



***Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.***

***Touching Lives with Compassion***

# Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

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## 2019 Annual Report



*WPAFB Fisher House I*



*WPAFB Fisher House II*



*DVAMC Fisher House*

***Providing an opportunity for military and Veteran families to stay together and support each other when a loved one is undergoing medical treatment.***

***The Fisher Houses provide physical and emotional support to our servicemen and servicewomen, Veterans, and their families.***



Partner Agency





FISHER-NIGHTINGALE  
HOUSES

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***The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. is a private 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to supporting the Fisher Houses (compassionate care facilities) at Wright-Patterson AFB and the historic Dayton VA Medical Center. It is not part of the Department of Defense or any of its components (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard) or the Department of Veterans Affairs and it has no governmental status.***

# Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

June 1, 2020

Dear Friends,

With the opening of the Nightingale House at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in May 1990, compassionate care housing in the Department of Defense was born. Later that year, Zach and Elizabeth Fisher started a dream that, as of May 2020, includes a network of 87 Fisher Houses world-wide, with more under construction, pending construction or identified with a recognized need. Fisher House I opened at Wright-Patterson AFB in May 1994. The Nightingale House was demolished in February 2011 and replaced by Fisher House II in April 2011. The Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher House opened in October 2018.

The three Dayton area Fisher Houses are extremely proud to be part of the support provided to our military men and women and their families by the Fisher House Foundation. **With a total of 37 bedroom suites, the two Wright-Patterson AFB and the Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher Houses offer 13,505 nights of lodging each year at no cost to the guests, saving them more than \$2M in local hotel costs alone annually – in a beautiful home environment. As a matter of fact, since May 1990, the Dayton area Fisher Houses have had the capacity to support more than 200,000 nights for the guests and, at a calculation of a hotel cost of \$125 per night, the Houses have had the capability to save the guests more than \$25,000,000 in hotel costs alone!**

Fisher Houses provide an opportunity for military and veteran families to stay together and support each other when a loved one is undergoing medical treatment, providing physical and emotional support to our servicemen and servicewomen, veterans and their families. The three Dayton area Fisher Houses serve families of all ranks, branches of the armed forces and all components, including active duty, Guard, Reserve, retired and Veterans. **More than 1,000 families a year are assisted annually by these three Fisher Houses and they have assisted nearly twenty-five thousand families in 30 years of existence.**

Ken Fisher, Chairman and CEO of the Fisher House Foundation, has stated “There can be no better medicine and treatment for our service men, women and veterans than the presence and love of their families. Fisher Houses ensure that those who have paid the price for our freedoms get just that. Families pay nothing to stay in these Fisher Houses and that’s the way it should be.”

David McIntyre, President and CEO of TriWest Healthcare Alliance wrote “It’s important for us as a nation to make sure that we can assist the families who have sacrificed so much. It allows us to help those families in caring for their loved ones, because complete and speedy recovery comes when the family is able to be around you in the caregiving process.”

More important than any statistic are the expressions of gratitude the House staff and volunteers hear from families who have stayed in the Houses. They would not have known how to cope with the crisis in their family – financially, emotionally and physically – had they not been able to stay at a Fisher House and receive the support that comes from the dedicated managers, staff, volunteers and other house guests.

I continue to be very humbled to serve as the Executive Director of the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. I know that I am part of an organization that makes a difference every day in the lives of our wounded, injured and ill service members, Veterans and their families. To quote a friend of mine, Mary Considine, Fisher House Foundation Chief of Staff, “From various hometowns across the nation, the military and veterans we serve at Fisher Houses left what was known and comfortable to stand for a higher purpose. Now it’s our turn to show how much we appreciate them.”

We fully know and genuinely appreciate that our organization has been able to do what we do because of the generous support of and partnerships with people, organizations and companies, on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, in the local community and beyond. We truly appreciate all of the support our organization receives. We will continue to be good stewards of your donations and our organization’s support of the Fisher House guests will not diminish.

**Paramount to the success we’ve enjoyed is the sacred trust we hold with donors/partners thanks to a constant focus on carefully managing costs – more than 92 cents of every dollar goes to program expenses that benefit wounded, injured and ill military men and women, Veterans, and their families. **Think of your donation this way: It’s not about giving money, but more significantly about directly impacting and changing the course of someone’s recovery.....because a family’s love is good medicine!****

With great gratitude,



CHRISTOPHER P. Z. STANLEY  
Senior Master Sergeant, USAF (Retired)  
Executive Director

## The Beautiful Faces of Hope: How the Fisher Houses provide guests with so much more than just a place to stay



*Alicia McChord stays at the Fisher House when her grandmother receives medical attention at the Wright-Patterson Medical Center. Ms. McChord enjoys taking advantage of the house's kitchen, where she cooks for herself and other house guests. (Courtesy photo)*

Hope could be the single most important service that the Fisher Houses provide. These three compassionate care houses, located on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base adjacent to the Wright-Patterson Medical Center and at the historic Dayton VA Medical Center provide an affordable, refuge close to the medical centers for patients and their families.

The Wright-Patterson Medical Center draws patients from around the world. It is the largest medical center in the Air Force and offers many specialty clinics.

The Dayton VA Medical Center primarily draws patients from Ohio and Indiana. The campus is the third oldest in the country, opening in September 1867 after President Lincoln signed a law to establish these in March 1865. It was also the first fully integrated campus.

The Fisher Houses are a haven after long days at the hospital and a place to rest and regain strength for the next day's challenges. Families can spend time alone in their rooms, or share conversation and meals

with people in similar circumstances in the warm atmosphere of our kitchen and dining room.

The House managers and volunteers reduce the feeling of isolation by helping guests get settled and letting each family know they are never alone.

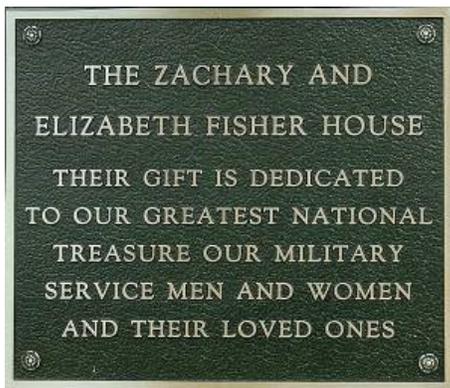
Captain Gretchen Lizza, whose son was fighting leukemia, saw the need for a home-away-from-home at Wright-Patterson and helped establish the Nightingale House, the first compassionate care house in the Department of Defense, opening in May 1990.

In May 1994, Zachary Fisher, a construction industry giant, and his wife Elizabeth donated a Fisher House to Wright-Patterson. They wanted to give something back to the men and women serving their country. Fisher House II opened at Wright-Patterson AFB in April 2011. The Dayton VA Fisher House opened to guests in October 2018.

Today, there are 87 Fisher Houses at 64 locations (25 military installations, 38 VA medical centers plus one in the United

Kingdom for the British families) serving our armed forces, with groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies planned in 2020, more pending construction and even more in the recognized need phase.

More than 1,200 families a year are assisted annually by the three Dayton area Fisher Houses and they have assisted nearly twenty-five thousand families in 30 years of existence.



Together the Dayton area Fisher Houses have served thousands of families. The average length of stay is 10 days. Some guests stay for only a day or two while others stay for months. We've even had guests stay up to a year or more. The Houses are nearly to completely full almost every week.

As soon as visitors cross the welcome mat and enter the front door, homelike comforts abound.

The Houses are professionally furnished and decorated. There are nine bedrooms in Fisher House I, twelve bedrooms in Fisher House II and sixteen bedrooms in the Dayton VA Fisher House. They all have common living rooms, dining rooms, laundry rooms, and fully equipped kitchens.

All utilities are provided, including private phone lines and laptops in each room. This allows guests direct communication with the hospital and their families.

Until September 30, 2006, rooms cost a nominal \$10 a night which helped cover some of the operational expenses. However, on October 1, the Fisher House Foundation began paying the \$10 a night room fee, so guests no longer pay to stay in any Fisher Houses. The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. does the fundraising to support the guests.

The Fisher/Nightingale Houses Inc. is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, registered in the state of Ohio. Our mission is to raise funds to support compassionate care lodging for patients and their families receiving critical medical treatment at the Wright-Patterson Medical Center and the Dayton VA Medical Center. The Board, along with the dedicated managers, volunteers and our generous Miami Valley partners ensure the continued success of these Houses and the Fisher's vision.

Even after Zachary's death in 1999, the Fisher Foundation continues to work under the leadership of his nephews and grandnephews.

