Home Away from Home

FISHER HOUSE WISCONSIN NEWS

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Message from the President



It is hard to believe we are already halfway through the year! Since our last newsletter, we have had some exciting things happen! To begin with, in this newsletter you will

read an article about an incredible opportunity and promotion for Jennifer Kiefer, who was the Milwaukee VA Fisher House Manager since its inception. We are also welcoming Torrie Hutchison to the Fisher House family as our new Milwaukee VA Fisher House Manager.

In this issue you will learn more about the FHW Board. It is important to see the depth of our Board and what they do for a living, while also supporting FHW. Notably, three of our Board members are veterans-we have one Director who served in the Army, one Director who served in the Marines, and an additional Director who served in the Navy.

This issue also includes an emotional story from the perspective of a wife whose husband required treatment for many weeks in Madison. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a Fisher House to help our families who are receiving care in the Madison area. However, we are taking bold steps to help move things along in establishing a Madison House. Thanks to the offices of Senator Tammy Baldwin and Senator Ron Johnson, we now have their support in ensuring things stay on track with our plans for our Madison house.

Volunteers are the vital source of all things FHW. We could not maintain the House, provide our guests the support they often need, or support fundraising events without them. Our Board often reflects on what we can do for our Volunteers to show our appreciation. This Spring, our Board members each chose to buy a table for our volunteers to attend the Night of Honor Gala supporting the Stars & Stripes Honor Flight. Ten of our female volunteers

represented FHW while dressed to the nines to attend the event. Throughout the evening I received countless pictures, text messages and videos sharing with us the fun they were having. After the event, I received thank you cards that were shared with the Board, which showed the immense appreciation the volunteers had for this event. Thank you to the best volunteers



As our summer calendars begin to fill up with speaking engagements and third-party fundraisers, I encourage you to check our website and Facebook events pages to stay up to date on our upcoming events. We have also included a list of those events in this newsletter.

I would be remiss if I failed to share some exciting news with you. For the first time ever, Fisher House Wisconsin has received the highest rating possible of 4-stars from Charity Navigator, which is the world's largest, most trusted nonprofit evaluator. We have included additional information about the 4-star rating in this edition.

Finally, I would like to thank you. Each of you has given to FHW financially, donated time, helped spread the word, hosted a fundraiser, invited us to come talk to friends and coworkers, or attended one of our events. We would not be where we are without your support. I truly don't know of a more giving network of constituents than those of FHW. Thank you so much and have a safe and wonderful summer.

-Angie Christianson, President

FISHER HOUSE WISCONSIN ANNOUNCES:

Promotion of Jennifer Kiefer to Veterans Experience Officer

By Michelle M. Friedman

In February 2023, Fisher House Wisconsin (FHW) learned long-time Milwaukee VA Fisher House Manager Jennifer Kiefer, was promoted to the position of Veterans Experience Officer for the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Milwaukee VA).

Jennifer will maintain an active role within Fisher House and will continue to oversee its program. To ensure smooth daily operations, staffing, and managerial duties, she has hired Torrie Hutchison from the Voluntary Services Department as the new House Manager.

Jennifer has been an invaluable asset to FHW since joining as the first House Manager in 2015. Her instrumental role in fostering collaboration between the Milwaukee VA and FHW, while assisting the FHW Board of Directors, has left a lasting impact.

"I was honored to be a part of dedicating this Fisher House, planning for the daily operations and seeing through its growth in the first seven years," Jennifer said. During her time as the House Manager, Jennifer spent meaningful time with countless staff and volunteers. She recalled her favorite celebration, which took place every September, when Fisher House would honor the birthday of its founder, Zachary Fisher. "This celebration usually involved a delicious, large cake, fun games and lots and lots of laughs," Jennifer recalled.

Her best loved FHW fundraiser is its annual golf outing, which is hosted in August, "The event allows me to volunteer outside of my regular job duties and help raise the funds that are used to support the families. It allows me the opportunity to personally thank those putting their money towards this great cause, and the day itself is always such a fun time," she added.

