

2024 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

- Fisher House Guests' Stories
- Golf Tournaments & Events in 2025
- VA St Louis Health Care System:
Five Stars & Expanding Services
- Memorials, Tributes & Many Thanks
to Our Donors

MISSION:

to ensure Veterans' family members can be with their loved ones who are receiving medical treatment in St. Louis. We accomplish this by raising money to build and then support ongoing needs of Fisher Houses in the area.



MOTTO:

*"because a Family's
Love is Good Medicine"*

How Veterans' Families were Helped in 2024

The VA Fisher House at Jefferson Barracks serves a lot of people! Through November:

- In a typical month, more than 90 families stayed at the house
- Guests stayed a total of 4,470 nights, with an estimated cost savings of \$536,400 for those families.

Friends of Fisher House St. Louis provided:

- \$40,000 in local transportation
- \$4,600 for overflow hotel accommodations
- \$15,500 for other support to the house and the guests

Do You Want our News?

Would you prefer emailed news?
Or would you rather be off this list?
Please tell us! go to www.FisherHouseinSTL.org/contact-us

FisherHouseinSTL.org/contact-us

Email

FisherHouseStLouis@gmail.com

Or call (314) 621-6182.

Thanks!

FRIENDS OF FISHER HOUSE ST. LOUIS

PO Box 998

Fenton, MO 63026

A "Genuine Hug" from Staff

Shannon is a three-time cancer survivor, and an Army Veteran who served in Operation Desert Storm while he was in the Reserves for six years. Shannon and his family live in southwestern Illinois, a 2-1/2 hour drive from St. Louis.

Shannon had to stay in the VA hospital recently. His mother, Brenda, wanted to be with him and supportive. Staying at the Fisher House enabled her to be at his bedside. Brenda and her husband, whom Shannon refers

to as "his good buddy" stayed at the Fisher House for a week. (Shannon's father died several years ago.)

They all said the Fisher House "is an amazing experience and a blessing." Shannon was happy to have his mom and buddy nearby. Shannon gave the house manager Vanniecia Brown a big hug when it was near time to leave. Shannon called it "a genuine hug." He greatly appreciates the support that the staff provided to his family, shown below.





Golf Tournaments, Auctions, Fun & a Helicopter Ball Drop with a \$3,000 Prize!

Whether you're a golfer or not, you can find something fun to help with at these events! Three benefit golf tournaments are set to tee off in 2025 to benefit the Fisher House St. Louis.

- **Friday, April 25** - Organized by Solerity, at Cardinal Creek Course, Scott Air Force Base.
- **Saturday, May 10** - Organized by the Knights of Columbus, in Forest Park.
- **Thursday, June 12** - Anyone can join us at our biggest annual fundraiser: the 13th Annual Golf Tournament, Dinner & Auction organized by Jim Sheets, held at Forest Park. This event includes a **Helicopter Ball Drop -- a 50/50 raffle with a guaranteed \$3,000 winner!** You don't need to be present to win, but you'll miss the fun! Interested in sponsoring the tournament? Have an item or experience to donate for the auction? Interested in Volunteering at this tournament? Please call Jim Sheets at JIMCO (314) 353-8000.

Scan to Buy 50/50 Ball Drop Tickets:
For all events, see [www.FisherHouseinStL /events](http://www.FisherHouseinStL/events)
Or follow us on Facebook/STLFisherHouse



Update on the New VA Buildings in Midtown St. Louis

The major expansion project at the VA medical campus at John Cochran (JC) in Midtown St. Louis is progressing. Plans are to build a new, state of the art inpatient bed tower with multiple operating suites, private patient rooms, a spinal cord injury unit, new emergency and intensive-care facilities. This will significantly increase the number of patients coming here from an eight-state area to receive medical care.

- Most of the property has been acquired to expand the footprint of JC by about 50%. Buildings on the acquired property have been demolished.
- Water-line relocation has started
- The U.S. Senate passed the Fiscal Year 2024 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act, which includes this JC Major Project, with \$135,340,000 in funding for it.