"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

## House Guest Comments – They Say it Best

“It’s hard to put in to words what being here has meant to us. It’s our Fisher ‘Home’ not ‘The Fisher House’. All of you and many of the other guests have become like family. We have been able to share our experiences (good and bad) with you all and know that we are not alone. Everything was so new and scary for us at first, but right away we felt at home here. As much as we may have thought we wanted to be at home in Wisconsin, I know now this is where we were supposed to have been. It means so much to us to have had your support and friendship during our stay; it has made a huge difference. I don’t want to think about what it would have been like if the Fisher House (all of you included) was not here for us – and so many others. Sometimes we forget about the reasons we are here and are just going on living our lives and sometimes the reasons are so in our face it’s hard to breathe...hard to see anything else. It’s then that we’d see your smiles or you would share a story or a place to visit that you’d think we would be interested in and things would seem ‘normal’ again. That is what it is all about; finding “normal” in the midst of all this craziness. Thank you with all of our hearts.” *Dan and Mary J.*

“Fisher House is the place I go for security and comfort. I sleep good here, and I feel safe to cry here. I get close to the Lord here. Fisher House makes my life easier in taking care of my needs so I can be there for my folks. Without this help I don’t think I could be with my parents. Please pass this blessing along as I have received so much for my family and I hope that maybe we will have support for the Fisher Houses so others can be helped too.” *Deborah H.*

“We have been here for 14 days and have enjoyed every minute of our time here. We have really enjoyed the hospitality of the whole staff. Our lives have been so stressed from everything we are going through, but the Fisher House is a wonderful place that has made us feel secure and welcome. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.” *Tommy and Arlene J.*

“What a blessing the Fisher House is! When stress and anxiety descend on me, it is such a comfort to be greeted here by friendly, caring people. The Fisher’s saw a great need and filled it so that difficult times might be made as pleasant as possible. Our hearts are grateful to them for this living monument to their thoughtfulness and gracious generosity.” *Harriett S.*

“I just wanted to drop you a line and say how much I’ve appreciated all your care and support to my parents over this past year and many preceding years. It’s been a difficult time dealing with both their illnesses in 2014, and Fisher House has been such a great option for their stays during their treatments and hospitalizations. You have all made Fisher Houses at Wright-Patt a warm and welcoming home, so much more than just a place to spend the night. Your genuine concern and thoughtfulness make it the next best thing to being home with family.” *Lindsay D.*

“We have been retired from the U. S. Army for 25 years and haven’t lived near a base since we moved back home to wild, wonderful West Virginia. It has been our pleasure to meet all of the great people who run the Fisher House. Julie, Ida and all of the volunteers have treated us great. We have also met some wonderful guests and patients here and wish everyone the best of luck and happiness. Thanks to the Fishers, we have enjoyed our visit to Ohio and will always remember our second home, for seven weeks!!” *Jack and Mary F.*

“I have flown here from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, to have spinal surgery. I will only stay here at the Fisher House for two nights, but I can tell this is a wonderful sanctuary for the mind and soul. This great place really reduces the anxiety of everything. I will stay in the hospital for three days before my return to Kentucky. Soldiers do not seem to be appreciated most places they travel. Coming here to this place makes 19½ years in the Army feel worth it. Thank you and God Bless.”  
***Michael R.***

“To all who work to make the Fisher House possible – Thanks so much for such a nice room and the beautiful surroundings. We enjoyed our stay so very much. It was so peaceful and relaxing. Also thanks so much for the unexpected anniversary gift – what a surprise! We shall use it when my husband heals. May God continue to bless your efforts in taking care of the Fisher Houses!”

“Thank you all very much for allowing us to stay at the lovely Fisher House. The hospitality was wonderful. The House was so clean and accommodating and so close to the Medical Center. We truly appreciate everything!” ***Larry and Jeanie S.***

“Thank you so much for the beautiful blessing. Your kindness and thoughtfulness will forever be remembered and appreciated. I was able to bring my 84 year old mother to visit her 81 year old brother. This was the first visit in several years. Thank you for making the journey stress free and allowing us to just focus on our brother and uncle.” ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

“This place has been a great blessing for my husband and I both. I usually sleep in whatever is available in the hospital room while my husband is here, but this time he was in ICU for several days over the weekend when everything is closed around here. I was able to come here and my husband did not have to worry about me. So a double blessing. Thank you.” ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

“Thank you to Zach and Elizabeth Fisher for this perfect respite. Our stay was made comfortable during the passing of my 95 year old WWII Veteran father who passed yesterday at the VA Hospice center. The VA and Fisher House provided comfort for our family.” ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

“This place is so truly great for people who are coming a long way. We are so grateful to know there is still so much kindness left in the world. The people here are so precious to so many; you all make a difference for so many people’s lives. This really makes my husband feel so much better knowing his wife is getting rest. Thank you and to the Fishers who made this all possible. Not enough can be said.” ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

“We live in Orrville, Ohio and when we arrived the evening before his surgery...we were in shock and very appreciative of the opportunity to stay here. This place is beautiful inside and out. Everything you need is right here. All we can say is that we are grateful for this beautiful home, and yes it is a home-away-from-home. My husband was able to rest and be calm prior to surgery. We just want to say thank you.” ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

“Dedicated hearts like yours are not easy to find. It takes a special person to be so generous and kind. To care so much for service members and their families is a quality all too rare. Yet you give of your time, for all in need to share. Thank you.” ***Wright-Patt AFB Fisher House guest***

I drove up from Georgie with my partner to see my father who was in the Lakeside Manor Hospice. Once all three of the children were there, we spent the day reminiscing of family memories with my father. When he passed that night, he passed peacefully with all his kids by his side. It was comforting to know that we had a beautiful place to stay during this time. Thank you, Fisher House, for allowing us to stay here. This place is such a blessing for Veteran's families. I will NOT forget your hospitality. ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

This is my third or fourth stay here at Fisher Houses and I have always been treated with kindness and dignity. I would like to thank the Fisher House family and staff for providing a safe comfortable place to rest my head while worrying about my husband while he is in the VA hospital. It is nice not to have to worry about how I am going to find the money to stay at a hotel. The Fisher House employees are always amazing. They do a great job of making sure families want for nothing during their stay. They always ask how my husband is doing and show genuine interest in our journey at the VA no matter the reason for our stay. Thank you for always being here. ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

Thank you all so much for this wonderful place. Your generosity, kindness and welcoming spirit overwhelmed my husband and me. My husband came down to get his hip checked only to be rushed to the ER for heart issues. I drove home that night and packed a bag for the next day. I would sleep on a cot if necessary because any amount of time in transit was time away from where I needed to be. I arrived at the hospital to learn about Fisher House; what a blessing you are. I was met with such kindness and a sincere wish to help me. Fisher House is the most amazing place. Your needs are met with a loving kindness here. ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

What a wonderful experience I've had at the Fisher house during my husband's surgery. The people are gracious and caring. The surroundings are so relaxing and accommodating. The staff goes above and beyond to be helpful. They are truly concerned for their guest's well-being. Being able to stay close by while my husband recuperated was such a blessing. I pray God will use this warm and welcoming facility to make a difference in the lives of those who stay here. God bless the Fisher family and all those involved for your caring and generosity. ***DVAMC Fisher House guest***

## MOM'S ROAD TO RECOVERY



*Jim, Judy & Martha Crist*

Mom paused at the door and listened momentarily. Then she stole quietly from the room with dad and me at her side. She walked around the dining room tables and up and down the hallway trying to regain her strength following surgery. She'd enter the living room, sit on the couch and spin the small wooden tops. This she said helped her keep her sanity. If we heard someone coming down the steps or in a door, she'd scurry back to our room. Following the operation, she didn't want to see anyone.

I'm not sure how Dad and I talked her into eating dinner prepared by the Jr. Red Cross that Wednesday night. Mom sat at a table where she could be in a corner. I fixed her plate and brought it to her. After dinner, the Fisher House volunteers started handing out cards and tokens for Bingo. I begged Mom to stay. Maybe she thought remaining was easier than retreating through all the people. Whatever the case, she agreed to play. Dottie called numbers. Myron handed out little, wrapped gifts. Marilyn engaged guests in conversation. Frank teased at every opportunity. I soon

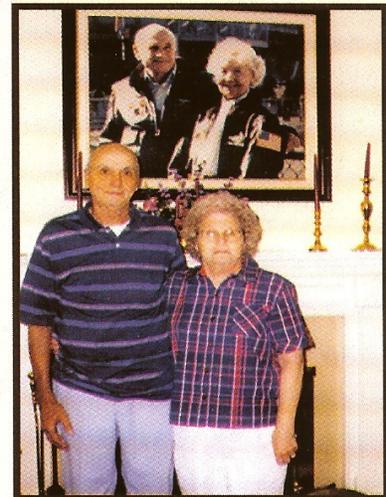
began to banter back. Before long, most were joking around. Mom actually smiled and laughed. It was her first interaction with people other than doctors, nurses, and family since her surgery.

Mom's battle with cancer has been our most arduous journey. Each step of the way is accompanied with its own hurdles to overcome. However, the Fisher House at Wright-Patterson AFB has been incredible. It has played a key role in Mom's road to recovery. Fisher House contains nine spacious bedrooms, a large living room, a Thanksgiving-sized dining room, and a well-stocked kitchen. The house is furnished with simple and functional elegance. It is surrounded by a manicured yard complete with a gazebo and squirrels to feed. Yet, the outstanding feature of the Fisher House is the concerned staff and compassionate volunteers. These people create a homey atmosphere. In less than a year my parents and I have spent nearly one hundred nights there. The way they reached out to Mom and us is tremendous. These people helped her interact with others again. Julie and Pat make reservations for our next trip

each time we leave and offer hugs for the road. We are most grateful for the gifts of friendship and hope we find each time we enter the doors. While the hospital treated Mom's body, Fisher House staff and volunteers have nourished her spirit and encouraged us all.

