Dear Friends,

I am proud to share with you the 2017 Omega House Annual Report. We send you this publication as a personal thank you for your support. Your generosity helped provide care to 31 residents in 2017 and over 500 residents since 2005. Your gift also gave the family and friends of these residents peace of mind knowing their loved one had exceptional and personal 24-hour care in a peaceful, homelike setting.

In this annual report we once again recognize our volunteer of the year along with updating you on various programs we offer at Omega House. Our feature article is dedicated to Scott Rutherford, one of the founding members of Omega House, who inspired many during his time.

There are many ways to support Omega House to invest in its future. Inserted into this year’s annual report is our “Planned Giving Brochure” which offers you several giving options. A planned gift in your will to Omega House may provide tax advantages for you and your heirs. Our promise to donors is to use their gifts wisely and for the purpose intended—to care for the dying. Please consider a gift of support to ensure that anyone needing a gift of home will not be turned away.

I want to extend a sincere thank you to all the donors listed in this report, to our board of directors, staff members, volunteers and our residents and their families who make Omega House a unique treasure in our community that is open to anyone in need at a special time in life—when caring matters most. Please join me in securing the future of Omega House through your continued support.

Sincerely,

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www.omega-house.org
GROWTH

Omega House opened its doors for the first time in September 2005. Since then, we have cared for over 500 community residents faced with a terminal illness, and we continue to be a community leader and resource in end-of-life care.

Consistent with our 2020 strategic vision, we have expanded our community resources to educate individuals about Advance Care Planning, which discusses the importance of end-of-life choices with loved ones, well in advance. Decisions about end-of-life care are deeply personal, and are based on one’s values and beliefs. Conversations about your wishes and beliefs help relieve your loved ones and healthcare providers of the need to guess what you would want, when you cannot make those decisions.

In addition to Advance Care Planning education, Omega House has opened a new room that provides short term residential respite care. Respite care offers relief to individuals and families, and provides 24-hour care for physically dependent loved ones.

In 2018 we will continue to offer grief support for families and loved ones, consistent with our community resources continuum of care. We will include a range of grief support offerings, from individual counseling, to support groups and specialized workshops.

The generosity of our community makes all of this possible. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who support the mission and vision of Omega House. Please continue to include Omega House in your annual charitable giving. I ask you to consider leaving a legacy of compassion by including Omega House in your will or estate plans. Again, thank you for your support.

Deb Young
President
The 2017 Volunteer of the Year is presented to Mary Jean DAAVETILLA

...who has graced Omega House since 2015. Mary Jean’s presence brings warmth, calm, laughter, and a sense that everything is ok.

“Growing up, I watched my mother and sisters, who all lived together. My aunt suffered from congestion, and without my mother’s and aunts’ home care, would have had to leave the area. It was simply more convenient for her to be [with us] at home. Without ever saying so, my mother’s job was to take care of her sister and her family. She taught me this.”

In response to a question about her most important accomplishment, Mary Jean said, simply, “My family. They are my proudest accomplishment—I love my kids and grandkids.”

“My job was my family. And when I think of my family, I [also] think about our family here, at Omega House. There is something about this home. I miss it when I am not here.”

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

PAST VOLUNTEERS of the Year

2005 Finlandia University Nursing Students
2006 Mary Erva
2007 Jan Wieber
2008 Carol Niileksela and David Milford
2009 John Van Westernburg
2010 Adele Masters
2011 Ruth Fitzgerald
2012 Joan Thornton
2013 Cyndy Quello
2014 Toni White
2015 Rich Featherly
2016 Shelby Hamar and Bruce Ragusett
“You are at your most alive before you die,” says Mary Foss, who has cared for people personally and at Omega House for many years.

Death is an important part of life, and the goal of hospice is to comfort the mind, body, and spirit of both the dying and their loved ones. Our new Omega Companions volunteer program will provide an extra layer of comfort.

We are recruiting volunteers to serve as trained and expert companions to residents and their family and friends. This is a wonderful opportunity for people who are interested in cultivating mindfulness, practicing contemplative caregiving, and engaging in a compassionate end-of-life movement.

If you are interested in volunteering as an Omega Companion, please call Omega House at (906) 482-4438 to learn more.
Are you caring for a loved one at home and have an unplanned situation? Maybe you just need a break from caregiving or you’ve put off that vacation of a lifetime far too long. These situations can create a need for immediate care by an alternative care-giver. Respite care provides caregivers a temporary rest from caregiving, while the person needing the care continues to receive care in a safe environment. Using respite services can support and strengthen your ability to be a caregiver.

