



August 2014

House Talk

The official newsletter of the Kiwanis Family House

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Jack Seigal accepting his Shining Star Award at this year's Evening with the Stars of the Kiwanis Family House Celebration

***"Not everything that counts can be counted.
And not everything that can be counted, counts."*** —
Albert Einstein

Jack Seigal both counts and can be counted. There is just one of him and he is ours. He recently retired as the editor of the House Talk after producing 13 straight years of monthly editions, never missing one. So many followers and supporters across the country have come to know the Kiwanis Family House because of Jack's commitment to our mission and passion for our story. At Jack's hand, the House Talk has built relationships and maintained regular contact with stakeholders. It has given the Kiwanis Family House the opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of what we do and why we do it.

Jack Seigal will always be a shining star. He is a volunteer of the highest order.

"Volunteering means working with others to make a meaningful contribution to a better community. This is the intrinsic value of volunteering. It is not about money. And volunteering should not be measured that way. How can we put a monetary value on ordinary people doing extraordinary things?" (Jean Ann Kochevar,, Human Resources Specialist with the Western Colorado Human Resources Association).

As his record of community service demonstrates, Jack is an ordinary person who does extraordinary things. In this first post-Seigal edition of the House Talk, we honor our friend and inspiration.

Editor's Message – Welcome to the New House Talk!

My name is Rita Germain, and I am your Board Secretary and, as I've been described, a "Jill of all Trades". To that end, I have added one more job title to the ever-growing list: House Talk Editor. Yes, as you read above, our erstwhile editor, Jack Seigal, has retired, and for now, I will do my best to fill the void.

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Editor's Message *(continued from Page 1)*

No, this won't be the same House Talk you've seen in the past—that was Jack's baby, and should always remain so. Instead, this will be the 2014 version of House Talk—featuring the most current news and stories, in a clean, shortened, easy-to-read format. After sending out your Kiwanis Family House emails and maintaining the Kiwanis Family House website for the past several months, I see the value in keeping each issue simple and to the point.

To that end, I hope that you enjoy this first edition of the "new" House Talk. But, I don't want to assume anything, so please, feel free to let me know what you like, what you don't like, or what you would like to see in the future. Just email me at ritamgermain@gmail.com. Your opinion does count—after all, this is OUR House, and OUR newsletter!

Email the editor at
ritamgermain@gmail.com

Executive Director's Column | Dan Germain

Sadly, we did not have the opportunity to honor Harry Rowe at our recent 30th anniversary celebration. I regret the missed opportunity.

When you list past Cal-Nev-Ha District Governors who have been ardent supporters of the Kiwanis Family House, you have to place Harry at the top of the list. He and KFH Founder Vern Bright served as Lt. Governors together in 1970-71 and began an enduring friendship. When Harry was elected District Governor in 1982-83, Vern and Leona Bright were in full campaign to build what we now regard as one of the best service programs that Kiwanis has ever built – the Kiwanis Family House. Harry Rowe was an immediate supporter and is still remembered as part of the original founding group.

In a 2003 interview with the House Talk, Harry recalled, "Vern and I led the way. We had no funds for the project in the 1982-83 (District) budget as it came up after the budget had been approved and almost totally spent. We were in support of the Family House – both the district board and myself personally. I can't recall whether my board made a donation, but I know I did, as my name was on a donor's board."

"If I was governor now," Harry went on to say in the 2003 interview, "I would say the statistics speak for themselves. What started out as a Sacramento-Northern California area project, now serves the entire district and beyond. I am particularly proud that Kiwanis is working with my alma mater, the University of California, in service to mankind."

Since Harry's recent passing, I have exchanged several messages with Mary Lou Rowe. In one email, Mary Lou reminded me that, "He was so interested in the establishment, progress and growth of the Kiwanis Family House. In fact, he stated that he did not want flowers, but instead send a donation to the Kiwanis Family House. The Family House was so important to him."

*Late Past Cal-Nev-Ha
Governor Harry Rowe*



President's Message | George MacMurphey

Some 30 plus years ago, Kiwanians gathered at a vacant plot of land east of the UCD Medical Center and cobbled together surplus construction trailers into the first Kiwanis Family House. This fulfilled a dream of providing housing for families of seriously ill children, so that parents and family members could be with them constantly to provide comfort and encourage healing during their hospitalization.

