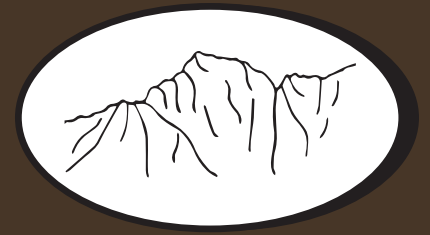


# GRANITE HOUSE

## DONOR NEWSLETTER

Fall 2022



For our donors, volunteers, and partners on our journey



### NOTES FROM THE BOARD

It was great to see the board members in person again this year. We had our spring and summer meetings at the house and showed off the recent improvements both indoor and outdoor. Our board members were represented at the Walk for Thought and our canoe outings with the staff on the St. Croix. The annual staff and family picnic was great fun, with board members meeting some of the staff and resident families too.

Meetings have focused on benefits for the staff, with overall hourly wage increases, increases in vacation and sick days, and the growing participation in our IRA company matching fund. We gave tours to some of our donors this summer and loved hearing praise for our hard work and wise use of their gifts. The board was glad to see the music therapy program returning, as well as the ponies and bunnies from Horse Hugs.

The widespread worker shortage has affected everyone in the caregiving sector, which makes us especially proud of our staff retention rate at Granite House and Amber's ability to weather such fluctuations. She is often doing treats and surprises to show her appreciation for the staff. Another new benefit is the free on-site massage for staff, great for our people who do the hard work of caring for those with high needs. With a staff who cares for the residents' families too, we can honestly say with pride that *Granite House is a place for families to heal.*

## FALL 2022 WALK FOR BRAIN INJURY



The Granite House 2022 Walk for Thought team had a great day at this event, which had not been held in person for several years. It was a perfect way to finish off a very busy summer. With the staff and family picnic, work in the gardens, resident and staff outings, we found time to spend together. See page 3 for more photos and information about this annual event.

**GRANITE HOUSE** has built a 24-hour community residence in Stillwater, Minnesota, for the long-term care of younger adults with severe and permanent brain injury who might otherwise be in a nursing home.



### GOT VEGGIES?

Our gardens grew like never before in our new raised bed planters. Layers of mulch and enriched soil, plus plenty of sun, water and attention helped the plants grow like in a greenhouse. There were three kinds of tomatoes, green bell peppers, and more cucumbers than we'd ever expected! Staff and residents enjoyed the veggies raw and in salsa or casserole recipes. See page 3 for more of our summer projects outdoors.

**Granite House is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation with a mission:**

To provide support and hope to individuals and families living with severe and permanent brain injury.



# OUR STAFF MAKES GRANITE HOUSE THE BEST PLACE TO BE

## STAFF AND FAMILY PICNIC!

What a great day we had, and a big turnout (75 people!) for our annual picnic. It was held in September after school started and the weather was beautiful. Staff members brought their families to show where they work and who they care for. Resident families came out to see their loved ones at their home and enjoyed meeting the staff. Many thanks to Nick and Dan for bringing their big smokers and cooking some fabulous food, including smoked mac & cheese! With all the potluck dishes from staff, it was quite the feast.



PICNIC

ANNUAL



## CANOE OUTINGS

Staff members and friends signed up for two days of canoeing on the St. Croix River, hosted and guided by Tom and Carol. It was great fun for the seasoned paddlers and a learning experience for others. We stopped on a sand bar for lunch, saw some petroglyphs along the river bluffs, and were back to Granite House in time for the afternoon shift. Plans for winter include snowshoeing and cross-country ski outings, starting in our own meadow and then going to Lake Elmo Regional Park on the trails.

