



FISHER~NIGHTINGALE  
HOUSES

# Fisher Houses

## Wright-Patterson AFB and Dayton VA Medical Center

*Touching Lives with Compassion*

*Chris Stanley*

*Executive Director*

*Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.*



Most likely you know someone who has had to travel somewhere away from their home for some sort of medical treatment. For our wounded, injured and ill military men and women, Veterans, and their families, this can be traumatic enough, not to mention compounding the situation with finding a place to stay, the potentially high costs for the place 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 – emotionally, physically and financially.

*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 and Dayton VA Medical Center 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. The Houses provide physical and emotional support to our servicemen and servicewomen, Veterans, and their families.*



*The Wright-Patterson AFB and Dayton VA Fisher Houses have assisted nearly 25,000 Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard (active duty, retired, National Guard, Reserve), Veterans and their families since 1990 – more than 1,200 families in 2019.*

because A FAMILY'S LOVE is good medicine

**90**  
HOUSES IN  
OPERATION

**400,000**  
FAMILIES SERVED SINCE 1990

**\$500 MILLION**  
IN SAVINGS TO FAMILIES SINCE 1990

**10 MILLION**  
DAYS OF LODGING

# *Guest comments*



- “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.*

## *Guest comments*



“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.*

# *Guest comments*

“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.*

# *The Beginning.....*

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



*Captain (ret) Gretchen Lizza and family*

# *Along come the Fishers .....*

- Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher were asked to build one Ronald McDonald-type compassionate care 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; following aircraft crash in Gander, Newfoundland and aboard the USS Iowa
    - Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum – New York City
  - First Fisher House opened in 1991
    - Now 90 Fisher Houses at 64 locations world-wide (24 military installations, 37 VA medical centers and 1 in the United Kingdom)
    - More under construction now (4) plus additional locations with a recognized need (16)



“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)*

Zachary was also made an Honorary Veteran by Public Law in 1999.

# *Nightingale House*



- Nightingale House
  - Converted base house
    - Two 3 bedroom units in an enlisted duplex
  - Eight bedrooms; four bathrooms; two half baths
  - Two kitchens, two dining areas, two living rooms
  - Not handicapped accessible
  - Demolished in February 2011

# *WPAFB Fisher House I*



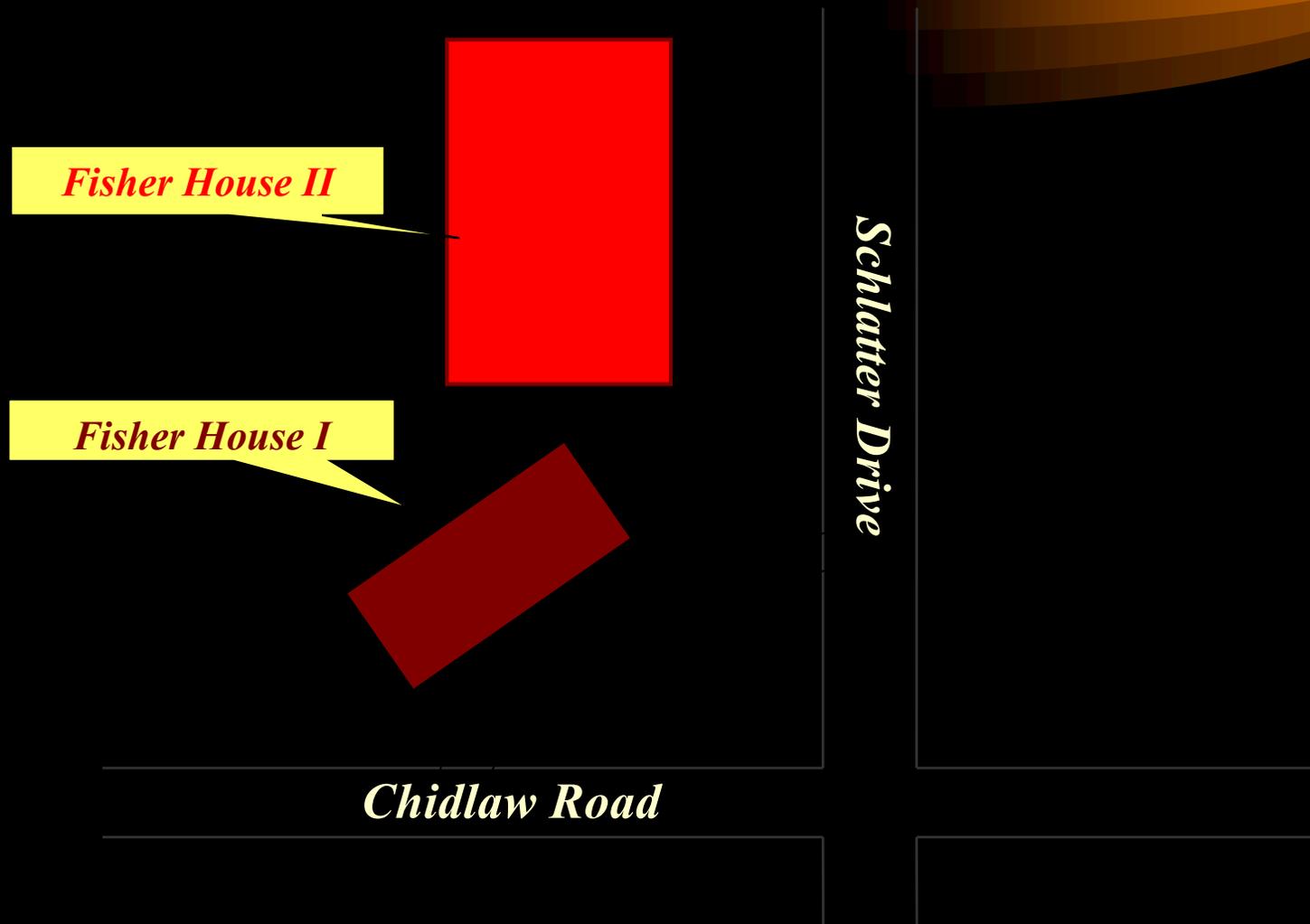
- Opened in May 1994
- Cost of \$1M
  - Two story, 5,000 square feet
  - Five single bedroom suites plus two two-bedroom suites
  - Seven bathrooms; one half bath
  - Kitchen, dining area, living room and laundry
  - Gazebo

