

# our House

719 Somonauk Street  
Sycamore, IL 60178

[payitforwardhouse.org](http://payitforwardhouse.org)



Kathy Saack

## A Guest's Perspective

### Meet Kathy Saack from Loves Park, Illinois

#### *Who was the patient and what brought you to Pay-It-Forward House?*

My husband Doug was at Mercy Hospital in Rockford, Illinois for a severe wound. He was in the ICU for 14 days. We did not know if he was going to survive or not. A woman from Sycamore came to talk to us about the services at Kindred Hospital for this type of wound. She saw that I was concerned about how I was going to be able to see him so she told me that there was a house that takes in loved ones of patients for a small donation or whatever I can do for the house. I called and spoke with Lisa, who is a wonderful, caring person and she said yes, they had an opening and wanted to know when I would be able to check in. They were transferring my husband to Kindred Hospital very soon so I was able to come right away. When Lisa told me that she had a room for me, I was so happy and relieved.

#### *What was your first impression of the House?*

Pay-It-Forward House is a warm and beautiful Victorian style house. My trip to the House took 45 minutes but when I arrived, Lisa greeted me with open arms and a caring disposition.

#### *What was the most gratifying during your stay?*

While there, I became friends with all of the families that stayed at the House and to this day, we have stayed in touch with each other. At the end of our day visiting at the hospital, we would all meet at the kitchen

- ♥ *Over 21,000 nights of rest*
- ♥ *Over 200 regular volunteers*
- ♥ *Approximately 75% of our guests come from more than 50 miles away*
- ♥ *In 2019, we served 514 guests by providing a home-away-from-home*

table and just talk about our experiences. Sometimes we would order pizza and eat or just worked on a puzzle. The House quickly became a place where we could come together and bond over different things. I was there for 3 months and no one at the House ever expected anything from me. I especially enjoyed being with Heather and her dog, Penny.

#### *What do you wish other people knew about the House?*

I would recommend this House to anyone that has to come to Sycamore to support someone who is receiving medical treatment in DeKalb County. It is a warm and inviting place where you feel secure, supported, and you may even meet a new forever friend. These people are my new family and I consider Pay-It-Forward House, my home-away-from-home. I will always appreciate the House and the people in it. I will never forget this experience. Thank you so much for everything!

# Volunteer Spotlight

Here are just some of the many volunteers and friends that help make Pay-It-Forward House a home. Their donated time and talents are a precious resource which helps us keep the House comfortable year-round and helps make our guests feel warm and welcome. Their service on behalf of our mission is priceless, and we and our guests are grateful too!



## Elizabeth Coats

**How did you hear about PIFH and why did you make the decision to get involved??**

"I first learned of PIFH when the

House was first getting established in Sycamore and Mary Eubanks was heading the effort to set up Pay-It-Forward House. I believe at the time I may have read about it in the newspaper and thought what a worthwhile project it was. I recalled the time when my Mother had a stroke and was in a hospital that was a 45-minute drive away from where I was living at the time. I made many trips back and forth from home to the hospital and I thought how nice it would have been to have had access to a place like Pay-It-Forward House at that time. Having myself been in the role of a caregiver, I understand that the caregiver also needs to take care of herself/himself in order to look after the needs of their loved ones. So, I can empathize with the residents at PIFH and their family members who are hospitalized at Kindred Hospital and elsewhere in DeKalb County." I not only empathize with them but I, like so many other volunteers and donors, am happy for the opportunity to do what I can to help in providing rest and respite and a home away from home for so many.

**What is your favorite part about the Pay-It-Forward House and the work you do here?**

"My favorite part of Pay-It-Forward House is the way so many diverse groups of people in the community have come together to support the mission of the House. It operates from volunteer effort. I have worked in the past as a Friendly Face volunteer, served on the cookie committee and now I do the bulletin boards for the House. I'm sure every volunteer can relate to how good it feels to receive help when needed. It feels even better to be able to "pay it forward" and lend a hand to someone else in need."

