



Derek Sealy was visiting the Niagara Region on Monday, May 20th when he suffered a severe brain bleed and hemorrhagic stroke. Luckily, Derek was with his girlfriend at the time and the 50 year old was transported to the Niagara Hospital. He was then transferred to the neurology ICU at the Hamilton General Hospital.

According to his brother Craig, Derek's girlfriend recognized the signs of a stroke and reacted quickly, contacting emergency services. She said to him "I think you're having a stroke" to which Derek responded "Shut up, don't say that". He also says that he doesn't remember being loaded into the ambulance.

On Wednesday, May 22nd, Derek underwent surgery to evacuate the clot in his brain and was on a respirator and unresponsive for the next several days. During that time, there were serious discussions between his doctors and family about Derek's quality of life because the surgery was a life saving measure and they couldn't tell them what the outcome was likely to be.

Derek slowly started to become responsive and after just seven weeks, including several weeks of physiotherapy, Derek was walking 100 feet at a time with the assistance of a cane. Derek's brother says "it's obviously turned into a pretty good news story to this point".

Derek's family, his brother Craig and parents Hal and Maureen travelled back and forth from their home in Toronto for the first couple of days before being referred to The Mark Preece Family House. Craig works full time and their parents are in their mid 70s. He commented that being able to stay at MPFH, close to the hospital and in a one room was a huge benefit.

"I'm not sure how we would have functionally done this and stayed sane" he said "It's been a lot of things from a lot of people to help us get to where we are and The Mark Preece Family House definitely played a pivotal role in our ability to support Derek through this."

***"The facilities far exceeded our expectations to be honest, between the whole house, the accommodations, the kitchen, the deck, the barbecue, it's been really remarkable."***

*Continued on Page 2*

***The Mark Preece Family House has provided a Home Away From Home for thousands of guests since its doors opened in 2011 and we couldn't do any of it without the support of people like you. To help continue our work, please consider making a donation online at [markpreecehouse.ca](http://markpreecehouse.ca).***

*Continued from Page 1*

Craig said being able to get to a nearby grocery store and being able to come and put food away, having a barbecue and a deck, and the kitchen downstairs greatly benefitted his family during their stay. He also said “you get to meet some of the people that are here and hear their stories and you get to learn a little bit about what everybody’s going through together and it makes you feel less alone.”

Sealy works for Telus and could often be found working remotely and says staff have “been accommodating by helping me find a room with a desk so I can do calls. I’m still trying to fit my work meetings and stuff in between.” He says that everything has been so well thought out and accommodating for all the different types of scenarios that he’s sure families encounter.

He also says that the drive back and forth from Toronto isn’t easy these days, with construction on the QEW. Sealy and his parents spent every night at MPFH for the first month. “I know that they’re every bit, if not more appreciative than I am for having the opportunity to stay at a facility like this”.

Sealy says that he’s not a Hamiltonian and that he hadn’t spent very much time in Hamilton prior to Derek’s stroke. “I think we’d all like to not have to be here, but I’m sure my brother would like not to have to be in the hospital. We’re all doing what we can.”

Derek continues to undergo physiotherapy at Hamilton General Hospital. When he was finally able to walk unassisted for the first time, he was only able to take a half dozen steps before he needed a break. The plan was for him to be released on August 8th but as Craig says, “he may or may not get there”, adding the medical staff are hesitant to put any timelines on his recovery.

Derek’s improvement has been “kind of remarkable”, which puts things into perspective as to how fast things can change for the positive.



“It’s amazing what the staff can do there and the motivation that they provide.” Craig added that you “definitely don’t make any assumptions about what’s possible.”

Craig says that “the climb continues” and “I think the road ahead is going to be long for him, but he’s a young, strong, physically fit guy which is serving him very well right now for sure.”

Sealy concluded by saying “You don’t think of these places because you’re not in need of them. Hopefully you never need them. For me, I would say that I didn’t realize how big and important a place like this is for families.” And “I will be forever grateful for, for, for everything that everybody has done for us.

***“I would certainly view these types of facilities a little bit differently because until you’re there, you don’t understand the stress that a place like this can help alleviate. So you can kind of focus on the task at hand and your family in this case.”***

# Thyme For Dinner Is All About Community

Thyme for Dinner's volunteers continue to support guests at The Mark Preece Family House. We are always looking for clubs, groups, businesses, and organizations to come in and prepare home-cooked meals.

Stalwart providers, the Rockton Lions Club and the Retired ICU Nurses of St. Joe's Hospital returned for their regular monthly meals.

Marisa Mariella of Marisa's Easy Kitchen returned with students from the YMCA Newcomer Youth Mentorship Program, as well as the Stoney Creek New Horizons Seniors Club.

