



In 2005, Janet Lechance from Chatham, Ontario, was diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer. With no established treatment protocol, she underwent a regimen similar to that used for stage 4 ovarian cancer, which included new drugs, 28 radiation treatments, and three brachytherapy sessions. Brachytherapy involves delivering high doses of radiation using a sealed source, or “seed,” placed inside or near a tumor. Despite being given only a 30% chance of survival, Janet reflects, “I’m still here.”

However, the treatment caused lasting damage to her body, including scar tissue on her bowels and bladder and bleeding in the bladder. Her urologist recommended hyperbaric oxygen treatment at Hamilton General Hospital, which brought Janet to The Mark Preece Family House (MPFH) in 2023 for eight weeks. Reflecting on her treatment, she says, “It got me to two more years.” She returned in November for an additional six weeks.

Before her referral to Hamilton Health Sciences, Janet had never heard of MPFH. Upon her arrival, she shared, “I got a room with my alternate family.” During her stay, she met families facing unimaginable challenges, including a family from Fort Francis and another whose daughter was recovering from a car accident. “You think you’re going through difficult times,” Janet says, “but there are families out there going through things you can’t believe. Through no fault of their own, it’s just the way things have happened in their lives.”

Janet also spoke highly of the MPFH community. “The family aspect is amazing,” she said. “While the staff aren’t trained counselors, they’re always willing to talk, listen, and offer understanding. There’s no judgment - just total patience.” Janet also praised the volunteers, especially those involved in the Thyme For Dinner program, for providing meals and treats. During her first visit, which took place during COVID, fewer Thyme For Dinners were hosted, so Janet often stepped in to cook for other guests.

Janet is also a quilter who has donated more than a dozen quilts to MPFH over the years. Reflecting on her first eight-week stay, she recalls, “I wondered, ‘What am I going to do with myself for eight weeks?’ Then I thought, ‘Bring your sewing machine.’” Janet realized how meaningful it would be to let people know, “Somebody cares enough to make something for them to take home after they’ve gone through their situations.” She decided to create quilts for use at MPFH.

Many of her quilts are lap-sized and can brighten up hospital rooms by adding a touch of color. Despite the number of quilts she has made, Janet says it isn’t difficult for her. Sometimes, she even uses leftover materials from other projects. MPFH staff occasionally inform her where her quilts have gone, and Janet has seen firsthand how positively they are received.

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.

One story stands out to her: “The migrant farmer who was here had an accident and was in the hospital. His wife came to visit but didn’t speak English. She’d only been here for a couple of days when they gave her a quilt. It’s that kind of stuff that means something to somebody else. For me, quilting is just a way to pass the time and enjoy the colors.”

By the end of her latest stay in January, Janet plans to donate another four quilts. After her treatments end on December 20th, she plans to visit British Columbia before returning to Chatham.

She reflects, “It’s interesting to meet people who are different from what you’re used to, especially those from small towns.” Janet adds that staying at The Mark Preece Family House has opened her eyes to another side of life and the diversity of people across the country, including the unique foods and cultures they bring. For her, MPFH is more than a place to stay during treatment - it’s a community where she’s found connection, support, and a way to give back. Through her quilts, Janet’s legacy of care and kindness will continue to brighten the lives of those who pass through its doors.



“Just being here and being in the house shows you another side of life, another side of the population in this country now. The different kinds of food that you see and everything, but for the most part, everybody tries, even though the language barrier is still there. Everybody tries to do their best to get along at that point in time, but it’s a different city, especially if you’re from a small town.”

Janet Lachance

Thyme For Dinner: Meals That Matter

Dozens of volunteers have come through the doors at The Mark Preece Family House over the past few months to prepare meals for our guests as part of our Thyme4Dinner program.

The Rockton Lions Club and the Retired ICU Nurses of St. Joe's Hospital have been providing meals on a monthly basis for years now and they plan to continue their tradition as regular providers at The Mark Preece Family House.

After a break for the summer, Marisa Mariella of Marisa's Easy Kitchen and her team from the YMCA Newcomer Youth Mentorship Program have returned as a favourite provider. When Marisa and her team come in, they prepare a variety of delicious meals for our guests once or twice per week.

We have also had the pleasure of welcoming new providers like Michael and Lucy Maiescuit and returning providers like the Dundas Junior Civitan Club to provide delicious meals for our guests. A new regular provider, Christian Public



Kaci, Kat, Autumn, and Jenna, Members of Christian Public Service (Canada) started hosting Thyme For Dinners over the summer and are a welcome addition to our providers.