In July 1984, the first guest family checked into the 7-bedroom Kiwanis Family House. Those original 7 rooms grew to 14 at that site a few years later, and in 2006, we opened our current 32-bedroom facility. This summer, we celebrated our 30th anniversary of providing a home-away-from-home to thousands of patient families.

I was around during the construction of the original facility, a member of the East Sacramento-Midtown Kiwanis Club, doing what I could to help. I wish I could say that I worked diligently, donated generously, and put in many volunteer hours during that time, but in fact I was only a modest occasional participant. My memories of that time are of helping (mostly watching) Norm Koyama disking and grading the property with his tractor, Ted Robinson and his crew hanging sheet rock, and Vern Bright everywhere planning, supervising, and urging on the volunteers.

The point is: at various times in our lives we are able to contribute in different ways and at different levels, giving more or less of our time, talent, and treasure as circumstances allow.

I never dreamed as the House was taking shape that I would ever be President of the Board of Directors. Having retired 2 (or 3) times from my primary career, I have been able to give more time to Kiwanis and particularly to the Kiwanis Family House the past few years. So here I am – ready and willing to lead us into our 31st year.

I look forward to a successful year ahead. We are so blessed to have such excellent leadership in management with Dan Germain as Executive Director and Charley Bussey as Operations Manager. Our Board is made up of dedicated members of the highest integrity, determined to make carefully considered and wise decisions as we oversee the many aspects of the operation. Financially, we are sound, with the Board acting as diligent stewards of our finances.

We have a fine hardworking staff, all determined to make the time that our guests reside with us the most comfortable and comforting time possible. We have so many Kiwanians and friends throughout the district and throughout the country, some even beyond our borders, giving of their time, talent, and treasure as generously as their circumstances allow.

The board members, management and staff are all so thankful for every gift of the 3Ts – Time, Talent, and Treasures – large and small, and look forward to continued support. Thanks to ALL as we begin our 31st year, and look forward to many more years of serving the many families dealing with medical crisis who are so appreciative of our ability to help.

It is my privilege and honor to humbly serve as President of our Kiwanis Family House Board of Directors as we move into our bright future. Thank you for allowing me to serve.



*KFH Board President
George
MacMurphey*

Guest Corner | Andrew's Story

"It's Like Finding a Life Raft in the Middle of the Ocean"

– Ling Sui

Andrew stands in front of the Kiwanis Family House



Andrew Sui is a civil engineer living in San Diego, CA. His father Ling Sui is an aeronautical engineer working for Northrup Grumman in Southern California. Andrew has been on kidney dialysis transplant list for the last 4.5 years waiting for an organ donor with a kidney that was a good match for him.

On Sunday, June 22, Andrew received a call from UC Davis Medical Center that was potentially life-changing. When he answered the phone, he was informed there was a kidney available here in Sacramento. He was number two on the waiting list to receive it. He was instructed to come up (to Sacramento). On Monday June 23, the hospital called again and told Andrew that the donor ahead of him had been eliminated from consideration to receive the kidney due to negative results on a blood antigen test.

Andrew hung up the phone and excitedly called his father to tell him it was time to go. Ling went home, threw some clothes and sundries in a suitcase and went to get Andrew. They arrived in Sacramento later that night, and Andrew was admitted to the hospital upon arrival. The transplant surgery took place the following Tuesday morning.

Ling spent some of his time researching where they might stay both during and after the surgery. He had many criteria that needed to be filled. It had to be close to the hospital and it had to be affordable. There was one crucial additional criterion. One of Andrew's post-surgery restrictions was that he was not to eat out at any restaurant and that he or Ling had to prepare any cooked food that Andrew ate. Ling's research eliminated places he felt were too expensive, spending \$130+ per night was not going to be sustainable for a 41 night stay.

Ling's options were dwindling fast. He had to find a place before Andrew was discharged. Every place that seemed to meet the criteria was too far from the hospital. Finally, one of the social workers told Ling about Kiwanis Family House. Ling ticked off each of the criteria on his list, "Is it close by? Check. Is it affordable? Check. Can we cook for ourselves? Check." Ling came to KFH, checked in and has said that "It's like finding a life raft in the middle of the ocean."

Ling and Andrew have been impressed with the "super friendliness" (their words) of the staff and they believe that Kiwanis Family House is "a great value", (again, their words). They find it hard to believe that this is the only Kiwanis Family House in the world.

Isn't it a great feeling when our guests affirm what we know about Kiwanis Family House?

