

Healthcare Professionals Behind the Scenes: Christie Knott, Family House

By Janice Lane Palko

When dealing with a severe illness or hospitalization, daily life may seem to come to a halt, but that is not the case. Family members of the sick or those with an acute illness waiting to be hospitalized still need a place to stay, clean laundry and food. Tending to those needs can add to an already stressful time.

Christie C. Knott, the Executive Director of Family House, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization, is responsible for helping to address those needs and serve patients and their families seeking treatment in Pittsburgh for acute or life-threatening illnesses or injuries. For nearly five years, Knott has been at the helm of Family House, one of the largest hospital hospitality houses in the country, overseeing facility operations and management at all four Family Houses residences. In addition, she is responsible for the nonprofit's budget, staff members, board members and the numerous volunteers that keep Family House the "home away from home" for families seeking medical treatment in Pittsburgh.



Christie C. Knott

Family House was founded in 1983 to provide an affordable, convenient, attractive, comfortable and cozy place for patients to stay while awaiting treatment or for their family members to live while they are hospitalized. Before the opening of Family House, patients and their families either had to seek lodging in a hotel, which can be very costly, or resort to sleeping in a waiting room or in their car. Over the years, more than 100,000 guests have stayed at Family House—some for 18 months or more. Guests have come from all 50 states and 44 countries, and annually it supports more than 10,000 families.

Four separate houses comprise Family House. The residences are located in the Oakland and Shadyside areas of

Pittsburgh, within close proximity to world-renowned hospital centers, including UPMC Health Systems, Veteran's Hospital, West Penn Allegheny Health System, and Children's Hospital of UPMC. A small, dedicated group of employees ensure that all daily operations are executed smoothly and 270 volunteers staff the four homes 365 days a year.

Anyone who owns a home knows the work involved in maintaining a residence. Imagine then how much more labor is entailed for Knott as she directs the upkeep of the four homes, complete with 163 guest rooms. In addition to those tasks, Knott oversees fundraising for Family House through several charitable events held throughout the year. In April, the Gifting Gala, held at the Omni William Penn, raised \$100,000 for the Family Assistance Fund, which provides funds for families staying at Family House who struggle to meet Family House's reasonable rates. Knott also guides the committee of volunteers for the organization's premiere fundraising event, Family House Polo. Held at Hartwood Acres, Family House Polo, a Pittsburgh tradition, attracts more than 2,000 spectators and is one of the most successful polo fundraisers in the world, raising more than \$3 million over the past 26 years. This year's event takes place on September 11.

The day-long fun kicks off with the On-field Vintage Car Display. Prior to the match, attendees can also browse the Boutique Village. Children will enjoy crafts, face painting, an interactive mural, finger casting, and games in the Children's Entertainment Tents. At 1 p.m. the opening ceremonies commence, and then at 1:30 the showcase event, the Family House Polo Match begins.

Knott's experience and education has provided her with the knowledge and skills to manage such a massive undertaking. Originally from Scranton, PA, Knott is a graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania and holds a Bachelor of the Arts degree in Applied Psychology. Previously, Knott was the Director of Community Development at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation, where she launched a corporate volunteer initiative; created specialized family centered care volunteer assignments and tripled the size of the overall volunteer program. Prior to a career change to the non-profit sector in 2003, Knott maintained a successful career in Retail Management with a specialization in Human Resources and Process Improvement. Her previous work experience includes Macy's, May Company and American Eagle Outfitter's. Knott began her relationship with Family House, Inc., in 2000 as a volunteer for Family House Polo then becoming the Executive Director of Family House in 2005.

Knott, her husband Ian and daughter Allie reside in Allison, Park, PA. She is currently a member of the Carriage House Children's Center Board of Directors and member of the Ladies Hospital Aid Society. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, skiing, practicing yoga and spending time with family and friends.

For more information, visit www.familyhouse.org. †

Auxiliary at MVH Sets Officers for New Year

Leadership of the Auxiliary of Mon-Vale Health Resources, Inc. is set for Fiscal Year 2010-2011, which began July 1.

Ruth Antonelli was sworn in for her first year of service as president at the Auxiliary's 32th annual appreciation dinner in the Anthony M. Lombardi Education Conference Center at Monongahela Valley Hospital.

In addition to Mrs. Antonelli other officers of the volunteer organization for 2010-2012 are Marsha Barcelona, vice president; Sandy McLuckie, treasurer; Georgetta Wiles, assistant treasurer; Mary Garris, finance officer; Lillian Nard, assistant finance officer; Ruthann Dulovich, recording treasurer and gift shop chairperson; Mary Lou Mudrick, recording secretary; Dolly Gaudio, corresponding secretary. †



Top Row (L-R): Marsha Barcelona, Mary Lou Mudrick, Mary Garris, Lillian Nard. Seated (L-R): Sandy McLuckie, Georgetta Wiles, Ruthann Dulovich, Ruth Antonelli

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