**What is one thing you would tell someone who had never heard of Pay-It-Forward House before?**

"I would tell them that the mission of Pay-It-Forward House is needed and worthwhile. The concept of paying it forward... we as volunteers are helping those in need and the ones we help in turn have an opportunity to continue the mission... to go out and continue to pay it forward...not just in word... but by their deeds."

Thank you, Elizabeth for your continued service and those amazing monthly welcome boards.



## THANK YOU

to the volunteers and community members who help us keep Pay-It-Forward ready for our guests.



We are looking for more Friendly Face Volunteers, could that be you? We have open shifts available for weekdays and weekends. As a volunteer, you will be a welcoming presence in the House for the families we serve. For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit our website at [payitforwardhouse.org/volunteer/](http://payitforwardhouse.org/volunteer/).



**LaVerne E. Mathews  
& Lisa Heckmann**

## Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends of Pay-It-Forward House,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your families safe and healthy as we enter the last few months of 2020. This year, we have been challenged in ways unimaginable, but as I reflect on the year as a whole, we have stood strong together to make the best of this situation. While I am no stranger to Sycamore and DeKalb, I am constantly impressed with how well the community continues to come together in the midst of this crisis to ensure that all of their neighbors, family, and friends are doing well and being safe. The “spirit of community” is certainly alive and well here!

We are happy that things are somewhat back to normal at Pay-it-Forward House with the return of our guests. For a newcomer like me, it has been a wonderful experience to see the house buzzing with energy as I envisioned it was before the pandemic. We are taking all of the necessary precautions that the CDC has advised with mask requirements, temperature checks, and hand sanitizing, but it still has not stopped the families staying in the House from gathering together for coffee and a conversation across the dining room table or sharing their daily experiences while relaxing on the couches in the family room or out on the patio (all while practicing social distancing). The safety and health of our guests, staff, and volunteers are our highest priority. To review the new COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines for visitors and guests, visit our website at [www.payitforwardhouse.org](http://www.payitforwardhouse.org).

Enjoy all of the beauty that the Fall season brings!

LaVerne E. Mathews  
*Executive Director*

### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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## Our Values

**TRUST**  
*in people's kindness to others and in their respect for the facilities made available to them.*

**RESPECT**  
*for all, especially our guests and the physical and emotional fatigue they are experiencing.*

**CARING**  
*demonstrated by a willingness to provide as little or as much companionship and support as each guest welcomes.*

**GRATITUDE**  
*for the generosity of others who make it possible for guests to find a place of rest and respite.*

### STAFF

LaVerne E. Mathews  
*Executive Director*

Lisa Heckmann  
*Administrative Assistant*

## How can you help?

Pay-It-Forward House is in need of in-kind donations.

Visit our website at:

**[payitforwardhouse.org/house-needs](http://payitforwardhouse.org/house-needs)**

*to see our Amazon Wish List and other House needs. Thank you!*

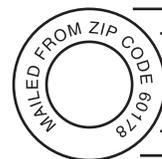


**PAY-IT-FORWARD**  
**HOUSE**<sub>NFP</sub>

719 Somonauk Street, Sycamore, IL 60178

**815.762.4882**

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helping us*



*How do I sign up?*

*It's EASY!*

Go to our website:  
***payitforwardhouse.org***

Click on the News & Events tab  
on the top right for the link!

## “Adopt a Day”

The season of giving is upon us, and we have the perfect gift to make everyone on your gift list feel special. Our Adopt a Day campaign starts in November, and you can honor or remember a special person in your life by adopting a day on our calendar. For just a donation of \$100, we will send a letter to each honoree recognizing their “day” and your support. Your \$100 donation means our guests who are physically, emotionally and financially exhausted can stay at the House for little or no cost during a very difficult time in their lives.

*Choose to “pay it forward” this giving season!*

