Our Mission
The Mark Preece Family House is a not-for-profit organization that provides temporary, affordable, accessible accommodation in a supportive environment for families of acute care in-patients being treated in a Hamilton area hospital.

You Can Make A Difference
Your organization and special events: We would be delighted to hear if you have a community event and would be interested in supporting the House through your efforts.

In-Kind Donations: Do you have resources or donations that could help House operations?

Cheques may be made payable to: Mark Preece Family House. General donations as well as special tributes and memorial donations will all help sustain House operations.

To donate online go to: www.markpreecehouse.ca

Hospital Family Houses of Ontario Charitable registration # 86700 9615 RR0001

A Not So Welcome Birthday Surprise
Eighteen-year old Michelle Crosby was coming home from her waitress job early in the morning of November 22, 2014 when her life changed in the blink of an eye. She had recently graduated from high school and was waitressing to earn money for a much-anticipated backpacking trip in January, before continuing her education. She was almost to her home in Welland when a car crossed the centre line and hit her car head on.

‘It felt like I was at home. It was my safe haven in my time of need.’

It was her mother Jeannine Weddell’s birthday and for some reason, her dad Craig, decided to wait up for Michelle. It was one of those moments that parents dread – officers walking up to their front door early in the morning to let them know their daughter had been in an accident and they needed to get to the hospital immediately.

Michelle was air lifted from the St. Catharine’s hospital to the Hamilton General. Her injuries included a total of 28 fractures from the neck right down to her heels. An immediate nine-hour surgery at the General followed for Michelle. And although her parents were relieved that the surgery went well, they were not ready to leave her side yet.

Craig noticed a poster for the Mark Preece Family House in the OR waiting room and decided to check it out. The minute they walked through the doors of the House they felt the same comforts of home. According to Jeannine, ‘it felt like I was at home. It was my safe haven in my time of need.’

Michelle’s family had a particular significance for the House. They were the 2,000th family served since the House opened in 2011.

Jeannine and her mother stayed at the House for two weeks while Michelle underwent another surgery at the General to continue repairing her

continued...
A warm, welcome haven for families.

I open this message with a warm spring greeting to all of you. In fact, it was close to the first day of spring when I had the pleasure of welcoming Tara, our new house manager, to the family house team.

I was immediately struck by her engagement and enthusiasm for the House and what we do. I have no doubt she will help make the family experience at the House even more supportive and welcoming than it is already known for.

It is a great reminder that it is our people, our staff and volunteers that make the House the warm, welcoming haven it is for our families even more so than the beautiful building and cozy rooms.

So as the warmth of spring comes, a heartfelt thanks to all of our amazing team of staff and volunteers for making the House the haven it is for our families.

I invite everyone to participate in one of our upcoming events, perhaps the coming golf tournament on June 4, to support the House and say hello to Tara, and thanks to Pearl, Elaine and the rest of the family house team for all that they do to make the house a respite in the storm for all of our families.

Chris Holtved, Chair

Volunteering is at the very core of being a human.

In April every year, not for profit organizations across Canada try to thank people who can’t ever be adequately thanked. By celebrating National Volunteer Week, we hope to acknowledge this amazing segment of the population who give of their time for the betterment of others.

We try to celebrate our volunteers every single day but it’s terrific to have a special place on the calendar to recognize the wonderful contribution these folks make.

At least a third of our volunteers have been with us since ‘the beginning of time’ – when the house opened in April of 2011. And while it’s great to have some long-serving volunteers, it’s also been great to welcome some new folks to the team.

Some who started as volunteers in the beginning have gone on to become staff. Some, who were staff, have become volunteers. Some volunteer for events and then go on and create a new event. Some make critical updates to our website. Some pick up garbage in the parking lot (thank you! thank you!). Some help raise money and some help build buildings.

To our many volunteers and the many roles that they fill, thank you for all you do to help us make a difference to families in need.

Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has ever made it through life without someone else’s help. Heather French Henry.

Pearl Wolfe, Executive Director
It All Started With a Beer  By Maggie Keaveney

Stephen Wetmore, a resident of Binbrook, is an advocate for seniors, how they live their lives and the challenges they face on a daily basis.