Fisher House has been a place for us to stay during Mom's surgery, treatments, and follow-up appointments. It is so conveniently located just a couple of blocks from the hospital. Mom is in remission now, and we feel a depth of gratitude that we can never repay to the Fisher House. All the staff and volunteers of Wright-Pat Fisher House open their hearts to the guests and become involved with their lives. It is a safe haven, a warm, inviting place of comfort and compassion. Fisher House is really the staff and volunteers who offer themselves unselfishly to hurting people. Fisher House is so much more than a house – it's our second home.

*Judy Crist,  
Athens, OH*



*Jim and Martha Crist at Wright-Pat FH*

*Note: The following articles were written by Frank Beeson, Publisher with Brown Publishing Company. They appeared in local papers as part of an advertising campaign in support of the capital campaign to build Fisher House II on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base – but they are still relevant today.*

## **Dan Albright**

*Age: 74*

*Home: Colorado Springs, CO*

*Occupation: Retired, 43 years in Hospitality Industry; USAF 1955-59*

*Tongue Cancer, Treated at Anschutz Hospital, Denver; Radiation Tooth Decay, Treated at the Veterans Administration Hospital, Dayton; Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy treatments conducted at Wright-Patterson AFB Medical Center.*

### **His Story:**

It's a 1,200-mile one-way trip from Dayton to Colorado Springs, CO. But when Dan Albright found out that the radiation and chemo-therapy treatments he had received for tongue cancer had caused radiation tooth decay, travel distance was no obstacle.

In June 2007, Dan was diagnosed with cancer, located on the back of his tongue. In order to contain the spreading of the disease, this 43-year veteran of the hospitality industry underwent six chemo and 33 radiation treatments. The treatments were successful.

"I have now been cancer-free for 11 months," the former USAF enlistee proudly stated.

But the required treatments created what is commonly known as radiation tooth decay. "Now I just consider that stage in my life as a minor setback," Albright said, while loading his van, preparing for his trip back home.

"I have Dr. (Ingrid) Valdez (on-staff dentist at the Denver Veteran's Administration Hospital) to thank for first discovering the severity of the tooth decay and then setting up the program to be transferred here to Dayton ... the VA and the Hyperbaric Center, here at the base. She made it all possible," he said.

"I had no idea what to expect when I first arrived, but the people here (Fisher and Nightingale House Compassionate Care Facilities), the people at the VA, and the people at the Hyperbaric unit here at Wright-Patt have been ... well ... let's just say WELL beyond what I had ever anticipated," Albright said.

For seven weeks this man underwent a number of reconstructive tooth and jaw surgeries, which was accelerated due to the treatments he received at the WPAFB Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy.

HBOT helps promote the healing process for bone and tissue damage. "The therapy forces more oxygen in the tissue, encouraging the formation of new blood vessels. The chamber creates characteristics similar to being 45 feet below sea level. Breathing 100% oxygen under pressure; equaling nearly 30 lbs. per square inch; the affect causes the oxygen to diffuse in the blood plasma. The pressurized environment helps to reduce swelling and pain, while providing the body with up to 20 times its normal supply of oxygen to help repair tissue damage," according to published reports.

Patients are placed in an oxygen tank (the facility at WPAFB can hold up to 18 individuals during one session) and go through a process of three "dives" simulating the below sea level pressures.

“It would have taken me two-to-three times longer for the healing process, had I not had gone through the therapy,” he added.

Albright was faced with staying by himself at the VA Housing Facility, but the Fisher-Nightingale Houses at WPAFB provided a facility for him and his wife, Margo.

“I feel very blessed,” Albright said. ... “Not only that they discovered the decay before infection occurred and possibly losing my jaw bone; but especially because they found this unbelievable facility where we were able to stay,” he triumphantly stated, motioning with his hands, sitting in the dining room at the Fisher House.

“There’s so much more to the healing process; it goes beyond the physical ... And when your mental well-being is also cared for ... well, let me just say that my wife and I now consider this facility our second home,” he said in a quieted tone.

“When we first walked into the Fisher House, our mouths dropped open,” Albright said of his welcome to Dayton, WPAFB, and the compassionate care facility.

“Being in the hospitality business for most of my life, I know what to look for and understand the challenges of maintaining an operation like this. Let me tell you, this place is immaculate,” he added.

“You could not have a more relaxing place, unless it was your own home,” the Colorado Springs resident said of the center. He and his wife recalled that after a full day of surgery they “returned ‘home’ to find a throw (cover) at their door,” welcoming them back from the VA. “You wonder about something that you might need and the next thing you know ... it’s there, in your room,” his wife, Margo added.

“People bringing in meals; volunteering to help out; and a staff that bends over backwards, just to make certain you are healing emotionally and physically. I even told Margo how wonderful it would have been to have had a staff like this,” the retired hotel manager said. “When you’re going through surgery and treatment ... the illness is tough ... but this facility and the people make you feel a thousand times better than you probably really feel,” Albright said.

The seven-week ‘residents’ of the Fisher-Nightingale House repeated what so many have voiced; that few realize the existence and the importance of the compassionate care facility.

“It needs to be shouted from the rooftops. We need a facility like this at every military installation ... worldwide,” Albright said.

## **Eldon Milligan**

*Age: 66*

*Home: Sanford, MI*

*Occupation: Retired US Navy, 28 years, Master Chief Petty Officer*

*Kidney Transplant Patient @ Miami Valley Hospital, Dayton, OH*

### **His Story:**

On April 18, 2008 Eldon Milligan received a kidney transplant which required that he spend ten days in the hospital and then remain in the area as a precautionary measure as well as for follow-up treatment. After a brief two-day recuperation stay at the Fisher House Compassionate Care Facility on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Milligan was rushed back to Miami Valley Hospital (MVH) due to post-surgery complications where he spent an additional 12 days.

Local rest and recuperation was then required after the second emergency procedure; Milligan returned to the Fisher House, joining one of two daughters, for what would be a three-to-four week stay.

Plans for the kidney transplant procedure began nearly two years earlier when Milligan asked to be put on the kidney recipient waiting list at MVH. He reported that the Dayton hospital seemed like a wise choice, since his one daughter lived in the area. He had planned to stay at his daughter and son-in-law's home during the procedures. Unfortunately, the couple was faced with a job relocation to Chillicothe and Milligan was faced with possibly selecting another hospital and starting back at the bottom of a kidney donation-recipient request list.

"It could have been another two years," the Michigan resident said, if he were to select another medical facility. "So I started calling around ... I knew I wouldn't be able to afford a motel for that long of a stay ... Wright-Patt happened to be one of the first places I called."

With tears rolling down the cheeks of this veteran's humbled face, he looked the interviewer square in the eye and slowly pronounced, "So you see, the surgeons did a tremendous job, of which I am grateful ... but this house, and the many people associated with this house ... they actually saved my life."

He went on to say that until he received initial calls, he had never heard of a compassionate care facility nor did he know that like facilities exist on a number of military bases throughout the world.

"Look at the sign (in front of the Fisher House at WPAFB) ... it talks about compassion. This is THE most compassionate place I know," he said, now attempting to control obvious emotional feelings. "Since I have retired, I have never been so proud to be a veteran, as I am today. This place and the people have made me feel SO proud."

By this time, Milligan, his second daughter, who "relieved" her sister midway through the medical and recuperation ordeal, and the interviewer were all displaying tears of joy and gratitude.

"There's something about it (Fisher, Nightingale Houses); when you first walk through the door ... that gives you a feeling of compassion and caring," Laura Bowen, Oklahoma resident and daughter of Milligan said.

The recent kidney transplant recipient went on to praise the staff and volunteers and remarked how "accommodating" everyone had been, while still respecting his privacy.

"If you've ever sat in your house saying ... 'Gee, I wish I could do something for the military and the people that defend our country' ... this is the perfect way," the retired Naval noncommissioned officer stated.

"There are many stories, just like mine ... And maybe there are some that can tell it better than me, but every person should know how this place can actually save lives."

## **Julie Hoppe**

*Home: Hillsboro, OH*

*Occupation: Interior Designer.*

*Husband served in USAF 20 years, retired as Major*

*Breast Cancer Survivor*

### **Her Story:**

One year ago, last summer, Julie Hoppe "knew something just wasn't right. It hurt like I had a deep bruise, but I hadn't done anything to injure myself."

Weeks later... “thanks to Joan in mammography and Dr. Quinn, who both went beyond their call of duty,” according to Julie ... after several biopsies and a performed lumpectomy, Hoppe would be told that she had cancer ... invasive carcinoma.

“I think every woman, in the back of her mind, is concerned about the possibility of breast cancer,” the mother of three grown sons said. “Then when you hear the words ... well, you begin to think and say to yourself that life will no longer be the same,” she added, her voice cracking just a bit as she attempted to control her emotion.

Julie was correct; life would no longer be the same for her.

In January of this year she underwent double mastectomy and then reconstructive surgery at Miami Valley Hospital. And she would meet Dr. David J. Hoopes, who would soon become her “hero,” not only because of his medical assistance, but also in his guidance and concern for her emotional well-being, introducing Julie to the Fisher Nightingale Houses at Wright-Patt. Hoopes, a captain in the Medical Corps, USAF serves as Assistant Professor of Radiology and Radiological Sciences, Uniformed Services, University of the Health Sciences at Wright Patterson Medical Center.

“I have stayed here 60-to-80 days over the past year,” the thankful woman said, holding her hands out to embrace and acknowledge the Fisher House, as she sat in the facility’s family/living room area. “And it was Dr. Hoopes that first told me about this beautiful facility for patients and for their families while in treatment,” Julie added.

