



Winston-Salem

Caring for families caring for children

Heart to Heart

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O.B. and Elaine

Forsyth Family Room Volunteer of the Year Elaine Hill

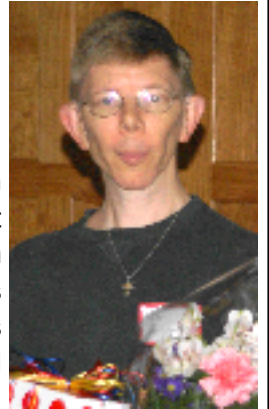
Elaine Hill has only been living in the Winston-Salem area for a year, but you would never know it to watch how comfortable, outgoing, and friendly she is with Family Room guests and volunteers alike. In the time that Elaine has been here, she has volunteered over 200 hours of service in our Family Room program.

Elaine was born in Syracuse, New York and grew up in a family who made service to others a priority in their lives. Elaine's parents spent many happy days cooking and caring for families staying at the RMH in Syracuse. In addition, they served as volunteer weekend managers whenever they were needed. Following her parents' examples, Elaine volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House of Syracuse checking-in guests, cooking, helping with special events, stocking the pantry, and doing *whatever was needed* for 15 years. Elaine jokes that the staff of the Syracuse House had her phone number on *speed dial*. Happily, Elaine brought her skills and experience with her to Winston-Salem and applies them in both the Brenner and Forsyth Family Rooms. When the Forsyth Family Room opened last February, Elaine extended her service there covering the 12-3 Wednesday shift every week.

Though Elaine had not been a Family Room volunteer in New York, she has become a great advocate for the program, recruiting friends and even her wonderful husband O.B. Elaine remembers with a smile that they met on an elevator at work, and with that characteristic twinkle in her eye, jokes that "they have had their 'ups and downs' ever since". Married for 46 years, the Hills have a son and daughter-in-law (Glen and Laura) and four grandchildren (Tim, Caroline, John, and Eliza).

It was a lucky day for our Ronald McDonald House when Elaine Hill called us to offer her help. Our Family Room guests have been fortunate beneficiaries of her kindness and care. Elaine's unselfish gift of her time and talents has enriched the lives of everyone who knows her and we are delighted the Hills have chosen to make Winston-Salem your new home.

Brenner Family Room Volunteer of the Year Pete Breidenbach



Pete Breidenbach is an extraordinary man. He does not allow life's challenges to get him down. He is always looking for ways that he can improve circumstances in his life and channel his time and enthusiasm to help others.

Born with a hearing impairment that made learning to speak and interact with others difficult, Pete was unwavering. While in school, he discovered that he had a learning disability, and again remained resolute. As a youngster, Pete enjoyed scouting. He especially liked doing service projects which helped his community. Pete completely landscaped the grounds of the Bethel United Methodist Church. In recognition of this, Pete received the prestigious Eagle Scout award, the highest recognition a Boy Scout could accomplish.

After high school Pete attended Forsyth Technical Community College where he pursued his interest in Graphic Arts. He loved to draw, but another disappointing diagnosis of arthritis, kept him from pursuing that craft. Once again, Pete did not allow this to get him down; rather he was determined to find ways in which he could help others and overcome his limitations as best as he could. In order to improve his communication skills, Pete joined the Toastmaster's Club. This is a group which meets twice a month and gives its members the opportunity to practice public speaking. In the years since Pete joined this group, his confidence has grown and his ability to communicate verbally has improved dramatically, leading to his current vocation as the Receptionist and Representative Payee Specialist assistant for the Enrichment Center in Winston-Salem.

The challenges that Pete faces have made him very sensitive to the needs of others. Six years ago when Pete learned about our need for volunteers in the Brenner Family Room, he immediately offered his time. Pete has been covering the 6-9 p.m. on Friday nights ever since. In addition, every year he volunteers for the 6-9 p.m. shift on Christmas Eve.

