



September 2014

House Talk

The official newsletter of the Kiwanis Family House

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Kiwanis Family House Tells Our Story At District Convention!

Kiwanis Family House (KFH) representatives, including Executive Director Dan Germain, Board President George MacMurphey, Board Secretary Rita Germain, Board Member Gary Christensen, and Past Board President Bill Hooper and his wife, Gale, attended the 94th Annual Cal-Nev-Ha Kiwanis District Convention on August 14th through 16th in beautiful San Diego, California. We were pleased to staff the *Kiwanis Family House* and *On to Sacramento* booths in the Exhibit Hall, where we spoke with hundreds of Kiwanians about the work of the Kiwanis Family House, accepted donations of Wish List items, scheduled future meeting presentations, handed out information about the city of Sacramento and next year's District Convention, and signed up three new Sponsoring Kiwanis Clubs for the House.

Each year, Kiwanis Family House attends Mid-Year Conferences, District Conventions, and even International Conventions, to enlighten Kiwanians about the great work being done at the Kiwanis Family House to help families who come to us from their communities. This year, we told the story of Andrew, a recent guest from San Diego County who stayed with us for five weeks following a kidney transplant at UC Davis Medical Center. Because of strict post-surgery restrictions on his activities and diet, Andrew had needs that could not be met at a typical hotel. So, the Kiwanis Family House became a lifeline for Andrew and his family, whose home was hundreds of miles away. Our "local" Sacramento project is in fact not local, as our guest families have come to us from every state in the U.S. and from 21 foreign countries over the past 30 years.

Our presence at Kiwanis conventions ensures that new Kiwanians and those who do not regularly attend District events hear our success story. And it works—after each convention, we make numerous new connections which lead us to booking presentations at clubs and Division Council Meetings, and those visits often lead us to signing up

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*Dan, Rita, and Gary
at the Kiwanis Family
House Booth in San
Diego*

District Convention *(continued from Page 1)*

new Sponsor Clubs and Friends of the Kiwanis Family House (a program in which an individual makes an annual pledge to KFH). In fact, this year we didn't even need to wait until after the convention—we were fortunate to be the program at the Grantville-Allied Gardens Kiwanis Club in San Diego on Thursday, where they signed up as KFH's 90th Sponsor Club. Back at the convention, two other clubs, Campbell and Healdsburg, did the same, and we left the convention with 92 Sponsor Clubs in total!

Our Kiwanis Family House is a story that makes an impact because of the number of lives we touch every day, and it speaks to the Kiwanis heart in all of us. If you would like to see and hear more, please view our guest stories on our YouTube Channel, *Kiwanis Family House*, or go to our website, www.kiwanisfamilyhouse.org. And, to book a Kiwanis Family House program for your club, Division, or other organization, contact our Executive Director, Dan Germain, at (916) 736-0116 or dgermain@kiwanisfamilyhouse.org. We can even provide remote programs for those clubs not within easy driving distance.

And be sure to look for us at the 2015 Mid-Year Conferences in Riverside and Monterey next February, then again in Sacramento for the District Convention August 13-15, 2015!

Executive Director's Column | Dan Germain

We were thrilled to add three Kiwanis clubs to the list of those in the California-Nevada-Hawaii District which are official Sponsors of the Kiwanis Family House – Healdsburg Kiwanis in Sonoma County, Campbell Kiwanis in Santa Clara County, and Grantville-Allied Gardens Kiwanis in San Diego County. We now have 92 Sponsor Clubs. That is nearly one of every five clubs in the District!

Healdsburg's financial support will help us provide services to low-income families, including the ten or so guest families we see each year from Sonoma County. Likewise, Campbell's support will help us serve the one-dozen Santa Clara County families which lodge with us annually.

Grantville-Allied Gardens stepped up immediately after learning that 45 families from San Diego County have been guests at the Kiwanis Family House in the past four years. Collectively, those families required 141 guest nights. Kidney transplant patient Andrew Sui, who recently housed at the Kiwanis facility for five weeks, was among them.

