



# Room in the Inn, Room in Our Hearts

**“It’s the most wonderful time of the year”, as the song goes.** The busyness of Christmas shopping, holiday parties, special church services, and time with family fills our December calendar. For many, it’s also the time to reflect on the blessings of the year and helping those in need. My favorite part of the holiday season is when my family gathers together and we read the Christmas story found in the gospel of Luke. I can finally exhale the stress from the season and inhale the peace that that I find in being home.

As I read, “And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn,” I’m reminded of the reality that finding ‘no room in the inn’ during a medical need away from home repeats itself thousands of times all year long in Tulsa.

Where do these families in medical crisis stay when they find themselves away from home, away from friends, and their community support? This past year over 250 families found not just room, but prayer support, meals, and comfort at The Hospitality House of Tulsa, a non-profit organization who’s mission is to offer a ‘home away from home’ for families caring for loved ones in medical crisis.

The families consistently express their gratitude for what Tulsa has done for them during one of the most difficult time of their lives. From a family whose baby was born prematurely, they write, “I never realized there was a place like The Hospitality House. It’s so great to know that there are still caring people in this world, and we needed you so badly during our time at the hospital. Our baby was put in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) for 11 days. Since we live in Mannford and not able to work, times were really hard and then we received your call. We are so blessed. Our stay there was amazing! The nice apartment, the food you brought in, and the prayers and thoughts and kindness that everyone there brought to us. You helped us through!”

Another family whose son was in the burn unit expressed:

“People don’t realize how it can affect your life. You need a place to lie down and take a bath. It was a God-

send that it was within walking distance [to the burn unit at the hospital] and so accessible.” The parents were able to rotate their time with their son. The dad would be the son’s support during the day, and mom by night.

The mother shared that by staying at The Hospitality House, she was able to have needed time to herself. She expressed thankfulness for a comfortable place to reflect on the good things that were happening for their family in spite of the tragedy, to read the Bible, take a bath, and do laundry. “These are things people take for granted, but here (at Hospitality House), it feels like home. It’s a warm feeling.”

This tragic experience affected the family not only emotionally but also spiritually. They shared that their faith has become stronger. “We couldn’t have gotten through it without our faith. No matter what comes, the Lord shows us the way. We give it to Him and then let Him carry us in His hands.”

Toni Moore, President of the Hospitality House of Tulsa shares, “There are so many families that have received the needed rest, nutrition, emotional and spiritual support this past year. We are grateful that the communities of Tulsa, Broken Arrow, Owasso, Jenks and many more have reached out to these families by providing volunteers and funding”.

The Hospitality House of Tulsa cares for family members of both adult and pediatric patients and serves all 14 Tulsa hospitals. Earlier this month, they began their “Room in the Inn, Room in Our Hearts” campaign. With seven fully furnished and decorated guest suites available, The Hospitality House can provide 2,550 nights of lodging a year. They have decorated the outside of the house with 2,550 Christmas lights representing one night of lodging for a family. The community is invited to help these families by making a \$10 contribution which illuminates one light on the house.

“Dealing with a medical crisis away from home is extremely stressful and financially devastating. When it occurs during the holidays, it’s even worse,” said Toni. “All the families want is for their loved one to be healthy and to be able to go home as soon as possible. The Hospitality House provides them that home away from home



**“The Hospitality House is more than just a place to stay. The love and care that has been invested here has meant so much to our family. The prayer support given here is so important and we believe prayer changes things.”**

**The Nunley Family  
Gilmer, Texas**

**The Nunley family resting in their apartment suite...finding more than just a room at The Hospitality House.**

For more information about The Hospitality House of Tulsa, call 918-794-0088 or visit their website at [www.tul-sahospitalityhouse.org](http://www.tul-sahospitalityhouse.org). Donations may be sent to: PO Box 1988 Broken Arrow, OK 74103

to help ease the burden.”

Staff members are especially sensitive concerning their needs during the holidays. To help these families have a Christmas in Tulsa, community volunteers have decorated each suite with a Christmas tree, gifts, and will also be providing Christmas Eve dinner and Christmas day lunch.

During the same time period that the organization served over 250 families, they actually received over 400 referrals from hospital case managers, physicians, nurses, and chaplains who needed the services for families in their care. Toni states that many of these families can not afford the out of pocket expenses associated with a lengthy medical stay. Many families try to sleep in waiting room chairs or their vehicles and often skip meals or eat out of vending machines to save some money.

Based upon a patient feasibility study the organization performed in 2005, there are over 25,000 patients a year that travel to Tulsa for inpatient medical care coming from distances of at least 50 miles up to 800 miles away. In their first year of operations, The Hospitality House served families from all parts of Oklahoma, 15 additional states, and 2 foreign countries.

“The reality for us is that we do not have enough room to meet the needs of these medical families. However, our organization is moving ahead quickly in planning for more space. Our

goal has always been to build a 24 or 28 room facility near a hospital campus so when a family needs us, we have a room for them that day, not a waiting list,” said Toni.

Her passion for this project is based upon the practice of Biblical hospitality. She shares that her personal call to this ministry comes from Matthew 25:37-40,<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’<sup>38</sup>When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?<sup>39</sup>When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’<sup>40</sup>The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

The story of Christmas centers on the birth of Jesus and his family being offered humble shelter during their medical crisis away from home. That story continues today, as Tulsa makes room in their hearts. ☺