



## Sarah House Director to Visit Bet Havarim October Service Announced

By Mel Shindler

Bet Havarim will welcome Mary Keough, Founder & Executive Director of “Sarah House” as guest speaker at the October 17<sup>th</sup> Shabbat Worship Service. “Sarah House” is Syracuse’s only Adult Hospital Hospitality Residence.

The October 17<sup>th</sup> Shabbat Worship Service will be led by Bet Havarim’s Cantorial Soloist, Hanita Margulies Blair, who recently celebrated her 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Bet Havarim. Services begin at 7:30 PM and are conducted in the Social Hall of St. David’s Episcopal Church in Dewitt. Assisting Blair will be several members of Bet Havarim’s Shabbat Committee, Zarita Hack, Helen Marcum and Delia Temes. Shabbat Services at Bet Havarim are coordinated by Committee Chairman, Mel Shindler. An Oneg Shabbat reception follows the service and all members of the community are cordially invited to attend.

Founded in 1992 Sarah House began as a dream for Mary and Dick Keough after they recognized the need for a residence for the families and loved ones of hospitalized adult out-of-town patients. The need became apparent to Mary and Dick after their experience with Mary’s nephew, Billy Johnson, who had undergone a bone marrow transplant in New Hampshire and Billy’s parents needed accommodations while they were with Billy. “There was no place to stay at the time,” said Founder and Executive Director Mary Keough.

In 1992 a house owned by Parish of Most Holy Rosary Church became available and with donations and many hours of work by volunteers the original “Sarah House”, a “place for hope & healing” opened in January, 1994. When it became apparent that the original “Sarah House” had outgrown its needs and a larger facility with ground-floor rooms accessible to the handicapped was needed, the Parish offered one-half of their Convent to “Sarah House.”

Opened in 2005 the current “Sarah House” is opened to provide shelter and support in a home-like setting to patients and families seeking medical treatment in Syracuse area hospitals.

(2)

While the majority of guests at “Sarah House” are receiving treatment at SUNY Medical University Hospital, patients and their families of all medical facilities, including rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, hospitals and other health care-related facilities are welcome. Since opening in January 1994 “Sarah House” has welcomed more than 4,000 individuals and provided over 19,000 nights of shelter and support. Guests have come from every state in the union except Wyoming, and from many foreign nations including Canada, Cuba, Israel, United Kingdom and a number of African Nations.

“Bet Havarim’s involvement with ‘Sarah House’ began in 2007 when members of our Social Action committee gathered to prepare home-cooked meals for the facility’s guests,” said Bet Havarim member and chair of the Committee, Toni Meltzer, who added, “we have adopted ‘Sarah House’ and are thrilled that we can play a small role in providing home-cooked meals to the families who are alone in Syracuse during very difficult times in their lives.”

In addition, members of Bet Havarim’s Social Action committee under the direction of Bernie and Joan Marcus visited “Sarah House” this past spring to assist in raking leaves and helping with a cleanup of the facility’s outdoor areas.

“Sarah House” is a member of the National Association of Hospital Hospitality Houses, Inc. which was established in 1986. More than 100 non-profit organizations across the United States belong to “NAHHH” which provide family-centered lodging and support services to families and their loved ones who are receiving medical treatment far from their home communities. The first home, known as the “Kevin Guest house” opened in 1973 in Buffalo, NY, as a result of the efforts of a family from Sharon, PA whose son had died of leukemia. This house became the inspiration for the first “Ronald McDonald House” which opened in Philadelphia in 1974.

“We will be thrilled to welcome Mary Keough who is a most engaging and dynamic woman and who, with her husband, Dick, saw their dream come to fruition,” said Meltzer. “Mary has and continues to labor 7 days a week at this most wonderful residence which has welcomed and provided a ‘home away from home’ for so many visitors for more than 14 years.”

(3)

Bet Havarim's Shabbat services are conducted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday evening of every month at St. David's Church in Dewitt. Off street parking is available and the church is handicapped accessible.

For additional information visit the BH website at [www.bethavarimsyr.org](http://www.bethavarimsyr.org), email: [info@bethavarim.org](mailto:info@bethavarim.org) or phone Marty Morganstein (637-5390) or Mel Shindler (478-6856).

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