



Omega House
2211 Maureen Lane
Houghton, MI 49931
906-482-4438

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NEWS FROM OMEGA HOUSE

A Community Leader & Resource in End of Life Care Issues

Summer/Fall 2018

Gerald G. Vairo Memorial Fund



Gerald Vairo

Omega House of Houghton is proud to announce the creation of a new memorial fund honoring long time Copper Country resident and attorney Gerald G. Vairo. This fund supports end of life care for residents with limited resources providing "no cost care days" for Omega House residents who meet the new programs income requirements. This fund reflects Jerry's lifelong dedication to helping those in times of need regardless of their financial situation.

A generous start-up donation was made to create this memorial fund by Jerry's long-time friend Jack Jiganti. They met for the first time when they both started at the University of Notre Dame in September of 1958 and over the next 6 years became close friends finishing up their undergraduate and law degrees together. They remained close throughout their lives.

John "Jack" Jiganti recounts his memory of Jerry:

"Over the years after we graduated Jerry visited me and my family in Chicago and I made an annual summer visit to the Copper



John Jiganti

Copper Country where I was exposed to its beauty and challenges.

"Jerry was an excellent athlete and a diligent student. Over the years we played handball, intermural softball and touch football. In all team sports he excelled and was captain; in handball he was the campus champ. He had a will to excel and win but he was respectful of the less talented athletes and offered nothing but praise and encouragement.

"Jerry had a wonderful law career. He was an exceptional advocate and trusted counselor. His considerable legal ability was enriched by uncommon "common sense."

"From the earliest years it was clear Jerry had a special affection and fierce pride for the Copper Country and its residents. When I visited Jerry during the years we were practicing, I walked down the streets of Houghton or perhaps Laurium with him. He would be stopped by his clients and would always take the time to assure them that he would be at the upcoming board meeting or labor negotiation and continue on his way. However (and it happened on many occasions) he would be stopped by an elderly lady who had a small matter pending. Jerry would stand there on the

street corner and listen intently and take the time to answer her questions. He would also then inquire into the health and whereabouts of her family. After 15 or 20 minutes he would finish up and he would tell me that while her legal problem was minor or non-existent; she was lonely and needed to talk to someone. It was those acts of humanity that reflected the depth of character that Jerry possessed. Everyone mattered to him, especially those that were often overlooked and needed kindness.

"When Jerry passed, and I reflected on his legacy, I thought that anything we did in his name had to be in the Copper Country. The legacy had to help those who could not fully help themselves. Next to his family, these were the people he cared most about. The Copper Country should be proud to have had such a fine son. It was an honor and a privilege to be Jerry's friend."

—John J. Jiganti

Giving to the Gerald G. Vairo Memorial Fund will allow your donations to go directly toward caring for a future resident with very limited resources. Call Omega House at (906) 482-4438 to make a gift to promote the quality of life for someone making their final journey.

Remembering Dyann Edgerton



Dyann Edgerton and son Zach

Dyann was an original member of the Omega House planning group in 1999. She was a generous person and devoted a good deal of her time to helping others. She was a longtime volunteer for Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly and also a long time member of the Copper Country Peace Alliance. When told of the upcoming effort to establish a hospice house in the Copper Country, she immediately expressed interest and joined the planning group when it formed. She remained active with the group until the effort shifted to fundraising. The phrase "A Final Gift of Home," which appeared

in the original Omega House logo, was one of her contributions. Her name is on a plaque hanging in the Omega House hallway commemorating those who were active with the planning group. Dyann and I were friends before we joined the Omega House planning group. I believe our friendship deepened because of that shared experience. Sadly, Dyann passed away in January of this year at the age of 70.

William Sewell
Founding Co-member of Omega House



The JOURNEY
A tribute to Journey
JOURNEY TRIBUTE
SEPT 29
OMEGA HOUSE BENEFIT

"The Journey" is a thrilling and high energy group that's been entertaining audiences all over the world by recreating the sound of arguably one of the greatest rock bands of all time. **AN ABSOLUTE MUST SEE.**

Date: Saturday, September 29th at 7:30 pm

Tickets are on sale at the Calumet Theatre for \$25. Reserved seating can be purchased at: www.calumettheatre.com or by calling (906) 337-2610.

A Message From The Executive Director

"Caring for the Caregiver"



Michael Lutz
Executive Director

Our Omega House staff and volunteers know that care for the family caregiver is just as important as the care we provide for our residents. As families watch their loved ones progress through the final days, weeks or even months of their life's journey, we can't forget that many of them have been the caregiver right up until the resident has been admitted to Omega House. They are suffering physically and emotionally during this process and it doesn't end when their loved one has passed on. The grief

associated with loss can be devastating to some and a very difficult process to overcome.

Recently Omega House has begun offering grief workshops and support to community members dealing with loss. Grief support

groups offer companionship and understanding from others who have experienced a similar loss, and are experiencing the similar challenges that living with grief brings. We also offer respite care services to those families caring for a loved one in their homes. A short break for the caregiver can relieve stress, renew your energy and restore a sense of balance to your life.

