Although we felt the pressure and fear of this pandemic, it was not more powerful than our Malachi House family who united together to care for our residents. We remember the faith and strength that has been passed down to us by our Co-founders, Father Paul Hritz and Kaki O’Neill, for more than 33 years.

We are humbled by each and every one of you that has kept our staff empowered with your words and actions to care for our residents. It has been difficult not to have our volunteers, hospice aids, social workers and chaplains during this time, but we are so grateful for their continued guidance and support. We look forward to the day we can reunite.

We have adjusted and kept up with the protocol for our health and safety, and this was made possible by our staff who are fearless, mission driven and relentless. We are so grateful for the overwhelming support of individuals, corporations and foundations who have showered us with the resources to remain open.

Enjoy your precious families during this reflective, quiet time. It is truly a gift. We will continue to help those in need with love, respect and empathy. You are in our thoughts and prayers, especially those who are suffering from illness. We know not what tomorrow brings, but we remain grateful for your dedication and commitment to the residents of Malachi House!

*Isaiah 40:29 “He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.”*

L. Joseph Lee
Board Chair

Judy Ghazoul Hilow
Executive Director
KAKI O’NEILL’S SPIRIT, INSIGHT HAS HELPED MALACHI HOUSE TO THRIVE FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS

By CYNTHIA SCHUSTER EAKIN / Reprinted with permission from Currents magazine

When Father Paul Hritz asks you to do something, and you know it is the right thing, then you just do it. That is how Catherine “Kaki” O’Neill’s involvement with Malachi House began. “I became involved with Malachi House in the late 1980s when Father Paul Hritz, then pastor of St. Malachi’s, asked me to help with a new ministry, caring for the dying poor of the area. I readily agreed after observing Father Paul’s concern for the poor of his parish and beyond,” O’Neill said. “We were members of St. Malachi Parish, although it was not in our geographic area. We went there because of Father Paul and his care for those less fortunate reflected in his beautiful homilies.”

Father Paul Hritz wanted to create a home for the dying poor, where compassionate people would provide care and attention to those who would otherwise spend their final days alone. The dream began to take shape in 1986 when four unused row houses located in the inner city of Cleveland were donated to the church. Father Paul asked Kaki O’Neill to be a co-founder and to create a board of trustees. To form the board, O’Neill partnered with the Greater Cleveland community to find experts in the corporate, financial, legal, spiritual, construction and medical fields.

At the time of Malachi House’s inception, there was no other program like it and hospice facilities were still in the early stages of creation. “I had to go to St. Christopher’s outside of London, England for research,” O’Neill said. “Hospice didn’t exist in America then. I recorded how the modern hospice movement was started by Dame Cicely Sanders, who I met on my visit.” After two years of struggle, and with the help of more than 100,000 donated volunteer hours, Malachi House received its first resident. “The mission of Malachi House has not changed over many years and the support of the Cleveland community and beyond, financially and in human resources, has increased dramatically since its inception,” O’Neill noted. “Malachi House is supported by hundreds of individuals, many foundations and corporations. Some of them have remained with Malachi House since the very beginning. Malachi House is also supported by gifts in kind coming from area schools and churches and most importantly pro-bono work in many fields of expertise in our geographic area.”

“The mission of Malachi House is to serve the dying poor with love and respect in a homelike environment without cost to its residents,” she said. “My continued vision for Malachi House is that it remains a mission and not an institution. This requires it to continue as a home with a small staff and large volunteer support system that includes its board of trustees and those meeting the needs of its residents.” The trained staff and volunteers provide spiritual, emotional and physical support for Malachi House residents with the assistance of a hospice team.

Since it opened in 1988, Malachi House has served 2,432 residents, provided 500,000 meals and utilized 200,000 volunteer hours. Judy Ghazoul Hilow, executive director of Malachi House said, “Kaki’s mission-driven spirit and insight has allowed Malachi House to thrive for more than 32 years. Kaki is a servant leader and I am blessed to have her as a mentor to guide me as the executive director.” To learn more about Malachi House, located at 2810 Clinton Ave., visit malachihouse.org.

Dr. Walters first learned about hospice during a mission trip to India during sophomore year of his undergraduate studies. He participated in a rural vaccination program in central India and also provided care to patients in the hospital’s palliative care unit, modeled after Mother Teresa’s House for the Dying in Calcutta. This experience shaped his life in such a way that he chose to go to Medical School and pursue a career in Hospice. He is currently the Medical Director for Cleveland Clinic Hospice.

