Fisher Houses Wright-Patterson AFB and Dayton VA Medical Center

Touching Lives with Compassion

Chris Stanley

Executive Director

Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

Wright-Patterson AFB – the Birthplace, Home and Future of aerospace….

but, did you know it is also the birthplace of compassionate care housing in the Department of Defense?

The Wright-Patt Fisher Houses provide an opportunity for military families to stay together and support each other when a loved one is undergoing medical treatment. The Houses provide physical and emotional support to our servicemen and servicewomen and their families.

The Wright-Patterson AFB Fisher Houses assisted 1,041 Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines (active duty, retired, Guard, Reserve and veterans) and their families in 2016!

The Beginning…..

- Foresight of Captain Gretchen Lizza
  - Involved and gained support of base leadership and private organizations
- Nightingale House opened in May 1990
  - Converted base housing across the street from the Medical Center
  - First compassionate care facility in the Department of Defense

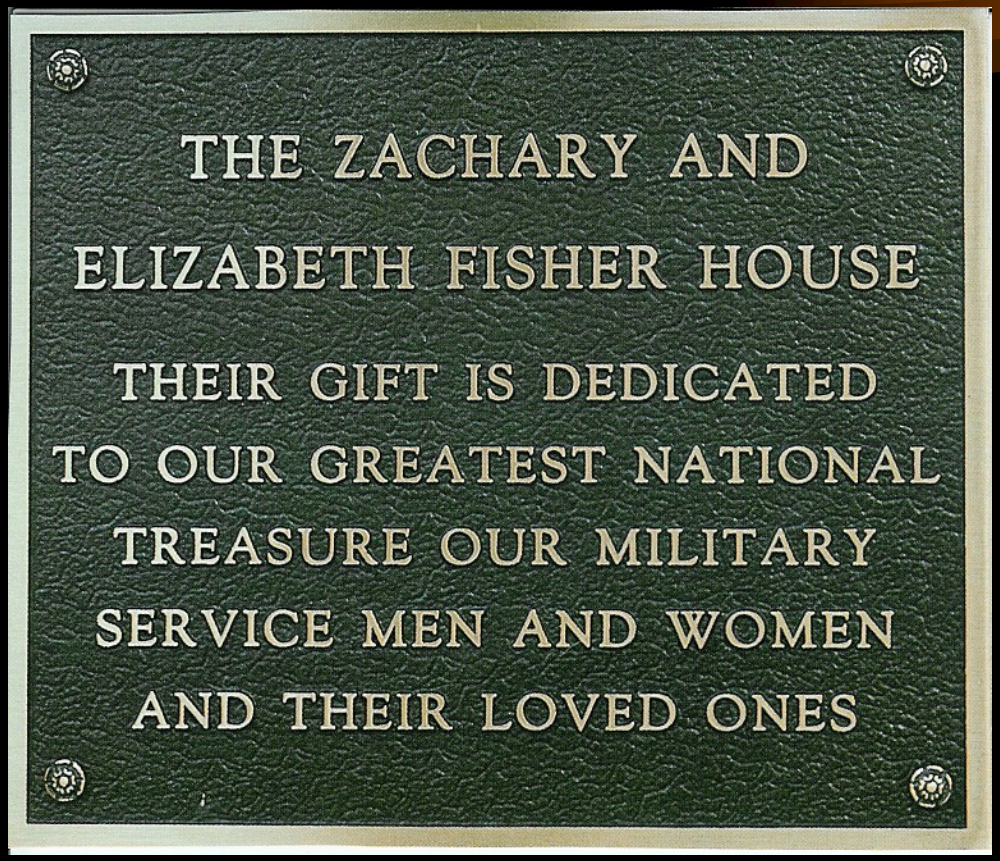
Captain (ret) Gretchen Lizza and family

Along come the Fishers…..

- Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher were asked to build one Ronald McDonald-type house at Bethesda Naval Medical Center
  - Due to prior involvement with military, they agreed
    - Check and personal note to each family of service members killed in Marine HQ bombing in Beirut, Lebanon and in Gander, Newfoundland and aboard the USS Iowa
    - Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum – New York City
  - First Fisher House opened in 1991
    - Now 71 Fisher Houses at 54 locations world-wide
    - 4 under construction now; 30 additional locations with a recognized need

"My thoughts of life have always been to do something in life that will outlast life. I was fortunate to find something that fulfills that goal completely."