During Jennifer's tenure, Fisher House has welcomed close to 4,000 guests, and she has gone above and beyond to coordinate last-minute shuttle rides for families urgently traveling to be with their loved ones. She has even assisted with providing Target gift cards to families caught off guard by the cold Milwaukee weather after arriving without proper winter attire.

Throughout the challenging times of the COVID pandemic, Jennifer tirelessly worked to find solutions for families unable to stay at Fisher House due to restrictions. She offered extended hotel stays, ensuring they could remain close to their loved ones receiving medical care at the Milwaukee VA. The heartfelt gratitude expressed by families who unexpectedly found comfort and meals at Fisher House is a testament to its profound impact. Grateful for the connections she has forged and the lifelong friends she has made, Jennifer cherishes her time at Fisher House. She acknowledges the dedication of the staff and volunteers who have been part of the program, some for longer than her tenure, and considers them an invaluable asset that shapes the welcoming environment for families.

"Seeing the looks on the faces and hearing the heartfelt gratitude from



Jennifer Kiefer and Torrie Hutchison.

families for the kitchen full of meals and the comforts they did not expect to receive, is so meaningful and underscores the impact that Fisher House has on families," Jennifer said.

As she moves into her new role, she is grateful she will still be connected to Fisher House and all that it does for its quests, the Milwaukee VA, and the veterans it cares for.

"I am truly blessed to have been a part of it all. I want to take this opportunity to thank all these individuals for what they do every day for this program. Each of them is indeed an asset and make this home what it is for the families that stay here," Jennifer said.

The FHW Board of Directors, volunteers, supporters, and VA Milwaukee staff wholeheartedly congratulate Jennifer on her well-deserved promotion and extend their gratitude for her selfless service over the past seven years.

Veteran and Wife's Courage in the Face of Adversity:

INSPIRATIONAL STOR

By Michelle M. Friedman

The extraordinary story of Army veteran Richard (Dick) and his wife, Mary Lou, who have been married for 45 years and share four adult children together, is one of unyielding strength and great fortitude. Despite a critical diagnosis, they have been able to remain positive and focused on his recovery while receiving medical care through the VA at UW Health. To alleviate the couple's great concern about housing in the Madison area, FHW President, Angie Christianson, stepped in to help by booking the couple a complimentary stay at an extended stay hotel in Madison.

"When she told us that she located housing and we didn't need to worry about anything, it was like a huge weight was lifted from our shoulders," Mary Lou exclaimed.

By doing so, Dick and his wife were able to fully concentrate on his health without

When she told us that she located housing ... it was like a huge weight was lifted from our shoulders. 99

the added stress of finding and managing a place to stay.

Before receiving medical attention at the UW Health, Dick proudly served in the Army as a Medic, 91B40-Spec 5 from 1969 to 1971. During his service in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970, he was awarded both the Bronze and Silver Star Medals for his actions.

At the extended stay hotel, Dick and his wife experienced many comforts. Without the burden of household responsibilities such as snow removal or cleaning, the couple was able to enjoy their stay,

relatively stress free. FHW even gave them an additional surprise of soup in a soup box after a visit to the hospital.

Dick and Mary Lou are doing wonderfully. "The PET Scan results show the treatment results were excellent and he is cancer free," Mary Lou said.

"We both know that this will be a shadow over us for a few years, but we are extremely fortunate to have this behind us and have a 'one day at a time' attitude. He has come a very long way. Initially he could barely walk from the garage to the curb of the street. Dick is now walking up to 1.75 miles a day.





TWO WAYS TO

Donations are critical to our mission to sustain a home away from home for military and veterans' families. We actively seek monetary contributions from individuals, organizations, and businesses to help us sustain the Fisher House. Even the smallest gift makes a difference in supporting military and veterans' families.

MAIL

Mail a check payable to Fisher House Wisconsin in the enclosed envelope.