Service (Canada) and volunteers Kat, Kaci, Jenna, and Autumn have been preparing meals since the summer and their efforts were greatly appreciated.

Some guests may miss dinner while spending time with their loved ones, but they deeply appreciate having leftovers to enjoy later - a comforting, home-cooked meal after a long, stressful day at the hospital.

Current and former 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.

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.



The Rockton Lions have been regular participants at Thyme For Dinner for years and their meals are always very well received.

Are you or someone you know interested in volunteering for our Thyme For Dinner program?

You can volunteer once or on a more regular basis.

Contact us at info@markpreecehouse.ca

or 905-529-0770 to learn more!

Fall For Beer: Raising A Glass For A Great Cause



Event Highlights:

It was a great evening of food, friends, and beer on November 4th for our 9th Annual Fall For Beer fundraising event. Once again, Shawn and Ed Brewing Co. in Dundas provided an amazing venue for the event.



Special Guests:

The evening kicked off with a warm welcome from Mayor Andrea Horwath. Rockton Lions President Pat Evangelisto then spoke about the Lions involvement with The House, especially as one of our longest serving providers for Thyme For Dinner.



Entertainment:

The evening featured a performance by local band Corner Pocket, Caricaturist Cartoon Bob, a photo booth by Betty Lou Photobooth, and a fantastic Silent Auction.

Thank you to our committee members, volunteers, and everyone else who helped make Fall For Beer 2024 such a success! Together, we raised more than \$15,000 to support The Mark Preece Family House



Special Thank You To Our Donors For Helping To Make Fall For Beer 2024 A Success!

Stoneridge Insurance Brokers
Carruth Family Trust

Innovative Occupational Therapy Services
Chamberlain Entertainment

Critical Trauma Therapy
Virk Personal Injury Law

And the generosity of all the donors to our
Silent Auction

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.

Thank You to our Adopt-A-Day Donors for June, July, August, September, and October!

Laura Anzik

Celebrating Life!

Perk De Mara

Happy Birthday Ron De Mara

Sandy & Jane Craik

Happy Birthday Sandy Craik

Cecilia Moffat

Happy Anniversary

Carolyn & Dale Nicholson

In loving memory of Jordan

Susanne White-Blake

Happy Birthday Eleanor Pover

Mike Emes

Happy Anniversary to my wonderful wife Dawn of 44 years. Always & forever, Mike

Margaret Couture

In loving memory of Nelson Couture

Sanya Massaro

In memory of Tyler

Sandy & Jane Craik

Happy Birthday Ben Craik

Tina Brillinger

In Memory of Gayle Brillinger

John Brown

Happy Anniversary Laura & John

AJ Preece

Thanks Tasha, Irv, Starling & Kevin, Preece weekend '24 was a blast! H W H W I T W Love you guys!

Joseph Sullivan, Sullivan Mediations

In honour of Virk Injury Law for their charitable work for Mark Preece House

Rita Preece

Remembering the Birthday of Mark Preece

Brantford Rotary Sunrise Fund

Support Rotary International in eradicating Polio

Ancaster Lions Club

Ancaster Lions Club Presents their Xmas Craft Show. November 2 & 3 at the Ancaster Fairgrounds



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



The Bayshore Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bayshore Health once again presented The Mark Preece Family House with a \$5,000 donation and a car-full of supplies. Thank You Bayshore for your generous gift.



Thanks to a grant, MPFH has been able to replace most of the mattresses and all of the bedding, many of which dated back to when we opened. On October 24th, volunteers helped to install more than 35 new mattresses in one day.



The Mark Preece Family House has welcomed a new weekly visitor from Therapy Tails. Obi, the Bernese/Poodle cross has been providing comfort for guests for the past few months, and he's a very good boy.



Our holiday helpers were busy decking the halls on December 4th. Thank you to Jane and Ann for all your hard work, even after the other volunteers were foiled by bad weather.



Members of the McMaster Engineering and Society Student Association hosted a pumpkin painting event for Halloween and collected donations for MPFH.



For the past several months, Communications and Development Specialist Chris Pelletier has been speaking to community groups and clubs. The goal is to raise awareness within the City of Hamilton about The Mark Preece Family House and how they can support us.

