

Cinco Charities

Building a Community of Care and Support in Katy

Cinco Charities Board Members



Local Organization Provides Housing for Out-of-Town Patients

Written by
MELANIE SAXTON

Katy is a great place to visit. Just ask Diana Kerrigan, an oropharyngeal cancer patient. When patients like Kerrigan come from out-of-town for treatments, lodging can be an issue. With this in mind, the associates of Keller Williams Realty Katy @ Cinco Ranch formed Cinco Charities. Their goal is to provide temporary housing for patients and their families who are hospitalized or receiving treatment for serious medical needs.

A Home Away From Home

"I wasn't familiar with the Houston area at all," says Kerrigan. During a routine exam, her dentist in Wimberley, Texas, found a spot in the roof of her mouth requiring surgery. Stage 3 cancer later appeared in her lymph nodes. "During radiation, my husband and I needed a home-away-from-home," says Kerrigan.

The Cinco Charities program requires referrals by a Katy hospital, doctor, or service provider. Kerrigan was referred by M.D. Anderson. "We provide accommodations for the patient and their immediate family or caregiver for up to 10 days," says Gary Lamb, a Cinco Charities board member. "Our application can be found online, and the process is quite simple, straightforward, and non-restrictive. A patient's finances are not considered. Help is based on medical needs." Until a permanent facility is built, patients stay at Marriott TownePlace Suites, just west of Highway 6.

According to Kerrigan, Cinco Charities was an extra support system through phone calls, cards, and emails. "The team at Cinco Charities was there

Diana Kerrigan and her husband Bob



To my new friends and support team,
How can I ever thank you all for your generosity? You have helped to ease the burden on me and my family more than you can ever know. People helping people - that is what gets us all through life - wish God's help.

From the bottom of my heart - Thank you!
Diana

4-12-2008
...to thank you enough!
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Sincerely,
Diana

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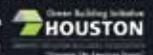
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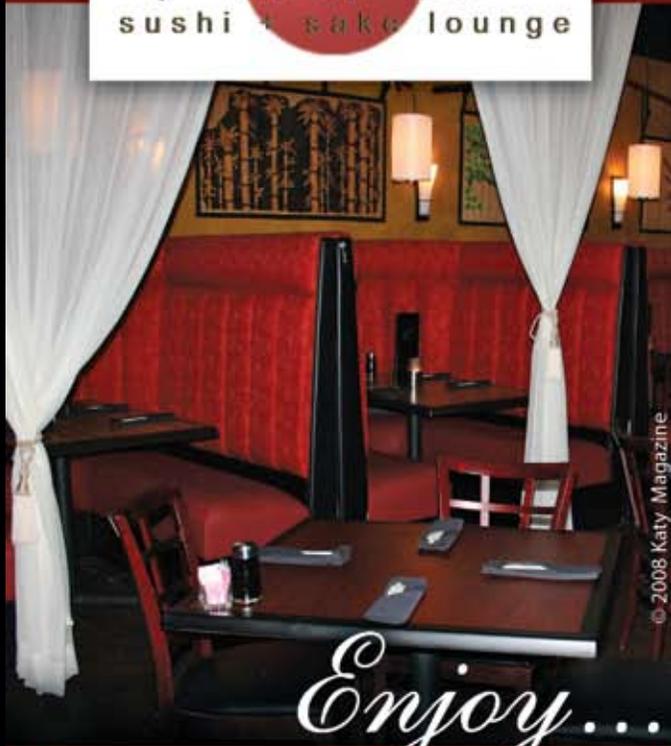
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for me and my family at the most vulnerable time in our lives. Their help made all the difference in how I was able to respond to treatment," said Kerrigan.

A Home Away

"Anyone who has faced a life threatening illness knows the difficulties one experiences during these times," says Linda Piazza, board member. "The stress, worry, and fear is huge. Many families have to travel away from their homes, families, and friends. Some patients travel here by themselves because it's not feasible for someone to come with them. No one should ever have to go through this alone."

Piazza can speak from experience. Many on the Cinco Charities team have been affected with critical medical conditions, from babies in neonatal, to cancer, to children with disabilities. "Each member of our board can relate to the families we are trying to help," says Piazza.

Austin resident Lionel Sleeper was also referred to Cinco Charities and is thankful for their help. "I had one less thing to worry about during treatment

Lionel Sleeper appreciates the help he received from Cinco Charities





for prostate cancer,” says Sleeper. Like Kerrigan, Sleeper received supportive emails, flowers, and phone calls. “My room had a kitchenette and my fiancé prepared meals. It meant so much to us.”

Hope for the Future

“Our goal, our dream, is to build a house in Katy that will service ten to 12 families at a time,” explains Piazza. “A comfortable, safe place for these families to call home short term. We’re in the process of seeing what that will look like and how we can accomplish it.”

“We’re looking at expanding our advisory board and exploring different avenues for long term financial partners,” says Chris Hiller, Chairman of the Board. “The resources needed to meet our goals are substantial, but if there was ever a community that can put something like this together, Katy is at the top of the list. There’s a spirit of volunteerism in our town like no other.” KM

MELANIE SAXTON is a Katy resident and proud mom to daughter, Emily. She enjoys writing and volunteering in the community.

How to Get Involved

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