

New Service Helps Patients, Families and a Community at the Same Time

By Keith Tilley

Residents of the Triad know very well how lucky we are to have the nationally recognized medical facilities, top medical professionals and leading scientific research teams available to us when and if we need them. However, with a reputation for some of the best care in the nation right here in our own backyard, we sometimes forget that we're not the only ones using them. For those patients undergoing treatment for critical illness and their families and caregivers from out-of-town, a stay in the hospital can create some difficult hardships.

Fortunately, we have some very caring and generous people and organizations that are doing something to help these families who have nowhere to stay while their loved ones are in a medical care facility here in Winston-Salem, including outpatients in need of a temporary respite during the day, between treatments. It's called the SECU Family House, and it's currently in the development stage, thanks in part to a \$1 million grant from the Richard J. Reynolds, III and Marie M. Reynolds Foundation; along with a pledge of \$250,000 each by the Forsyth Medical Center and NC Baptist Hospital Foundation to the Endowment Fund for operating expenses; and a very generous \$2 million challenge grant received from the State Employees' Credit Union Foundation (SECU). The SECU Family House has purchased 8.8 acres of property on Hospice Lane to build the facility, which is conveniently located near both Forsyth Medical Center and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center/North Carolina Baptist Hospital.

The center has received \$5.5 million in donations and grants to date. However, there's still significant need for added capital to fund the on-going program. A capital campaign is currently underway to raise additional funding for the 40+ guest rooms center—each room including two queen beds and a private bath—along with the staffing necessary to maintain the center due to break ground this year, and open in 2011. Kathy Kookan Carr, Executive Director of the SECU

Family House, had this to say about the current capital campaign: "This community initiative will serve referred adult patients who travel to either of our two medical centers during a medical crisis. Winston-Salem has a marvelous Ronald McDonald House which serves pediatric patients, but over 400 families of adult inpatients are traveling here daily and have no options for affordable lodging. We are in the final phase of our capital campaign, and need only \$525,000 to reach our SECU Foundation challenge grant. If we can reach this last hurdle, we can offer these families a comfortable place to stay, so they don't have to camp out in the hospital waiting rooms."

In addition to the overnight lodging and assistance for more than 2000 families a year, as well as a comfortable, friendly, and supportive environment for outpatients in between treatments during the day; the center will also provide training for medical and nursing students from Winston-Salem State University, Forsyth Technical Community College, Wake Forest University and others. Ms. Carr reported, "These institutions have asked to help develop an educational/training program at the House which will allow their medical, nursing and allied health students to interact with families and understand family dynamics during a medical crisis."

To find out more about making a donation, and how you can help the SECU Family House, visit their website at www.familyhousews.org, or contact Ms. Carr at 336-793-2822 for further information.