ONLINE

Donate online via credit or debit card from our website fisherhousewi.org/donate-online/





Meet Fisher House Wisconsin's

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS





ANGIE CHRISTIANSON is the Senior Manager of Strategic Partner Operations at Stanley Black

serves as the President of FHW. Angie started volunteering for FHW in 2013 and was nominated to be on the FHW Board of Directors in 2016. Prior to becoming its President, she served as a Vice President, a Director, and oversaw the Fund Development & Marketing Committee.

Angie earned a Bachelor of Science in Business and Management from the University of Phoenix and is a Certified Software Asset Manager, as well as a Certified Contract | Vendor Manager.

Angie's father was in the Air Force and both her grandfathers, and a great aunt served in the Army. She has many friends that are veterans and has a love for all veterans, while always asking, "How can I help?"

Angie chose to volunteer for FHW when a prior President asked for her help at a golf outing. Although she does not golf, she now enjoys planning the largest FHW fundraiser of the year – its annual golf outing. She is also working with the Madison VA Medical Center to continue the forward momentum to build a second Fisher House in Wisconsin.



CHUCK STEINMETZ is the Senior Vice President and General Manager of WITI FOX6, which has one of the most

experienced teams of anchors, reporters,

and digital journalists committed to bringing the news that matters to those in southeast Wisconsin. He joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2019, where he serves as a Director and its Vice President.

Chuck earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Chuck chose to volunteer with FHW after hearing about a family experience from a close friend. He feels strongly about its mission and advocates for the continued support of the needs of veterans and military service members receiving medical care at a VA approved medical facility. He is proud to be a part of FHW.



its Treasurer.

is a partner at Baker Tilly US, LLP and joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2017 and in 2021 became

CHAD O'BRIEN

He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting, magna cum laude, from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Chad was first introduced to FHW in 2013, while the organization was planning construction for the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center Fisher House. Representatives from the Board met with him to discuss its mission, fundraising efforts, sponsorships and the FHW annual golf outing. Learning about the mission was powerful and Chad knew he needed to be a part of FHW movement. The passion and energy of the mission was overwhelming.

Coming from a long line of veterans, Chad acknowledges the personal

sacrifices that each veteran and their families have made to serve and protect our country. It is in that same spirit of service that he volunteers his time with a commitment to serve our military men, women, and their families. Chad continues to be humbled by the experiences and stories shared at FHW meetings and events.



CARMEN ANDERSON is an attorney with Husch Blackwell, LLP where she practices in civil litigation. She has been on the

FHW Board of Directors since 2016 and has served as Secretary since 2017.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Iowa. Carmen attended law school at the University of Iowa, and the University of Missouri-Kanas City, where she earned her Juris Doctor degree.

Carmen strongly believes that when military members serve, their families do too. Veterans recognize their tours of duty and service would be even more of a sacrifice were it not for family support. FHW enables family members to be close to their veterans when they are getting treatment at the VA, which provides them with the best formula for healing.

She is grateful for the opportunity to be a part of FHW, where she has worked with other Board Members and countless volunteers to ensure that the veterans and families staying at FHW have every need covered when staying under its roof.

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MICHELLE FRIEDMAN is the Director of Marketina at DeWitt LLP Law Firm and became a Director on the FHW Board of

Directors in 2020. She also serves as a member and co-chair of the Board's Fund Development & Marketing Committee and helps spearhead its biannual newsletter.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication | Journalism, magna cum laude, from the American University in Cairo and an Associate of Arts in Modern Standard Arabic from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center located in the Presidio of Monterey, California.

During her military career Michelle obtained the rank of Sergeant while enlisted for four years, where she served on active duty in the United States Army Military Intelligence Corps as an Arabic Linguist-Voice Interceptor. She held a top-secret SCI security clearance and was selected to participate in Bright Star 1995, which at that time was one of the world's largest joint military exercises hosted in Egypt.

Michelle chose to volunteer with FHW because she is passionate about military service members and veterans and believes strongly every veteran and current service member deserves recognition and support for the sacrifices they have made.

