

Merck Renews Commitment to The Woodmont House

Merck Foundation recently renewed its commitment to The Inn's Woodmont House, pledging \$5 million over five years. The grant supports and maintains programs and services, ensuring Woodmont will continue to provide a safe, comfortable home for up to five families at a time. Like all Inn families, they pay nothing, regardless of the length of stay. Merck's grant is the Foundation's second major gift to Woodmont since the home opened in 2010, on the corner of Battery Lane and Woodmont Avenue in Bethesda.

More than 116 children and their families have stayed at Woodmont over the past four years. On average, families stay for several weeks or months, a longer stay than at The Inn, says Jennie Lucca, The Inn's Director of Resident Services & Program Opera-

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Mission Statement

The Children's Inn at NIH is a private, nonprofit, residence for families and their children who are participating in pediatric research at the National Institutes of Health's Clinical Center. The Inn enhances the opportunities for groundbreaking medical discoveries by providing a free "place like home" that reduces the burdens of illness through a supportive environment including therapeutic, educational and recreational programming.

tions. The Woodmont House has proved to be a perfect space for families with children receiving transplants. The personal environment is ideal for children and young adults during the 120-day waiting period following a transplant.

Families with young adults in treatment have requested The Woodmont House, Jennie adds. The location is close to Bethesda's vibrant restaurants and shops, yet close enough to quickly access doctors at the NIH Clinical Center.

For the Trowbridge family from Nevada, the quiet, spacious home was just what they needed during a stressful time following their son's bone marrow transplant. George Trowbridge asked Inn managers if he and his wife could move to Woodmont in late December after their son, Austin, 17, was well enough to leave the hospital.

Austin has a disorder called Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS)/Monosomy 7, a type of cancer in which the bone marrow does not produce enough healthy blood cells. George and his wife Marcheta were more cautious and concerned about Austin's exposure to infections, as their oldest son, Eric, passed away in 2008, at age 15, during a transplant for the same rare disease.

"January was a really dark month," Marcheta says. Austin was released from the hospital within 15 days of his transplant, an unusually quick turnaround. They celebrated the bustling Christmas holidays together with other Inn families. But for Austin, the celebration was brief. Nine days after his release from the hospital, Austin developed acute graft-versus-host-disease, which occurs when the body fights the transplanted cells. He was immediately hospitalized and has been for several weeks. During two weeks of his hospital stay, he was unable to eat or drink.



The Trowbridge Family



"We always felt very welcomed, very cared for," Bridget Atkins says of her stay at The Inn's Woodmont House. "It helped us focus on what we were there to do—getting Dalvin better, getting him home with a clean bill of health."

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By February, Austin was beginning to show small, but positive signs of improvement, Marcheta says. Doctors began giving Austin "passes" to leave for brief outings. His dad took him to the Bethesda library down the street from The Woodmont House. The family also went to the movies. "We're starting to breath a little easier and feel a little better," Marcheta says. "To be able to stay together here is a huge help." George, an architect, appreciates the spacious office for parents to use, which allows him to roll out drawings and plans. "Having that extra work space has really made a difference," he says. Marcheta, an accountant, found it too difficult to work—even remotely—during Austin's treatment so she resigned. "This is where we need to be right now," she says. "We don't have another child. There was no way one of us was not going to be here during Austin's transplant."

Bridget Atkins also requested The Woodmont House after her son Dalvin, 21, underwent a bone marrow transplant to treat his blood disorder, Aplastic Anemia. The two spent several months at Woodmont last year.

Friendly, outgoing, and quick with a smile, Bridget bonded with Woodmont House Manager Chiquita Serpas and Assistant Manager Taylor Watson. They shared meals together, particularly Friday night family dinners. Whenever Bridget and Dalvin returned from treatment, they headed straight to Chiquita's and Taylor's office, she says.

"They were never too busy to sit with you and hear you out," Bridget says. "We actually looked forward to greeting them. It's funny, it was like coming home to mom and dad." Dalvin returned home to Florida around Thanksgiving and he and his mom credit his healing progress to the time he spent at Woodmont.

Merck: A Legacy of Giving

With their second major financial commitment to The Woodmont House and more than two decades of generous support of The Children's Inn, Merck and the Merck Foundation have built a legacy of philanthropy that has touched thousands of lives and will benefit many more seriously ill children and their families who will stay at The Inn in the future.

The partnership with Merck began 25 years ago with its initial gift of \$3.7 million to build The Inn. Merck's total giving now tops \$20 million—a remarkable level of support and commitment to The Inn's mission.

"There is no way to really put into words how much Merck's support over the years has meant to our families. The Inn and Woodmont House would not exist today without Merck's financial support," says Inn CEO Kathy Russell.

As a global healthcare company, Merck and the Merck Foundation are committed to helping increase access to medicines, vaccines and quality healthcare worldwide. The Inn's mission and partnership with Merck support these goals by providing a free "Place Like Home" for children and families from all 50 states and more than 84 countries who are participating in leading edge biomedical clinical trials at the NIH.