Hear me loud and clear. By the August 2015 District Convention in Sacramento, we will have at least 100 Sponsor Clubs! I want to reach 120 within three years.

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Comments? Questions?

*Email the editor at
ritamgermain@gmail.com*

*KFH at the Grantville-
Allied Gardens
Kiwanis Club Meeting*



Executive Director's Column *(continued from Page 2)*

Right now, all clubs are crafting their new budgets for the service year that begins in just a few weeks. If you are already a KFH champion, help me encourage clubs in your division which are not yet sponsors of the Kiwanis Family House to join our great team.

- Ask them to provide a one-time sponsorship fee of \$500. This commitment can be approved by the club's Board of Directors.
- Advise them that KFH sponsorship includes continued support in the form of \$100 in annual dues and one additional donation during each year (suggested target \$1,000), possibly the proceeds from a special fundraising project. Because this commits the club to future-year expenditures, a majority vote of the club's membership is required.

Why is it so important to grow the ranks of our Sponsor Clubs? We provide a place of respite for families dealing with medical crisis, hosting nearly 2,000 families each year from every state in the United States and, periodically, from foreign countries. We do so with an annual operating budget under \$500,000. Less than 20 percent of our revenue comes from Sponsor Clubs.

To the extent that we can increase Sponsor Club support, we can ease the anxiety and effort demanded by other income categories – competitive grants, labor-intensive fundraising events, donations from loyal sponsoring individuals and, most importantly, from the low-income families who come through our doors. If your club is not already a KFH Sponsor, please consider joining Healdsburg, Campbell, Grantville-Allied Gardens, and the other 89 Sponsor Clubs throughout the District. Hear the voices of those we serve.

"For the first time in my life, I feel that I have somebody to walk with me. Kiwanis is my rock right now. This place has taken a lot of pressure off me and I can relax a little bit."

"I have been angry, but this is another world where everybody listens and cares. This place makes you want to care for them."

"Without a facility like this, I probably would have slept in my van with my one-year-old. It would have been an even harder struggle."



Sponsorship check received from Grantville-Allied Gardens Kiwanis



President's Message | George MacMurphey

*Kiwanis Family House
Board President
George MacMurphey*



Our Kiwanis Family House was well represented at the Cal-Nev-Ha District Convention in San Diego last month. Rita and Dan Germain, Gary Christensen, Past Board President Bill Hooper and his wife, Gale, and I, as well as First Gentleman John Brummer, all were in attendance. Rita, Dan and Gary staffed the KFH booth in the exhibit hall (with a little help from me.) Bill, Gale and I were at the "On To Sacramento" booth promoting next year's convention here in Sacramento. John was everywhere. All of us were telling the story of the KFH at every opportunity.

I would say that a majority of convention goers I talked to were familiar with the House, some seeming to know all about it, and all were eager to hear more. We have done a good job of informing our fellow Kiwanians throughout the District over the years.

I attended the Interfaith Breakfast on Saturday morning. The District Chairperson of the Human and Spiritual Values Committee led off by stating that while many (probably a majority of) clubs no longer have an active Human and Spiritual Values Committee, in her opinion the entire thrust of Kiwanis works toward serving Human and Spiritual values. In other words, we could consider ourselves one large Human and Spiritual Values Committee. As she was speaking the thought flashed through my mind that she was accurately describing the Kiwanis Family House. We fit completely into that description of promoting, supporting, enhancing, and improving Human and Spiritual Values in everything we do at the House. It probably has never been consciously stated exactly like this, but it sure fits.

The keynote speaker at the breakfast was Past Governor Gary Jander. He did a magnificent job of describing the spiritual aspect of Kiwanis in a short and well-crafted message. He was able to convey what he believed without preaching or telling anyone else what to believe and brought out the commonality in all religions and in the psyche of individuals who did not consider themselves "religious" at all. In his conclusion he said, in effect, that a common theme in all religions is Love, and I thought – Wow – does that ever apply to all of us involved with the Family House. The very nature of our work is based on Love, probably rarely ever expressed or even thought about as such; and don't we receive abundant Love in return? Everyday, the expression of thanks and appreciation from our guests comes through in the most loving ways imaginable.

