

Kathleen Fleiszar of Life House Atlanta Children's Respite to be Featured on Close Up Radio

KENNESAW, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, August 14, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ --

It is estimated that 500,000 children in the United States present with a life-limiting illness. In Georgia approximately 1500 babies are born each year with complex medical conditions. These children must be cared for either at home or in a hospital with few options available. Primary caregivers are usually family members, mainly parents and siblings. As you can imagine, the physical and mental stress of round-the-clock care puts a tremendous strain on family life.

Kathleen Fleiszar first learned about pediatric respite homes in 2017 from her sister who lives in Arizona. There she visited Ryan House in Phoenix. Greatly inspired by a tour of this home, she decided to see if her home city of Atlanta had a similar place. When the answer was a resounding "no," a new journey started for her. With the help of a longtime friend, this journey culminated in the founding of Life House Atlanta Children's Respite, Inc. (DBA: Life House Atlanta). She now serves as the co-founder and executive director. Fleiszar is leading the effort to increase community awareness of the urgent need of a freestanding pediatric respite house in Georgia, a home that will be the first of its kind in the southeast.



Life House Atlanta, a 501c3 public charity, is composed primarily of volunteers who have been working ceaselessly to expand their database of potential and current donors to raise funds to build this house.

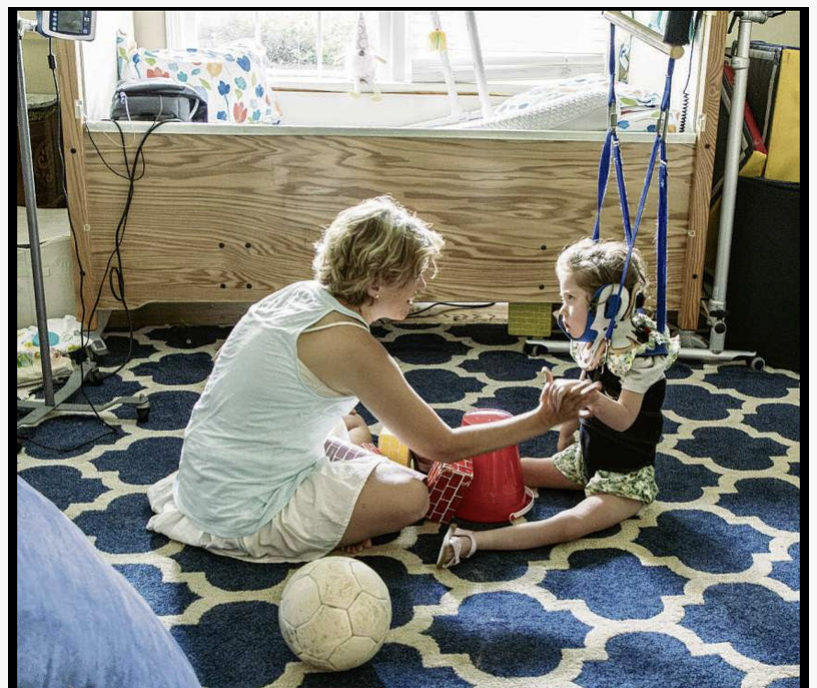
"To share the work, our Board of Directors established 3 major committees: Building,

Communications, and Development. With projected building costs of \$8 million, our major focus is to raise the funds to make this home a reality," explains Kathleen.

"Life House Atlanta will model itself after other homes that are already in place in California, Arizona, Indiana and Minnesota. We are looking to construct a 12,000 square foot, freestanding building with ample ground space for a playground and quiet time in nature. The building committee has been looking at a variety of places in metro Atlanta and has located several prospective sites. Additionally, we have a conceptual design that provides a solid foundation of the anticipated cost of \$8 million. There will be opportunities to donate toward individual therapy rooms, a hydrotherapy pool, a playground, or a child's private bedroom. The ultimate, of course, would be to find someone who is willing to donate land, with or without a structure that can be renovated. I have a vision of staking a post on that piece of land with a sign that reads, "Future home of Life House Atlanta," says Fleiszar.

Life House Atlanta will be a warm and cheerful home uniquely designed to provide palliative care, which essentially means helping children with extensive medical needs live as well as possible for as long as possible. Each day at Life House Atlanta will be filled with stimulating activities such as art, music, and hydrotherapy. Meanwhile, parent caregivers can enjoy respite from the relentless demands of round-the-clock caregiving.

Each child will have a private room while family suites will be available to parents and siblings



Mary Reed, sitting with her medically fragile 8-year-old daughter, is a board member of *Life House Atlanta*. Reed stumbled upon the nonprofit three years ago online.

should they wish to stay on the premises before embarking on a vacation. Family members may also have time to network with other families or take a much-needed vacation to recharge and refresh. Up to 30 days a year will be offered to each family, at no charge. Life House Atlanta will also be equipped to provide end-of-life care should the family desire.

Life House Atlanta is affiliated with Children's Respite Homes of America, a national umbrella organization that supports existing and emerging homes across America. The ultimate goal is a pediatric respite house in each of the 50 states. Currently, there are six in operation in 6 states with none in the southeast. Contrast that with the United Kingdom where there are 54 homes, all supported by their local communities with less than 5% funding from the UK's National Health Service.

Before her quest to bring respite to families in Georgia, Kathleen earned a B.S. degree in Biology and a PhD in Human Genetics. With her doctorate in human genetics and a Board certification in Medical Genetics from the American College of Medical Genetics, Fleiszar taught for over 30 years at Kennesaw State University. During that time, she opened a consulting firm, Medical Genetics, and worked with multiple families helping them to determine the impact of hereditary factors on their families.

"Genetics has always been a passion for me. As a board-certified medical geneticist, I conducted genetic consultations for over 10 years with families who were concerned about their next pregnancy. Oftentimes the mother was of advanced maternal age or had a family history of a hereditary condition and the family needed to discuss options available on how to proceed with growing their family. If the parents had a child with a genetic condition, I was there to hear their concerns and provide support. I enjoyed getting to know these families and their children."

After retirement from Kennesaw State University in 2003, Kathleen continued to help families in her church and community.

"... after I retired, I met a woman at church who was involved in several ministries. One was called 'Fun Night!' for families of children with special needs. Once a month, we entertain the children with dinner, games, dancing and crafts while their parents and siblings go out to dinner and maybe a movie. I have been involved with Fun Night! for over 20 years and have been honored to meet so many families through this ministry," shares Kathleen.

As for the future, "Among other plans to raise money, our annual breakfast will take place this fall at the Georgia Aquarium Oceans Ballroom—it's a beautiful venue."

Information about this fundraiser and others can be found on the website home page:

<https://lifehouseatlanta.org>

Close Up Radio will feature Kathleen Fleiszar, Ph.D. in an interview with Jim Masters on Friday, August 16th at 3 p.m. EST

Listen to the show on [BlogTalkRadio](#)

If you have any questions for our guest, please call (347) 996-3389

For more information about Kathleen Fleiszar and Life House Atlanta Children's Respite, Inc., please visit <https://lifehouseatlanta.org>

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