An architectural design of the new hospital is below. We hope it will be completed by 2032. With their forecast of more patients, the VA St. Louis Health Care System Executive Team has advised the Friends of Fisher House St. Louis Board of Directors that **#2FHStL** the VA would like to have a second Fisher House in St. Louis,

near JC. It is important to note that Fisher Houses are built only with private funds; they cannot be built using government money. So the Board is starting to plan a capital campaign to build a new 16-suite house at JC. This will cost about \$10 million, and one-half needs to come from local sources. The Board is on their way to raise \$5 million with the community's help! We anticipate needing this by 2028, and we also know we can't raise it overnight, so we're talking about it now!



Memorials & Tributes

Memorials:

James Barry
Major Lee Michael Berra
Jeffery Lyle Busch
Michael Cripps
Dave Davenport
Thomas N. Dodillet
LTC John V. Doheny
Robert Eck
LtCol. John A Firse
Kathryn M. Fry
David J. Glick
SPC Thomas Grisham
Cletus William Kinzinger
Joseph O. Ludwig
Elizabeth Meyer
Frank Pultz
George M. Pultz
Peggy Lu Rhyne
Roosevelt 'Butch' Rias
Col Joseph A. Sabin
Sandra L. Sabin
David Santoyo
LtCol. John David Schimpf II
Henry Sellers

Richard Sievers
Tom Willie Smith
MSgt. E.B. Sturm
Robert Sucher
Col. Vito Tamboli
Robert L. Troutman
1st LT John Nelson Wilt
Joanne Yates

A Bequest:

Roger M. Stueckel

Tributes:

Dr. Michael Banton
Gateway Chapter of the
Buick Club of America
Kate Eibes
Thomas M.Kozloski, PhD
John Noce

These gifts were received between January 7 and December 1, 2024. Please call (314) 621-6182 with questions.

Start the Party, the Sisters are Frying Bacon!

Raymond and Lisa Knotts live in Branson, Missouri, but they have been 250 miles away, in St. Louis, since late July. While Ray has had heart issues for decades, he didn't expect to go straight to the hospital from the doctor's office. With impending heart failure, it was that determined Ray would get a left ventricular assist device, or LVAD -- a mechanical pump that keeps the heart working. Heart specialists affiliated with BJC HealthCare are national leaders in the use of LVADs, and this medical care for Ray was covered by the VA.

But Lisa didn't know about the Fisher House in July! When she wasn't at Ray's bedside, she stayed at BJC Lodge, which has a daily fee and doesn't include food. Costs added up.

In September, Lisa learned she was eligible to stay at the Fisher House, and that changed how she could manage. Lisa said Fisher House is "a dream, how nice it is! It is such a blessing. It's been wonderful." Ray is still in the hospital, and has had several more health challenges. Lisa has been at his side for most of the past four months. But since September, other family members have been able to visit Ray, and relieve Lisa, because they could stay at the Fisher House.



Family members can stay as long as they are healthy, fit in the family's room, check with staff and follow the rules!

Lisa is warm and talkative, always visiting with other people, and a night owl. Lisa and her sister Donna, who has been able to stay a lot and be supportive of Lisa, are known as "The Late Night Sisters." They stay at Ray's bedside at the hospital as late as they can. On a typical night they'll get back "home" and hungry around 10 p.m. Then they cook up a meal in the kitchen from the variety of food that is well stocked and free for guests.

A few weeks ago there were 10 people in the kitchen at midnight -- eating, sharing stories and supporting one another. All were drawn to the aroma of Lisa and Donna frying bacon and their way of welcoming the others into their circle of warm energy. Lisa said of that night "I was like a waitress for them. Everyone smelled the bacon. A gentleman came in and asked 'is that crispy? I just might want some!' So of course I made it crispy!"

Lisa added "I have made a lot of friends here. We cry together, ask questions and coach each other. We share information that can be helpful for all Veterans' families."



Lisa said "it is so fortunate that I could be with Ray all this time. It's a godsend."