Zachary Fisher


THE ZACHARY AND
ELIZABETH FISHER HOUSE
THEIR GIFT IS DEDICATED
TO OUR GREATEST NATIONAL
TREASURE OUR MILITARY
SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN
AND THEIR LOVED ONES

Zachary Fisher and the Joint Chiefs of Staff at a reception following the presentation of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

(14 September 1998)

Houses…..

- Nightingale House
  - Converted base house (two 3 bedroom units in a duplex)
  - Eight bedrooms; four bathrooms; two half baths
    - Six families shared two 2nd story bathrooms
  - Two kitchens, two dining areas, two living rooms
  - Not handicapped accessible
  - Demolished in Feb 2011

Houses…..

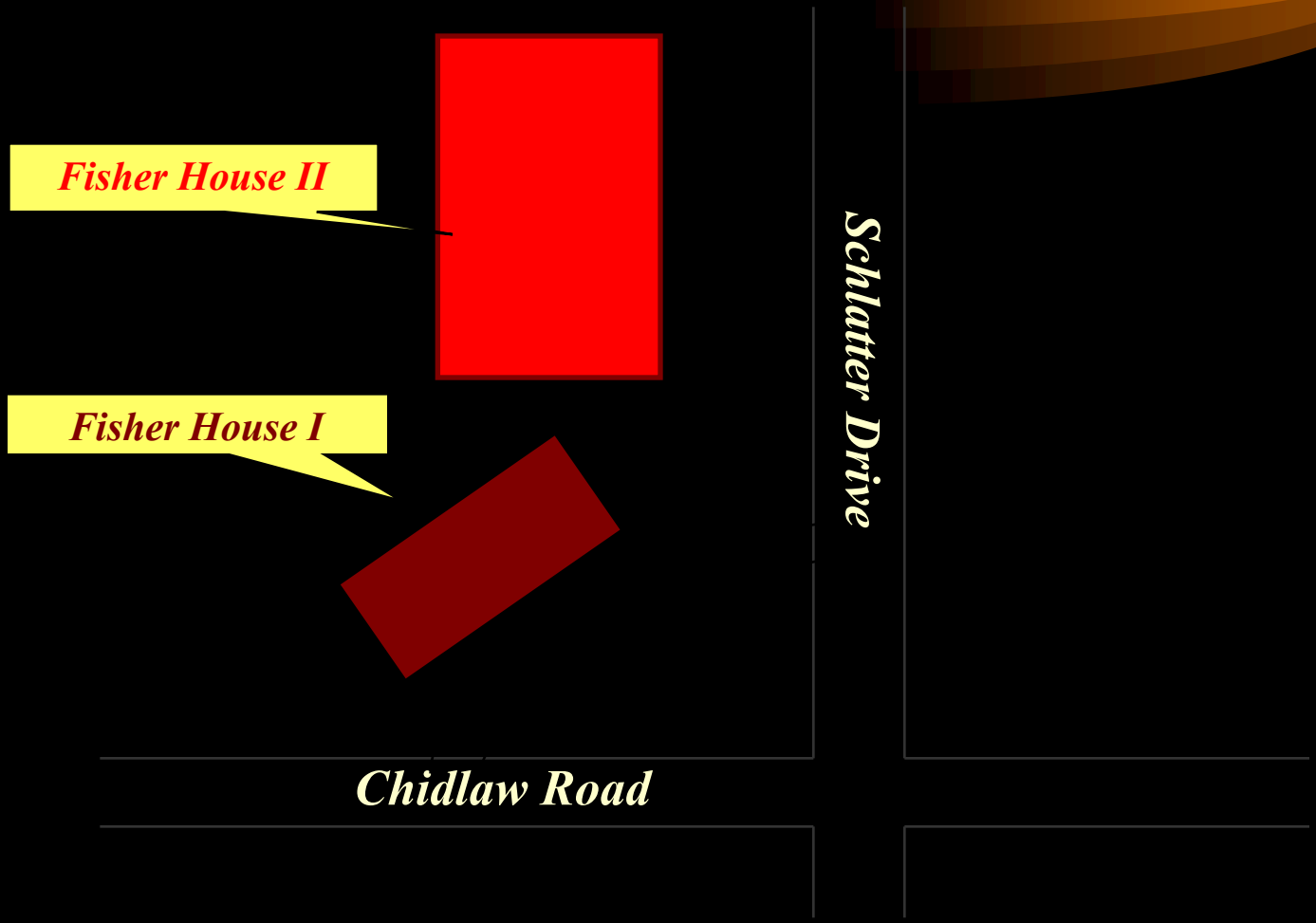
- Fisher House I (opened in May 1994)
  - Five single bedrooms and two two-bedroom suites
  - Seven bathrooms; one half bath
  - Kitchen, dining area, living room and laundry
  - Gazebo

