be long, the vehicle may be strange or unexpected. But if the dream is held close to the heart, and imagination is applied to what there is close at hand, everything is still possible.”
Robert Fulgham, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

Just as Kindergarten is instructive to a 5-year-old child, these early years at Clara’s House have taught us the art of serving families in times of medical crisis. Of equal importance, we have opened our doors to the very community that made Clara’s House possible with offerings of support groups, educational events and the lovely Healing Garden.

These first five years have positioned us as more than just a room to stay. At Clara’s House, people find just the right combination of hope and kindness to help them on their journey. We have a very bright future with the imprint we have made on our health care and our community. Can you imagine what is in store for our wonderful Clara’s House in the years to come? Let’s keep dreaming and celebrate this important milestone together at our Open House on April 30 from 1-5pm!

With a Grateful Heart,
Rebecca :-)

“There is no way to adequately express my gratitude for my stay at the Clara McLean House. I appreciated not only the beauty of the home, but the quiet, restful peace that can be found here. It was a real Godsend as a retreat from the hospital. Thank you for exceeding my expectations.”

Reid H.
Asheboro, NC

“Clara’s House is a beautiful place, and the volunteers and staff are so kind and helpful. It is very nice to not have to make the one hour return trip to our home in Fayetteville every night. And for me not to have to sleep in a hospital room recliner when my husband spends several days in the hospital due to surgery.

Thank you for the great benefit Clara McLean House is to all of us and to the community.”

Mary M.
Fayetteville, NC
Foundation Patient Visitors Spread Smiles

Much of the support offered through The Foundation of FirstHealth and Clara’s House happens behind the scenes in personal, meaningful, one-on-one interactions which is certainly the case with our dedicated team of patient visitors. In the last fiscal year, these volunteers visited 3,600 patients in the hospital to provide a personal touch by offering a newspaper, information on Clara’s House, and even a meal ticket to the cafeteria when needed. Their commitment to caring is appreciated by each patient and family they visit.

So, after 5 years and more than 16,000 patients visited, we want to say a very big THANK YOU to these special men and women: Herm Collier, Barbara Graning, Bill Graning, Joanne Hansz, Bill Mamel, Don Schneider, and Jean Souweine.

Letter of thanks for the patient visitors:

“Your valuable time and your love and concern, truly helped us every day to realize how blessed we are to know people like you who make this world worth being in it at these difficult times. Thank you again.”

-The Wilce Family

Volunteer, Sally Olson, gets down and dirty to prepare the Healing Garden
A Peace of the Spirit by Pam Hudson

Thinking back to when I was a 5 year old, I do not have a lot of clarity in my memories. What I do have is a picture taken with my family; my maternal grandparents, my parents, my sister Terri and myself. We were celebrating birthdays, mine and Terri’s, as we were born just a year and 6 days apart. Our birthdays are close together and always seemed to be celebrated at the same time. In the picture we are sitting in front of two cakes, one for each of us. And as I look at this picture I know how loved I was and am, just by looking at it. And even though specific memories may be sketchy, my emotional memories are strong and I think back on how I loved family times. I loved it when we were all together, and I remember and love deeply each and every person in that picture with me. The picture reminds me of all that and more, and my memories are becoming a bit clearer.

Thinking back over the past 5 years here at Clara’s House, there have been some wonderfully rich times. Much love and laughter, many tears, relationships forged, hopes shared, and kindness galore! How loved we are here at Clara’s, how loved by our community, how loved by our guests, and how much gentle caring we have been privileged to be a part of! We are a fortunate people in so very many ways. So as we celebrate our 5 year birthday, may we continue to grow in love and kindness, and always be clear about who we are!