“No one could have prepared me for the compassion and the gentleness that Karen (Healea, house manager) and Barbara (Howe, assistant manager) and the entire staff and volunteers...for that matter ... give to all of their guests,” a humbled woman recounted.

“It was if they were taking on your emotions, trying to ease my burden, giving me strength to carry on,” Julie said. “I call them God’s little angels,” she said of the staff and volunteers. “As of today, I have only a one percent chance of recurring breast cancer.”

For the weeks and months after surgery this woman would have been faced with an early-morning “wake-up call” at 2 a.m. allowing her to drive from her hometown area of Hillsboro-Chillicothe in order to meet five-day-a-week radiation treatment in the Dayton area. Julie was also diagnosed with Lymphoma.

Becoming a temporary “resident” of the Fisher House gave Julie the opportunity to rest in the confines of her “second home” in preparation for the next day’s treatment.

“I’m reminded of the story in the bible about an ill man everyone passed by on their daily business, but the Good Samaritan stopped and took immediate care and paid for his room and board. The Fisher House staff is filled with such compassion ...even in this busy world we live in,” she added, doing her best to hold back the emotion that filled her voice inflection.

“I cannot say enough about this place. In a period of less than a year, I went from ... (long pauses and signs of heartfelt emotions interrupted her train of thought) ... to where I am today; I’m home at the Fisher House,” Julie said. “And this facility would not be five-star if it wasn’t for the volunteers.”

Hoppe, knowing that WPAFB is now on the “waiting list” for the addition of another Fisher House and in the throes of a capital campaign, was eager to tell of her obstacles that have turned into opportunities.

“There are very few people that know these facilities are located all over the world, providing compassionate care for individuals like me. We need to encourage more people to get involved, whether it’s through volunteerism and ... or financial support,” she added.

According to this cancer survivor, one out of every three women will develop some type of breast cancer during their lives.

“I just want everyone to know the signs of early detection and then to know there are people and facilities like this (Fisher House) to help get you through the tough times. This is my family, and every day I remind myself of how fortunate I have been,” the survivor stated in a grateful, yet victorious tone.

## **Linda and Kirk K. Links**

*Parents of former Marine Corporal, Beau Links, Reservist,, Lima Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, Columbus, OH*

*Home: Huber Heights, OH*

*Occupation: Kirk – Retired Lt Colonel USAF (26 years)*

*Parents of three boys: Beau, Justin, Lance*

*Beau Links, critically injured while deployed in Iraq in 2005, spent one week in the hospital at Landstuhl Army Base, Germany, before transferring state side to Bethesda, MD. A patient at Bethesda National Naval Medical Hospital for more than a month, Links was transferred to the Dayton Miami Valley Hospital for rehabilitation and then was later put under the care of the Wright-Patterson AFB Physical Therapy Clinic.*

### **Their Story:**

It was Mother’s Day, May 8, 2005; Beau and his fellow Lima Company corpsmen were assigned to search homes in New Ubaydi, Iraq, looking for insurgents held up in the vacated homes. As Links entered the dwelling he was met with open fire and an enemy grenade, which severely ripped into his left leg.

Instinctively, with serious gun and shrapnel wounds to his neck, shoulder, arm, and leg, Links drug himself to an adjacent unoccupied room and placed himself in a defense posture, not knowing if the insurgents or his corpsmen would be the first to enter.

Placing themselves in harm’s way, LCPL Crum, LCPL Hewitt and LCPL Leary entered the building, drug Links out of the dwelling and immediately began life-saving first aid on the wounded Marine. The three corpsmen, ranging in ages from 19-21, convinced Beau that he would live and that everything would soon be okay, shouting encouragement as they secured the area.

Weeks later, while undergoing every other day surgery in Bethesda, Beau would whisper to his father, “that day was the best day in my life ... I didn’t know what was behind that door when I went in, but MY corps ... they knew what they would be faced with ... and yet they still came in to save me,” Kirk recalled, as his eyes welled with tears.

The call that parents of military troops pray against, came the day after Mother’s Day; they were told that Beau had sustained critical injuries and it was questionable whether or not he would live through the ordeal.

Medical Evacuation units airlifted Beau to an Army Base Hospital in Germany, where it took more than one week to stabilize the Marine. On that Friday the Links were told that it appeared Beau would live, but extensive surgery would be required; he would be flown back to the states and would find the Bethesda National Naval Hospital as his respite.

Upon their arrival at Bethesda, following a silence-soaked 10-hour drive to Washington, Linda noted that the first night they found an off-base hotel to stay, but that she, her husband, and Beau’s

girlfriend, now wife Courtney, “really didn’t know what to expect as we drove from Dayton to the east coast.”

“When we got there (at Bethesda), we had nowhere to go,” Kirk said. “I don’t think the Marines were prepared for the number of troop casualties and injuries coming from Iraq.”

The next night, and for 34 nights that followed, the Bethesda Fisher House became their refuge. Like so many other military families, the Links found that the compassionate care facility, which was within walking distance from the hospital, became their home away from home. It was a place to rejuvenate and prepare for their son’s on-going medical challenges and successes.

“Everyone needs to go to the fifth floor at Bethesda,” Kirk said of the military hospital’s critical care unit. “I would not wish a Fisher House stay on anyone, but if it’s needed ... Thank God there are Fisher Houses,” the retired USAF Lt. Colonel said.

The compassion shared at Fisher Houses throughout the world was ideally characterized as Kirk retold a memory at the Bethesda center: “I was in the kitchen of the Fisher House when the manager came through with a couple and was describing the features of the house to them. He introduced me to them and they asked if my son was injured and how he was doing,” Kirk recalled.

“After a brief response, I asked about their son. “Our son did not make it,” responded the father of the fallen soldier.

“I fell back against the counter and cried so hard that the parents hugged ME, telling me it would be alright. They had lost their son and they were consoling me. I have never experienced so much compassion as from anyone as I saw first-hand at the Fisher House,” Kirk said.

“To a person, they (the Fisher House staff) seemed to have a sense of when to talk to me and when to leave me alone. Sometimes I just needed my space, and other times I needed to release,” he said.

“Fisher House was a God-send to us,” Linda said. “We were able to be at Beau’s side every time he opened his eyes. Kirk would stay at the hospital during the night; we would go during the day. Without the Fisher House we wouldn’t have been able to be there when Beau needed us most.

“While someone is taking care of YOUR kid, it’s reassuring to know that someone is taking care of you,” the mother of three boys added.

The house, just 400 yards from the hospital, “gave us a base to operate,” she said. “We would have slept on a couch ... in a car ... it didn’t matter; but they made room for us and told us to stay as long as was needed.”

Today, Beau is a senior at Wright State University; following March graduation, he plans to enter medical school and has aspirations of re-joining the armed services in the medical profession, “to pay his country back for saving his life,” his father related.

After months of rehabilitation ... at Miami Valley Hospital and through the Physical Therapy Clinic at WPAFB, Beau is able to run and frequently bikes. Although there was a great deal of nerve damage to repair, he will now be able to lead a productive and “repaying life”... even after being told he may never walk again.

Beau, his wife, and his parents credit his fellow corpsmen, the many medical staffs (from the medical evacuation to surgery and to rehabilitation), and the caring confines; the “safe haven” of the Fisher House, for his miraculous recovery.

Kirk is the fitness director for the three centers at Wright-Patt; and Linda now volunteers her time, assisting at the WPAFB Fisher Houses. Beau is the youngest of the three sons.

Justin, the oldest, served two years in the U.S. Navy and is now a Captain in the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army. Lance is a science teacher at Lebanon High School.

In 2005 the Columbus-based Lima Company became one of the most devastated troops in the Iraqi conflict with 23 fallen warriors and more than 50 critically injured. Their heroic stories are often retold.

# Tom Taylor

*Age: 57*

*Home: Cleveland, OH*

*Occupation: Retired USAF Defense Contractor, Military Rank at Discharge: E6*

*Colon Cancer Survivor*

*Treatment @ USAF Medical Center, Wright-Patterson AFB*

## **His Story:**

On April 29, 2007 Tom Taylor lost his wife to lung cancer; one year to the day later, April 29, 2008, Tom's mother passed away, also a victim of lung cancer.

Taylor received word of his mother's death while he was staying at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Fisher House as he was receiving treatment for colon cancer.

"This place has made such a difference in my life," Taylor said, while sitting outside of the compassionate care facility, located a few blocks away from the base hospital facility. "Listen ... do you hear those birds chirping in that tree? I can now appreciate them even more," he said in a quiet, yet sincere tone.

His "home away from home;" it was Taylor's fifth time staying at the house which offers free lodging and meals for individuals and or family during extended hospital stays for treatment or surgery.

"It's tough to stay with friends when you're going through cancer treatment ... it's different when you're staying with others that are experiencing some of the same type challenges. When we're here, we can share.

"At some point during the day ... we might meet in the kitchen or in the living room ... we come together and share; it's that binding that's spiritual ... actually medicinal," he said.

Before Tom's wife lost her battle to cancer she offered him her "prayer beads," according to the retiree, suggesting that the beads would give him comfort at times of need. After she passed, Tom offered the beads to his mother, repeating the same words as his wife. When his mother was discovered, passing one year later, she was found grasping those same prayer beads.