She, her father, and her brother all served in the armed forces at the same time in the 1990's, representing the Army, Navy, and Marines.



MATT GRIFFIN is an Information Technology (IT) Director at Johnson Controls and is responsible for Strategic Supplier

Management. He joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2023. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin. Matt earned a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and is a Certified Project Management Professional.

Matt is a veteran of the United States Navy and was assigned to Fighter Squadron Two as an Aviation Electronics Technician. He was responsible for troubleshooting and maintenance of the F-14 Tomcat's radar, communications, and weapon systems. He was deployed multiple times overseas on aircraft carriers during Operation Southern Watch in the Arabian Gulf and he also participated in Operation Restore Hope off the coast of Somalia.

He is an advocate for military service members and their families. His first connection with FHW began when he attended its annual golf outing. He was impressed with the leadership team and the impact the organization had in the community. Matt strongly believes in the FHW mission to provide families a home away from home while their veteran or service member receives care at the VA.



PATTI KNEISER is the President of Workforce Health, LLC, and is the Vice President-**Employer Services** for Froedtert

Health. In this role, she provides strategic direction and leadership for the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health network's employer services. She is also responsible for initiatives to strategically advance the health system's growth and effectiveness in related businesses and other efforts to enhance quality of life in our communities.

Patti earned a Master of Health Care Administration from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology from the University of North Dakota. She is board-certified in health care administration as a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

As the proud daughter of a WWII U.S. Army Veteran who received care through the VA, Patti is passionate about serving the needs of military families and happily joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2017 to further its mission. She knows firsthand that, "a family's love is good medicine." Patti chairs the FHW Strategic Planning Committee and supports its charitable events throughout the year.

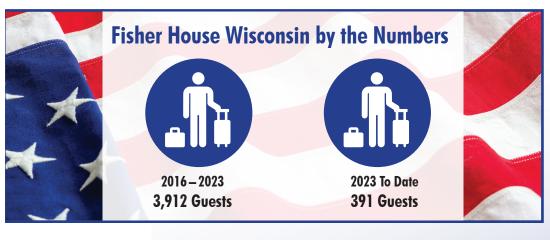


TIMOTHY LA SAGE is the Military Affairs Manager for WPS Health Solutions. WPS Health Solutions processes Tricare

and Medicare health care claims serving more than 16 million beneficiaries. Tim joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2022 and is a member of its Fund Development & Marketing Committee. He also spearheads the social media activities for FHW.

While serving in the Marine Corps, he attended Golden West College where he studied criminal justice. Tim also

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attended the Organizational Behavior and Leadership program at Edgewood College.

During his career, Tim earned two Purple Heart medals for wounds received in combat. His long journey to recovery after multiple surgeries to save a limb, all while having amnesia, was done without support. His motivation to assist FHW with its mission comes from a desire to ensure service members and families have the space to love and support each other while enduring difficult times.

First Sergeant Timothy La Sage served 22 years on active duty in the Marine Corps where he earned two Purple Heart medals, two medals for valor in combat, and two medals for life saving actions while saving his fellow Marines.



BILL MICHAELS is the host of The Bill Michaels Sports Talk Network. He is a Director on the FHW Board of Directors,

a member of its Fund Development & Marketing Committee and spearheads The Big Unit's Motorcycle Poker Run benefiting FHW.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications | Journalism from Ohio State University.

Bill once met a nameless Army Ranger at a local restaurant. The Ranger had just returned home from active duty in Afghanistan and met his 1-year-old daughter for the first time. After hearing part of the Ranger's story, Bill offered to buy him dinner to thank him for his service. The Ranger smiled and replied, "thanks but no, we know what we're signing up for. But what you can do is something for our families, for the kids of soldiers, they didn't sign up for this." Since that chance meeting with the Ranger, Bill has been a huge supporter of FHW.

Bill's father was a Gunnery Sergeant in the Army while stationed in Germany. Growing up, he always admired what his father accomplished during his storied life and is very proud of his legacy.