A short breakfast meeting with no mention of or direct connection to the Family House brought forth many pleasurable thoughts regarding what we do. We can be proud of what we have done and what we continue to do, serving the families of the seriously ill. It is, in my mind, not much of a stretch to say that our work absolutely deals with Human and Spiritual Values in a multitude of ways.

I say Thank You so much to all who are involved with the Kiwanis Family House in any way.

Guest Corner | Stefanie's Story

Flash back to August 2013. Stefani is at a doctor's appointment with her oncologist in Watsonville, CA. He tells her "Congratulations, as of now, you are cancer-free." Imagine the joy she is feeling. She has beaten her cancer into submission. It has cried "Uncle, I give up."

Now flash forward to August 2014. Stefani receives a phone call from one of her children. It is 24 year old John. John says "Mom, I'm in the hospital in Sacramento. The Urgent Care doctor wrote a note and sent me to UC Davis Medical Center Emergency Room and they have admitted me. I have leukemia."

Stefani feels the pain any mother feels when she hears something has happened to one of her children. She feels the frustration of not being able to protect him from this hurt. It is not something that a mom can kiss and make better. She wants to come to Sacramento to support her son and find out more about what is going on. However, due to her own cancer, she has suffered financial setbacks. It is expensive to be treated for any illness and cancer is a particularly expensive one. She hasn't been able to work during her illness and is just now starting to get back on her feet. All of this and more flashes through her mind as she races to Sacramento to be with her son.

Her first instinct as a mother is to want to take him home to where she was successfully treated but her son is an adult and that is not her decision to make. She doesn't have the authority to take him from the hospital. Now she wonders, "Where am I going to stay?" The social worker at the hospital has given her a referral to Kiwanis Family House.

When she is informed that the standard rate for a stay is \$50 per night, Stefani tells Bonnie, who is working at the Front Desk that day, that she cannot afford to pay that much and she doesn't know how long she will be here. Bonnie says "That's okay. You can talk to our Operations Manager, Charlie and he will work with you on the rate."

The next thing Stefani knows is that she is in Charlie's office, telling her story and starting to cry. She says she wants to take John home. Charlie assures her that her son is receiving some of the best medical treatment available in the United States and that he is in a good place. "The doctors will figure out what is wrong with John and how to treat him for his cancer."

Charlie then tells her that he and the staff want her to concentrate her energies on helping support John through this ordeal and that, because of generous donors to the KFH Sponsor a Family program, her bill will be covered and she will not have to pay anything for her stay. Stefani starts to cry harder, but now the tears aren't from frustration and worry, they are from the sense of relief she feels that at least this burden has been removed from her shoulders.



*Stefani at Kiwanis
Family House in
August*

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Guest Corner *(continued from page 5)*

A few days later, Stefani is smiling. Charlie asked her what caused the change and Stefani says, "You were right. They figured out the type of cancer that John has and he is responding well to treatment. I am so glad that I wasn't selfish enough to take him home that first night. That was for me and not for him. He is in the right place and getting the right treatment. Thank you for what you do here. This place is truly a blessing. "

Spotlight on Service | Charlie Bussey



*KFH Employee
Nathan Castillo*

Nathan is a 20 year old student studying to be a court reporter. He lives with his family in Elk Grove, where his mother has her own housekeeping business. Nathan has been in the housekeeping business since 2008 but started working as a housekeeper at Kiwanis Family House in January 2013, primarily evenings and weekends.

After a while, Nathan professed a desire to learn the Front Desk reception area. This would give him an opportunity for additional hours. We encourage all of our associates to learn all of the different jobs at Kiwanis Family House as this affords us maximum flexibility and helps us to provide a quality experience for our guests. He quickly learned how to use our reservation software system and his bilingual abilities have been invaluable when he is on duty. KFH almost always has one or more guests whose primary language is Spanish.

Nathan is a hard worker who is always looking for something to do around KFH. When he finishes his regular duties, he helps others finish theirs.