# *WPAFB Fisher House II*

- Opened in April 2011
- Cost of \$4M
  - Single story with 10,000 square feet
  - 12 bedrooms with 13.5 handicapped-accessible ADA compliant bathrooms
  - Living room, family room, kitchen, dining room and patio with pergola
  - Expanded laundry capabilities
  - Manager's office

*Added 1,460 bed nights a year (as we grew capacity from 17 bedrooms to 21 bedrooms)*

# *Location of the WPAFB Fisher Houses*



## *WPAFB FH II Capital campaign*



- The cost of the House was \$4M
- The Fisher House Foundation challenged the FNHI to raise \$1M towards the new House
  - Kicked off campaign in December 2007
  - Exceeded the goal – \$1.2M raised

# *Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher House*



# *Dayton VA Medical Center Fisher House*

- Opened in October 2018
- Cost of \$7M
  - Two story, 13,500 square feet
  - 16 bedrooms with 17.5 handicapped-accessible ADA compliant bathrooms
  - Living room, family room, kitchen, dining room and patio with pergola
  - Manager's office

*Added 5,840 bed nights a year*

*Now the three Dayton area Fisher Houses provide a total of 13,505 nights annually*



Dayton VA Medical Center dedication on 7 November 2018

*“Tour” of the new Dayton VA Medical Center  
Fisher House*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV-L4hBUiCU>

## *Unique needs to support at the DVAMC Fisher House*



- Groceries via Shipt (local area is a “food desert”)
- Taxi service
- Support for Hospice families
- Golf cart

# *Houses serve everyone*

- In 30 years of operations, the three Dayton area Fisher Houses have served nearly 25,000 families
  - From all branches of the military
  - From stateside and overseas
  - Active duty, retired, Guard, Reserve, Veterans, and their families
- Average length of stay is 7 days (and approximately 75% plus occupancy – pre-COVID)
  - Some stay for only a day or two and others for months – even up to a year or more

## *Guest charge*

- Previously, Wright-Patterson AFB Fisher House 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 Fisher Houses for free (and at no cost to taxpayers)

# *WPAFB Fisher Houses Playground*



# *Volunteers key to our success*

- In addition to small paid staff, numerous volunteers support the House guests
  - In 2019, in-house volunteers provided 1,450 hours of service to the Houses plus the popcorn volunteers who have put in more than 868 hours
    - Utilizing the Independent Sector national volunteer rate of \$24.14 an hour, that's a \$55,957 savings!
- Staff could not have supported guests and/or raised funds as well 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 and the historic Dayton VA Medical Center

# *Government's involvement*

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

# *Relationship of the Fisher House Foundation, the Fisher Houses and the FNHI*

## *Fisher House Foundation:*

*Builds Fisher Houses at major military medical centers and Veterans Affairs medical centers and donates them to the Government.*

## *WPAFB and Dayton VAMC Fisher Houses:*

*DoD and VA organizations providing compassionate care housing for Medical Center patients and their family members*

## *Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc:*

*501(c)3 non-profit organized solely for the purpose of raising funds to support the USAF and VA Fisher House guests*

