

'I didn't know where I was going to stay'

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"I packed before I left Escanaba. I knew I was going to be here," said Cherie, but she just didn't know where. By early evening, "I didn't know where I was going to stay. I was all by myself," said Cherie. That's when a nurse named Jill told her about the Altrusa House. Cherie made the call.

"I asked if there was an opening for me to stay and she (Mary Pat Cumps, volunteer coordinator) said 'yes.' I was relieved right away. 'I said thank you, Jesus.' I was praising the Lord," recalled Cherie. By 8 p.m. Cherie had arrived at the Altrusa House. "I was stunned at how beautiful it was," remembering, "I felt just like I was at home... It was a mansion to me that night." ❀

Many thanks to the NWTC Leadership Development Program led by instructor Andrew Clark. Students get out in the community to make a difference, and since 2010 have raised over \$7,000 for the Altrusa House!

Faithful Volunteer

For years Jim Lawniczak has been volunteering at the Altrusa House once a week and does the important "odd jobs" that need to be done around any house -- like changing the outdoor light bulbs. We could not run the Altrusa House without our faithful volunteers. If you'd like to know more about how you or your organization can volunteer with the Altrusa House please call (920) 884-6677. You'll feel good about making a real difference for our guests who are always so appreciative of the Altrusa House during their time of need. (Photo by Barb Moore) ❀



The "Camera Corner Volunteers" all work together at Camera Corner Connecting Point in downtown Green Bay. It's a busy work environment, serving individual and business clients, yet it's important to them to make time to volunteer. Pictured are (left to right) Kristen Tlachac, Lena Slusarek, Tammy Deppe and Altrusa House Volunteer Coordinator Mary Pat Cumps. Tammy Deppe is pictured with her daughter Addison, 9, who volunteers with her mom. (Photos by Barb Moore)



Camera Corner volunteers are picture-perfect

By Nancy Barthel
Green Bay Altrusan

It was two years ago that Lena Slusarek started volunteering at the Altrusa House. She is vice president of procurement/purchasing and warehouse and vendor relations at Camera Corner Connecting Point in Green Bay. "I absolutely fell in love with the place ... I fell in love with what it was about," she said.

A year ago coworkers Kristen Tlachac, service dispatch supervisor in the computer service department, and Tammy Deppe, internal support and renewals manager, joined her.

Lena, Kristen and Tammy all help on weekends -- a time when volunteers are needed most. They were trained by Mary Pat Cumps, volunteer coordinator. The most important part of their shift is providing a listening ear to guests.

All are active volunteers in other areas of their life as well, but wanted to make time for the Altrusa House. As Tammy said, "It's just what we do." She likes to bring along one of her kids and often it's her daughter Addison, age 9. "It's time for us," she said, adding how important it is to involve children in volunteering.

All have met wonderful people at the Altrusa House, said Kristen. "You just realize how important it is to people," she said. Guests are always grateful for the homey atmosphere, said Lena, adding that as a volunteer, guests make a difference in your life, too. "You are receiving and giving at the same time," said Lena. ❀



The McCaslin Lioness Club of Lakewood made a donation of important household items to the Altrusa House earlier this year. Pictured with House Manager Cheri Corcoran is Lioness Linda Vanden Langenberg along with her husband John. Many thanks!

Congratulations to Cheri Corcoran!

House Manager Cheri Corcoran is celebrating her 15th anniversary with the Altrusa House. Originally hired to be the assistant to the house manager, when that person left within a very short time of her hiring, Cheri was offered the position and accepted.

"I love working with people," said Cheri, who has a bachelor's degree in psychology. "I love helping people. That's my passion. Every day is different here." Some days are like a rollercoaster, she said, and you need to come each day with compassion and understanding for what guests are going through.

Guests come to Green Bay often unexpectedly and are dealing with serious crises. It's her role and the role of her staff and volunteers to provide guests with a home-like atmosphere they can return to each day. "You need to know how to handle it emotionally," said Cheri. Most guests have a long road ahead of them. "We laugh with them, we cry with them," she said, and in the end staff and volunteers make a difference. ❀

Bellin Health makes \$25,000 annual commitment to Altrusa House

By Kelly McBride Moore
Communications Specialist
Market Development
Bellin Health

Bellin Health has announced it will contribute \$25,000 annually toward Altrusa House, enhancing its commitment to this critical home-away-from-home for patients and families of Green Bay's hospitals.

The 12-bed facility at 1116 E. Mason St. sits on Bellin-owned land just blocks from Bellin Hospital. The health system has long donated parking and hospital goods, as well as security and transportation services, to assist in the running of the house. Still, there was a desire to do more.

