

# A Little Dose of Sunshine

Spring 2016

We hope you enjoy this edition of our Sunshine Memorial Foundation newsletter - A Little Dose of Sunshine. In an effort to keep in touch with our volunteers, event participants, donors and supporters, we bring you this publication and hope to continue to connect on a routine basis.

Enjoy and we welcome your input and suggestions for future publications.

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## Giving Hearts Day

Giving Hearts Day was Thursday, February 11th. We raised over \$20,000 from more than 150 donors! Thank you for your support, and to our partners, Your QFM and Bully Brew Coffee House!

All money raised on this day goes toward the Sunshine Hospitality Home project. One person who is passionate about this project is Katy Johnson. Here is what she had to say.

"Life can change so, so fast—sometimes in ways that are exciting and invigorating. And other times in ways that challenge us to the core. On July 2nd, I was enjoying life with my husband and 2 boys. We were anxiously awaiting the arrival of our 3rd baby boy in August. Yet, we were so consumed with life and had spent little time preparing physically for this new addition. Our nursery was not ready, my hospital bag was not packed, our freezer was not full of food, and my belly was not big enough. But, things changed. Dale decided to come early. He arrived on July 4th, 2015 and he will always and forever be our little firecracker. I had a repeat C-section that went smoothly, but he did not think it was cool or fun to breathe on his own. He was whisked away to the NICU before I could even hold him. And it was there that he hung out for the first 2 ½ weeks of his precious life.

That time was hard. It did rock us to the core in so many ways—emotionally, physically, and financially. I was a mom of three amazing boys. I needed to be in two places at the same time—at home with my two big boys and at the hospital with my little firecracker who was fighting for his life.

Each day was a new day and each night was a new night. When Dale was in the hospital, I realized quickly that things don't slow down when the sun goes down. I wanted to be with Dale day and night—to be able to hold and feed him whenever he was strong enough to come out of his isolate.



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Getting to and from the hospital was a challenge. I can't even imagine the challenge if we did not live in Grand Forks—if we had to travel from out of town or stay in a hotel. The NICU became my community. The other families became my friends. We talked birth weights, milligrams, breathing tubes, vitamin deficiencies, breathing rates, and so many other things new parents don't normally have to even think about. Having a place to be together with other moms going through so many of the same things was one of the things that pulled me through that difficult time.

The hospitality home in Grand Forks can be that place. That place for families to come together. That place for families to feel supported. That place for families to feel like they have a home when they can't be at their home. That place where a bed will be waiting—not forcing anyone to sleep in a waiting room or a car in the parking lot.”



**Giving Hearts Day**

[impactgiveback.org](http://impactgiveback.org)

February 11, 2016



## Sunny People Spotlight

**ALICE HOFFERT:** This is where we take a moment and feature a “sunny” person. Our volunteers work so hard, daily, weekly, monthly, and are so appreciated by everyone! Alice Hoffert, the Chair of Sunshine’s Board of Directors was presented the AARP Andrus Award for Community Service in 2015.

The prestigious award is given to one North Dakotan annually to recognize that individuals have the power and ability to make a difference in the lives of others. Through her volunteer service, Alice impacts the lives of people in the Grand Forks community and beyond. Besides her work with Sunshine, Alice is involved in many other organizations, including the Grand Forks Senior Center, the LISTEN Center, and the United Way.

*Left to Right: Daughter Heidi Flaten, husband Rodger, Alice, and son Derek*



## Ray of Sunshine

The “Ray of Sunshine” program is a pilot program through Sunshine Memorial Foundation. The goal is to assist families and caregivers with the basic need of lodging. It offers a hotel room at a discounted price for those who have a loved one at the hospital.

With a \$25 off coupon, distributed by a hospital employee, families can stay at one of nine participating hotels: Americas Best Value Inn, Days Inn, Ramada, Red Roof Inn, TownHouse, Knights Inn & Suites, Roadway Inn, Quality Inn of Grand Forks, Sleep Inn & Suites, Super 8 Motel, offering their best rate.



The hope is to offer a little ray of sunshine during a very stressful time by taking some of the financial burden off the shoulders of families and caregivers so they can focus on the healing of the patient as we work to build the sunshine Hospitality Home.



## ...with Grant & Rebekah Seeger

### As a doctor, why is this project important to you?

As a physician at Altru, I have seen the trouble that some families must go through to care and support their loved ones in times of significant stress. Having a facility to support these families may actually improve the care of the patient in subtle ways that are hard to quantify. Even if it allows a spouse or child to spend a little bit more time with the patient in the hospital.

### Why did you decide to name the Mother's Room after your mothers?

Rebekah and I plan to dedicate the Mother's Room to our mothers, Vickie Stortroen and Barbara Seeger due to their consistent support through all of the phases in our lives, but also for their strong support for breastfeeding. The medical community continues to discover incredible benefits for breastfeeding and we want to help provide a sanctuary for these mothers in order to not interrupt the lives of their children during stressful times.

### What impact do you hope this Home will have in our region?

The impact of the Sunshine Hospitality Home will be dispersed across the region by improved support and health of our friends and family. It will be a blessing to the patient and their supporters.

*Grant is a dad and a board certified radiation oncologist at Altru. Rebekah is a mom, owner of abooboo design graphics, and a volunteer extraordinaire.*



## High School Student Gives Moving Speech

Kylie Dvorak gave a winning speech on the Sunshine Memorial Foundation and the Hospitality Home project to her speech class at Red River High School.

For their assignment, each student had to give a persuasive speech on a charity, non-profit, or any other good cause. Each student brought in \$2, and when all presentations were done, the class voted on who to donate the money to. During her speech, Kylie talked about her own personal experience living in this type of place while her sister received treatment out of town. Ultimately, she won over the class with her story and Sunshine Memorial Foundation received a check for \$48!



## Southern Nelson County

The Sunshine Hospitality Home will benefit those that need to travel to Grand Forks for medical needs. Surrounding communities understand the need for a home like this and have banded together to fundraise. Southern Nelson County has been working hard for the cause. Multiple people, businesses, and organizations have donated from all around, including McVille, Tolna, Binford, and Aneta. They received the Regional Team Award at Sunshine Fest this year.

*Left to Right: Carma Hanson, Scottie Larson, Donovan Larson*



# Thank You

to our Giving Hearts Day donors

Kimberly Adam  
Mary Akason  
Valerie Ames  
Karen Anderson  
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Steven Asche  
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Clair Zirnhelt  
Dakota Medical Foundation  
Farmers & Merchants Bank of ND  
McVile American Legion  
Tolna American Legion  
Tolna American Legion Auxiliary

## Sunshine Fest

The 6th annual Sunshine Fest was January 30th at the Ralph Engelstad Arena! Thank you to everyone who came! This day would not have been a success without our awesome volunteers, sponsors, and participants. A special thank you goes out to our main sponsors: Altru's Jerry & Sanny Ryan Center for Prevention & Genetics, Truyu, Shine the Light, Your QFM and I RUN 4.

Take a look at all of the photos from Sunshine Fest on our website, [sunshinememorial.org](http://sunshinememorial.org).