If you are interested in Respite Care services through Omega House, please call us at (906) 482-4438 to schedule your appointment today.
ACCUMULATED GIVING

$100,000
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Ernest Giff
James LaBelle Family*
Keweenaw Community Foundation
Rebecca Sandretto*

$50,000
Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital
James A. Ruppe Foundation
Valinda Tomasi*
U.P. Health System - Portage
Jim and Lorraine Vivian, Sr.*

$25,000
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Richard Heckel*
William Hodge*
Tom Hruby
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Keweenaw New Home Nursing

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Lions Club International
Lions Clubs of the UP
Father Wayne Marcotte*
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Deb and Mark Young

*Deceased

...Omega House...the care, the compassion and attention (my dad) received was beyond imagination. Every staff member and volunteer made sure to see to all of my dad’s needs and, more importantly, made their own connection with him.

GEORGE S.
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Dennis Timm
Ray and Wili Weglarz
Timothy Young

"Thanks for making my father’s last days so comfortable and for your hospitality to our family."

DAVID P.
Scott Rutherford, a friend to many and a founding member of Omega House, died quietly with his loving wife Joyce; his daughter, Anne; and faithful dog, Carmen, at his side, February 9, 2018. So many of us loved and learned from Scott that we thought it appropriate to ask several of his friends and family members to remember him, here.

Anne Rutherford Harrington recalls her father: “When I think about my Dad, he is always in motion. He travelled a lot for work and always brought me a doll from wherever he’d gone. He commuted to his job in downtown DC, and I would run up the street to walk him home the last few blocks. Later, when quitting smoking caused him to put on weight, he took to biking downtown. Then biking became running marathons.

But even when his body was at rest, his mind seemed never to be. On vacations, sitting in his sand chair at the surf’s edge he’d have, as often as not, a yellow, and slightly damp, legal pad on his lap, writing down his thoughts about—well, I never really knew for sure: the world in general, his world, his visions of what “it” all meant and what should be done to fix things.

We were in motion again together the September before his cancer diagnosis. He shared the beauty and history of the UP with me as he did with other visitors: we went down the Quincy mine, explored Calumet and Hancock, and walked along the ridgeline of Copper Harbor. Too quickly, the physical motion became too difficult, but the mind was moving right to the end. Sheets of yellow legal pad were never empty, as he wanted to put down the many thoughts, ideas, feelings he felt friends and loved ones should know before he ran out of time. So, that’s how I’ll remember him, a man always in motion, a force of nature that only another force of nature could ultimately make still.”

Magdalena Belej says, “I have known Scott for almost 20 years. We first met while working together on the dream—Omega House. On February 9th, I was privileged to welcome Scott to Omega House on his final coming. It was very emotional. He was hoping it would be a temporary stay, but we both knew…” “It was an honor to know you Scott.”

Ray Weglarz recalls...“in 1997, while working in hospice at Keweenaw Home Nursing & Hospice, I received a phone call from someone at the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center in Iron Mountain.” “Hello, this is Scott Rutherford and I am trying to help a Native American veteran. He is terminally ill and wants to return to his home near Baraga for his final days. He is very weak—can you help us?” Through our efforts, Scott was able to help this man come home to the land and reservation he loved for his final days.
“Little did I know from this call how our lives would change and have a significant impact on the future of our community. Not long after this, Scott, Bill Sewell and I began to meet regularly at Marie’s Deli (now Victoria’s Kitchen). Through these informal chats, members of the community came and worked together to found Omega House.”

Scott’s pastor, Bucky Beach, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, spent years knowing and working with Scott. He says, “Scott was a deeply religious individual who worked tirelessly for peace and justice issues all over the world. Many people do not know the specific and religiously Christian side of Scott Rutherford. As his pastor, I did. His conversion to Christianity [was based] on very troubled issues of violence and war, racism and oppression. We are continually blessed by his presence. The struggle goes on, and so do we. And so does Scott!”

Bob Pizzi, a longtime friend, recalls, “I met Scott in the winter of 1999, when I moved back to the Copper Country to care for my father. Scott was my father’s hospice volunteer and we met through Keweenaw Home Nursing and Hospice. Scott came over to my dad’s house and engaged him so naturally. Scott’s compassion shone through. A great example of Scott’s devotion, compassion, and ability to connect with people and gain trust was his support work for the struggle for tribal voting rights with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in Baraga. At a naming ceremony, he received the Ojibwe name, Nigit Bimosse, or ‘Walking Otter.’ I remember our early morning walks with dog Carmen, breakfasts at the Kaleva, laughs and lamentations about the sorry state of the world—just being with Scott.”

Scott helped launch Omega House, where he spent his final days with his devoted wife, Joyce. I find it compelling that wherever you might find Scott you could count on something meaningful, imaginative, and valuable happening. Omega House reflects his values so completely. It is a lasting legacy to this community. I will always consider it one of my most cherished life experiences to have met and to call Scott Rutherford my friend.”