A few things about Nathan:

What is your favorite thing about working here? My favorite part about working here is being able to provide a service to individuals or families that are going through a tough time. If they have a clean room and a bed to sleep on, it's one less thing for them to worry about.

What is your least favorite thing about working here? I'd say my least favorite part of working here is getting the occasional room that looks like a disaster zone, although those are VERY rare.

Why do you want to be a court reporter? What is it that drew you to that profession? I want to be a court reporter for the flexibility it provides. I wouldn't have to work 5 days a week (unless I want to) so I'd have time for the volunteer work I currently do for my congregation. The flexibility that it offers is what drew me to it.

What is your quest? My quest is to travel to and hike all the national parks in California and the Pacific Northwest.

What is your favorite color? Orange and black baby!

What is the terminal velocity of an unladen swallow? It depends on whether you are talking about an African or European swallow.

Clubs: Please Remember KFH in Your Budgets

All Kiwanis clubs, including those which are official sponsors of the Kiwanis Family House, should be in the process of the drafting their annual budgets for the 2014-15 administrative year, which starts on October 1. We will be mailing annual dues reminders to all of our sponsoring clubs about the time new club leaders assume office. We ask that all clubs send us their \$100 dues checks in a timely manner – within the first quarter of the new administrative year.

As important as the annual dues are to us, our ability to continue serving families dealing with medical crisis is hugely dependent on budgeted support beyond the dues. Understanding that we compete with numerous other community needs for your financial support, we request that every sponsor club build in a donation of \$1,000 to the Kiwanis Family House. We know that not all clubs can allocate that amount. But, again, any additional donation beyond the annual dues is vital to us. More importantly, your support is vital to the 150 families we host every month. Please remember us as you complete your budget work in the next couple of months.



Yountville Kiwanis presents their annual donation to KFH

How YOU Can Make A Difference | Rita Germain

Donors and volunteers make all the difference in our ability to care for our guest families during times of medical crisis. Without these two key groups, our Kiwanis Family House could not continue to fulfill its mission of providing temporary housing and support to ill and injured patients being treated at UC Davis Medical Center and Shriners Hospitals of Northern California. So, beginning this month, we will use this column to remind you of ways YOU can make a difference by helping the families who stay in our Kiwanis Family House.

The **Bright Award** was named for the founders of the Kiwanis Family House, Vern and Leona Bright. More than 30 years ago, these two, along with members of Vern's Kiwanis club, took the spark of an idea and turned it into a reality that is stronger than ever today. The Bright Award was established to recognize Kiwanians and others who have made a special contribution, either to the Kiwanis Family House or to their community at large. For a \$1,000 contribution, an engraved medal and pin bearing the likenesses of Vern and Leona Bright may be presented by a club, family, or individual to a deserving person.



The Bright Award, named for KFH founders Vern and Leona Bright

With the end of the Kiwanis year rapidly approaching, now is the perfect time to make a donation to the Kiwanis Family House through the purchase of a Bright Award to a retiring Club President, Lt. Governor, District Trustee, or other Distinguished Kiwanian, just as the Cal-Nev-Ha District presented Bright Awards this August to our outgoing District Governor, Rae Whitby-Brummer, and her husband, First Gentleman John Brummer.

To purchase a Bright Award, contact Executive Director Dan Germain at (916) 736-0116 or dgermain@kiwanisfamilyhouse.org.

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How YOU Can Make A Difference *(continued from page 7)*

Volunteer opportunities are always available, and Operations Manager Charlie Bussey coordinates these efforts for individuals, clubs, and outside groups. To learn more, or to schedule a time to volunteer, contact Charlie at (916) 736-0116 or cbussey@kiwanisfamilyhouse.org.

In addition, large K-Family workdays are scheduled at least two times a year, typically in April during Kiwanis One Day, and in early September. These are great opportunities for clubs to work side-by-side with their sponsored youth, friends, family members, and membership prospects. Check our website and Facebook page for upcoming events.

Ask Alan | Alan Penn

What is the role of the Immediate Past President, and what words of guidance would you offer?