"Altrusa House provides such an invaluable service to patients and families, often during some of the most difficult times they face," said George Kerwin, Bellin Health President and CEO. "The facility does an amazing job operating on a lean budget, but we felt we really needed to step up and do more to help."

The \$25,000 will be distributed each October, beginning in 2017. The funds will be used toward operational costs for the facility, which during the 2016-17 fiscal year provided 3,554 nights of lodging to guests from 15 states. The average length of stay was six days, but some people have stayed at the facility for weeks or even months.

"The numbers speak for themselves. The work Altrusa House does to assist patients and families is nothing short of phenomenal," said Tracy VandeLoo, Bellin Health team leader for case management. "We know many of these individuals have financial need, and would be out of options if they had to pay for a hotel. Plus, lodging can be hard to come by — particularly during Packers season — and these individuals and families have to have a safe, comfortable place to stay."

Bellin looks forward to continuing its relationship with Altrusa House, which has become a critical part of the services the health system offers to patients and families.

"By removing the stress of lodging for families, Altrusa House allows them to contribute to the healing process by focusing on being there for their loved ones," Kerwin said. "We hope this contribution helps the facility thrive for years to come."

Altrusa House future is bright, uses donations wisely

By Nancy Friebe, Green Bay Altrusan, treasurer of the Altrusa International Foundation of Green Bay, WI, Inc.

This past year we made a huge difference to 591 guests who spent 3,554 nights at the Altrusa House. By providing safe and secure low-cost temporary lodging, we eliminated a major financial and emotional burden for them.

The operating cost budget for the past fiscal year ended May 31, 2017, was \$124,365. Our house is now 16 years old so we have experienced a number of repair and maintenance issues. We now have a brand new air-conditioning system and computer system. I am thrilled to report the actual operating costs were only \$119,767. To end the fiscal year with a positive balance emphasizes how fiscally responsible we have been.

The Annual Altrusa House Golf Outing in June and the Annual Newsletter-Phantom Ball in October are our major fundraisers, raising 23% and 22%, respectively, of our actual operating expenses. The Altrusa House has 24/7 coverage, accomplishing this with only three paid employees and volunteers who donate thousands of hours each year. We are also grateful for the following grants: Evenor Fund, \$7,000; Green Bay Packer Foundation, \$5,000; Newman's Own Foundation, \$5,000; and Nicolet National Bank, \$500.

We are always looking for ways to ensure continued success for the Altrusa House. With that in mind, we are researching establishment of an Altrusa House Advisory Board. We all feel that the future is bright for the Altrusa House.



George Kerwin
Bellin Health
President and CEO

HSHS is there for the Altrusa House year-round

By Angela Deja
Public Relations Coordinator
at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital

It all started as an idea from a social worker at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital in the late 1980's – to create a safe, comfortable place to stay for loved ones with a family member in the hospital. With an invitation from the hospital, the Green Bay Altrusa Club took on the project of overseeing a three-bedroom one-bathroom hospital-owned home. Thus the first Altrusa House opened on Porlier Street in Green Bay in 1989.

With the need for more room, the club raised money and opened at its current location, 1116 East Mason Street in 2001.

Sixteen years later, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital continues to show its support for the Altrusa House through various in-kind services. Each year, graphic designer Val Peeters at the HSHS-Eastern Wisconsin Division Print Shop designs the Altrusa House's annual newsletter. The newsletter is a vital communication tool for Altrusa House to create more public awareness about the organization and gain more support. Other related projects are printed at the print shop as well under the direction of Barry Smetana, print shop facilitator.

In 2016, the hospital's marketing department also produced three videos for Altrusa House, which were used to demonstrate the positive impact Altrusa House has on the community. HSHS St. Vincent Hospital also helps ensure Altrusa House guests have clean bedding and towels throughout their stay by covering the cost of these laundering expenses.

HSHS St. Vincent Hospital also supports the Altrusa House by sponsoring its fundraising events, including the annual Altrusa House golf outing.

"HSHS St. Vincent Hospital is proud to be a long-time supporter of the Altrusa House," said Tom Bayer, Senior Vice President of Strategic and Regional Development at HSHS-Eastern Wisconsin Division. "We see firsthand how their services benefit our patients and their families, and we are happy to support the Altrusa House in any way we can."



Val Peeters, graphic designer at the HSHS-Eastern Wisconsin Division Print Shop, designs the Altrusa House newsletter each year.

Thanks to Walgreens!

Many thanks to Walgreens for its generous quarterly donations of supplies to the Altrusa House. Our connection was the result of a guest whose son works in their corporate office. As you can see, so many people make a difference to our guests!