"I really believe my wife came down to get my mother," he said, his voice cracking with emotion.

Taylor has undergone two separate surgeries during his battle, both at the Wright-Patterson AFB Hospital. Initially, doctors removed part of his colon. After allowing the area to heal, a second surgery was required to re-connect the colon pathway.

Because the Cleveland-area resident has displayed positive response to continuing cancer treatment and to both surgeries, he has now been given a high probability of survival.

"Many of our families, especially retirees, simply cannot afford to stay in a hotel during these extended treatments; this house ... the staff, the volunteers, and the others facing like circumstances ... well, let's just say they are all caring. I've been a part of it and I can see what this place does for families," he added, carrying long pauses in his delivery.

Although Taylor worked in this area for 13 years as a defense contractor, he wasn't aware that such a facility existed. "We need to do a better job of letting people know about this very caring place," he stated with sincere compassion. "If telling of my events and feelings allows just one more person to understand the importance of this facility today, and for the future, then my story is worth telling ... worth repeating," he said, as an ever so slight grin appeared upon his face. "I am so thankful."

# History

## The Fisher's Vision

Acknowledged by the Armed Forces as the nation's most dedicated patriot, Zachary Fisher considered himself to be the luckiest man alive. He had two rewarding careers, one in the investment building sector of New York's real estate industry, the other as a private citizen serving his country. Born in Brooklyn, New York, young Zachary left high school at age 16 to help in the family construction business. He laid bricks until a serious building accident nearly cost him his left leg. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, he was rejected by the military due to his injury.

Over the years, Zachary's family business skyrocketed along with his devotion to his country. Fisher Brothers is one of the industry's leaders, contributing some of the most prestigious corporate office buildings to the New York skyline. After 50 successful years as a real estate developer, Zachary Fisher embarked on a new career that would ultimately touch the lives of thousands of Americans. Zachary wanted to give something back to those who gave their lives to preserve his freedom and that feeling stayed with him his entire life. Zachary's future wife, Elizabeth, was also passionate about serving the armed forces from her time spent traveling overseas during World War II as an entertainer with the USO.

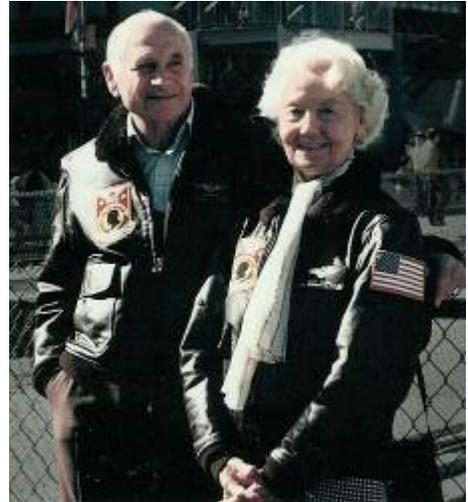
Their marriage in 1943 was the beginning of a love story – two extraordinary people, their love for each other and for their country. They began searching for ways to support military families around the world.

In 1983, the Fishers established the "Zachary and Elizabeth M. Fisher Armed Forces Foundation" to provide financial assistance to military families in need. That need arose when they stepped in with a gift of \$10,000 to each of the families of 241 casualties from the Marine Barracks bombing in Beirut in 1983 and again when a military aircraft crashed in Gander Newfoundland, killing 248 "Screaming Eagle" soldiers in 1985. They then stepped in with a gift of \$25,000 to each family when 47 crewmen were killed in a 1989 turret explosion aboard the USS Iowa. In their letter of condolence, they explained that while nothing could compensate for the loss of their loved ones, they hoped there was some comfort in knowing that two strangers cared enough about their grief to send a token of their remorse.

The Fishers' generosity has been extraordinary. Besides enormous financial assistance, college scholarships and the building of New York's Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, the Fishers continued to ask what more they could do for the military family. Then, Pauline Trost, wife of former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Carlisle Trost, suggested the idea for comfortable, affordable family housing near military hospitals. The Fisher's knew this need fit perfectly with their objectives. The Houses became a tangible way of finally expressing their gratitude to the men and women in uniform.

"Where there is a military, there will always be a Fisher House. Where there is a Fisher House, there will always be love and caring, warmth and compassion," said Zachary.

In 1998, Zachary Fisher received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award the country can bestow on a civilian. In 1999, Public Law 106-161 conferred "honorary veteran" status on philanthropist Zachary Fisher, making him only the second individual so recognized (Bob Hope being the first).





*Captain (retired) Gretchen Lizza and family*

## A Dream is Born: The Nightingale House

The first compassionate care house in the Department of Defense was the dream of a scientist at the Armstrong Aerospace Medical Research Lab at Wright-Patterson on a humanitarian assignment.

Captain Gretchen Lizza thought of the idea for the Nightingale House when her son, Tony, was diagnosed with leukemia. In the months of initial therapy, Gretchen met many families with similar circumstances. They were in shock, emotionally overwhelmed and facing long hospital stays for their loved ones. They also had the added burden of not having an affordable place to stay.

Gretchen saw the need for a home-away-from-home. She took her idea to Colonel Dennis P. Tewel, Commander of the 2750<sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing, and convinced him of the need. Her idea for an on-base version of the Ronald McDonald House was taken all the way to the Pentagon. After months of work, authority was obtained for an existing duplex on base to be redesigned and remodeled and in May 1990 the house was ready to become a home for visiting families.

The house needed a name that conveyed its special purpose. "Nightingale," a name synonymous with tender, loving care, and the nickname for the C-9 medical evacuation transport plane, was the perfect fit. So the dream of the Nightingale House became a reality.

With the opening of Fisher House II in April 2011, the Nightingale was returned to the military and demolished.

Even though the Fisher Houses are located on federal installations or at major Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, they, like Ronald McDonald Houses, have no corporate or government underwriting and must rely on private donations for operating expenses. But unlike the Ronald McDonald Houses, which are limited to families of critically ill children, the Fisher Houses accept families of patients of all ages.

Guests come from all branches of the military, active duty, retired, reserves/Guard and veterans. They have come from as far away as overseas and as close as here in the Miami Valley.

Captain Lizza's motto for the Nightingale House was quite simple, "If all hands that reach could touch." To her that meant by reaching out and touching someone, you can make a difference in their life. We are all thankful that she took that time, in the midst of her personal circumstances, to reach out and touch so many families in need.

Even after the Lizza's retired from the Air Force in 1993 they continued to stay in contact with the House managers and volunteers. In August of 1996, her son Tony lost his battle with leukemia. Today, Gretchen and Carl are keeping Tony's memory and legacy alive through "Tony's Gang," a non-profit organization founded to support children with serious illness and their families ([www.tonysgang.com](http://www.tonysgang.com)).

The Lizza's hope to educate people about the needs and challenges of families facing a serious illness. They want to train those who want to help but don't know how to act or what to do. Finally, they hope to foster what they call a "kid-to-kid" network of support. They felt that Tony lived longer than many of his peer group in part because of the support he had.

The national headquarters of Tony's Gang opened in Philadelphia in support of Children's Hospital. The Lizza's took their tragedy and built something positive and lasting from it. In their eyes, it gives added meaning to their son's life.

The Nightingale House was returned to the Air Force and demolished in February 2011; Fisher House II opened in April 2011. Gretchen and her family came back to Wright-Patterson AFB and participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Fisher House II.

# Volunteers

One of the major keys to the success of the Fisher Houses is its volunteer program. The managers and small staff could not possibly conduct the day-to-day operations of the Houses while supporting the guests in the way that they need. That's where the Fisher Houses volunteers provide an invaluable service! They assist them in getting settled into their rooms, talk with them and console them, cook meals and garden. No matter what the guests or staff need, the volunteers are there to support them in every way possible. The volunteers put in 1,450 hours of time in 2019.

At other times, volunteers step forward to assist at fundraisers to benefit the Dayton area Fisher Houses. It could be an evening event, a weekend event or at the "All-American Evening" – wherever it may be, these volunteers are integral to the success of every fundraiser.

## The Broxson Award

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### History and Significance

The Broxson Award was created to recognize an individual on the Wright-Patterson Medical Center staff who most significantly touched the lives of families residing at the Fisher Houses with compassion and support.

The award is named after Colonel (Dr.) Emmett Broxson, Director of the Pediatrics Specialty Clinic, Wright-Patterson Medical Center from 1988 to 1996 and was established by the founder of the Nightingale House, Captain Gretchen Lizza.

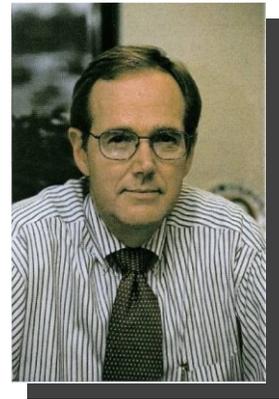
The Broxson Award is the most prestigious recognition given by the Houses in honor of the families we serve. Our families vote and choose the recipient each year. The award is meant to distinguish that medical servant who, like Dr. Broxson, epitomizes virtue and strength.

Dr. Emmet Broxson's dedication and gentle ways endeared him to the families whose children he treated during his service in the U. S. Air Force.

