



Executive Director Message

The Next 25

Twenty-five years is quite a milestone! I hope you enjoy the stories and photos in this issue celebrating our anniversary and the amazing community that made Molly's dream come true. Be sure to also check out the 25th anniversary posts on our Facebook page (photos, fun facts and more).

While we honor the past, we also focus on keeping Molly's House strong for another 25 years. That's why I'm so excited about a new project we started over the summer with a growing team of teen volunteers.

Social media is a great platform to let people know about Molly's House, but it only works if you know how to use it. I'm fairly savvy with Facebook, but I struggle to keep up with Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, etc. Young people are social media experts. Our student volunteers helped us create a structured project that taps into their fresh ideas, enthusiasm and social media skills to help us raise awareness and funds. Watch for more details of their efforts in upcoming newsletters, emails and social media posts.

I love working with these teens. They're well aware that Molly's House began with a teenager, which hopefully shows them they can have a lasting impact on their community too.

Katie Watts, Executive Director

BUILT BY Unseen and Unsung Heroes

Molly's House became a reality through the determination of her family and a small group of their friends who together mapped out plans over food at the Prawn Broker restaurant. They put together golf tournaments and clambakes. Molly's grandfather even dug up the clams himself.

Three people pooled their money to buy the lot on Osceola Street. Kevin Sharkey's brother worked the bulldozer that knocked down the dilapidated buildings on the site. And this was just the beginning of Molly's extended family, family friends and community pitching in wherever they could.

The original plan for Molly's House

was for a one-floor, two-to-three-bedroom house. When leaders at Martin Memorial Hospital (now Cleveland Clinic Martin Health) got involved, they recommended eight rooms, so plans were made to add a second floor. When Molly's House opened in 1996, the new building boasted 14 guest rooms.

While Kevin was starting his air-conditioning business, he hunted daily for contractors who would donate time or supplies to build the house. Anyone who got a call from him knew why he was calling. It wasn't unusual for a contractor to just show up on-site to work. According to Kevin, the only items that needed to be paid for were the

lot, concrete, staircase and elevator. That means everything from the trusses to the windows, electrical, plumbing, air conditioners, and even painting and furniture was donated by the community.

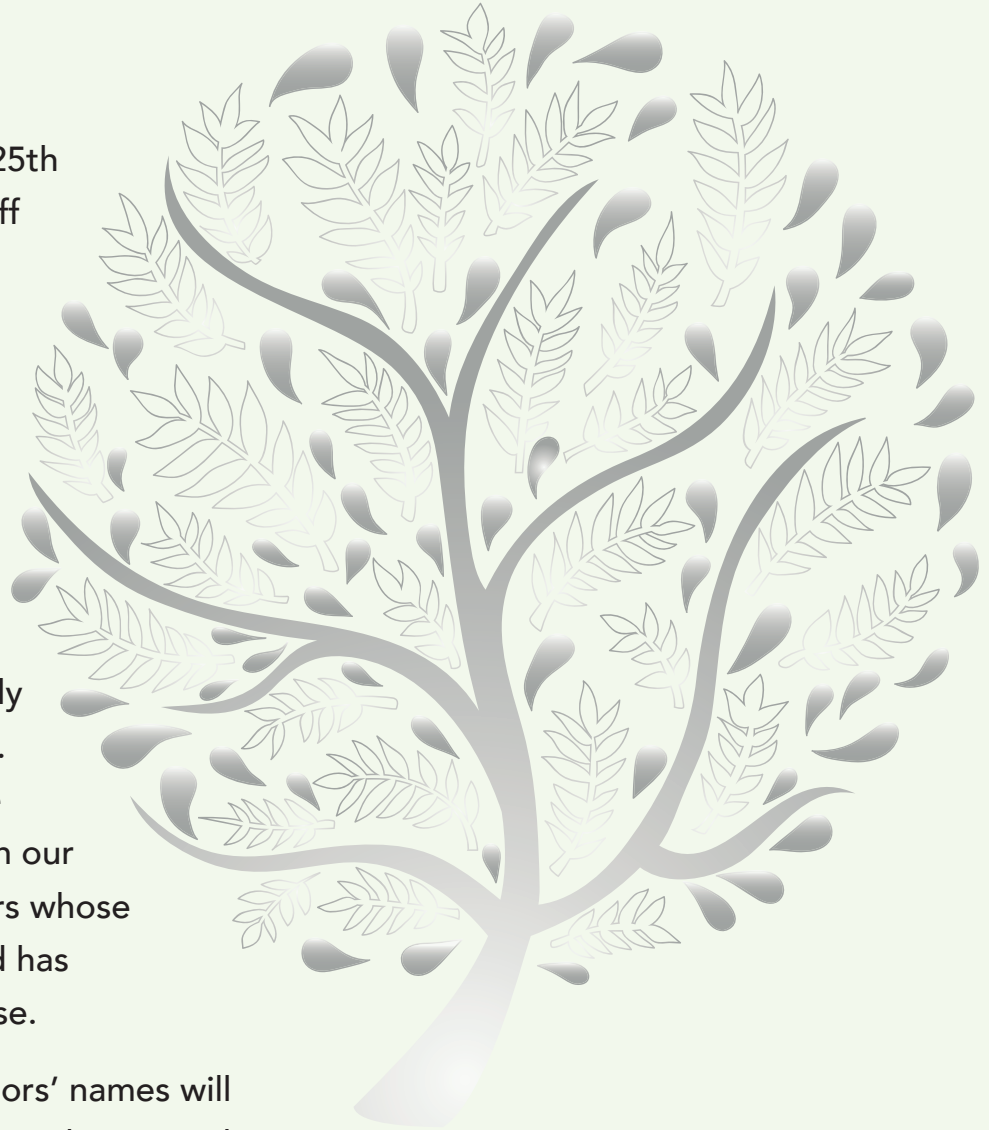
After 14 months of construction, with all volunteer labor, Molly's House was ready for guests. The list of those who gave time and materials is long; and after 25 years, some of the names have faded, but their generosity has not. Kevin explains there is a story behind each of the many plaques displayed throughout Molly's House. He credits a **"very giving and involved community"** for building Molly's House.