Wright-Patterson AFB's newest Fisher House!

Why a new Fisher House?

- The Nightingale House was a converted base house
  - From two three-bedroom units to an eight bedroom facility (including the conversion of the two garages to two bedrooms)
  - Compared to the current Fisher Houses, this house was constructed in 1975 and was not handicapped accessible
  - Two of the eight bedrooms had private baths; the other six bedrooms shared two small upstairs hallway baths
  - There were two small kitchens and two dining/living room areas

Location of the new House….



Fisher House II – opened in April 2011

- 12 bedrooms with 13.5 handicapped-accessible ADA compliant bathrooms
- 10,000 square feet
- Living room, family room, kitchen and dining room
- Expanded laundry capabilities
- Single story
- Manager's office

✓ Added 1,460 bed nights a year
(from 17 bedrooms to 21 bedrooms)

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Entrance

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Living room

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Dining room

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Side hallway (back and front exits)

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Bedroom

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Bathroom

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Kitchen

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Kitchen

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Pass through from kitchen to family room

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Family room

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Family room

"Tour" of the new Fisher House

Laundry room

Fisher House Playground

Capital campaign….

- The cost of the new House was $4M
- The Fisher House Foundation challenged the FNHI to raise $1M towards the new House
  - Kicked off campaign in December 2007
  - Reached goal and went on to exceed the goal

Houses and occupancy…..

- Twenty-one bedrooms between the two Houses – equates to 7,665 bed nights a year
  - FH I: 2 two-bedroom suites; 3 w/two doubles; 6 w/2 singles (5 pullout chairs)
  - FH II: 8 w/one queen; 2 w/2 doubles; 2 w/two singles
- Average in excess of 95 percent occupancy
- Unfortunately, demand for rooms fluctuated and each month some families had to be turned away due to unavailability of space (based on a priority system) – this new House helps to alleviate this problem

Houses serve everyone…..

- In nearly 27 years of operations, the Wright-Patterson AFB Fisher Houses have served over twenty thousand families
  - From all branches of the military
  - From stateside and overseas
  - Active duty, retired, Guard and Reserve and their families
- Average length of stay is 11 days
  - Some stay for only a day or two and others for months – even up to a year or more

Guest charge…..

- Previously, guests were charged $10 per night, per room
  - In the event a family expressed concern about their ability to pay this nominal fee, the House Managers had the latitude to waive the fees for the guests and the Fisher/ Nightingale Houses, Inc. then paid the waived fees, ensuring no family was turned away due to a financial situation
- In October 2006, the Fisher House Foundation started reimbursing the $10 per-night guest fee – guests now stay in the Houses for free (and at no cost to taxpayers)

Volunteers key to our success…..

- In addition to small paid staff (1 full-time and 2 part-time managers; 1 full-time and 1 part-time housekeeper), numerous volunteers support the House guests
  - Provided 579.5 hours of service to the Houses in 2016 and groups provided another 1,449 hours plus the popcorn volunteers who put in 1,256.5 hours
    - Utilizing the Independent Sector national volunteer rate of $23.56 an hour, that's a $77,395 savings!
  - Staff could not have supported guests without this unselfish giving of time (the most valuable resource)