Diagnosis and care of children who battle catastrophic diseases – diseases without cure – is by far the most difficult area of medicine. Physicians and their staff who attend to these children tirelessly search for answers.

Dr. Broxson distinguished himself through his consummate love of children and daily demonstration of a faith in wisdom that transcends understanding. This is why the award is named for Dr. Broxson.

The Broxson Award celebrates the humility and strength of Dr. Broxson. The award was first presented to him and now identifies others who exhibit dedication to their practice and compassion for others.



## Past Broxson Award recipients

<b>2017</b>	Roger “Tony” Crews	VA Coordinator
<b>2016</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Lt Brittney N. Rufus	Clinical Nurse, Multi Service Unit
	Lt Colonel (Dr.) John W. Powell	Orthopaedic Surgeon
<b>2015</b>	1st Lt Neal J. Alexander	Pediatric Nurse, Pediatric Flight
	1st Lt Leslie A. Whiting	Clinical Nurse, MIU
	Amber N. Van Hoose	Clinical Nurse, Cancer Care Center
<b>2014</b>	Major (Dr.) Michael Palmer	Orthopaedic Surgeon
<b>2013</b>	Major (Dr.) Elizabeth P. Tran	Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon
<b>2012</b>	Major (Dr.) Stefanie K. Horne	Staff Otolaryngologist (Ear, Nose and Throat)
<b>2011</b>	Major (Dr.) William K. Skinner	Radiation Oncology
<b>2010</b>	Major (Dr.) Jorge Arzola	Staff Urologist and Chief of Surgical Specialties
<b>2009</b>	2d Lieutenant Jessica Roberts	In-Patient Surgery Recovery Unit
<b>2008</b>	Colonel (Dr.) Leo D. Hurley	Director of Ophthalmology and Refractive Surgery
<b>2007</b>	Lt Colonel (Dr.) Ronald Hale	Radiation/Oncology
<b>2006</b>	Kay Baumgardner	Warfighter Laser Surgery Center
<b>2005</b>	Major (Dr.) Eric Trueblood	Internal Medicine Clinic B
<b>2004</b>		Warfighter Laser Surgery Center
<b>2003</b>	Major (Dr.) William Decker	Radiation/Oncology
<b>2002</b>	Noni Heinrich	Pre-Admissions
<b>2001</b>	Major (Dr.) David M. Powell	Chief, Hematology/Oncology Center
<b>2000</b>		Hyperbaric Chamber Team
<b>1999</b>	Lt Colonel (Dr.) Sandra Herrington	Radiology
<b>1998</b>	Major (Dr.) Kelvin B. Raybon	Oncology
<b>1997</b>	Captain Anita Herrera	Nurse, 3 West
<b>1996</b>	Major (Dr.) Patrick W. Townsend	Radiology
<b>1995</b>	Major (Dr.) Frederick J. Barton	Radiology
<b>1994</b>	Major (Dr.) Jeffrey Carlson	Radiology
<b>1993</b>	Lt Colonel (Dr.) Emmett Broxson	Pediatric Specialty Clinic

# The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

## Executive Board

The first volunteer Board was formed shortly after opening the Nightingale House. It provided financial support and insured the future of the founders' dream for an affordable on base home-away-from-home for military families in medical crisis. In 1990 these dedicated founders, led by Captain Gretchen Lizza, established and became the first members of the Nightingale House Support Association, a private, nonprofit charitable organization. This Board assisted in fundraising, staffing the house with volunteers and made all financial decisions.

After Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher's generous donation of the Fisher House in 1994, the Board has had a couple of name changes and today is known as the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

The Board's sole mission is to raise funds to support compassionate care lodging for patients

and their families receiving critical medical treatment at the Wright-Patterson Medical Center and the Dayton VA Medical Center. The Fisher Houses are owned, managed and supported financially by the Air Force/Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. donates funds to the Air Force/DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs to support the guests in the Fisher Houses. The organization also donates additional funds, services, and items (large and small) specifically in support of the three Fisher Houses.

The partnership between the Board, the House managers, the volunteers and the Air Force has been essential to the success of the Wright-Patterson Fisher Houses. Together, we have accomplished great things – together, we are making a difference!

## 2019 Executive Board Members

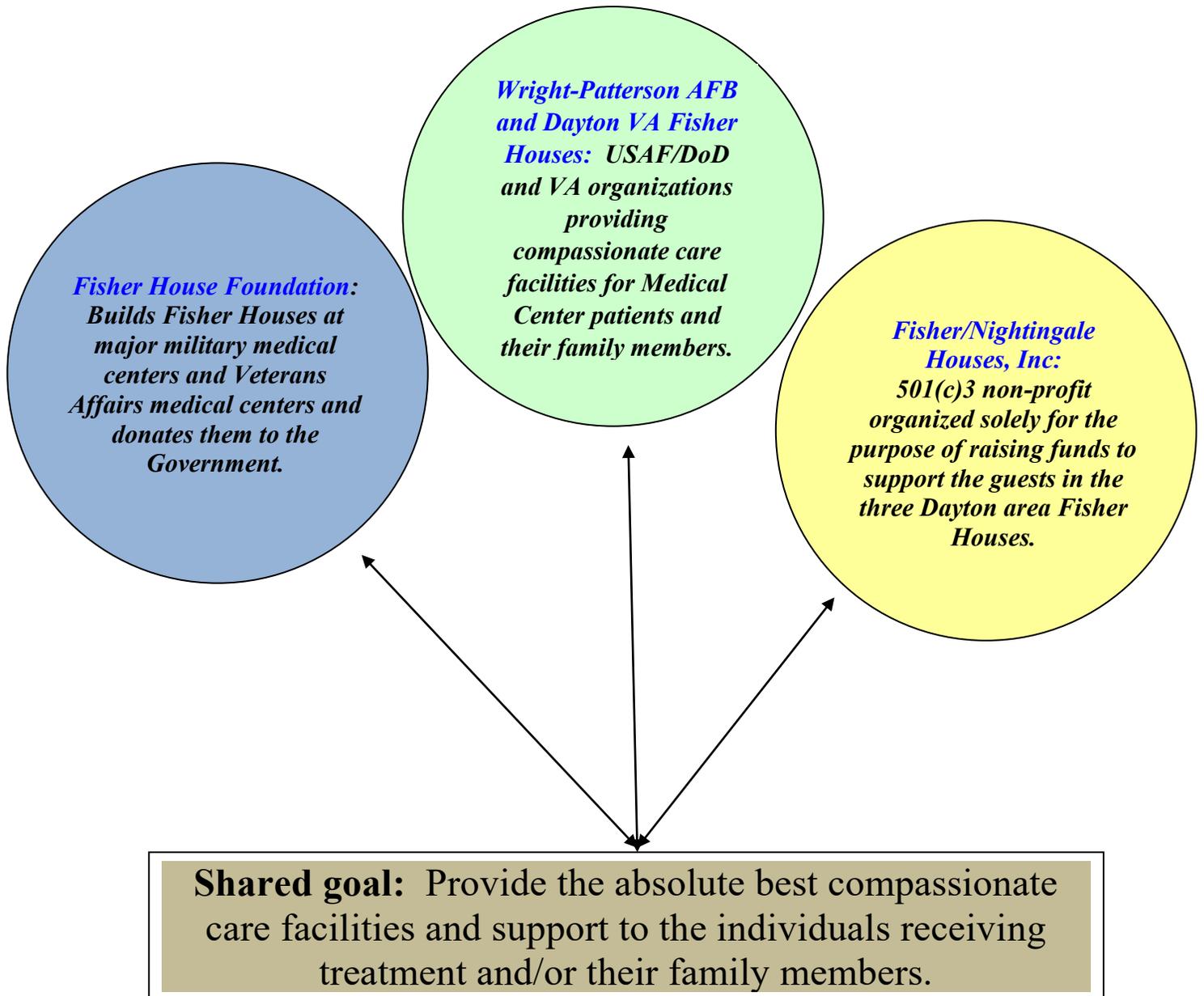
(as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019)

Linda Skinner  
Colonel (Retired) Jeff Owens  
Matthew Purkey  
Mary Owens  
Anthony Dattilo  
*Vacant*  
Kari Tucker  
John Taffany  
Terri Dalton  
Joani Reynolds  
Senior Master (Retired) Sergeant Theresa Wilson  
Airman First Class Naketa Mullings  
Master Sergeant Toby McWilliams  
Master Sergeant Benjamin Seekell  
Diana Andre  
Dan Sgraves  
Jennifer Crookston  
Stacy Underwood  
Colonel Michael Fouch  
Bobette Hart-Nelms  
Laurie Sherman

President  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Legal Counsel  
Media Relations  
1<sup>st</sup> Trustee-at-Large  
2<sup>nd</sup> Trustee-at-Large  
3<sup>rd</sup> Trustee-at-Large  
Community Development Committee Chair  
AF Sergeants Association Representative  
AF Sergeants Association Representative  
First Sergeants Association Representative  
First Sergeants Association Representative  
Officers' Spouses' Club Representative  
Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services Representative  
Enlisted Spouses' Club Representative  
Enlisted Spouses' Club Representative  
88<sup>th</sup> Medical Group Liaison  
Dayton VA Medical Center Director's Liaison  
Wright-Patt Liaison

***The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. is a member of the Dayton/Miami Valley Better Business Bureau, the Fairborn Chamber of Commerce, the Dayton Chamber of Commerce, the Beavercreek Chamber of Commerce and the Huber Heights Chamber of Commerce. It is also a United Way Partner Agency.***

