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Community Celebrates the Grand Opening of Grace Guest House

Hospitality House Will Serve Patients' Families

Western New York Community leaders celebrated the opening of Grace Guest House, the first nonprofit guest house in South Buffalo to serve families with a loved one being cared for at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo.

Cynthia Battista, Grace Guest House President & Founding Director said, "We are here today because of the time, talent and treasures selflessly donated by many individuals, families and organizations in our community, but none more so than Michael Salvadore, President of Concrete Applied Technology Company (CATCO). Michael believed in Grace's mission when it was just a vision, stood strong with us through it all and provided the financial means for Grace to serve families in this beautiful guest house. Today's ribbon cutting ceremony reflects the culmination of Grace's four-year incubation as a grass roots start-up that was powered by the strength and tenacity of its inaugural board. At the same time, today's ceremony celebrates the beginning of our impact as we begin to carry out Grace's mission. To that end it is my honor and pleasure to announce that Kevin McLaughlin has joined Grace as Director of Mission and Philanthropy."

Cindy was inspired to establish Grace Guest House after learning about a friend's experience after his son suffered a traumatic medical crisis. The family traveled hundreds of miles to support their loved one and came back to share the profound experience and supportive environment they had while staying in a healthcare hospitality house.

Grace Guest House, located in the former St. John the Evangelist Rectory at Cazenovia Park, will enable families to enjoy simple and serene lodging close to their loved ones with complimentary transportation between the guest house and Mercy Hospital in a shuttle van donated by the West Herr Auto Group. The home offers 9 private bedrooms and 6 full bathrooms.

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“We are very grateful to Cindy Battista for her amazing enthusiasm and perseverance to bring this much needed community service to fruition,” **said Mercy Hospital President & CEO C.J. Urlaub.** “Because of her vision, our patients and their loved ones, especially those who travel long distances for heart and stroke care at Mercy Hospital, will benefit by having a home away from home and a way to stay close and supportive during the healing process.”

Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, a 385-bed acute care hospital and regional tertiary care center, is home to the Catholic Health Heart Center and the Comprehensive Stroke Center caring for patients undergoing open heart surgery and cardiac interventional procedures, those with complex stroke cases, and a range of other critical care services. Subsequently, the hospital serves a growing number of patients from outlying areas of the region.

West Herr Auto Group President Scott Bieler was also in attendance to present Grace Guest House with a 2016 Dodge Grand Caravan minivan which will be used as the shuttle for Grace’s guest families.

“Grace Guest House is a home built with heart,” **said Congressman Brian Higgins.** “From conception to its operation, this is a place that seeks to embrace those who want to be close to loved ones going through difficult times and in doing so takes one less worry away from families. We commend Cynthia and the many partners who made this happen.”

“I want to congratulate Grace Guest House on the opening of their new location at 2315 Seneca Street in South Buffalo,” **said Buffalo Common Council Member Christopher Scanlon.** “Grace, in collaboration with Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, will provide a place of comfort to the families of Mercy Hospital’s patients during some of the most frantic, emotional and exhausting times of their lives. I want to thank and congratulate all of those involved, especially Cindy Battista, President of Grace Guest House, for their vision and commitment to this project and for bringing this tremendous asset to the South Buffalo community.”

Assembly member Mickey Kearns said, “We know that when someone we love and care about suddenly ends up needing critical care at the hospital, lives are turned upside down. The last thing anyone with a loved one in critical care should have to worry about is where they will sleep at night. Grace Guest House fills a significant void in this area of patient and family care. I commend Cynthia Battista of Grace Guest House, Mercy Hospital and West Herr for stepping up to fill this void, and relieve undue stress on families at Mercy Hospital.”

Grace Guest House expects to serve as a home away from home for approximately 1,000 families every year.