Glowing Comments Written by the Guests

"This place helps with so many mentally, emotionally, even financially heavy burdens."

- T.W.

"Thank you is not enough gratitude for how much we feel for the kind, caring, wonderful people here."

- A & A

"Thank you for providing such a beautiful, comfortable and safe home away from home. We are so very blessed to have all the staff taking care of us. Always thankful for each time we return."

- Wanda from Kansas, mother of the Veteran shown who is happy to have new wheels!



To learn more about our Fisher House, scan the code or visit

www.FisherHouseinSTL.org

Where you can find Eligibility Criteria, Sign-up for News, Register for Events, Volunteer or Donate.

Please & Thank You for Donating!

The VA and its staff lead the service at the Fisher House at Jefferson Barracks, but the non-profit organization "Friends of Fisher House St. Louis" backs them up 100%. The organization provides after-hours transportation and overflow hotel rooms. It is "on call" for when needs for food, emergency repairs or other situations arise. And, as covered in the article about John Cochran VA, the board is planning for a second Fisher House in St. Louis.

How can you help? Monetary donations are always welcome. You may donate on-line, make a one-time gift or set up recurring contributions (your choice of monthly or quarterly), using a credit card or ACH (direct bank transfer). Scan this code to go to our secure web page:

www.FisherHouseinStL.org

Or mail a check to:

PO Box 998

Fenton, MO 63026

Will your workplace match donations?

Double your impact!

When strategizing your IRA withdrawals, you may want to consider donating to the Friends of FHSTL through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) as part of your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year. Your financial advisor can explain the significant tax advantages.

We also can accept gifts of stocks and bequests; please call **(314) 621-6182**.



Thank You to All Our Donors!

We are very grateful for the many people who have supported the VA Fisher House in St. Louis and its non-profit partner, the Friends of Fisher House St. Louis over the years. In particular, we'd like to thank these donors who gave more than \$2,000 to the Friends organization between December 31, 2023 and December 1, 2024.

- American Direct Marketing Resources
- American Legion Fenton, Post 400
- AMVETS Post 6 Riders
- Anonymous
- Berra Family Charitable Foundation
- Commerce Bank
- D&G Support Services
- Drury Southwest Foundation
- Linda D'Angelo
- Disabled American Veterans, Ch. 24
- Edward Goedeke
- Mike Graven
- Thomas & Paula Hubbard
- JMS Foundation, Marie Jacobs, Trustee
- The Kaufman Fund
- Knights of Columbus Councils:
 - Kirkwood, #2117
 - Fr. Griffin, #3586
 - St Alban Roe, #12022 Auxiliary
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- Masonic Home of Missouri
- Merrill Lynch - The Gray Group
- Robert & Louise Nation
- Anita D. & John T. O'Connell Family
- Francis A Rogers Charitable Trust
- Sons of American Legion, Chesterfield Squadron #556
- Joseph & Mary Stieven
- Roger M. Stueckel, bequest
- Swanson Masonry, Inc

- Target Circle
- Veterans of Foreign Wars, Overland - St. Ann, Post #3944 Auxiliary
- George Walker
- Willert Home Products
- John Wilt Foundation
- William Donald Wolfinger

Golf Tournaments by:

- Jim Sheets' Family, JIMCO Promo
- Solerity, Inc.
- Knights of Columbus
- Elks Lodge #9
- United Rentals
- Veterans of Foreign Wars, Overland - St. Ann, Post #3944

Other Big Events:

- World Wide Technology Raceway, CAR-ing for Veterans
- Bowling Tournament at Concord Bowl, by Don Menendez and Missouri Baptist University
- BBQ by Knights of Columbus - Kirkwood Council 2117
- Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 3479 Auxiliary, Eldorado IL

In-Kind Support:

- Presort - Printing/Mailing Services
- Maritz - Accounting

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Top Charity Ratings

We work hard to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We are proud to hold these top ratings.



Fisher House in St. Louis, doing business as **Friends of Fisher House St. Louis** is identified as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization by the IRS. EIN 01-0881719.
www.FisherHouseinStL.org