Guest Update | Hector's Story

Our readers may recall 14-year-old Hector from Baja California, Mexico, who sustained severe spinal injuries in a July 2009 vehicle accident that left him paralyzed from the waist down. Hector and his family have been guests at the Kiwanis Family House multiple times since their initial visit around Easter 2010. This month, we were again pleased to see Hector with his sister Gloria, father Damian, and mother Violeta. On this trip, Hector not only continued his therapy program at Shriners Hospital to build strength and flexibility but also worked with his doctors on a regimen for dealing with nagging infections associated with his immobility.

In July 2009, Damian was driving with his family in the car. He never saw the vehicle that hit him broadside at high speed. Hector and his baby sister Gloria were most critically injured. Doctors told Damian and Violeta they were at risk of losing both of their children.

Miraculously, Gloria completely recovered from her brain injury. Her brother was not as fortunate. Hector's spinal injuries left him paralyzed from the waist down. Following the second of two surgeries in Mexico, the family crossed paths with visiting representatives from Shriners Hospitals. Around Easter of 2010, Hector and his family made their first of five trips to Sacramento, supported by Shriners and charitable airplane pilots. Three surgeries later, Hector's spinal support and wheelchair mobility are improved.

On that initial trip in 2010, they worried about accommodations. They never expected to find the Kiwanis Family House. Damian says the people have always treated them with respect and lots of love for the children. Hector and Gloria always want to come to the Kiwanis Family House. They tell us that it feels like home to them.



Gloria, Violeta, and Hector during a stay at KFH in 2013



Executive Director Dan Germain with Damian, Gloria, and Hector in July 2014

Spotlight on Service | Charlie Bussey

Evonne Crayne has been working at Kiwanis Family House since October of 2007. This is a second job for her, as she is also a 25 year plus employee of the Sacramento Bee. Evonne, a resident of West Sacramento since childhood, started working at KFH in order to help with some of the expenses of a single mom and also help her kids to pay for some of their college costs. She is the mother of two and college is almost behind now, yet she continues to work at Kiwanis Family House. When asked why she continues to work here when her initial reasons no longer exist, she said "It helps pay the bills."



*KFH Employee
Evonne Crayne*

Evonne works at the front desk two nights a week on Tuesday and Thursday after a long day at the Bee. She also works both Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon. She has great interaction with our guests and greets everyone who comes through our doors with a friendly smile.

Her favorite thing about Kiwanis Family House is the guests. She enjoys talking with them and hearing their stories. Evonne has a way of getting people to open up and share some of their hardship and grief. Our guests have said many times how much help that is to them to have an opportunity to talk with someone about what is happening to them and their families.

What does Evonne get out of working at Kiwanis Family House (besides a paycheck)? She explained it this way. "Everybody has a hectic, stressful life and sometimes that can get you down, but when you leave here it is difficult to feel sorry for yourself. This place really provides some perspective on what is important in life. When I leave here I think, 'Wow, I guess I don't have it so bad after all.'"

Trivia about Evonne: She and another one of our long time employees, Terri Ganz, went to high school together at Washington High School in West Sacramento. Her favorite color? All of them.

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.



*Lincoln Kiwanis
presents their annual
donation to KFH*

Upcoming Events

Join us for the following upcoming events:

- Kiwanis Family House Board Meeting** August 5
- Cal-Nev_Ha District Convention** August 14-16
- Swing Fore Kids Golf Tournament** August 25
- K-Family Workday** September 6
- Glow Golf Tournament** October 4

AUGUST 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

August Wish List

The Operations Manager always has a ready Wish List of items that are needed by Kiwanis Family House. These items are usually available at a convenience store or perhaps you might have them in your home. If you feel you can help out with an item, either bring it to Kiwanis Family House or give the Family House a call at 916-736-0116 to arrange a pick-up of the item(s).

SEPTEMBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

AUGUST PRIORITIES

Bottled water, paper towels, printer cartridges (HP85A, HP74, HP75)

GUEST NEEDS

- Powdered Laundry Detergent
- Lysol or comparable toilet bowl cleaner
- Clorox or comparable disinfectant wipes
- Dishwasher detergent
- Liquid hand soap

OTHER NEEDS

- Cash donations targeted to Rent Relief, New "Staff Only" Laundry Room Capital Campaign or to help with the recent unbudgeted expenditure to replace our old and broken phone system.

OCTOBER 2014						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

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