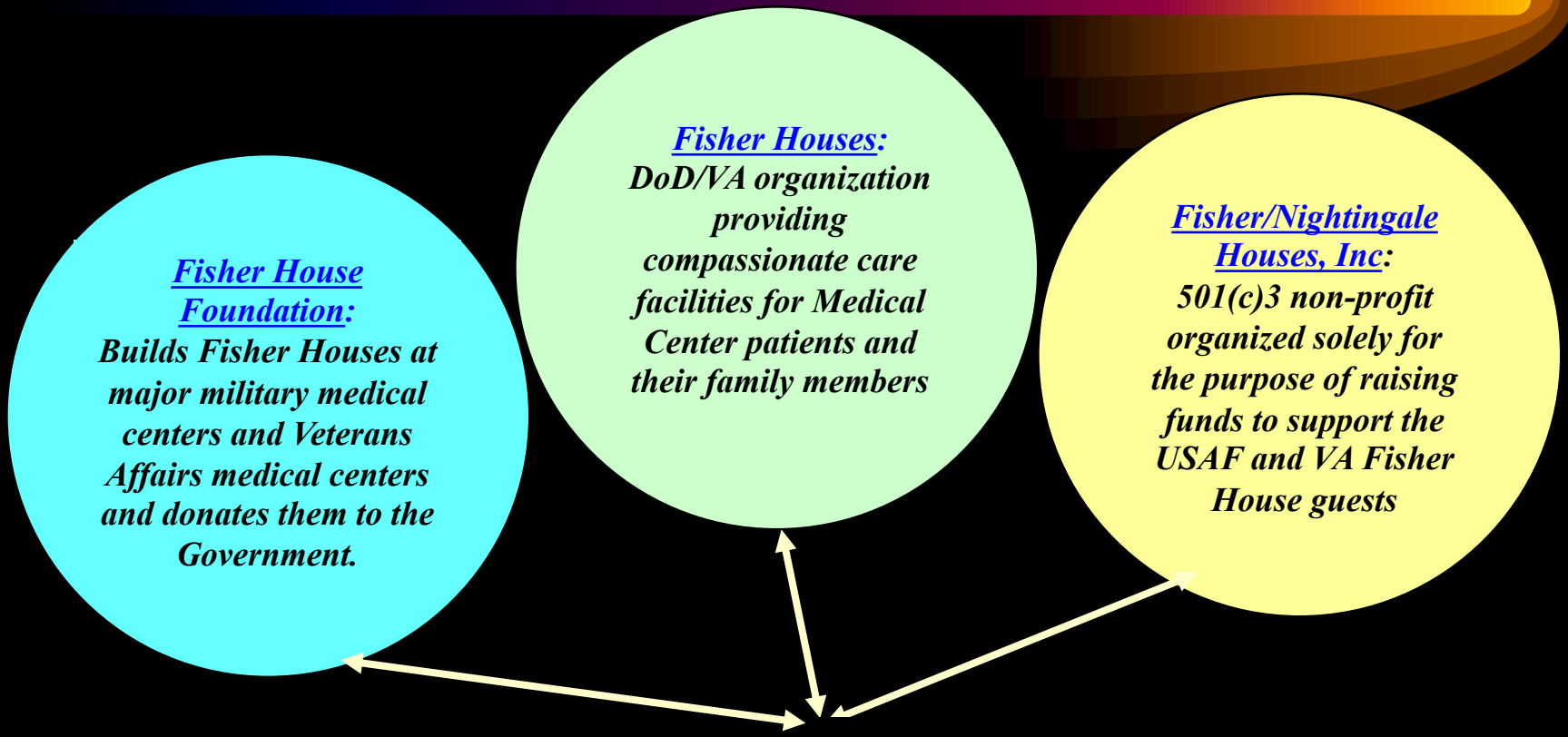
Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

- A private, 501(c)3 nonprofit, registered in the State of Ohio
- Registered with the Miami Valley Better Business Bureau Charitable Advisory Service
- Sole mission: raise funds to support compassionate care lodging for patients and their families receiving treatment at the Wright-Patt Medical Center

Government's involvement…..

- The Fisher Houses are owned, managed and supported financially by the Air Force and the Department of Defense
- The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. donates funds to the Air Force and Department of Defense each month to cover all costs associated with the day-to-day operation of the Houses
- The organization also donates additional funds, services, and items (large and small) to the Air Force and Department of Defense specifically in support of the Fisher Houses and their guests

Relationship of the Fisher House Foundation, the Fisher Houses and the FNHI…..