Join Our 25 YEARS CELEBRATION

To celebrate our 25th anniversary and kick off another 25 years of welcoming patients and their families during medical crises and treatment, we're creating a 25th Anniversary Silver Celebration Tree that will be prominently displayed in our lobby. It will complement the beautiful Tree of Life in our library honoring donors whose generosity started and has sustained Molly's House.

Silver Celebration donors' names will be engraved on the tree's leaves and on stones around the base. These donors and those who are recognized on the Tree of Life will be invited to an intimate gathering and 25th Anniversary Silver Celebration Tree unveiling in early 2022.

If you would like to learn more about the 25th Anniversary Silver Celebration Tree, visit mollyshouse.org or call Katie at (772) 223-6659.



Still Returning

LOVE, SUPPORT AND KINDNESS

"This house is even more than Molly dreamed it would be," says Debby Sharkey. "I know it's exceeded her expectations." Reflecting on the 25th anniversary of the opening of Molly's House, Debby and Kevin Sharkey are still in awe of how the community came together to build the house described in their daughter's journal. As Kevin explains, "We knew early on this was bigger than us."

When 14-year-old Molly, dressed as an angel, fainted during a Christmas pageant, no one suspected a rare form of leukemia. The determined teenager conveyed hope and optimism as she and her family traveled in search of doctors, treatments and a bone marrow donor. The family learned to navigate the healthcare system and keep their spirits up on the road. Debby confesses she snuck into hospitals' medical libraries to learn more about Molly's disease.

The family also needed places to stay while making these trips. Thankfully, they often found local Ronald McDonald Houses. In a television interview, Molly described these houses as offering a shoulder to cry on and warm, comfortable rooms. She said, "They're built out of love and care...and they made the ordeal easier."

Out of that experience grew Molly's idea to create a similar house in her hometown of Stuart, near the local hospital. She shared her vision through interviews and conversations with her doctors and in her journal. Molly wanted to give people peace of mind. Guests would be close to their loved ones. Patients wouldn't have to worry about where their families were staying, and they could stay there if they needed to be near the hospital when they were released.

It was important to Molly that the house be open to everyone in the community and not be restricted to pediatric patients, as Ronald McDonald Houses are. Rooms would be inexpensive and no one would be refused because they couldn't pay. In addition to these wishes, her journals provided very specific details for Molly's House, including on-site laundry, communal kitchens and a window seat overlooking the garden.

According to her mother, Molly knew that many who would want to support the project wouldn't be able to give money. "She saw someone donating a book for the library or a tea towel for the kitchen." Debby describes her first-born child as having a servant's heart. As Molly told a local reporter, "My idea to build a house in my own community is a way to return the love, support and kindness I've received."

In retelling the story of how Molly's House came to be, Debby and Kevin focus on the people they met along the way. Parents of other leukemia patients who offered advice. Doctors who cared for Molly, listened to her describe the house and got involved in making it happen. And all those who showed up to provide whatever was needed before the Sharkeys even knew they needed it.



Find out more about Molly and Molly's House on our YouTube channel, and visit our new and improved website, mollyshouse.org

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We knew early on this was bigger than us.

MOLLY'S HOUSE

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

430 SE Osceola Street
Stuart, FL 34994

Nonprofit
Permit
Stuart, FL
#849



Celebrating Our

25th
Anniversary

WAS THIS newsletter forwarded to you?

Please let us know if you have a seasonal address you'd like us to use. Email us at kwatts@mollyshouse.org or give us a call at (772) 223-6659 with the address and months you'd like to receive Molly's House mailings there.

OUR MISSION

To support patients receiving medical treatment by providing temporary affordable accommodations to them and their families.

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