Hello friends of the Kiwanis Family House. When I was President of Kiwanis International in 2011-12 I provide articles for the House newsletter. The column was called "Ask Alan". It has been a couple of years since then and I missed this opportunity.

I am back to provide a few pearls of wisdom on specific Kiwanis topics.

The topic for this article is "What is the role of the Immediate Past President, and what words of guidance would you offer?"



*Past Kiwanis
International
President Alan Penn*

One of the strengths of our organization is the structure we have in place within our clubs, districts, and international for our leadership. Once an individual has served as a club president, a district governor, or international president they are asked to continue their leadership as an immediate past officer.

Their role is to provide advice and counsel to the current officer team. They use their years of prior leadership experience as a basis for this advice. This structure helps clubs, districts, and international avoid the pitfalls that happen in so many organizations when leadership upon completing their term is shown the door and not asked for any advice.

Immediate past officers have a wealth of experience and information that they all want to share.

Past officers provide a pool of advisors that can help guide current leadership. However, for the health of the current officers the key is to follow this rule of thumb, "give advice when asked".

Aside from providing advice and counsel a past Kiwanis president should help the local club grow. This is vital to help meet the service needs of our clubs.

Past officers can help recruit former SLP members, recently retired workers, those 70 and 80 year olds who want to serve, and other underrepresented groups. Kiwanis needs to grow and who better to help with this effort than an immediate past president.

Help us as we enter our next century of service by showing the way to grow our clubs.

Who We Are



Dan Germain,
Executive Director
dgermain@kiwanisfamilyhouse.org



Charlie Bussey,
Operations Manager
cbussey@kiwanisfamilyhouse.org

Our Board of Directors



George MacMurphey, President
East Sacramento Kiwanis
georgemac1@comcast.net



James "Jim" Legler,
Vice President
Galt Kiwanis
ajrlegler@msn.com



Rita Germain, Secretary
Greater Sacramento Kiwanis
ritangermain@gmail.com



Matthew J. Wehner, Treasurer
Davis Kiwanis
mwehner@carbahalcpa.com



Mathew Barkley, Director
PepsiCo
mathew.barkley@pepsico.com



Gary Christensen, Director
East Sacramento Kiwanis
gjcsmc@aol.com



Chris Creelman, Director
Sacramento Suburban Kiwanis
ccreelman@msimail.com



William "Rick" Dwyer, Director
Sacramento Suburban Kiwanis
rick@prop-con.com



Bob Isaacs, Director
Greater Sacramento Kiwanis
kiwanisb@surewest.net



Duane Paul, Director
Citrus Heights Kiwanis
duanepaul@comcast.net



Daniel Saulisberry, Director
East Sacramento Kiwanis
dsaulisberry@thebrickyard.com

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide temporary housing and support to families of seriously ill or injured children and adults being treated at UC Davis Medical Center and Shriners Hospitals of Northern California.

Our Vision

Our Vision is to continually provide convenient, restful, secure, and low cost accommodations for the families of patients being treated at the UCD Medical Center or at Shriners Hospital.

Our Values

Our Values are guided by the KIWANIS Service Motto: "Serving the Children of the World".

The KIWANIS FAMILY HOUSE encourages the following core values:

- o A sense of community
- o Dedication to service
- o Respect for families
- o Augmentation of services provided by other organizations
- o Collaboration with community partners
- o Foster awareness for those in need
- o Generosity

Ways to Help

You can help the Kiwanis Family House by donating or participating in the following programs:

- o Sponsor A Family
- o Become a Friend of the Kiwanis Family House
- o Buy a Brick
- o Purchase a Bright Award
- o Donate a Vehicle
- o Participate in the SaveMart S.H.A.R.E.S. Card Program
- o Donate Wish List Items
- o Become a Sponsor Club
- o Sponsor a Room
- o Volunteer at the Kiwanis Family House
- o And much more!

For information on these opportunities, go to www.kiwanisfamilyhouse.org/how-you-can-help

Kiwanis Family House is a 501(c)3 charitable corporation.



Visit www.kiwanisfamilyhouse.org