# The Fisher House Foundation, Fisher Houses and Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. Relationship



# The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

## Donor Recognition Program

The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. established a donor recognition program in January 2002. It is open to all individuals, corporations, proprietorships, partnerships and organizations interested in promoting of the objectives and purposes of the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

There are three levels of donor recognition. Each level is defined by the annual donation made, whether financial, donation-in-kind or volunteer time. If an individual or organization makes both financial and time donations, the donor level is the highest level for which qualification requirements are met. The levels are:

<b>Supporter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 hours of service to the Houses</li> <li>• A financial contribution of \$50 to \$250</li> <li>• A donation-in-kind valued at \$50 to \$250</li> </ul>
<b>Friend</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 hours of service to the Houses</li> <li>• A financial contribution of \$251 to \$500</li> <li>• A donation-in-kind valued at \$251 to \$500</li> </ul>
<b>Patron</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 hours of service to the Houses</li> <li>• A financial contribution of \$501 or more</li> <li>• A donation-in-kind valued at \$501 or more</li> </ul>

It is effective the first day of the month following receipt of the donation or volunteer time. All donors are invited to fundraising events hosted by the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

The first 1,000 donors at the Friend and Patron level are considered to be Charter Donors. Charter donors stay on the permanent roles but must renew annually in order to retain their Donor Program status. As of 31 December 2011, there were 1,000 Charter Donors.

### Donor Program Status

<u>Active Supporters</u>	<u>Active Friends</u>	<u>Active Patrons</u>	<u>Cumulative Raised</u>
329 as of 31 Dec 19	86 as of 31 Dec 19	241 as of 31 Dec 19	\$8,000,022.57
354 as of 31 Dec 18	88 as of 31 Dec 18	245 as of 31 Dec 18	\$7,363,367.38
477 as of 31 Dec 17	111 as of 31 Dec 17	292 as of 31 Dec 17	\$6,805,392.72
601 as of 31 Dec 16	114 as of 31 Dec 16	320 as of 31 Dec 16	\$6,017,428.23
408 as of 31 Dec 15	101 as of 31 Dec 15	250 as of 31 Dec 15	\$5,176,446.42
490 as of 31 Dec 14	113 as of 31 Dec 14	208 as of 31 Dec 14	\$4,537,723.14
395 as of 31 Dec 13	76 as of 31 Dec 13	176 as of 31 Dec 13	\$4,064,933.00
521 as of 31 Dec 12	105 as of 31 Dec 12	188 as of 31 Dec 12	\$3,707,671.37
495 as of 31 Dec 11	113 as of 31 Dec 11	188 as of 31 Dec 11	\$3,299,919.39
544 as of 31 Dec 10	115 as of 31 Dec 10	229 as of 31 Dec 10	\$2,918,284.63
576 as of 31 Dec 09	104 as of 31 Dec 09	251 as of 31 Dec 09	\$2,342,487.84
560 as of 31 Dec 08	102 as of 31 Dec 08	262 as of 31 Dec 08	\$1,720,236.38
487 as of 31 Dec 07	75 as of 31 Dec 07	195 as of 31 Dec 07	\$1,085,381.01
332 as of 31 Dec 06	56 as of 31 Dec 06	129 as of 31 Dec 06	\$674,780.67
296 as of 31 Dec 05	54 as of 31 Dec 05	116 as of 31 Dec 05	\$418,990.35
283 as of 31 Dec 04	36 as of 31 Dec 04	83 as of 31 Dec 04	\$253,369.34
196 as of 31 Dec 03	21 as of 31 Dec 03	55 as of 31 Dec 03	\$111,260.37
120 as of 31 Dec 02	16 as of 31 Dec 02	35 as of 31 Dec 02	\$38,604.13

# The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

## Major Fund-Raisers - 2019

**“An All-American Evening...Talk Derby to Me”** 343 tickets were sold for this successful event that included fun, food, auctions, and entertainment at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Attendees participated in a silent auction of art, jewelry, event tickets, sporting items and much more with Masters of Ceremonies Jim Bucher and Dan Edwards; an exciting, fast-paced live auction by Gene Fisher; a gourmet meal by Elite Catering; a themed costume contest and wine tasting. This year’s event raised **\$107,037.61** (after expenses) for the benefit of the Wright-Patterson and Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher Houses (and has raised \$1,175,628.73 (after expenses) since it started in September 2004). Publicity took place on Spectrum TV, WDTN’s “Living Dayton”, WDTN’s “Five on 2”, “Fox45 in the Morning”, Dayton Access TV and “Gem City Tonight” on Dayton Access TV.

**Popcorn Operation** In July 2004, the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc., assumed responsibility for the popcorn operation conducted at the Wright-Patt Medical Center and continued support in 2019. A small group of volunteers pop popcorn three or four days a week for donations; they totaled 868.5 volunteer hours in 2019. This activity raised **\$11,726.77** (after expenses) for the benefit of the Wright-Patterson Fisher Houses. This year, through the many volunteer hours expended since July 2004, the gross amount raised by this successful fundraiser took us over \$233,000 in net popcorn income – that’s a lot of popcorn!

The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. also participates in the Combined Federal Campaign, the United Way of Greater Dayton and the State of Ohio Combined Charitable Campaign.

The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. was fortunate to connect/partner with several organizations who conducted fundraisers in 2019 to benefit our organization and our support of the three Dayton area Fisher Houses.

- 6924th Heritage Association
- ABF Freight
- AmazonSmile Foundation
- AMVETS Post 51, Thornville OH
- AMVETS Post 444, Fairborn OH
- Another Broken Egg, Beavercreek
- Austin Landing’s “First Friday” (with sponsorship from Superior Acura of Dayton)
- Belle Center United Presbyterian Church
- BRG Realty Group "Home for the Holidays" campaign
- Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, Chapter 12-1
- Dayton Dragons Professional Baseball Team
- Dayton Mall “Cruise and Brews”
- Dayton Mall “Boo ‘n Brew”
- Dayton Warriors Softball Fund – USA Patriots Amputee Softball Team
- Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) of Greater Cincinnati
- Greene County Sheriff's Office "No Shave December"
- Major Larry Smith Memorial golf tournament
- Mall at Fairfield Commons “Red, White and Brew”
- Mall at Fairfield Commons “Boo ‘n Brew”
- Miami Valley Military Affairs Association
- Moose Lodge 1068 golf tournament
- National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA)
- Rose & Remington, Fairfield Mall
- Sigma Phi Gamma, International Sorority, Inc.
- Starbucks
- Stockslager’s Greenhouse and Garden Center “Combos for our Country”
- The Annual “Tourney for the Troops” Disc Golf Tournament
- Tony Waterfall's Portable Disc Golf Course
- Troy High School Hockey Boosters
- U. S. Veterans Motorcycle Club “VetFest” and “Freedom Fest”
- W. O. Wright’s
- Wright State University Air Force ROTC “Red, White and Run 5K”

## Special Thanks to our “All-American Evening” Sponsors

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Fisher House Foundation – *Platinum Level / Presenter*

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SRC, Inc. – *Silver Level*

Taft, Stettinius & Hollister LLP – *Silver Level*

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Speedway – *Bronze Level*

Stahl Vision – *Bronze Level*

The Boeing Company – *Bronze Level*

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Wright-Patt Credit Union – *Bronze Level*

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Air Force Association, Wright Memorial Chapter 212 – *Copper Level*

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Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1445, New Philadelphia OH – *Copper Level*

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8598, Swanton OH – *Copper Level*

## Financial Status – 2018

In November 2019, the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. received the final evaluation of the 2018 financial reports audited by Flagel, Huber, Flagel & Co.

- Program expenses for 2018 were identified as \$678,436 (or 92.63% of total expenses).
  - The Better Business Bureau (BBB) standard is that the organization must obligate at least 65% of its expenses to the Program expense area.
- Fund-raising expenses for 2018 were identified as \$17,088 (or 2.33% of total expenses) and Administrative expenses for 2018 were identified as \$36,860 (or 5.04% of total expenses) for a total expense of \$53,948 (or 7.37% of total expenses).
  - The BBB standard is that the organization must obligate no more than 35% of its expenses to Fund-raising and Administrative expense areas.

As a percentage of income, fund-raising and administration expenses were 12.32%.

Income for 2018 was identified as \$437,921 (unrestricted). Total operating expenses for 2018 were \$732,384, reflecting a total loss in 2018 of \$294,463 (ending net assets of the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. were \$2,683,145).

***Note: The complete 2018 Audit and 2018 IRS Form 990 are available for review on the Fisher/ Nightingale Houses, Inc. website ([www.fnhi.org](http://www.fnhi.org)).***

## Financial Status – 2019

The preliminary/unaudited figures for 2019 indicate operational support income of \$689,760 plus income into The Dayton Foundation account for the new Fisher House at the Dayton VA Medical Center of \$7,025.

For 2019, there were total expenses of \$602,163. Therefore, there was an \$94,622 operational support surplus recognized by the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.

