

The Roundtable

Published Even in Snowstorms by the
Bangor Area Breakfast Rotary Club

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Sarah Lives Here

Sarah Robinson died from a brain tumor in December 2011. Her spirit lives on, however, in the many activities she participated in through the Old Town Rotary Club but especially in Sarah's House.

It was through Sarah's inspiration to create a place for cancer patients and their families to stay while undergoing treatment at Cancer Care of Maine in Brewer. The result is Sarah's House. After learning that some patients traveled for many miles, mostly from Washington and Aroostook Counties, she set in motion a place- suggesting to her husband that they get bunk beds for guests to stay at their house.



Delores Landry, House Manager for Sarah's House, told our meeting this morning about the miles, the expense and the relative comfort at Sarah's House that cancer patients and their families experience when undergoing treatment regimens. To stay at Sarah's House, patients must have a referral from CCM.

"We are a hospitality house, not a treatment center," Ms. Landry said. To qualify for staying at Sarah's House, patients must live more than 30 miles from the Holden facility, bring a qualified caretaker with them and be a patient at Cancer Care of Maine. Per day cost is nominal- \$15 – but that helps cover Sarah's House operations and doesn't inflict major expenses for housing on the patient.

There are nine guestrooms.

Ms. Landry crunched some numbers after showing a new video describing the house and its facilities. In the two years the house has been open, it has hosted 187 guests for a total of 2,000 nights and saved visitors 350,000 miles of travel. Thirteen Rotary Clubs are involved with supporting and helping Sarah's House.

Volunteers are a critical component of the house's operation. Laundry and housekeeping are done by the 12-15 volunteers. Former Breakfast Rotarian **Judy**

Collier is outgoing president of the board and she serves as Volunteer Campaign Consultant.

On the last page of this edition, find a well-written history and description of Sarah's House as it appears on the organization's website.

The Lull Before the Storm

The snow started well after the meeting ended, giving **President Kristy Kimball** time to thank Breakfast Rotarians who attended the Area 9 meeting last Thursday evening. The Polio Plus campaign benefited during meeting.

Kristy received an email request for help for a family with three young children who have no winter clothing (it is now February). **Kendra Speed** purchased boots and ski pants among other items for the children. We passed an envelope around the room that resulted in cash that exceeded the amount spent.

The 4-Way Test and the Object of Rotary were the subjects of **Ken Huhn's** Rotary Moment. The Birthday Trio (all THREE back LIVE!), **Lisa Wahlstrom, Les Myers** and returning troubadour **Dick Cattelle** sang to **Greg Urban** and **Sandy Blitz. Paul Miragliuolo** levied stiff birthday fines on both gentlemen. Greg suffered little; he won



the weekly drawing, but the \$264 in the Joker's Wild pot eluded him.

Judy Horan sent a crew to the Super Bowl to capture the "color." She said they had a grand time.



Les Myers- February 9, 2017

Let the sun shine in

Sarah's House

From www.sarahshouseofmaine.org

Sarah Robinson was a remarkable human being... words on a page cannot describe her. Her laugh, smile, and sense of humor, coupled with her love for people, generosity and strength made her incredibly unique.

Sarah was born a twin in Greenville, Maine and moved to the town of Dexter at the age of three with her family. Sarah and her identical twin sister, Lindsay, were the youngest of nine brothers and sisters. They were infamously known as “the Turner Twins” on the athletic fields and courts as well as in the classroom. During high school Sarah met Ben Robinson; little did she know that at that first date she had met her future husband. After high school Sarah and Benny moved to Old Town where they would get married, attend college and have their daughter, Morgan.

Sarah's sense of adventure and fun loving spirit led her down many paths, both personally and professionally. One such path was joining the Old Town Rotary Club. Sarah was drawn to the Rotarian way of life: “service above self.” In 2008 Sarah became a real estate agent and the club's youngest member. She participated in countless charity events, service projects and fundraisers and loved being a part of helping her community and others.

Sarah and her twin sister, Lindsay, played in the same cover band. During a performance in 2010, Lindsay noted that her sister's drum playing was less than perfect, and pointed it out to Sarah. Sarah complained of lack of feeling in her left arm, and Lindsay, a nurse, quickly decided to take Sarah to the EMMC emergency room. Multiple tests were done before an MRI detected a brain tumor.

Lindsay stayed with Sarah through the early days of the cancer diagnosis until Benny could be called home from Iraq on an emergency Red Cross message. Benny had been deployed for 9 months when the news came.

Sarah's fight began quickly that spring. She underwent an open-awake craniotomy in Boston to remove the tumor and then had chemotherapy and radiation treatments using state of the art technology at the Lafayette Cancer Center in Brewer. It was during her treatment in Brewer that the idea of a Cancer Hospitality House first began.

Sarah's idea was born out of interactions with two women that were receiving radiation treatment at the Lafayette Cancer Center at the same time Sarah was there. These women were both traveling great distances to get to treatments. One woman came from Eastport — five hours round trip, every day, five days a week, for six weeks! Sarah couldn't imagine the added hardships caused by travel to and from the Cancer Center, and she said to Lindsay and Benny: “They can just stay the night at our house. Let's go buy bunk beds and set them up downstairs for people to sleep on.”

Sarah knew that buying bunk beds was not the solution to a much bigger problem, and she was serious about the idea of helping these patients find a place to stay. She took her idea to the Old Town Rotary Club where it picked up support and momentum.

“It needs to be bigger; we need a house!” she said.

And so it was born, the idea to build a cancer hospitality house to serve our region and the biggest, most rural part of our state. Sarah met with the people she knew through Rotary and her work in the community, and the process of creating the future Sarah’s House began.

Sarah was featured as a cancer survivor the summer before she passed and was quoted: “It was in my battle with cancer that I found my purpose for living.”

After her work on the cancer hospitality house began, Sarah started back at work and continued on in her Rotary Club efforts. In August of 2011, Sarah’s cancer returned. This time an operation was not possible. With her sense of humor intact and her courageous spirit unbroken, Sarah spent her last days at home with her loving family and friends. Her family all said the same things about her near the end: “She made us laugh every single day. She was not afraid...her faith was so strong...”

Sarah Lunette Robinson, 26, died Sunday, December 4, 2011. A faithful Christian, a loyal wife, a loving mother, a protective sister, a Rotarian, a tenacious competitor, a talented musician and a bright and cheerful soul, Sarah will be remembered always.