Fisher House Wisconsin Receives Four-Star Charity Navigator Rating



Fisher House Wisconsin announced that they have received the highest rating possible from Charity Navigator scoring 100% and earning a Four-Star rating. With nearly 200,000 charities ranked, Charity Navigator's comprehensive ratings shine a light on the cost effectiveness and overall health of a charity's programs including measures of sustainability. The metrics inform donors of not just where their dollars are going, but what their dollars are doing.

"It is an honor that Fisher House Wisconsin has received the highest ranking possible from Charity Navigator" noted Fisher House Wisconsin President Angie Christianson. "It is important that our donors know that the funds they entrust us with are being used in alignment with our mission and strategic goals."



TERRI LEIGH **RHODY** is the Vice President of Marketing at Sware, Inc. She became a Director on the FHW Board of

Directors in 2020 and serves as a cochair of the Board's Fund Development & Marketing Committee, where she helps lead its strategic marketing initiatives. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Terri Leigh chose to volunteer with FHW because she is passionate about supporting those who have served our country not only during, but also after their military engagements have concluded. She feels strongly about their access to healthcare and the ability for their caregivers and family members to be able to support them.

Military service runs through many generations of Terri's family. Her grandfather and great uncles served in the Army and Navy during World War II. Since then, a variety of relatives (uncles, cousins, second cousins, and their children) have served primarily in the Army and Navy.



WADE ROBERTS is the Vice President of Pieper Electric and Ideal Mechanical Inc., where he serves on its

Leadership team. He joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2023 and serves on the Board of Directors for Arrow-Accusery Corporation located in Louisville, Kentucky.

Wade completed an IBEW Electrical apprenticeship with Local 702 after graduating from Marion High School and earned a Wisconsin Master Electrical License. He has a passion for his trade and through his relationships in the trades, he has been a leader with his team to serve others and give back to the community.

He believes strongly in helping others and is honored to serve the families of those who served in our military by volunteering with FHW. Like other board members, Wade's family has a history of military service which includes five uncles, two aunts and a nephew. They served in the armed forces proudly from 1950 through 2021 - (2) Army, (2) Navy, (3) Air Force, with some of them serving in the Korean War and OIF Operations.

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In addition to volunteering with FHW, Wade also volunteers with the Milwaukee Fire Department's Survive Alive House helping to maintain the facility, and he recently upgraded the interior and exterior lighting of the facility. He also helps the department on an annual basis with installing operational smoke detectors in low-income houses. Additionally, he volunteered to assist with the relocation of the Lance Sijan F4 Jet memorial to the entrance of General Mitchell Airport and volunteered, designed, and donated materials for the Wisconsin 911 Memorial located in Kewaskum, Wisconsin.



DIRK STALLMANN is the President of Verlo Mattress and joined the FHW Board of Directors in 2020. He

served on the board's Fund Development & Marketing Committee for two years and is currently a member of the Board's Governance & Development committee.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Truman State University located in Kirksville Missouri. Dirk enjoys volunteering for FHW because he believes strongly in supporting veterans. He believes the house serves as a significant symbol of Wisconsin's care and commitment to veterans and their families but is a modest token of our deep appreciation for their service and sacrifice. Both Dirk's father and father-in-law were in the service, in addition to extended family who served in the Korean War and World War II.





Upcoming Events at Fisher House Wisconsin

July 20	Dane County Fair's 2023 Hometown Hero Day
July 26	Milwaukee Milkmen Baseball Game Fundraiser for FHW
July 29	25th Annual 5K & 10K Famous Racing Sausages Run/Walk
August 28	11th Annual Fisher House Wisconsin Golf Outing
September 3	16th Annual Big Unit's Fisher House Wisconsin Poker Run
November 9	Fisher House Wisconsin Town Hall — Madison
November 16	Fisher House Wisconsin Town Hall — Milwaukee









NOVEMBER 17, 2022-JUNE 1, 2023 **Donation Tributes**

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