He saw an ad one fall for an event called ‘Fall for Beer’ in support of the Mark Preece Family House. The event that year was at the Sarcoa Restaurant on the Hamilton bay.

Stephen had a great time at the event and once he learned more about the House, he decided that he needed to be part of the committee that organizes it. Who knew then that it would be a marriage made in heaven?

Each year, Stephen plays a key role in the development of this event. He finds it gets better each year because they build upon the lessons learned each year to enhance the experience. Stephen visits local businesses and encourages them to donate product or services towards the Fall for Beer’s silent auction.

By day, this proficient fundraiser works in sales at the Burlington Gardens Retirement Community. He sees every day how seniors function and interact with others as they age.

Last Thanksgiving, Stephen and his partner Debbie Bradley brought a chef to the house to prepare Thanksgiving dinner for all guests spending the holiday away from home.

Stephen says the motivation for his efforts at the House is because he enjoys giving back. He’s always eager and willing to help where help is needed.

From what I could get out of Stephen regarding this fall’s Fall for Beer, it will again be on the Hamilton waterfront and he promises that everyone will be amazed. Looking forward to it!

Remarkable and Generous Acts of Service

‘What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are small matters compared to what lies within us.’ – Emerson

This belief in inner strength is what kept Patricia Galaczy balanced during the fall of 2013. Patricia is a self-employed educator living in Victoria B.C. teaching leadership and meditation courses. Her mother, Sandra, living in Burlington, was receiving cancer treatment at St. Joseph’s Hospital. While recovering, Sandra experienced a heart attack which left her in a coma and on life support from September to November.

It was a highly-charged emotional period of time where doctors were uncertain if Sandra would ever come off of life support. Patricia flew to Hamilton and, not knowing the Mark Preece Family House existed, spent several weeks in a Burlington hotel which put a huge dent in her savings.

By Christmas 2013, Patricia’s mother was responding well and was being weaned off of life support. Patricia returned to be with her mother for a couple of weeks while she continued to improve. Her medical team told Patricia about the Mark Preece Family House and Patricia quickly selected the House as her home while in Hamilton.

Unlike the Burlington hotel where Patricia felt isolated and all alone, the House gave her a sense of peace and hope. She was moved by the kindness of other guests who helped her overcome her feeling of having to deal with this crisis all on her own.

Patricia remembers her stay in the House as an oasis of quiet respite filled with caring staff and volunteers who selflessly offered generous acts of service to those guests who found themselves in a period of crisis. Patricia feels the house is truly a community effort and she hopes that the community continues to be involved with keeping this well-kept secret running smoothly and welcoming guests in their time of need for many more years.

Her most memorable memory of her stay is the dinner in the Christmas season when volunteer and board chair Chris Holtved served guests along with family and friends. Even his young daughter served guests. This family of volunteers allowed guests the privilege of enjoying the festive holiday, even for just this short period of time.

Thankfully, Sandra is back home doing well and leading an active and independent life.
Spring Volunteer Social

For our Spring Volunteer Social this year, we decided to treat our volunteers to a cooking class at Maccheroni Cucina Alfresco. The volunteers enjoyed the cooking demonstrations, the recipes and then got to enjoy the finished product. It was our chance to serve them and thank them for all they do for the House, all year round. Thanks to Michael Veri of Maccheroni’s and Chef Carrie Peever for a fun night.

Chef Carrie Peever shares some of the tricks of the trade with volunteers.

Matt Patricelli, Amy Gringhuis, Mindy Tweedle and Stephanie Shuster

Kathie Hibbens and Gord McCurdy

Mary Whitfield and Nadine Eagleson

Walk organizer Jessica Matthews and her daughter Madison.

Natalie Mancini and Tracey Schockaert
Volunteer Owen McCrae writes why he loves volunteering at the House as part of National Volunteer Week.

Mac brains help market the House

We are a group of MBA marketing students from the DeGroote School of Business. We have been fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to work with Mark Preece House and assist the organization with their marketing strategies. The goal of our project is to uncover ways to increase the awareness and involvement of Mark Preece House in the healthcare community, so that Mark Preece House can continue to help families in need during such difficult times. We are really excited to be working with the Mark Preece House team, and are also looking forward to cooking for house guests in the upcoming weeks.