The organization regularly purchased items in support of the Fisher House guests such as Visa cards, cable/internet and DirecTV and bottled water services to support the house operations. When the Fisher Houses are full, the FNHI also pays for overflow guests in Wright-Patt Billeting, the Hope Hotel and local hotels. The organization also proffered gifts directly to the U.S. Government for the operations of the Houses such as landscaping services at all three Fisher House locations, a storage building for the Wright-Patt Fisher Houses, hardwood flooring in Wright-Patt Fisher House II (replacing carpeting in each of the 16 bedrooms), cleaning of the air ducts in Wright-Patt Fisher House I, a secure entrance system at the Dayton VA Fisher Houses, upgrade of the guest golf cart at the Dayton VA Fisher House, tile and grout cleaning at the Dayton VA Fisher House, and hotel signage for the Dayton VA Fisher Houses.

***Note: Final/audited figures will be provided and posted to our website once the formal audit is concluded in the Fall of 2020.***

*It was once said of Zachary Fisher, “If you were to describe Zachary Fisher’s impact on this country, it would be much like describing how wind works in nature. You do not actually see wind, but you see the effects of wind and feel wind upon your face. Like a strong steady wind of compassion, Zachary’s effects can be seen and indeed felt by the thousands of service members and their families during what for many is the time of their greatest challenge and difficulty.”  
Our supporters are also like the wind – you can see and feel the effects of their efforts.*

*Thank You!*

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***	Jenkins Community Development
***	JJR Solutions, LLC
*	Joanne McFarland Insurance Agency, New Lexington OH
*	Kitchen Aid Experience
***	LDSS Corp.
*	Locust Hills Golf Club
*	lululemon
**	Manning & Associates, Certified Public Accountants, LLC
**	Marriott at the University of Dayton
***	McAfee Heating and Air
*	Meadowview Garden Barn
***	Miami Valley Military Affairs Association
***	Miami Valley Restaurant Association
*	Miamisburg Wireless Association ( <i>IMO Steve Schoemann</i> )
*	Micah Windsor Agency

*	Milestone 229
***	Military Officers Association of America, Dayton Chapter
*	Miller Boat Line
***	Miller-Valentine-Walsh Fund
***	Mills Park Hotel
***	Monterey Consultants
***	Moose Lodge 1068, Fairborn OH
***	Mountain Home Officers' Spouses' Charitable Fund
**	Mutt's Sauce LLC
*	National Aviation Hall of Fame
***	National Defense Industrial Association, Dayton Chapter
***	Northrop Grumman
*	Nu Beta Chapter, Sigma Phi Gamma, International Sorority, Bellefontaine OH
*	Ohio State Auxiliary, Fraternal Order of Eagles
*	P.E.R.I., Montgomery County Chapter #6
*	Perfect North Slopes
*	Piano Preparatory School
*	Pieces of Style Boutique
***	PNC Financial Services Group
*	Practice Fitness for Life
***	Pratt and Whitney
***	Quantech Services, Inc.
**	Riverside Area Chamber of Commerce
**	Rockford United Methodist Women
***	Rodriguez Financial Strategies
***	Rona Community Church
*	Rose & Remington
***	Sam's Club #6517, Beavercreek OH
***	Sawdey Solution Services, Inc.
*	Scene 75 Entertainment Center
***	Sigma Phi Gamma International Sorority, Inc.
*	Sigma Phi Gamma, Xi Theta Chapter
**	Skateworld of Kettering
***	Society of American Military Engineers, Kittyhawk Post
***	Soin Medical Center
***	Sons of AMVETS Post 51, Thornville OH

***	Sons of AMVETS, Department of Ohio, Columbus OH
*	Sons of the American Legion Squadron 24, McConnellsville OH
**	Sons of the American Legion Ross County Squadron 62, Chillicothe OH
***	Sons of the American Legion Squadron 169, Tiffin OH
	Sons of the American Legion Squadron 200, Huber Heights OH
*	Sons of the American Legion Squadron 257, Loudonville OH
***	Sons of the American Legion Squadron 733, Bettsville OH
***	Sons of the American Legion, Department of Ohio
***	Southwest Airlines
***	Speedway LLC
*	Square One Salon and Spa
***	St. George's Episcopal Church Social Issues Commission
**	St. Mary's Post 306, Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A., Metamora OH
***	Stahl Vision
***	Stockslagers Greenhouse & Garden Center, Inc.
***	Superior Acura of Dayton
***	Synchrony Financial
***	Synergy Mills Morgan
***	Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP
*	Tavernier's Salon & Spa
***	Terry Webb Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1516, Lancaster OH
*	The Air Force Museum Foundation, Inc.
***	The American Legion Department of Ohio Charities, Inc.
***	The Benevity Community Impact Fund (Assurant)
	The Blue Berry Café
***	The Boeing Company
*	The Cheesecake Factory
***	The Fluor Foundation
***	The Greener Pastures Foundation
***	The Greentree Group
	The Home Depot
***	The Huston Giving Fund

***	The Larry Smith Annual Charity Golf Scramble
***	The Robert "Driz" Young fund at The Stark Community Foundation
***	The Starbucks Foundation
*	Thornville Pharmacy, Thornville OH
	TJ Chumps
**	Toledo GM Salaried Retirees
***	Tony Waterfall's Portable Disc Golf Course, LLC
***	Tridec Technologies
***	Troy High School Hockey Parents
***	U. S. Veterans Motorcycle Club, Ohio State Chapter
***	Ugly Dog Distillery
***	Universal Technology Corporation
**	University of Dayton
***	Uptime Solutions Associates, Inc.
*	Urbana United Methodist Church
**	US Military Vets Motorcycle Club OH2
***	USAA
***	Vana Solutions
*	Vectren Dayton Air Show
***	Vertiv
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 657, Riverside OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Moundbuilders Post 1060, Newark OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1089, Wadsworth OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Chief Tarhe Post 1380, Lancaster OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1445, New Philadelphia OH
**	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2529, Sandusky OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Firelands Post 2743, Norwalk OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2901 Auxiliary, Cambridge OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3343, Clyde OH
**	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4329, Galion OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Edward D. Martino Memorial Post 4615, Tipp City OH

*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4874, Piqua OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5532, Washingtonville OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6515, Fort Recovery OH
**	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6861 Auxiliary, Fairborn OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8312, Beavercreek OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8586 Auxiliary, Perrysville OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8598, Swanton OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9142, Ottawa OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Centerville Memorial Post 9550, Centerville OH
*	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9684 Auxiliary, Medway OH

***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9908, Kelly's Island OH
***	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9966, New Carlisle OH
*	Volume The Salon
***	Voyager 498, 40ET8, Lancaster OH
***	W. O. Wright's
***	Wright State University AFROTC Det 643 "Red, White and Run 5K"
*	Wright-Patt Chief's Group
***	Wright-Patt Credit Union
***	Wright-Patterson AFB Catholic Parish
***	Wright-Patterson AFB Protestant Chapel Fund
***	Xcelsi Group, LLC
***	YMCA of Greater Dayton
*	Young's Jersey Dairy
*	Zebra Girl Boutique

**\* Supporter**  
**\*\* Friend**  
**\*\*\* Patron**

# The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. Privacy Policy

*In accordance with Better Business Bureau Charitable Advisory Service standards, the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. will, at least annually, allow donors to inform us if they do not want their name and address shared outside the organization.*

## **The Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. Privacy Commitment to You:**

We appreciate each and every individual, organization and corporation who supports the Wright-Patterson AFB Fisher Houses and the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. We thank you for being a loyal supporter. It is because of you, your belief in our cause and the trust you place in the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. that we can continue to support the military men and women and their families who are utilizing the services of the Wright-Patterson Fisher Houses. In today's information age, we will make extra efforts to ensure and maintain your trust and privacy to your satisfaction. To that end, we are committed to protect and keep information about you private, safe and secure. We have developed and continue to maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards to protect your information. Rest assured that we do not sell or release any personal information you have shared with us.

## The Fisher Houses “Wish Lists”

The Fisher Houses are always in need of items to support the House guests. In addition to financial donations to the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc., the House managers at both the Wright-Patterson AFB and Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher Houses have compiled a list of needed items. This list is updated regularly and can be located on the website ([www.fnhi.org/wishlist.html](http://www.fnhi.org/wishlist.html)).

***If you are interested in donating any items to the Wright-Patterson AFB Fisher Houses, please call the Manager's Office at (937) 257-0855.***

***If you are interested in donating any items to the Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher House, please call the Manager's Office at (937) 268-6511 extension 2887.***

# The Fisher Houses An Appeal

If you've ever known someone who has had to travel away from his or her home for medical treatment, you know that it can be traumatic. The situation can be compounded with finding a place to stay, the potentially high costs for that place as well as food, and the loneliness of a hotel room. Whether for a few days, a month, or even a year, this situation can wear on a family – physically, emotionally and financially.

That's where the Dayton area Fisher Houses step up to the challenge for our service men and women, Veterans, and their families.

Your donation of

- \$34 helps one family...
- \$102 helps three families...
- \$1,000 helps 29 families spend one night in the Fisher Houses.

*Figures are based on the calendar year 2020 budget of expenses that will be allotted to support the guests at the Wright-Patterson AFB and Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher Houses.*



*Fisher Houses provide an invaluable service to military men and women, veterans and their families. Won't you consider reaching out a caring hand to help a military family today?*

***Think of your donation this way: Your donation is not about giving money, but more significantly about directly impacting and changing the course of someone's recovery....***

***because a family's love is good medicine.***

# ***“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 those 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

