



# KitchINN Grand Opening

The renovation of the kitchens and dining areas in the original building of The Children's Inn at NIH is finally complete. What began in October 2012 came to an exciting finish this past June, after a two-phase construction project. A major fundraising effort, The Inn raised a total of \$1.5 million to renovate the two kitchens. The Inn's vision was brought to life by planning and design firm Poltronieri and Tang, Scott Long Construction and the teamwork of our NIH colleagues. Families can now enjoy new commercial grade appliances and an open floor plan with a spacious kitchen layout that enables them to share and cook with each other while utilizing fully stocked food pantries maintained by volunteers. As approximately 15,000 meals are prepared each year in these two kitchens, we are hopeful that these updated spaces will continue to foster a sense of community, which is what truly makes The Inn "a place like home."



The Children's  
Inn at NIH

FALL 2014

# INNspirations

## Mission Statement

The Children's Inn at NIH will fully and consistently meet the needs of children and families participating in groundbreaking research at the National Institutes of Health.

We will:

- Respond to evolving family support needs from pediatric research and clinical care
- Provide a free family-centered "place like home"
- Reduce the burden of illness through therapeutic, educational and recreational programming

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The culmination of this two-year-long endeavor was cause for celebration with a Chef's KitchINN reception on September 15, spotlighting five DC area well-known chefs in the newly remodeled kitchens. Board members, staff, families and guests sampled hors d'oeuvres and sipped "mocktails" while touring the newly renovated spaces. Meanwhile, a string quartet strummed beautiful harmonies. As visitors entered the kitchens, they had the opportunity to taste the chefs' creations, from lobster rolls and crab cakes to duck liver pâté. Event chair, Erika-Monroe Williams, wife of Washington Nationals Manager Matt Williams and creator of the blog The Hopeless Housewife, taste-tested the various food choices as well as the cold-press juices from Jrink Juicery. At the end of the evening, attendees received fresh-baked cookies from the food truck Captain Cookie & the Milkman - a hit with both children and adults.

The Inn will turn 25 in 2015, and the kitchen opening was the perfect way to kick off this upcoming celebration. A special thank you to chefs Spike Mendelsohn, Ris Lacoste, Will Artley, Chris Clime, and Matt Newland who made the evening a success. Visit The Inn's website for more information regarding activities planned to celebrate this monumental year, including an anniversary reunion for residents and friends next June.



Spike Mendelsohn, Will Artley, Matt Newland, Ris Lacoste, and Chris Clime received gifts from Children's Inn residents at the grand opening of our new kitchens.

# INNspirational PEOPLE



Inn resident Ezmee Hutton, pictured above with NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, at The Inn's 26th Annual Congressional Gala. [See complete gala story on page 3.]

## Meet Inn Resident Ezmee Hutton

**D**uring her junior year of college at The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, Ezmee Hutton thought she was coming down with a bad case of the flu. She had been working hard—majoring in International and Global Studies—but when her symptoms didn't go away, she saw doctors in both Tennessee and at the University of Virginia. Ezmee was diagnosed with an immune system disorder called Common Variable Immune Deficiency (CVID) and was referred to the National Institutes of Health.

People with CVID have low levels of several of the proteins, or antibodies, that help them fight infections. It is a random genetic mutation that leaves them open to recurrent infections in their ears, sinuses and respiratory system, and increases their risk of digestive disorders, blood disorders and cancer. Ezmee drives to the NIH every three to four weeks from her home in Ruckersville, Virginia, for treatment at the NIH Clinical Center. She receives an infusion of immunoglobulins, called IVIG, and is also regularly monitored for lesions in her brain and lungs that are caused by the disease.

Ezmee, now 24, finished her college degree and works 30 hours per week as an assistant retail planner at the corporate offices of Plow and Hearth. She also works an additional 20 hours per week as a nanny for a four-year-old girl. Her mother, also named Ezmee, often joins her on the three-hour trip to the NIH—time they enjoy spending together after a long day of work.

“When we get in late and we are hungry, we so appreciate the food pantry at The Inn,” says Ezmee. “It’s also such a relief not to worry about spending \$200 a night to stay up the road in a hotel. I am still paying back college loans and paying for a car, and have to take unpaid leave from my job to come here for treatment. I can’t say enough about what a difference it makes for me to be able to stay at The Children’s Inn.”

## Chaplain Mike Visits The Inn on Tuesdays

**E**ach Tuesday afternoon at 4:30, a casual reception for Inn parents and caregivers is held in the lobby living room area of The Inn. Led by Mike Zoosman, NIH Clinical Center Pediatric Staff Chaplain, this special time is set aside for caregivers to relax, have a snack or coffee, meet other caregivers, and to share both their challenging and happy times with one another. To allow for this time of respite, The Inn’s programming staff holds a coinciding Chill-INN activity just for kids, where parents can drop off their children in the Learning Center for a fun and educational program.