MBA students from McMaster working on the healthcare marketing program: Jack Sullivan, Alex Antonucci, Maria Konchalski, Annie Myron and Caroline Nnamichi.

Darryl Johnston, Community Relations Director from Mother’s Pizza makes the first delivery of Mother’s pizza to the House. Mother’s has joined our Thyme4Dinner team and will be delivering pizza once a month.
A very simple way to help…

Val Evans is a golfer and a member of “the Nightingales” a group of women, primarily nurses, who are long-time supporters of the Mark Preece House. She is a social person and a giver.

In the summer, this group gets together at Knollwood Golf Club and throughout the year, they walk Saturday mornings and then have breakfast. During the winter months, the group meets at Val’s home for movie nights.

For the price of a donation to her money jar, she provides dinner and a movie. Guests are also encouraged to donate any nickels or dimes in their purse and occasionally are given an opportunity to bid on sale items. In December, the jar was emptied and Mary Whitfield, a member of the group and a volunteer at the Mark Preece House, presented the house with a donation of $700.

These friends set a wonderful example of how easy it is to do something fun - and something that benefits others at the same time!

From Our Guestbook

“It was our lucky day when our doctor’s secretary called to tell us about this amazing facility. We can’t thank you enough for accommodating a disabled family member, along with the rest of us. You all made us feel so welcome! The environment here is safe, friendly, comfortable, and family-like. What a blessing you all are to us scared and overwhelmed family members. The comfort and care you offered made this ordeal so much easier. God Bless you all. With deepest regards from the Poulsen family, Niagara Falls.”
Glitter for a cause

It was cold outside but there was lots of warmth inside as a group of big-hearted women came together to make a difference at Girls’ Night Out Feb. 20 at the Design Annex. Participants enjoyed handwriting analysis, hand massages, nail art and great draws. The event netted more than $5,000 for House operations.

Special thanks to PureNV Salon and Spa for the donation of a Renewal and Enhancement Spa Day!

Certified graphologist Elaine Charal was the hit of the evening with her handwriting analysis.

The Girls’ Night Out committee consisted of: Natalie Mancini, Rayanne Adams, Jan Milne, Pearl Wolfe and Tracey Schockaert.

Filomena Tassi and Sandra Giles had so much fun they take a selfie to preserve the event forever!

Carrie Wroot from Barry’s Jewellers and Filomena Feltmate and Jackie Fenton from the Southern Ontario Women’s Show enjoyed networking with all the women present.
Upcoming Events

19th Annual Golf4Life Tournament
IN SUPPORT OF THE MARK PREECE FAMILY HOUSE

Tuesday, June 4, 2015
Dundas Valley Golf & Curling Club
10 Woodleys Ln,
Dundas L9H 6Y6
To register or donate:
905-529-0770 or info@markpreecehouse.ca
www.markpreecehouse.ca

Fall for Beer 2015

What do fabulous fall weather, refreshing craft beers and locally-harvested foods have in common? They combine to create Fall for Beer, a great autumn evening of craft beers and food pairings.

Mark your calendar for our third annual event:
Thursday, October 22, 2015
Bay City Music Hall
50 Leander Drive, Hamilton
(former Leander Boat Club)

We think an autumn food and beer event carries on our wonderful tradition of serving the best in local foods and beverages with a refreshing difference. We will offer fresh, specially selected foods to be paired with some of Ontario’s best craft beers.

We are thrilled to welcome back our friends from Nickel Brook.

Tickets are $100.
Contact us for more information. Cheers!

From Our Guestbook

“Thank you so much for the wonderful safe haven of the Mark Preece Family House. My friend Donna is making a good recovery and much is owed to the welcome hospitality and caring way we were treated – which is most assuredly that other families and friends received from you all. Your beautiful sanctuary will always remain in my memory.”
Christina G.

“Thank you for the assistance in helping me support my husband at this time. I will continue to pray for your House. It definitely helped me and assisted in my staying stable through these hard times. A home for those whose mate or child is ill. What a blessing!”
Jeane D.

“Thank you for taking care of my Nonna in Room 109.”
Iannazzo Family