

Holocaust Survivor and Founder of American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge Network Turns 100

Margot Freudenberg's Vision Honored With Record Expansion of American Cancer Society's Free Housing Network for Cancer Patients New York City, Minneapolis and Grand Rapids Locations to Open This Year

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Margot Freudenberg, a Holocaust survivor and founder of the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge movement, will turn 100 this year. As she celebrates her centennial, the American Cancer Society is launching a record expansion of the system she created -- a network of free housing and support for out-of-town cancer patients and their caregivers while undergoing care. Within the next two years, the number of Hope Lodges will increase to 34, with Hope Lodges set to open this fall in New York City and this winter in Twin Cities/Minneapolis and Grand Rapids, Mich. An additional nine facilities are in development, and groundbreaking for expansion of the Charleston Hope Lodge and a new Hope Lodge in Iowa City, Iowa were held earlier this summer.

"Forty years ago even one Hope Lodge was just a dream," said Margot Freudenberg. "To see the network expanding across the country to provide support to cancer patients during their treatment is more than I ever imagined would happen."

Hope Lodges, which are part of a national patient service program run by the American Cancer Society, are free, residential facilities for individuals undergoing cancer treatment and their caregiver. More than just lodging, the Hope Lodge provides patients and their caregivers with a supportive environment and sense of community. Patients are surrounded by people going through the same experience and given the space they need to focus on healing. Hope Lodges provide trained staff who offer emotional support, cancer care information and compassion.

In 1970, Ms. Freudenberg, a longtime volunteer with the American Cancer Society, helped create the first Hope Lodge facility in her hometown of Charleston, S.C., with room for nine patients. Since that time, the American Cancer Society has expanded the program. In 2006 alone, more than 17,000 patients, caregivers and family members stayed at American Cancer Society Hope Lodges, saving nearly \$18 million in hotel expenses. Patients and caregivers now come from all 50 states and more than 75 countries, including Egypt, Greece, France, Guatemala, Italy, El Salvador, Russia and Switzerland.

"Margot's vision was to offer hope and a haven for people with cancer," said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., national chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society. "Many cancer patients must travel away from home to receive treatment that can last weeks or months. They often struggle to manage medical bills, other financial burdens, and the emotional isolation of being away from home. The national American Cancer Society Hope Lodge network provides thousands of cancer patients with access to the best possible cancer treatment each year and the support of the Hope Lodge 'community.' I'm so honored that within Margot's lifetime, we're realizing her dream and providing services to so many people at such a critical point in their fight with this disease."

The American Cancer Society Hope Lodge New York City will be the newest facility when it opens later this year. The 77,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly facility will be a campus of care for city residents, commuters, and out-of-town guests seeking information, advice, peer support and guidance through every phase of treatment. It will feature:

-- 60 patient rooms with private baths

- Shared family and meeting rooms
- Kitchen facilities
- Laundry facilities
- On-site patient and family service programs

"We are so proud and excited to be opening our Hope Lodge in New York City and look forward to welcoming cancer patients and their caregivers," said Donald Distasio, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society of New York and New Jersey. "The new Hope Lodge will make it possible for cancer patients to come to New York to access cancer care that they otherwise would not have been able to afford due to the high cost of temporary lodging in Manhattan."

The new Twin Cities Hope Lodge in Minneapolis will be a 22,000 square-foot facility with 40 patient rooms with private baths, and the facility in Grand Rapids will be a 30,000 square-foot facility with 20 patient rooms with private baths. Both Hope Lodges will have shared family and meeting rooms, kitchen and laundry facilities and provide on-site programs for the cancer patients and their caregivers.

The American Cancer Society has existing Hope Lodges in the following cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Ala., Buffalo, N.Y., Burlington, Vt., Charleston, S.C., Cincinnati, Cleveland, Gainesville, Fla., Greenville, N.C., Hershey, Pa., Kansas City, Mo., Lexington, Ky., Marshfield, Wis., Nashville, Tenn., New Orleans, Rochester, Minn., Rochester, N.Y., St. Louis, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Tampa, Fla., and Worcester, Mass. Hope Lodge is part of the American Cancer Society Cancer Resource Network that helps patients and their caregivers manage the impact of cancer on their lives through up-to-date cancer information and referrals to Society programs and other community resources.

For questions about cancer or more information about the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge, contact the American Cancer Society, toll-free, 24 hours a day, at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit its Web site at <http://www.cancer.org/>.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit <http://www.cancer.org/>.

SOURCE: American Cancer Society

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