We have also had the pleasure of welcoming new providers to provide delicious meals for our guests. The Rotary Club of Stoney Creek and volunteers hosted dinners and their efforts were greatly appreciated. We also welcomed back the Dundas Junior Civitan Club for the first time in several years.



*It was Taco Tuesday for Thyme for Dinner in March. The Rotary Club of Stoney Creek served up dinner for guests for the first time.*

Several guests have also provided meals for their fellow guests. For some, it was an important way to show their appreciation to The House for the support they have received, while for others, it was a way to help, themselves.

Some guests aren't able to make it to dinner because they're still with their loved ones, they always appreciate being able to enjoy a plate set aside for them after a long, stressful day at the hospital.

Groups or individuals prepare a meal for approximately 20 – 25 individuals, either in our kitchen or theirs. We often have house food available for use or volunteers supply the items needed for their meal.

If you can't make it out to The House to prepare a meal yourself, you can sponsor a Thyme for Dinner for \$250. Visit our website for details.



*The Dundas Junior Civitan Club returned after several years to host a pizza party for their Thyme for Dinner in February.*

***Are you or someone you know interested in volunteering for our Thyme4Dinner program?***

***You can volunteer once or on a more regular basis.***

***Contact us at [info@markpreecehouse.ca](mailto:info@markpreecehouse.ca)***

***or 905-529-0770 to learn more!***

# Golf4Life Returns For 27th Year



## 2024 GOLF 4 LIFE



More than 100 golfers took to the links at the Flamborough Hills Golf Club on Thursday, May 30th for the 27th Annual Golf4Life Fundraising Tournament in support of The Mark Preece Family House.



Golfers enjoyed perfect weather and great company, raising more than \$55,000 for

the continued operation of MPFH. This year's Premium Package included a mulligan, and allowed golfers to take part in the Longest Drive and Closest to the Pin contests, as well as the debut of the Marshmallow Drive.



## Special Thank You To Our Donors For Helping To Make Golf4Life 2024 A Success!

*The Carruth Family Foundation  
The Keg - Hamilton/Waterdown/  
Brantford*

*White Pine Waste Services  
StoneRidge Insurance Brokers  
Aird & Berlis*

*LimeGREEN Equipment Ltd.  
One Reimer Advantage*

*Quadreal Property Group, Brokerage  
BBS Realty*

*Pettinelli Mastroluisi LLP  
Geronimo Occupational Therapy  
Plastex Matting Inc.*

*CCXIT Computer Services  
Bay West Benefits*

*Grant Thornton  
Mackesy Smye LLP  
Kardean DesignFlooring  
The Tittley Family*

*Innovative Occupational Therapy  
Services & Critical Trauma Therapy  
Virk Law  
Niagara Nautico*

# *Adopt-A-Day And Make A Difference*

Adopt-A-Day is a wonderful way to help people get through a stressful and challenging time in their lives by supporting the operations of this wonderful House.

## **Adopt-A-Day Donors for November to May!**

### **Charno Birk**

*In Memory of Bhajan Singh Birk*

### **Paul Wenger**

*In Loving Memory of Paul Wenger. Care of Mimi and Pete,*

### **Elaine Dean**

*Today we celebrate Chris Dean Moran's Birthday. He is always with us, in our hearts and in our memories.*

### **Eleanor Misener**

*Happy Birthday Andrew Leishman*

### **Tittley Family**

*In loving memory*

### **Brandy Douglas**

*Happy Birthday Dad, Love Brandy*

### **Jane Brown**

*We rise by lifting others*

### **Bruce & Shelley Catoen**

*In honour of Megan Catoen*

### **Susanne White-Blake**

*In Memory of P. Robert Blake*

### **John Brown**

*Happy Birthday Laura*

### **Theresa & Kevin Cruff**

*Thank you to all the caring spirits at HGH on 7W and Mark Preece House for your kindness and compassionate care!*

### **Ivonna Kratynski**

*In honour of my brother Mark on his Birthday*

### **Paul Jones**

*John, there are better ways of getting a day off! Wishing you a speedy recovery. Respectfully, Paul*

### **Janet Lachance**

*Put your best foot forward*

### **Jennifer Chan**

*In Honour of Charlton Chan's 84th birthday*

### **Elly Smeda**

*In loving memory of Willem Smeda, husband, father and Opa*

### **Eleanor Misener**

*Happy Birthday Tim*

### **Neil & Linda Smith**

*To our Dad and Papa, Joseph Falco, we miss you every day*

### **Gizella Colby**

*Happy 75th Michael*

### **Roxanne Widdicombe**

*In memory of Mike on his birthday*

### **Sandy & Jane Craik**

*Happy Birthday Jane Craik*

### **Gary & Dianne Phelps**

*Thanks to Dr Davis and the Whole Hyperbaric Team!*

### **Marilyn Birchall**

*In loving memory of a dear sister, Carolyn Guenther*

### **Maureen Wood**

*Celebrating World Hyperbaric Month*

### **Arthur & Veronica Herriott**

*Thanks to Dr Chu and team @ HGH!*

### **Heather Munn/Marie Smith**

*In Memory of Boo Smith*

## **Become an Adopt-A-Day donor Today!**

You will receive recognition and a charitable receipt. Best of all, you'll know you have helped to make someone's day just a little brighter. For your \$500 donation, you can recognize a birthday, anniversary, or a memorial message in honour of a loved one.