Pete knows what it feels like to face difficulties, and he wants to do whatever he can to *lighten the load* for families with sick children. If you were to visit the Brenner Family Room on any Friday night of the year that is exactly what you would find him doing.



Carolyn and Family

House Volunteer of the Year Carolyn Blakley

House and Family

Room volunteers relieve some of the stress of being at the hospital, allowing parents to focus on the care of their child and quality time together. **House Volunteer of the Year, Carolyn Blakley** understands that each day is a gift and it's an even bigger gift if you get to spend that day with your family.

Originally from Winston-Salem, Carolyn and her husband, Dallas, met while attending high school together. This past August, Dallas and Carolyn celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary (congratulations!). They are devoted parents of two (Bryan Blakley and Kim Christian) and grandparents of four (Grayson, Chase, Kelsie and Morgan). Carolyn's passions are supporting her family and helping her community. She attends every grandchild's dance concert, band performance, soccer game and school function. Carolyn's not only a spectator. She integrates her grandchildren into her world, involving them in volunteering in our community. Serving our families is a chance for Carolyn to spend time with her grandchildren. Chase Blakley and Morgan Christian often volunteer with their "Naana" at the House. Leading by example, Carolyn is teaching them that together as a team, they can accomplish many things.

Carolyn began volunteering at the House in 2005 and recently began volunteering in our new Forsyth Family room in March. She has volunteered over 210 hours serving our families. *"She is the happiest when she is busy helping or doing for other people,"* said daughter Kim when asked about her mother. Many organizations are recipients of Carolyn's *"helping spirit"*. At her church, Old Town Baptist, she's a member of the choir and is in charge of the bereavement and care meals committee. She provides pillows for cardiac patients (yet another task with which she recruits her grandchildren to help) and volunteers for the Red Cross in aiding with numerous blood drives. She's on the hospitality committee at Reagan High School and helps with filling Christmas stockings each year.

Carolyn is a role model for her children, grandchildren and for all families. Supporting the Ronald McDonald House is not just something "Naana" does; she's made caring for our families a responsibility of her entire family. Carolyn, thank you for your dedication to serving others and for being an inspiration to all!

Family Support Program

Volunteer of the Year Shari Crangle



The Family Support Program is fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers who provide a variety of services, including supportive hospital visits and recreational programming to help guests

unwind from the long hours at the hospital caring for their sick children. During these recreational programs (Bingo, massage therapy, pet therapy, and arts activities), our families have an opportunity to chat with each other and to receive comfort and support from our trained volunteers.

One of our most devoted and generous volunteers is **Shari Crangle, the 2009 Family Support Program Volunteer of the Year.**

Having graduated from UNCG with a BS in Interior Design, Shari continued her education by taking supplemental art and design courses. As she first worked for others in the interior design field, and then herself, Shari earned her Level II Contractor's Building Certification and has done professional design work in a number of commercial and residential settings. Because of her expertise in children's murals, RMH hired Shari several years ago to transform our playroom into a delightful and whimsical haven for our young guests. As Shari recalls, *"One of the more endearing moments was when a 11 year-old cancer patient asked me to work his favorite Therapy Dog into the mural. The joy on his precious face solidified my decision to continue my volunteer efforts at RMH."* As a result, Shari completed the Family Support Program volunteer training and began working directly with our families in 2006.

Each month, Shari designs and provides beautiful art projects for our families using all of her donated materials, including fall and holiday wreaths, memory boxes, embossed candle holders, and picture frames. Our families love their time with her and ask repeatedly throughout the month, *"When is Miss Shari coming back?"* She works with great tenderness, a zany sense of humor, and much patience in helping our families connect with each other and open up about their worries and fears. In creating this supportive environment, Shari provides our guests with the much needed gifts of unconditional acceptance and positive regard.

On behalf of our appreciative guests and staff, we thank you, Shari!



Ronald McDonald House

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