Debbie Mues says, “Scott was a beam of light in this world. We all benefited from his friendship and his work with social justice, peace, and the environment, which spanned continents from Vietnam, Central and South America to right here in the Upper Peninsula where he lived the rest of his life. He died the way he lived, facing the prow of his boat into the waves and taking care of everything that came. And how profound that he died at Omega House, the wonderful place he helped found.”
MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a home-like environment where people at the end of life may live to the fullest, receiving compassionate and competent care from professional volunteers and family caregivers.

COMMUNITY GRIEF SUPPORT

Grieving is the most difficult life experience that we all share. We grieve many deaths of loved family, friends, and pets, and we grieve layers upon layers of other life losses that need our attention too. Even though grief is such an important part of life, compassionate support can be difficult to find. Myths of grief stages and timelines also cloud how we grieve and how we comfort others—none of these persistent myths adequately explain our diverse and individual expressions and feelings. Grief has no timeline and no agenda. Keeping love and the relationships at the center of our grief offers us solace and honors our loved ones.

“Grieving is Love” is the compassionate message at the heart of the new Omega House Community Grief Support program, which includes grief resources, counseling, and group support for all community members. The Omega House board of directors initiated this program in their Strategic Vision 2020. The board’s Community Grief Support committee, comprised of counseling, clergy, grief, and hospice experts, is focused on building a special program to address our community needs.

Omega House started the grief program in 2017 with two workshops about grieving during the holidays. Then in early 2018, an Omega House social work intern, trained in grief therapy, began offering free grief and loss counseling to community members. Future plans include a monthly grief support group and grief in-service workshops at local organizations and businesses.

Recognizing the need for grief resources, the Rice Memorial Clinic Foundation recently donated $6,450 to Omega House. With this continued and growing support, we plan to expand the program to help teenagers deal with grief and loss and help community members grieve traumatic deaths such as suicide and the opioid epidemic. The need for expert and compassionate grief support has never been greater in our community and in our culture. Omega House is helping to meet these challenges. If you are interested in a unique giving opportunity, please consider donating to our Community Grief Support program.

OMEGA HOUSE COMMUNITY GRIEF SUPPORT COMMITTEE:
Sarah Cheney, Cynthia Drake, Kathy Johnson, Michael Lutz, and Ray Weglarz.

To the Omega House residents who have gone before us in 2017

To the Omega House residents who have gone before us in 2017

Marilyn Bowers
Carol Bradstrom
Thomas Burr ridge
Karen Cavaler i
Arbutus Durocher
Roy Harju
Edsel Johnson
Jane Jordan
Margaret Kiiskila
Shirley Kindall
Frank Lide
Ruth MacFarlane
Robert McLain
Laurie Monticello
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Cliff Nichols

Bob and Paula Nutini

Shawn and Douglas Oppler

Mark Palosaari
Although our mother was only two short days, you made those days peaceful and comforting for all of us. You were very special and we could not thank you enough.

BOB P.
IN MEMORY of... continued

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James Zurcher
James and Judy Zurcher

I can’t thank you enough for all that you did in helping to make my father’s passing peaceful and peaceful. It meant the world to me to have such loving and caring people around us at this difficult time.

KIM C.

Every effort has been made to include all donors. We sincerely apologize for any omissions or misspellings. Please let us know of any mistakes so we can correct them. Thank you for your patience and assistance.

13
We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

—WINSTON CHURCHILL

William Sewell (left) received the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, Volunteer of the Year Award in 2004, for his work in hospice and helping to create Omega House.

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Message from a Founding Co-member of Omega House

Since its inception, it has always been the goal of Omega House to make care accessible to all, without cost, regardless of finances. However, to achieve this goal will require substantial financial resources. Currently, to ensure that Omega House continues to serve our community well into the future, we need to maintain operations on a sliding scale of reimbursement where residents pay to reside at Omega House based on their income levels.

One way you can help Omega House meet these goals would be to include Omega House as a beneficiary in your will. Making a generous bequest is the best way to build an endowment fund, which would guarantee our continued existence and progress towards reducing costs to residents.

The enclosed Planned Giving Brochure discusses several ways in which you can support Omega House through a will or estate planned gift. “In the past several months, two personal friends and fellow co-founders of the Omega House have passed on: Dyann Edgerton and Scott Rutherford. I take comfort in knowing there is a special place in your community to provide personalized end-of-life care.”

William Sewell

WITH A PLANNED GIFT YOU CAN:

• Make a larger charitable gift than you thought possible during your lifetime
• Prioritize the financial needs of your family
• Provide inheritances for your heirs at a lower tax cost
• Reduce your income tax and even avoid capital gain taxes
• Diversify your investment portfolio
• Increase income and effective rate of return
• Leave a gift without giving up assets

I tell everyone how comfortable Dad was at Omega House. It was so quiet and peaceful. Everyone was so nice and helpful. I can’t tell you what it means to me to have my dad in such a great place.