The Inn would like to express our deep appreciation to Inn board members, Robert McMahon and Mark Raabe; as well as Ken Frazier, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Merck; and Brian Grill, Executive Vice President, Merck Foundation, for their strong support of this partnership with Merck.



"From that initial gift through their support of The Inn's major expansion in 2004 and continuing with \$10 million committed to The Woodmont House, Merck has always responded to the evolving needs of our residents," says Inn CEO Kathy Russell.



"As The Children's Inn begins its 25th year of providing "A Place Like Home" for children with cancer and their families, CCF is pleased to have been a part of The Inn since its beginning. It's been a long and mutually wonderful relationship that will continue Shirley's legacy and reflect her love of The Inn," says Diane Perry, Shirley's daughter and CCF's Executive Director.

Steadfast Support from The Children's Cancer Foundation

Last August, The Children's Inn lost a dear friend and staunch supporter—Shirley Howard, President and Founder of The Children's Cancer Foundation, Inc. (CCF). Shirley passed away at age 88, but not before devoting her life to helping children and their families living with cancer. It's been said that Shirley and CCF changed the face of childhood cancer, perhaps more than any other organization in the area. Throughout her years of support, Shirley described The Inn as a wonderful, inspirational place.

"The Children's Cancer Foundation's grants have enabled The Inn to welcome our young cancer patients and their families into a warm and homelike place during extremely stressful and medically traumatic times," says Kathy Russell, Inn CEO. "These children, who are participating in groundbreaking biomedical research at the NCI, are often the most sick and their families the most stressed. CCF's support of The Inn has truly helped these children enroll, and stay enrolled, in life-saving clinical trials."

Over the years, CCF has played an integral role in the growth of The Inn, providing more than 22 grants, totaling \$1,787,040. These grants supported many of the major capital projects and improvements that directly affect our residents, including funding for the Great Room in the main lobby, the children's Computer Room, the Reflection Space, the Entertainment Room at The Woodmont House and more.

"I was a new member of the CCF Board of Directors when I attended the initial dedication for the Great Room at The Inn and can still recall the joy that Shirley expressed about the foundation's role in creating a truly wonderful place for the children and their families. The Inn has a special place in the hearts of our members and we look forward to continuing our relationship in the years to come," says Dr. Jerry Chadwick, CCF President.



We learned from more than 200 participants of our survey that The Inn indeed has a significant positive impact on families during their stay.

Measuring The Inn's Effectiveness

The Inn has provided "A Place Like Home" for the more than 12,000 children families who have stayed here since opening in 1990. We wanted to know if we were meeting the needs of our families and ensure that our resources are applied in the most optimal way. Last year, The Inn launched a strategic evaluation plan to demonstrate mission impact and organizational effectiveness. We hope to gain comprehensive information, which we will share with key stakeholders to convey the impact of their efforts.

The first part of the strategic plan was a family survey. From June to September 2013, caregivers and patients over the age of 18 were asked to complete a survey designed to gauge why they chose the NIH for treatment, how The Inn impacted their emotional, social, and financial well being, and what programs and services were particularly beneficial. The survey results revealed that: without The Inn, families would have trouble coming to the NIH for treatment due to housing costs; anxiety levels were reported to have decreased for both the caregiver and child during their stay at The Inn; and families appreciated the wide array of programs and activities offered.

We now have concrete data to show that we are meeting the goals of our mission. This information will be used to continue to improve current services and meet the changing needs of patients and families.

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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 and click on Get INNvolved to learn more about how you can help the many children and families who call The Inn home.

An Evening for Hope to Benefit The Inn

On April 5, 2014, The Children's Inn will celebrate its inaugural "An Evening for Hope" fundraising event at The Ritz-Carlton in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. More than 600 health industry supporters, high-level corporate executives, and entrepreneurs who represent all areas of the federal information technology community will attend to show their support of The Inn and its mission to provide "A Place Like Home" for families with seriously ill children treated at the National Institutes of Health, the nation's premier biomedical research center. Under the excellent leadership of Robert Guerra, a long-time supporter of The Children's Inn, and Kelvin Womack, Vice Chair of The Inn's Board of Directors, the evening will be one you won't want to miss!

Guests will enjoy dinner in a lively and entertaining atmosphere, highlighted by a show-stopping performance by the "Original Dream Girl," Tony and Grammy Award-winning singer, Jennifer Holliday. A silent and live auction, with items ranging from a trip to Cabo San Lucas and spa treatments, to a week-long getaway to a beautiful beach house in Florida, will entice guests to bid generously to support The Inn. Guests also have the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win a luxurious vacation to the spectacular Marriott Desert Springs Villas in Palm Desert, California.

Sponsorships and individual tickets are still available! To learn more about the event, or to purchase a raffle ticket today, please visit www.AnEveningforHope.org.



The Original Dream Girl, Tony and Grammy Award-winning singer Jennifer Holliday, will perform at The Inn's inaugural "An Evening for Hope" fundraiser on April 5.