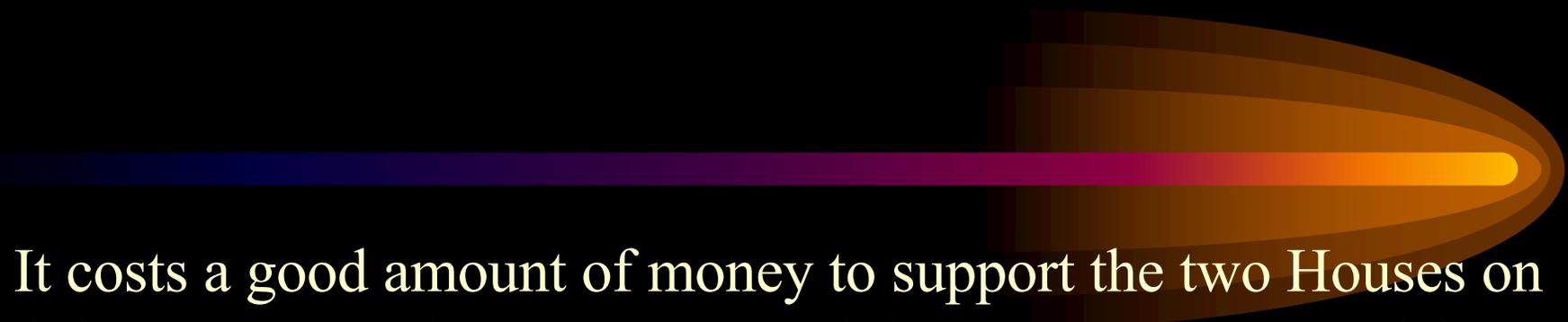
**Shared goal:** Provide the absolute best compassionate care facilities and support to the individuals receiving treatment and/or their family members.

## *Interesting information*



- From inception in May 1990 to end October 2019: the three Dayton area Fisher Houses have had the capability to provide 201,634 bed nights
- At a local hotel rate of \$125 a night, that translates to a potential savings to the guests exceeding \$25 million – in hotel costs alone

# *How you can help*

- 
- It costs a good amount of money to support the two Houses on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and 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 2020 budget of expenses needed to support the operations of the Fisher Houses
  - A donation of \$34 will support one family spending a night in the Fisher Houses
  - A donation of \$68 will support two families
  - A donation of \$1,000 will support 30 families spending a night in the Fisher Houses

***Without your help to offset the day-to-day operational costs, the guest fee could be \$34 per night/per room***

## *FNHI Financial Status - 2019*

- In September 2020, Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc. received the final evaluation of the 2019 financial reports audited by Flagel, Huber, Flagel & Co.
- As a percentage of total income, fund-raising and administration expenses were 5.49% – that means that more than \$.94 of every dollar raised was available for Program support.

# *FNHI Donor Program*

- Established in 2002 – provides an opportunity to obtain one of three levels of donor status with the Fisher/Nightingale Houses, Inc.
  - Supporter: 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

## *“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*



## FISHER~NIGHTINGALE HOUSES

*Fisher Houses are part of the fabric of the healthcare system and 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?*

## *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?***

# 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

**Think of it 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.***

## *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](mailto: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.***

www.fnhi.org

**FISHER HOUSE**  
HELPING MILITARY FAMILIES

**FISHER~NIGHTINGALE HOUSES**  
Touching Lives with Compassion at Wright-Patterson Medical Center & the VA Medical Center, Dayton, Ohio

Search this site

HOME ABOUT US THE HOUSES EVENTS HOW YOU CAN HELP CONTACT US DONATE

Since 1990, the Fisher and Nightingale Houses at Wright-Patt have been a way for us to give something back to the men and women serving their country.  
[» More](#)

The Fisher Houses offer physical and emotional support to our servicemen and servicewomen, providing the opportunity military families to stay together and support each other when a loved one is undergoing medical treatment.

MAKING A RESERVATION UPCOMING EVENTS MAKE A DONATION

*www.facebook.com/FisherNightingale*

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for Fisher-Nightingale Houses, Inc. The page header includes the name and a search bar. Navigation tabs for Page, Inbox, Events, Notifications, Insights, Publishing Tools, and More are visible. The profile picture is a circular logo with a house icon and the text 'FISHER HOUSE HELPING MILITARY FAMILIES'. The cover photo is a large brick building with a prominent water tower. A 'Boost Your Post for \$20' advertisement is displayed at the top. Below the cover photo, there are options to Like, Follow, Share, and Donate. The main content area includes a 'Write a post...' section with options for Photo/Video, Feeling/Activity, and Check in. At the bottom, there are two promotional cards: 'Reach People Nearby' and 'Get More Page Likes'. A right-hand sidebar shows a 5.0 star rating and a section titled 'ABOUT FISHER-NIGHTINGALE HOUSES, INC.' with a sub-section 'Our Story'.



**FISHER HOUSE**

*because* A Family's Love  
is Good Medicine

[www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org)