SHIRLEY H.
**HOW CAN I GIVE to Omega House?**

**Annual Gifts**
Annual donations to Omega House support the daily operations of the House. These gifts are essential for us to fulfill our mission. Annual gifts can be designated in memory of a friend, loved one or someone important in your life. Please consider becoming a Sustaining Donor with on-going donations via a credit or debit card. We bill in a secure manner at the amount and interval that you direct us to. Contact Mary Kay at Omega House for more information. marykay@omega-house.org

**Founders Fund**
The Founders Fund recognizes individuals who make donations at the $25,000 level. These gifts are payable over a period of one to three years. A gift of this level provides resources to operate the entire House for a month. It helps ensure that no will be turned away. The Founders Fund is named for the early organizers who helped make the vision of Omega House a reality.

**Veterans Fund**
Since opening our doors, U.S. military veterans make up 30% of all residents. We are honored to serve them. You can recognize a veteran, a branch of service or a veteran’s group with your gift.

**Naming Opportunities**
Omega House has naming opportunities available for donations small and large. This is a unique way to forever honor or remember a loved one. For gifts of $1000 an etched glass panel commemorative wall has been created that greets visitors as they enter the House.

**Events**
Events are held in the community throughout the year to benefit the House. Some events are planned and conducted by Omega House staff, volunteers and board members. Other events are planned and conducted by individuals and organizations in the community on behalf of Omega House. Please consider becoming a sponsor for an annual Omega House event or hosting an event of your own. See the Event section on page 16 to identify ways that you can support Omega House. For assistance in planning an event to benefit Omega House, contact Michael Lutz, Executive Director at michael.lutz@omega-house.org

**Gifts-in-Kind**
There are many non-monetary contributions of products and services that you can gift Omega House that support the daily operations of the house. Our on-going Wish List is updated regularly and includes items such as postage stamps, gift cards to area stores as well as kitchen and bathroom items needed at the House. View the wish list on our website at www.omegahouse.org.

**Keweenaw Community Foundation Endowment Fund**
The Keweenaw Community Foundation (KCF) manages a designated endowment fund for the benefit of the Omega House. The perpetual fund was established in 2005 to support our operations and programs. For more information or to donate call KCF: 906-482-9673, mail@k-c-f.org or online at www.keweenawcommunityfoundation.org. You can also contact your financial advisor for planned giving options to this fund and make it a Gift For Good, For Ever!

**Community Outreach**
If you would like an Omega House representative to speak to your community group, educational class, civic organization, church group or veterans organization please contact us. We will work with you to present a program that meets the needs of your group.

**Donate Online**
Our website provides you with a convenient and secure way to donate online anytime. Donations can be made using a credit card and you may designate a special fund or make the gift as a memorial or honorarium. Support Omega House online at www.omegahouse.org and click on the Donate tab.

For more information about gifts to Omega House contact Mike Lutz • (906) 482-4438 michael.lutz@omega-house.org
THE MOST successful EVENT is the one that achieves your goals and exceeds your expectations.

Fall Concert Sponsors

**Platinum**
Ruth Nara

**Silver**
Gregg & Sharon Fisher
Dr. Mary Beth & David Hines
Dr. Terry Kinzel & Sue Ellen Kingsley
Guy & Kathy St. Germain
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Michigan Tech Athletic Department
Michigan Tech Campus Store
& University Images
Peterson’s Fish Market
Portage Lake Golf Course
Shopko
Vollwerth & Paul Baroni Companies
Walmart
Deb and Mark Young
Percentage of Room & Board Paid by Residents

Number of Residents
- 7 Residents paid 25%
- 5 Residents paid 50%
- 6 Residents paid 75%
- 13 Residents paid 100%

Residents Served
- 15 Females
- 16 Males

Nearly 50% of Residents served were Veterans

Omega House provides care to anyone in need on a sliding scale. Residents are charged a daily fee based upon their income and are billed monthly.

2017 Income
$409,106
- Resident Payments ...................... $172,060
- Donations ........................................ 202,287
- Events ............................................. 30,902
- Medical Equipment Rentals .......... 18,914

2017 Expenses
$433,925
- Payroll and Related ..................... $300,976
- Insurance ........................................ 23,361
- Maintenance, Utilities & Other .... 53,024
- Printing & Mailing ......................... 22,812
- Events ............................................. 11,400
- Miscellaneous Operating ............... 22,352

- # of Care Days Provided: 1481 10 days
- Average Length of Stay: 10 days

Residents served: 15 Females, 16 Males

Nearly 50% of Residents served were Veterans