

**Mark Preece Family House  
Annual Report  
2018**

**Guests and Guest Services:**

- The Hamilton Plaza hotel became unavailable to us for a preferred rate, leaving us with really no low-cost alternative for families when we are full.
- An increase to the room rental rate to \$50 was implemented in October. There have been no concerns expressed about this increase.

**House Operations:**

- Concerns about the effectiveness of the security system were addressed.
- Four rooms were converted from queens to twins in February. The queens were ready for replacement and we were able to use a grant from the Takla Foundation for the work.
- Pichin Ltd. conducted a comprehensive reserve fund study.
- Another grant was approved for the replacement of seven remaining old windows.
- A commercial dishwasher was donated in March.
- The roof was damaged sufficiently in May to warrant an insurance claim.
- Considerable repairs were necessary to the elevator in July.
- After a major fail of the air conditioning system in August, a study was undertaken by an engineering firm to make improvements to the HVAC system.
- We changed pest control companies in November and began monthly inspections.
- A volunteer re-painted the coffee bar cupboards in the living room to great effect.
- Our insurance company required that we install a battery back-up to the sump pump in the crawl space.

**Sustainability:**

- Golf4Life - more great committee members have been recruited. Golf 2018 had better results than 2017.
- We participated in – and won! – Pitching in for Charity put on by MBA students at McMaster. We won \$5,000 which we used to buy a travel voucher for our Dream Vacation Raffle.
- We subscribed to a foundation database and sent several letters requesting funding to various foundations. A very generous donation was made by the Freeburne Banting Foundation in December.
- Mohawk PR students conducted a communications project that included a survey about communications. One of the responses received was that families would appreciate an email from the House after they check out. We implemented this practice in November and the results have been overwhelmingly positive. This is an important marketing ‘touch’ which should bear fruit when families receive a request for donations via the newsletter.

**Awareness:**

- An excellent three-minute video was produced by Broadcast Media students at Mohawk College.
- We started using Mail Chimp to send e-newsletters to families in our database. This activity hasn't resulted in any donations to date but our open rate is much higher than similar organizations.

**Human Resources:****Staff:**

- Bill 148 changes in 2018 had some financial implications. Much of the bill was repealed by the end of the year.
- Staff training was held in February on Strategies to keep helping professionals grounded.

**Volunteers:**

- 2018 started with fantastic increases in T4D providers.
- Union Gas planted annuals in the spring.
- Singer-songwriter Dan Medakovic performed at our spring volunteer social.
- Photographer Donna Waxman took volunteers' portraits at our holiday volunteer social.