Our Doors are Open to Welcome Families Traveling to Hamilton

Hello and happy holidays!

As 2024 comes to a close, I'm very pleased to be reaching out to you on behalf of the Board with an update from the Mark Preece Family House. The world outside is returning to a new normal, and we're happy to be able to serve our mission again. Our doors are open to welcome families traveling to Hamilton to be with their loved ones under local medical care.

This year to date we've hosted more than 600 families at the House for a total of 5,200 nights. By staying with us at the Mark Preece House, those families have benefited from more than just a roof over their head. We're able to offer an accessible, affordable, and empathetic home away from home to guests traveling under unfortunate circumstances. The heartfelt care offered by our staff and volunteers helps ease the hardships of these travelers, and that warmth can make all the difference to guests going through difficult times.

An uncertain economy has had some fallout on our donations through the year, understandably. Ontarians are struggling with interest rates and the affordability of basic necessities, and donors have had to be conservative with their money. Since the House receives no public funding, we've had to double our fundraising efforts to make up for the effects of economy. Our staff has done a great job of increasing the House's outreach in the community, and those efforts are paying off with new sponsors. One such sponsor (who wishes to go unnamed) was kind enough to fund a significant refurbishment of fixtures like carpets and mattresses – the kind of goods that were starting to show their age – so you may notice a bit more sparkle to the House on your next visit.

We continued our tradition of hosting two major events, Golf 4 Life and Fall for Beer in early summer and mid autumn respectively. Both events were fantastic successes – I'm sure you'll find photos elsewhere in this letter. It is always a pleasure to interact with the Mark Preece Family House community – you! – because that

community has helped build and maintain the House, and that community is what binds us all together in our mission. I'm a terrible golfer, but getting out on the course with families and friends of the House who have been here since the start is truly an honour, and you're all so forgiving when it comes to my swing! And our Fall for Beer social event is really starting to regain its momentum – approximately 90 members of the MPFH community joined us this year at the Shawn and Ed Brewery in Dundas to listen to some music, enjoy some food and drinks, and connect with each other and with the staff and Board from the House. I love the Fall for Beer event for this reason; it really is about keeping our bonds together strong.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who make our mission possible. First, thank you to our donors and sponsors, whose financial contributions help keep our room rates affordable, a key part of our mission. Thank you to my fellow Board members, who, for these past few years, have been doing far, far more work than I think they signed up for. Thank you to the nurses, doctors, and social workers who refer patients and families to the House – many guests would never know we existed without these thoughtful referrals. And, most of all, thank you to the staff and volunteers who make the Mark Preece Family House what it is – a safe haven and loving home – twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. I wish we could all get together give the staff and volunteers a standing ovation every morning. In absence of that, please do consider giving your thanks, a smile, or a hug, to our dedicated team the next time you're at the House.

Until I see you next, happy holidays, and thank you for being a part of this incredible community.



Russ Rowlands, Chair



Scan the QR code to make
a donation today or visit
markpreecehouse.ca/donate

191 Barton Street East
Hamilton, Ontario
L8L 2W7

P: 905-529-0770
F: 905-529-9955

info@markpreecehouse.ca
markpreecehouse.ca

Hospital Family Houses of Ontario
Charitable Registration
#86700 9615 RR0001

Scan the QR Codes to Donate!



Amazon
Wish List



Donate To
The House



MyRegistry
Wish List

Support A Great Cause - Buy Your 50/50 Tickets Today!



Tickets are on sale now for our Fall 50/50 Raffle. Sales end on Thursday, December 12th and the draw will be held on Friday, December 13th at Noon!

Tickets Prices:

- 1 for \$15.00
- 3 for \$40.00
- 5 for \$60.00
- 10 for \$100.00



Visit <https://trellis.org/mpfh5050fall2024> to purchase your tickets or scan the QR Code.

Save The Date!



Golf4Life 2025 will be held on
Thursday, May 29, 2025 at
Flamborough Hills Golf Club.
Stay Tuned!

Rather than a physical copy, you can receive the electronic version of our newsletter by scanning the QR Code



“Thank you for your generosity that makes it possible for patients and family like ourselves to stay so comfortably and conveniently at The Mark Preece House. We were so impressed by the quality of the accommodations and care of the wonderful volunteers. Being able to stay here during treatment makes all the difference in eliminating the stress of travel, parking, etc.”

*With gratitude,
Tyler & Ruth Wain*