Contact us to learn more!

# Happenings At The House



Members of the "Nativity Ladies" from the Anglican Church of the Nativity stopped by The Mark Preece Family House on June 1st for a tour and to drop off some goodies for our guests.



After it was discovered that the newly-donated barbecue was stolen an "Anonymous" donor delivered a brand-new barbecue. Thank you to Demetrio (Bo) Macri for arranging the donation.



On April 8th, guests of The Mark Preece Family House were able to experience the Total Solar Eclipse as it passed over Hamilton. Special glasses were provided to us by McMaster University's Department of Physics & Astronomy



This year, we worked with students from the Public Relations - Corporate Communications Graduate Program at Mohawk College. This included, students Victoria, Aditi, Aneri, and Kristy hosting an information booth in March at the Courtyard Cafe to highlight MPFH.



A new location of Chipotle opened in Hamilton in December and during their staff training, they donated hundreds of burritos, taco bowls, and fixings for our guests. There was no way we would use it all so much of it was donated to Mission Services.

# You Make It Into A Home For Those Who Stay With Us

As we roll into summer, I'm happy to report that this year so far has been a very positive one at the House. In our core mission, the House has provided a sanctuary for 330 families, offering them comfort, warmth, and empathy while they're displaced to be with loved ones seeking medical care. Our staff and volunteers help make the Mark Preece Family House into a temporary home for our guests, adding personal and caring touches to their experiences.

That personal touch is the heart of the House, filling this building with love and dedication. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and volunteers for that incredible energy. As you interact with the House over the coming year, I encourage you to try to bring these names to mind, and to join me in thanking the amazing people who make the House a home.

Staff: Chris, Crystal, Nicole, Jen, Kathryn, Marites, Melissa, Myka, Nicole, Syris, and Virginia. Manager Lyn, and Co-Director Mary, Volunteers: Ari, Blanche, Donna, Ellie, Furqan, Jim, Katherine, Kerry, Lloyd, Lori, Margaret, Marilyn, Mary, MaryKay, Morris, Nadine, Pamela, Wayne, and Vanessa. If I've missed anyone, my most sincere apologies. This list will change over time, but it's important to make the connection between our mission and the humanity of the individuals who fill the building at 191 Barton Street East.

As these good people work day in and day out (24 hours a day!) at the House, it's the wider community – including all of you – who make our mission possible. Our donors and supporters, our referring medical teams and care workers, previous guests who have become vocal advocates, our network of families and loved ones, the individuals who work with foundations and corporations that support us... your efforts, your donations, your positivity, your referrals, your problem-solving and your continued dedication; the Mark Preece Family House could not exist without you.

A friend of mine recently became a guest at the House, having traveled to Hamilton to be with his father during a procedure at the General. He spent two nights at MPFH under tense circumstances. When he returned to St Catharines (where I now live), we chatted about his experience. While the circumstances of his visit were unfortunate – as is often the case – he was positively glowing about the House and its people. He related details about the warm greeting he received on arrival, his positive interactions with staff, volunteers, and other guests in the common areas over coffee or a meal, the comforts of his room, the convenience and practicality of the House's proximity to the hospital... it sounded like a commercial for the House in the best way possible. He said he felt lucky that the House existed, and that everyone should know about it. I couldn't agree with him more. Mark Preece Family House – its mission, its people, and its supporters – is a gift to those in distress.

On behalf of the Board, and at the personal request of a good friend, I'd like to thank you all for making the Mark Preece Family House what it is; a sanctuary and a home, and one that couldn't exist without your efforts, your love, and your support. Thank you.

All of my best to you and your families this summer, and I hope to see some of you later this year for our Fall for Beer community event. Stay tuned for details!



Russ Rowlands, Chair



Scan the QR code to make a donation today or visit [markpreceehouse.ca/donate](http://markpreceehouse.ca/donate)

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# How to Help The House

## Scan the QR Codes to Donate!



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Wish List**



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Thank you for your support!



**Fall  
FOR  
Beer**

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Presented by & in support of  
Mark Preece Family House

**We are looking for volunteers  
to help us with this year's  
Fall For Beer Fundraising  
Event.**

We're looking for help to plan and run  
the event, being held this Fall.

If you have a few hours to spare,  
please get in touch with us by  
phone at 905-529-0770 or by email at  
[development@markpreceehouse.ca](mailto:development@markpreceehouse.ca)

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