When the reception is over, Chaplain Mike makes his way around The Inn with his guitar, playing familiar songs like “Puff the Magic Dragon” and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” He provides spiritual care for many Inn families, listening to their hopes and providing a source of comfort as they share their fears. His inviting demeanor makes it difficult for even the most shy or exhausted residents to not participate.

Chaplain Mike was invested as a Cantor and earned his Master of Sacred Music at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 2007. Inspired by his years of pastoral work, he left his full-time congregational position to train in professional multifaith chaplaincy, and recently became a board certified chaplain. Mike became a part of The Children’s Inn family just before the holiday season last year, when he began leading the weekly Parent & Caregiver Receptions. We are truly privileged to have him available to provide such a meaningful service to our families.



Chaplain Mike sings “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” along with Inn resident Kaleb, who accompanies him on the drums.

# INNspirational EVENTS



## Inn CEO Kathy Russell to Retire

The Children's Inn opened its doors nearly 25 years ago, and Kathy Russell has been part of this organization since its inception—serving as chair for the original Board of Directors, and as Chief Executive Officer for the past ten years. She will be retiring at the end of this year, after a tenure that included seamlessly shepherding the nonprofit through the 2008 economic downturn, establishing The Woodmont House, an off-campus transitional home for longer-term patients, and most recently, major playground and kitchen renovations.

Kathy began her career at the NIH in 1982 as an administrator for pediatrics at the National Cancer Institute and then went on to help establish an NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center at Georgetown University Medical Center. She later served as the director's deputy as the Lombardi Center's Associate Director for Planning and Administration. In 2002, she was asked by Governor Roy Barnes of Georgia to aid in the development of cancer programs in his state.

During that time, Kathy came to know of the psychosocial needs of cancer patients and their families, and she was part of the team effort and unique public-private partnership that brought The Children's Inn into fruition in the late 1980s. Along with Dr. Philip Pizzo, who was the Chief of Pediatric Oncology at NIH, she had observed that parents were congregating with other families in the waiting rooms of the Clinical Center and forming support networks, often reluctant to leave and go back to their respective hotels. It was their concept to create a place on the NIH campus where families could stay together, for free, to facilitate healing through mutual support including therapeutic, recreational and educational programming.

"The common threads that run through Kathy's remarkable, ongoing contributions are leadership, compassion, and relationships," says Dr. Lee Helman, Immediate Past Chair of the Board of The Children's Inn. "Her passion to improve the lives of others is a shining example. She has made a difference in the lives of children and families from around the world that is deeply meaningful and enormously enduring."



## The Inn's 26th Annual Congressional Gala a Success

The 26th Annual Congressional Gala, held at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC on September 16, raised \$400,000 for The Children's Inn.

This year's gala was emceed by newswoman Nina Totenberg and co-chaired by U.S. Congressman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO). Bill Corr, HHS Deputy Secretary, spoke about The Inn and how it eases the burden on families and provides a sense of normalcy during times of stress. Dr. Francis Collins, NIH Director, highlighted The Inn's important role in pediatric medical research, and Inn resident Ezmee Hutton spoke about what a difference it has made for her to have the support and comfort of staying at The Inn. [Read Ezmee's story on page 2.]

The evening culminated with Inn CEO Kathy Russell receiving an award for her years of service to The Children's Inn. "The support we receive from this event is an investment in science, in medicine, in children, and the return on that investment is the promise of a brighter, healthier future for generations to come," said Kathy.

Left to right: U.S. Congressman Paul Tonko, (D-NY); Kathy Russell, Inn CEO and Dr. Phil Pizzo, a founder of The Children's Inn.

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## The Children's Inn at NIH

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There are many ways to support The Children's Inn, such as food drives and the Thoughtful Treasures mailbox program. Visit [www.childrensinn.org](http://www.childrensinn.org) and click on Get INNvolved to learn more about how you can help the many children and families who call The Inn "A Place Like Home."

Follow us on:  

## Toyota K's for Kids Program Raised More Than \$50,000 for The Inn

Washington Area Toyota Dealers presented a check for more than \$50,000 to The Children's Inn prior to the Washington Nationals game on September 9. Inn resident, Dillon Papier, threw the opening pitch in front of more than 35,000 fans – a dream of his, as he is a big Nats fan.

Each time a Nationals pitcher threw a strikeout this season, Toyota donated \$37 to The Inn. The \$37 highlights Nats' star pitcher Stephen Strasburg, number 37.

"The K's for Kids program is the perfect opportunity to give back. Toyota strives to be an active, positive influence in the DC community and we were very delighted to continue our relationship with The Children's Inn at NIH this season," said Mark Shwetz of the Washington Area Toyota Dealers.

In addition to their financial donation, Toyota provided dozens of families with the opportunity to attend ballgames each month during the season. Families were able to watch batting practice, meet the Nats' players, enjoy free food and drinks, and more.

"These games provide a wonderful break for our families and help alleviate some of the stress of medical appointments and treatments," said Kathy Russell, Inn CEO. All proceeds from the K's for Kids program support The Inn's mission.



Washington Area Toyota Dealers presented The Inn with a check on September 9 as part of their K's for Kids Program.