As you may have experienced, caring for a loved one or friend is not easy, nor is it something most of us are prepared to do. Our strategic vision is focused on providing levels of support to our community apart from end of life care. These programs are available because of your generous support and Omega House is stronger because of it. Should you be interested in grief support or respite care, call Omega House at (906) 482-4438 or check out our website at www.omega-house.org

Volunteer Spotlight



Omega House is very thankful for the more than 30 active wonderful volunteers who give their time to help us in a variety of ways. Volunteers support Omega House as individuals or as a group such as these 8 HOSA students and their teacher. They spent a morning planting several flowers in late May to help beautify our grounds.

Student volunteer groups play an important role because they can tackle large projects and complete them in a short period of

time such as fall clean-ups with our yard. In return these students are rewarded with a sense of community and being of service to others. The mission of HOSA is to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill and leadership development of all health science technology education students, therefore, helping students to meet the needs of the health care community.

Have you given thought about being a volunteer in your community? Volunteering offers vital help to people in need, worthwhile causes, and the community, but the benefits can be even greater for you, the volunteer. Volunteering and helping others can help you reduce stress, combat depression, keep you mentally stimulated, and provide a sense of purpose. While it's true that the more you volunteer, the more benefits you'll experience, volunteering doesn't have to involve a long-term commitment or take a huge amount of time out of your busy day. Giving in even simple ways can help others in need and improve your health and happiness.

For more information on volunteer opportunities at Omega House, contact Mary Kay at (906) 482-4438.

House Happenings

by Mary Kay, House Coordinator

It's been a busy first half of the year for the house with over 40 new residents admitted to Omega House since January. We are trending toward having one of our busiest years since we opened in 2005.

We recently had all of our resident rooms repainted and our kitchen hardwood floor was resurfaced. We now turn our attention to sprucing up our yard and gardens so plans are beginning to take place on how to proceed with grounds beautification.

I recently attended advance care planning training in Marquette and I have become certified to assist families with planning

for healthcare decisions should you not be able to speak for yourself. These decisions are deeply personal and are based on your values or beliefs. I can help facilitate those conversations at no charge to the family. Omega House has been offering advance care planning discussions since 2015 which was started with a grant from the Keweenaw Community Foundation. For more information, please call me at 482-4438.



Mary Kay Grabig

Summer/Fall 2018

Make a Difference Today — Donate Now!

Every dollar counts and as a nonprofit organization for 13 years, Omega House has provided competent and compassionate care for over 530 terminally-ill patients and support for their families. To make a tax-deductible donation to Omega House, please complete and submit the form below to Omega House, 2211 Maureen Lane, Houghton, MI 49931.

Donations can also be made on-line at www.omega-house.org

\$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____

I would like to join the Sustainer Program. Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card on the following schedule:

Monthly Quarterly Annually

I understand Omega House will charge the above amount on the schedule I've chosen indefinitely. I may end my participation in the Sustainer Program at any time by contacting Omega House via phone or mail.

Please make my donation

in Honor of: _____

in Memory of: _____

Please notify _____ of this gift at address _____

DONATION INFORMATION

Enclosed is my check made payable to Omega House
 Please charge my VISA MasterCard

Cardholder's Name _____

Account # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Email: _____

Thank you for your "Gift of Home"

Omega House, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible under the limits of the law.

2018SUMLTR

Omega House Blooms



Jack Townsend

Bobbie Bicigo

The Omega House and Econo Foods have joined together to create Omega Blooms, a partnership that consists of flower donations for the residents. Every week, each resident receives a new colorful, flower-filled vase from Econo foods floral manager Bobbi Bicigo. Bobbi and Omega House social work intern Sarah Cheney started the program in February as a simple way to bring joy into the rooms.

Grief Counseling at Omega House

Community grief support is available at no cost at Omega House in our peaceful meditation room. Sarah Cheney and Cynthia Drake offer individual and family grief counseling and a monthly grief support group. Call Sarah at 281-5558 to schedule an appointment and learn more about our compassionate grief program.

We grieve because we love.

Corrections to 2017 Annual Report

An in-kind donation for wall art by Kanak Nanavati and Charlotte Ann Cappo was omitted from the memorial section on page 10. We make consistent efforts to be as accurate as possible with entering and acknowledging every gift, however we make mistakes at times. We appreciate you informing us of any such error so we may correct them and our sincere apologies go to these individuals and families.

2018 Summer Concert Thank You



The Omega House 12th annual summer benefit concert, "Seasons of Love," was held on Tuesday evening, July 24th. Performers from all over the Keweenaw volunteered their time, talent and good cheer. We want to thank event coordinator Cindy Lysne for her hours of work, making the concert possible.

Our heartfelt thanks also to all our performers: David Owens, Karin Schlenker, Ruth Robertson, Barbara Lide, Lara Neves, Cheyenne Kaufman, Susan Newman, Dan Fuhrmann, Hannah Kowalewsky, Juli Mickle, Dawson McKenzie, Mads Howard, Roger Kieckhafer, Jon Ensminger, Masha Sergeeva, Cindy Lysne, Mike Christianson, Carol Waisanen, Barb McTaggart, Jan Dalquist, Jim Weiler, Steve Jones, Courtney Jones, Anne Linja, Noteworthy, Joan Petrelius, Trudy and Milt Olsson. Finally, thanks to members of Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church, who helped make this possible, as well as Kayla Semmons, and Susan Lutz for baking cookies and pastries.