

# THIS WILL BE 'SUNSHINE' ON A RAINY DAY



**Shannon "Sunshine" Larson**

by Jeff Olsen

Talk about enthusiasm. It's really catching, especially with the Sunshine Hospitality Home that will have a huge impact on many of us up here.

Kelly Kofstad sat in her upstairs office at Citizens State Bank, and she talked fast and excitedly about what the Sunshine Hospitality Home will mean to Roseau County residents, who doctor in Grand Forks or have a family member hospitalized there and need a place to stay while visiting.

"If you have a doctor's appointment on Monday morning and it's supposed to be bad weather and you want to get there on Sunday, you can stay at the Sunshine Hospitality Home on Sunday night and be there for your appointment

on Monday morning," she said.

"Or, say you have a premature baby who is transferred to Grand Forks. Where are Mom and Dad going to stay? It takes a lot of money to have a hotel for months. Who knows how long they will have to be there?"

And then, with another exuberant breath, she exclaimed, "They're breaking ground in 2017!"

Yes, and they are looking for donations to make Sunshine Hospitality Home a beautiful reality.

"They can make contributions at Citizens State Bank in Roseau, Border State Bank in Greenbush, and Security State Bank in Warroad," she said, adding that Roseau County has its own fundraising team.

"We have Jack Swanson, Sarah Kofstad, Abigail Johnson, Abby Johnston, and myself," she said, adding that Theresa Garbe, formerly of Roseau and now in Grand Forks is the chair.

"Theresa is actually working for Sunshine," she said, and then highlighted that there will be 14 rooms available for lodging.

Just a word about the real Sunshine, a remarkable woman for whom the facility will stand out as a monument.

According to the brochure: *The Sunshine Memorial Foundation is a North Dakota non-profit that was established by Van and Dee Larson.*

*The Larsons established the Foundation in memory and in honor of their daughter, Shannon "Sunshine" Larson, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 31 from heat stroke and dehydration while hiking in Arizona. The purpose of the Foundation is to support charitable programs promoting Shannon's attitude of helping others.*

The Sunshine Hospitality Home will be constructed on the west side of the Altru Campus, according to Kofstad.

"You don't have to be an Altru patient," she said. "You just need a medical reason to be there."

Yes, it is recommended that a person make a \$25 donation or more.

"But if you can't afford it, there's no charge," she said.

Roseau County has pledged to raise \$250,000 for their share in helping to fund Sunshine Hospitality Home.

"Basically, we're raising our money to sponsor a room, to name a room," she said, explaining that if 10 people from Roseau County needed to stay at the facility, they could if there's room available.

"Everybody knows somebody who could use a room like this," said Kofstad, mentioning a need when a family member is transferred to Grand Forks for specialized treatment.

Once the Sunshine Hospitality

Home is in operation, a family member could stay in Grand Forks for an extended time to spend time with that family member.

Earlier this month, Theresa Garbe, the Roseau County chairperson, who formerly worked for Altru Clinic in Roseau, was reached in Grand Forks.

She noted that the Roseau County team has surpassed the halfway mark of their goal of \$250,000.

"To date, we actually have \$136,926," she said, adding that the Sunshine Memorial Foundation, which was established in 2012, is separate from the hospital system.

The Sunshine Hospitality Home won't be some shack.

"We've estimated the cost to be \$3.54 million," said Ms. Garbe. "We are actually about 70 percent done with raising the funds to build it."

Yes, many hands make light work.

"We actually have eight regional teams that are raising funds," she said, and then singled out the Roseau County Team.

"They're actually one of the highest fundraising teams right now," she said.

## A Great Idea

*"If you build it, they will come" is a famous quote from Field of Dreams. And build it they will soon do.*

Fundraising is important and so will be the availability of the facility



**Logo for a life-changer of togetherness**



**Drawing of Sunshine Hospitality Home**

right next to the Grand Forks hospital.

"It's a lot like most hospitality homes - like the Ronald McDonald House," she said, emphasizing that they will continue to raise funds after it is in operation.

"Their hope is to raise funds when someone does stay at Sunshine," she said, mentioning a nominal fee of \$25 a night.

"It's not an obligation if someone is unable to do so," she said.

Already the response from volunteers offering to help staff the building has been remarkable, according

to Ms. Garbe.

"Hundreds of people have already volunteered to work at the home," she said, mentioning that there will be two full-time employees and a number of volunteers during each shift.

Directly under the photo of Shannon "Sunshine" Larson on the brochure, it says it all: "Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

The Roseau County Team would like to thank you for your wonderful contributions.