Shared goal: Provide the absolute best compassionate care facilities and support to the individuals receiving treatment and/or their family members.

Need Meets Generosity

The Dayton VA Medical Center,
The Fisher House Foundation,
Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. and
The Greener Pastures Foundation

The Dayton VA Medical Center

- Legacy from Dayton Soldiers Home authorized by Abraham Lincoln on March 3, 1865
  - Accepted first patient in 1867
  - One of three National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers
    - Third oldest VA Medical Center
  - By 1884, caring for >7,000 Civil War Veterans; worlds largest
  - 1st Racially Integrated Home/Hospital
  - In 2012, Awarded National Historic Landmark Status
    - Fewer than 2500 historic places bear this national distinction

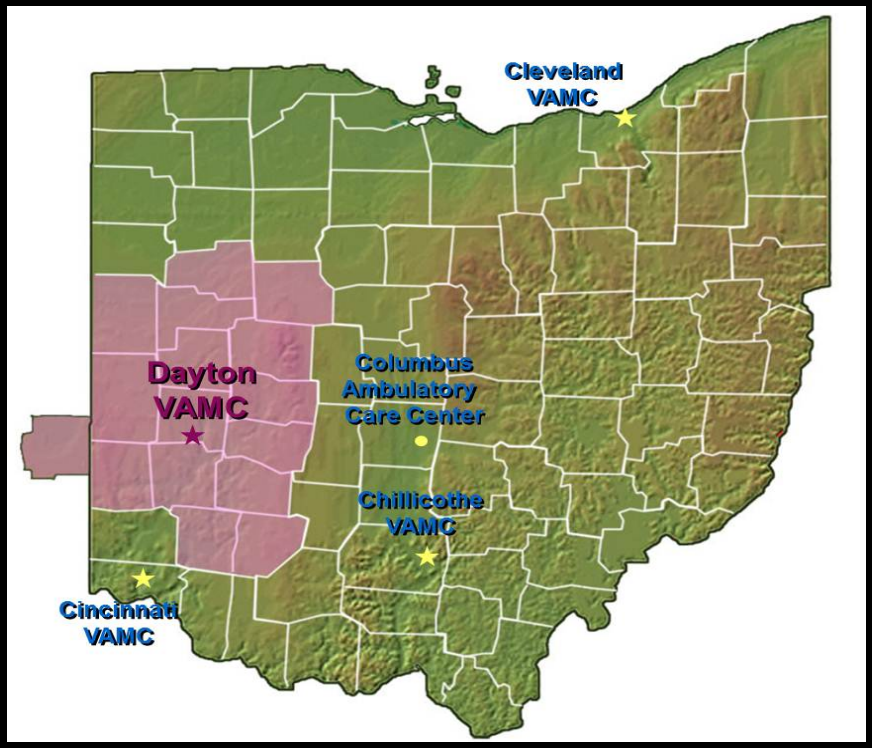
The Dayton VA Medical Center

- Tertiary Care Facility
- Complexity Level 1c (Levels 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 3)
- Authorized 486 Beds & Types
  - 91 Acute Beds
    - Medical
    - Surgical
    - Inpatient
    - Intensive Care/Transitional Care
    - Rehabilitation
    - Mental Health
  - 280 Community Living Center (Nursing Home Care)
  - 115 Mental Health Residential
  - Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- Fiscal Year 2016:
  - 56,903 enrolled Veterans
  - 4,716 admissions
  - 507,403 outpatient visits

The Dayton VA Medical Center Serving Veterans in Ohio

Facility Locations

Service Area



The Dayton VA Medical Center

- Medical Center
- National Cemetery

- 382 Acres
- 63 Total Buildings (24 Historic)
- 6 Vacant Buildings
- 8 Tenants/Occupants

- Currently, no on-campus Veteran or family member lodging is available
  - VFW-operated Hospitality House, built in 1885, opened in October 1986 but closed in March 2015
  - Requesters referred to Marriott near University of Dayton, WPAFB Fisher Houses, and other commercial providers – all distant
- FY2014
  - Hospitality House Requests: 520
  - Average Weekly Request: 12
- Voluntary Services Support
  - Volunteer base
  - Veterans Service Organizations
  - Donations