Dr. Walters was born and raised in Coshocton, Ohio, with 2 older sisters. He is married, and has lived in Cleveland for the past 11 years. Outside of work, he enjoys traveling across the world and immersing himself in different cultures. He is also an avid runner and enjoys hiking and nature.

Dr. Walters looks forward to serving Malachi House as the new Medical Director and is grateful for the opportunity.

J. BRANDON WALTERS, MD, FAAHPM, MALACHI HOUSE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

WELCOME
J. BRANDON WALTERS, MD, FAAHPM, JOINS MALACHI HOUSE AS NEW MEDICAL DIRECTOR
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

“The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers” – Terri Guillemets

And we certainly witness that at Malachi House. Our volunteers not only keep the house running but create the environment of warmth and love that is so uniquely special to Malachi House. We are pleased to announce this year’s recipients of the Fr. Paul Hritz Volunteer of the Year Award.

JIM GULICK has volunteered his time weekly as a Eucharistic Minister to the residents of Malachi House for 15 years. Born, raised and educated in Northeast Ohio, Jim and his wife Edna are the proud grandparents of 15 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. When Jim is not spending time volunteering, he enjoys wood carving and golfing. He first learned about Malachi House from his long-time neighbor Kaki O’Neill, our very own co-founder! In Jim’s 15 years with our residents his most memorable experience was with one specific spiritual resident who he had been sharing communion with for several weeks. One day, after first declining communion, Jim was called over the loudspeaker to return to her room. When he got there, she asked if it was not too late to accept communion. She told Jim “I never want to say no to God”.

JIM BARES has been a volunteer at Malachi House for 15 years. A Cleveland native, Jim and his wife Mary, raised 3 sons here and now have 2 grandsons. When Jim is not working at Robert Half, where he has been for 30 years, he enjoys music, sports and teaching Bible Study. Jim helps in a large variety of ways at Malachi House, from cleaning and cooking to visiting and praying with the residents. When asked about a memorable experience at Malachi House, Jim recounts a time when cooking breakfast for the residents on a Saturday morning. While most of the residents received their breakfast in their rooms, one resident joined Jim at the dining room table. After a bit of persistence on Jim’s part and fixing the meal to the liking of this resident, he and Jim enjoyed their meal and a nice conversation. Jim later found out that the resident passed away shortly after this meal. Jim was thankful for their time together and said, “we just never know when we might make a big difference for someone.”

ROSA | WRITTEN BY: DESI COLON, CAREGIVER

Rosa is one of Malachi’s longer-term residents, she’s been with Malachi for a while and says she loves her “forever” home here. When we asked Rosa what were her most favorite things in life she told us her family. She could not think of anything greater than family. When we asked her granddaughter the best way to describe Rosa, she said “Queen Bee.” She also told us that Rosa took care of everyone and was truly their heart.

MINNIE

Minnie is one of our newer residents and puts a smile on the face of all who meet her. Minnie takes pride in her age and you will often hear her ask “Do I look good for 99?” When we asked Minnie to tell us about herself, she said she still remembers coming to Cleveland at just 14 years old all by herself from Mississippi. This is where Minnie started her beautiful and big family who all adore her. Minnie says watching after her grandkids is what brought her the most joy in her life.
A FOND FAREWELL TO LAURA HOEKSEMA, MD

Please join us in wishing Dr. Laura Hoeksema tremendous success in her important and exciting new role within the Cleveland Clinic. Unfortunately, Dr. Hoeksema will be stepping down from the Malachi House Board and from her duties as our Medical Director.

We are so grateful to Dr. Laura Hoeksema who has served as Medical Director on the Malachi House Board since October of 2015. Dr. Hoeksema currently serves as Associate Medical Director for the Cleveland Clinic Hospice. Although Dr. Hoeksema holds many roles at the Cleveland Clinic, she has been asked to lead a new initiative to address distress that takes place among the caregivers of the Cleveland Clinic. She accepts this role as one of the most well respected and sought-after Hospice and Palliative Care physicians in our community and throughout the Cleveland Clinic.

Dr. Hoeksema administered an educational role with our staff and hospice teams with great insight, compassion and servant leadership to secure our mission. She has guided us through policies, procedures and staff guidelines for best practices among our leaders and caregivers. Dr. Hoeksema ultimately worked to relieve the suffering of our patients and their families during the final stage of life.