## TANYA FEATURED CAREGIVER



In her senior year at Tartan High School in St. Paul, Tanya learned the skills of a Certified Nursing Assistant through the Medical Careers class at the 916 Vocational Program. Towards the end of the year, she answered an ad for an in-home caregiver and began to care for Aaron, one of the current Granite House residents. We had already broken ground on Granite House and Tanya was immediately interested, becoming one of our first hires when we opened in 2018. Tanya left Granite House for other pursuits in 2020 but we were pleased that she came back full-time this spring. She has a cheerful laugh and a gentle touch with our residents and enjoys styling the girls' hair and doing fun hairdos like braids and space buns. With the new raised garden beds this summer, Tanya became our

primary hands-on vegetable gardener, drawing on her experience with her neighborhood community garden and learning tips and techniques from board members Kirk and Carla Dahl. See the article about the garden on the next page and photos of this year's harvest. Tanya joined the staff on our canoe outing this summer and is learning about the guitar from our new music therapist. She is proud of her Mexican heritage and her mom is teaching her to make authentic dishes. She generously shares them with the staff, who all agree that her pico de gallo and tamales are amazing! She enjoys being with the residents "...for their good days when we're blowing bubbles, and their tough days when they need extra encouragement. I cherish all these moments with them."



## PROGRAMS FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND STAFF



### RESIDENT OUTINGS AND VISITORS

The residents once again went to the Washington County Fair, the State Fair, local beaches and Sun Country Farms in Lake Elmo. Routine appointments were much more fun with a stop at Dairy Queen for ice cream. Our friends from Horse Hugs came out again with mini horses and soft angora rabbits.



### MUSIC THERAPY IS BACK

Steve from Twin Cities Music Therapy is coming every other week to engage and delight the residents and staff. He brings drums, cymbals, and other music makers that the residents can use to feel the beat and enjoy the music.

## A PLACE FOR FAMILIES TO HEAL



### WALK FOR THOUGHT

It was a cool day for the return of the walk at Long Lake Regional Park in New Brighton. Caregivers brought two of the residents and came out to represent Granite House. With staff, resident family members, donors, friends and board members, we had a team of 28 in our Granite House shirts. *See the team photo on page 1.*



### WHY WALK FOR THOUGHT?

"Brain injury can happen to anyone, anywhere anytime. The Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance can provide help, hope and a voice to the 100,000 Minnesotans living with a disability due to brain injury and their loved ones. Funds raised at the Walk for Thought help ensure that Minnesotans affected by brain injury can connect to critical support services." This, from the MN-BIA website, describes the walk. Our 70 Granite House team members have raised over \$3500 at the walk since 2014.



### REMEMBERING TAMMIE



We sadly lost one of our dear residents this summer. It had been our privilege to care for Tammie for four years and see her family at their daily visits. Her hospice care team arranged for her to be at home in her own room at Granite House with her family during her last few days. Tammie was our sweet little lady, and the staff loved her like family. We miss her and extend our love and best wishes to her parents and brother.





## SUMMER PROJECTS



### VEGGIES

Two of the 3' x 5' Black Locust planters were completed and installed by Tom just in time for planting, and they yielded a great harvest. The staff and residents enjoyed the fresh tomatoes, bell peppers and cucumbers and were amazed to see them grow. The last of the three planters has been installed for spring planting on the next level down on the wall hillside.

### EDGING AND MULCH

Our summer volunteers worked on brick edging around the two big oak trees and mulched the area. Brick edging was also extended along the sidewalk for a memorial garden (see photo, page 3). Many thanks to Lizzy, Alex, and Carol for their weekly work and to Chase and Sue for coming by to help. Tom used scraps from the three big planters to make a smaller one.



### HARDSCAPE UPDATE

Tom and his equipment continued work on the north side hill last fall and this summer to finish the walls and rain runoff drains. Walls reaching away from the house and along the driveway complete the block work. Boulders extend the drainage area and help to stabilize the big maple tree. The third raised bed was just installed, and the final grading and seeding will be completed in the spring. Note the roof in the process of being replaced this fall after the May hailstorm.

### NOTE FROM THE STAFF

Winding down from a busy summer, we are marking the anniversary of our opening and will begin our fifth year after the Thanksgiving holiday. Anna, our Nursing Director, held a staff training meeting this summer and everyone enjoyed getting together to receive Red Cross First Aid certification on site. The picnic, canoe outing, walk and massages have all been well-attended and appreciated and we love showing our staff how much they are valued. How reassuring to know that over half of our staff have been with us for four years. We must be doing something right, with excellent benefits, a beautiful place to work, and great co-workers who feel like family.

*Amber and Grace*



### CONTACT US

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