The Greener Pastures Foundation

- Donors' expressed desire "to help a veteran"
- Information provided, and subsequent deliberations led to July 17, 2015 letter of intent to donate $1.075 million to the Fisher House Foundation for a Fisher House at the Dayton VA Medical Center
  - Accompanying donor request for "community involvement" at $0.5 million, for operating expense reserve and to cement awareness, sense of ownership, and on-going support
- Interactions between Department of Veterans Affairs, Fisher House Foundation, Greener Pastures Foundation and other related parties all moved quickly in a positive direction
  - Fisher House Foundation letter to VA, August 12, 2015, requesting "consideration for…out-of-cycle evaluation on the need…"
  - Secretary of the VA signed off on priority need
  - Fisher House Foundation elevated Dayton VA Medical Center on priority list
  - Working to July 2017 groundbreaking for a 16 bedroom house

How you can help…..

- It costs a lot of money of operate the two Houses on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and we want to meet the Greener Pastures Foundation support "challenge" for the new Dayton VA Fisher House
- Thanks to generous supporters who gave generously last year, we were able to get the job done.
- The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. is *not* a government agency. Each year we wouldn't succeed without the generosity of caring Americans…like you!

How you can help…..

- Charitable donations to the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. help defray the day-to-day operational expenses of the Houses
  - Contributors can be
    - Organizations, both on-base and off-base
    - Corporations
    - Individuals

How you can help…..

- Based on the calendar year 2017 budget of expenses needed to support the operations of the Fisher Houses
  - A donation of $38 will help one family spend a night in the Houses
  - A donation of $114 will help three families
  - A donation of $1,000 will help 26 families spend a night in the Houses
- Without your help to offset the day-to-day operational costs, the fee would be $38 per night/per room

FNHI Membership Program…..

- Established in 2002 – provides an opportunity to obtain one of three levels of membership in the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.
  - Member: 25 hours of volunteer service to the Houses; a donation from $50 to $250; a donation-in-kind valued at $50 to $250
  - Friend: 50 hours of volunteer service to the Houses; a donation of $251 to $500; a donation-in-kind valued at $250 to $500
  - Patron: 100 hours of volunteer service to the Houses; a donation of $501 or more; a donation-in-kind valued at $501 or more

Closing…..

- Most likely you know someone who has had to travel away from their home for some sort of medical treatment
- This can be traumatic enough, not to mention compounding the situation with finding a place to stay, the potentially high costs for the place to stay and food, as well as the loneliness of a hotel room
- Whether for a few days, a month or a year, this type of situation can wear on a family, financially, emotionally and physically
- For our servicemen and women and veterans and their families, that's where Fisher Houses step up to the challenge

"A Port In A Storm"

We came to a town we did not know,
Without a friend in sight;

With doors wide open, arms out stretched,
You bid us stay the night.

Others who were far from home
Had lit upon your door

And having similar hopes and fears,
Shared comfort, smiles and more.

You touch the lives of this who stay –
A shelter in the storm,

For lives in chaos, fear and strife,
A haven, safe and warm.

Valerie Brooks
Mother of Ryan Hall, Naval Seaman Recruit
A Fisher House Guest, Bethesda Maryland,
November 1991

It's time to help…..

In a national poll, Americans placed the highest level of confidence in the U. S. military (of all institutions).

At this time in our country's history, we're asking more of our Armed Forces than we have for a generation. Our military members have risen to meet *their* challenges magnificently!

Can we count on you to help us meet *our* challenge….to show each of these wonderful men and women and their families *how much we appreciate them?*

Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
Nightingale House - May 1990
25th
Anniversary
Fisher Houses - May 1994 & April 2011
Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

Fisher Houses provide an invaluable service to military men and women and veterans and their families – won't you consider reaching out a caring hand to help a military or veteran family today?

Consider helping, please…..

- Consider a donation to the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.
- Contact the Executive Director, Chris Stanley, for more information
  - Mail: Post Office Box 33871, WPAFB OH 45433
  - Home phone: 937-372-5784
  - Cell phone: 937-672-8724
  - E-mail: cstanley@woh.rr.com

The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. is a private organization. It is not part of the Department of Defense or any of its components or the Department of Veterans Affairs and it has no governmental status.