



FAMILY HOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PRESS CONTACT:

Julianne Hluska

(412) 647-0389

jhluska@familyhouse.org

FAMILY HOUSE ACQUIRES COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT FACILITY

Pittsburgh-based nonprofit will consolidate operations, services, and staff in a single location

PITTSBURGH, PA (July 7) – Family House, Inc. announced today that it has purchased the Courtyard by Marriott property located at 5308 Liberty Avenue in Pittsburgh’s Bloomfield neighborhood. The six-story, 132-room property was sold to Family House by Watermark Lodging Trust, Inc., a Chicago-based real estate investment trust. The purchase price was \$20.5 million.

“This marks a truly historic moment in the life of Family House,” said Board Chair Al Vallano, a First Vice President at Hefren-Tillotson. “Not since the day this healthcare lodging facility first opened its doors in 1983, to serve patients and caregivers who travel to Pittsburgh to receive life-sustaining medical care and treatment, has such a transformational event taken place.”

The decision to acquire the hotel was unanimously approved by the Family House Board of Directors in June.

“I want to extend my deepest appreciation to my colleagues on the Board for the extensive amount of time they spent in committee meetings and with members of the Family House leadership team to thoughtfully and carefully review details of the deal,” Vallano added.

“And I am especially grateful for the leadership and expertise contributed over the past 10 months by Glen Feinberg, who has served on the Family House Board for more than 24 years. Over the past year, Glen has led Family House’s Building Subcommittee. He also graciously agreed to chair our capital campaign.”

“Family House is an essential partner to the region’s healthcare industry,” said Feinberg, who recently completed a 41-year career at Deloitte. “Seizing upon this truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase this property and establish a one-house operation will enhance our service delivery and ensure that Family House is well positioned to meet the needs of the thousands of patients and caregivers we will continue to serve long into the future.”

Feinberg added that Family House will renovate various spaces within the facility, which was built in 2003. “We will make changes as needed to the interior and exterior to ensure that it aligns with the overall home-like atmosphere that is a hallmark of Family House,” he said. “Based on preliminary cost estimates, we expect to invest another \$3 million to make those enhancements over the next few years.”

The project will be funded in part by capital grants that Family House will seek through a multiyear fundraising campaign as well as from other organization assets. No definitive move-in date has been identified.

“Since 2015, we have been engaged in a strategic planning process to ensure that the future vision and services provided by Family House meet our healthcare partners’ and guests’ needs,” said Executive Director Jennifer March. “The Marriott property will enable Family House to consolidate operations, services, and our dedicated team of volunteers and staff into a single location, which will lead to operational efficiencies as well as ensure our long-term sustainability.”

In December 2019, the Family House Board directed leadership to move forward with the second phase of its development feasibility study to help guide its plans to become a more efficient and cost-effective operation, March noted. At that time, she said that the organization anticipated building a new facility on property it owns on McKee Place in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood, the site of the original Family House.

When the coronavirus pandemic struck early in 2020, the organization temporarily suspended its capital building plans and focused on keeping its doors open to support the thousands of patients whose emergency and life-sustaining medical care could not be delayed by COVID-19.

“While our capital building plans slowed during the early stages of the pandemic, we continued to provide our essential services to those patients and families whose emergency care and life-sustaining medical treatments could not be delayed,” March added.

“I am proud that Family House was the only healthcare hospitality lodging facility in western Pennsylvania to remain open throughout the pandemic.”

Late last summer, Family House's Board approved the demolition of its original facility on McKee Place. Shortly thereafter, leadership reconvened planning discussions with healthcare and community partners, and several benefactors. Included among discussion topics was the impact that a proposed 10-story student housing development at 3500 Forbes Avenue would have on Family House's preliminary design plans for a new facility at McKee Place. Family House expressed its concerns about the plans for the adjacent development during a City of Pittsburgh Zoning Board hearing. It later entered into negotiations with the Forbes Avenue property developer (CA Ventures), ultimately reaching an agreement.

In the meantime, the opportunity to buy the Marriott property came about quite unexpectedly, according to Feinberg.

“While we were moving forward with plans to redesign and build a new Family House on our McKee property, it was brought to our attention that the Courtyard by Marriott in Shadyside was going on the market,” he said. “Recognizing the value of that property and its potential to meet Family House's long-term occupancy and operational needs, we immediately contacted Watermark Lodging and began negotiations.”

According to Vallano, the purchase represents a “win-win-win”—a “win” each for Family House, its regional healthcare partners, and the region.

“This is a big win for Family House in that we are able to consolidate operations under one roof,” Vallano said. “The second win is that as an essential partner to all Pittsburgh healthcare systems, this location remains within close proximity to our region's world-class hospitals with which we have partnered for nearly 40 years.

“And, finally, we believe that the region is also a big winner since Family House will take over an existing structure, and retrofit it to serve as the home for Family House long into the future.”

For more information about Family House, visit the website at www.familyhouse.org.

About Family House

Family House, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization that provides a special “home away from home” for patients and their families who are in Pittsburgh seeking medical treatment. Governed by a community Board of Directors, Family House offers convenient, affordable housing at three locations in Pittsburgh's Oakland and Shadyside neighborhoods. Family House's home-like environment serves to reduce the emotional and financial stress for people facing a medical crisis in a city where they may be strangers. To learn more about the organization and how to get involved go to www.familyhouse.org.

###