

# Impact Report



**JoeAnna's House**

2024/2025



MORE THAN A PLACE

# It's Where Magic & Connection Come to Life

If you've ever stepped through the doors of JoeAnna's House, you've likely felt it, something intangible, yet undeniable. It's not just the warmth of the fireplace in the common room or the gentle hush of the family kitchen at dawn. It's not even the quiet hum of voices over a shared pot of Cherry Hill coffee. It's something deeper. Something alive.

a knowing glance between strangers who understand each other without words; a late-night laugh in the hallway; the tears, held or shared, over a Share a Meal dinner with new friends. These are the moments that transform a house into a home, and a stay into a lifeline. These are the stories that make JoeAnna's House a living, breathing part of the healing journey.

As we reflect on all that this past year has brought us, and look ahead to what the next promises, we've come to call it the "magic of the house." It's found not in big moments, but in the in-between ones:

We are deeply proud to share that this magic is expanding, quite literally. In September 2025, we will break ground on an exciting expansion project that

will add 10 much-needed rooms to JoeAnna's House. This marks a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to keep families close to their loved ones during some of life's most difficult chapters.

It's a promise to provide comfort and care to even more people, right when they need it most.

That promise was echoed all year long in the vibrant hum of community support. Our annual Winter Wonderland fundraising event was once again a

resounding success, a beautiful celebration of generosity, joy, and togetherness. Meanwhile, our Share a Meal program continued to shine as a quiet hero, providing nourishment and connection through the simplest of acts: sharing food. Dozens of volunteers and community members prepared and served meals for families staying at the House, reminding us that healing doesn't just happen in hospital rooms, it happens around dinner tables, in spontaneous conversations, and in heartfelt gestures.


These touch points of care and connection, whether through a meal, a conversation, or a place to rest, affirm something we at JoeAnna's House have always known, health care extends far beyond the hospital walls. True healing happens in community. It happens in presence. It happens here.

As you turn the pages of this year's annual report, I invite you to look not only at the numbers and milestones, but at the magic between the lines, the moments that can't be measured but mean everything.

**Darlene Haslock**  
Director | JoeAnna's House


JOEANNA'S HOUSE AT A GLANCE

**20** + 10  
**20** family rooms  
(with **10 more** on the way!)

  
**\$89** daily cost to  
operate JoeAnna's House  
(per room)

  
**28,762**  
overnight stays

  
**3003 families**  
welcomed

  
**148 nights** –  
longest stay

  
**394** repeat stays

**42** volunteers  **12** staff





(L-R) Aidan, Lindsay, and Shawn Coates at home.

## GUEST STORY

# The House That Heals Beyond Hospital Walls

The kind of event that shatters your very existence brought Shawn and Lindsay to Kelowna after a serious car accident left their son, Aidan, critically injured, and their world suddenly unrecognizable.

“We were exhausted shells of ourselves, broken and unsure of the future,” Lindsay recalls. Amid the uncertainty, there were painfully ordinary questions: Where do we stay? For how long? What now? But the moment Lindsay stepped

through the doors of JoeAnna’s House, she snapped a photo of the sign at the front entrance: “Welcome to JoeAnna’s House. Kick off your shoes and make yourself at home.”

They soon realized they weren’t just guests; they were part of a family they never knew they needed. A home where the circumstances that bring you here bond you to people in unexpected ways. A refuge filled with quiet music,

gentle chatter, and support.

Reflecting on a conversation with a volunteer named Donna, Lindsay shared: “She simply asked us how we were doing. When Shawn revealed that recovery could take months, Donna reassured us that we were welcome to stay here for as long as we needed. That was everything.”

They found peace in daily rituals like morning tea, shared meals, and evening chats. They forged friendships with people from across Canada. Each carried a different story, but they were all on the same flight, riding out their own turbulence.

JoeAnna’s House, and the people within it, gave Lindsay and Shawn space to unmask, and set down the guilt that so often comes with feeling anything other than fear or sadness. It became okay to laugh, to breathe, to feel human again. It replaced the grief, stress, and monotony, if only briefly, with warmth, laughter, and the quiet understanding of people walking parallel paths.

“That nurtured us,” Lindsay said. “An isolated hotel room could never have done that.”

Another guest from Nelson, gave them a four-leaf clover that traveled with Aidan from ICU to rehab, and through every ward and waiting room in between.

Now, it sits in his home as a symbol of how deeply small offerings can matter, especially when shared by someone carrying their own burdens.

During their first week, Lindsay and Shawn weren’t emotionally ready to join Share a Meal nights. By the second, they leaned in. They feared being pitied, but what they experienced was compassion without condescension.

“It was lighthearted. You could feel the kindness,” Lindsay said. “It brought us all together in a safe, respectful way. Connection without pressure. And yes, your soul really can heal over burrito bowls and apple crisp with ice cream.”

“Julie, the Share a Meal volunteer, really made those nights special. She immediately felt like a friend.”

Being steps away from the hospital allowed them to be fully present for their son without the added stress of commuting, parking, or getting to him quickly. Being a short walk to the lake also became part of their healing.

“We’re certain Aidan’s recovery would have looked very different without JoeAnna’s House. His care teams even said our presence made a real difference in his progress. JoeAnna’s House made it possible.”

“You know how, on a flight, they tell you to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others? JoeAnna’s House was our oxygen mask. Sleep, hygiene, and food wouldn’t have been enough. It was the community within the house—and everything that came with it—that gave us the strength to show up for our son every single day.”

JoeAnna’s House held them through it all, giving them safety, comfort, and community at a time when they had no one else nearby. When Aidan was finally discharged, they were overjoyed, but there was also a deep sadness in leaving.

“We didn’t just leave a building, we left a circle of care that had become our anchor.”

They continue their journey and maintain the friendships they made at JoeAnna’s House.

“Kelowna General Hospital saved our son’s life. JoeAnna’s House helped us stay strong enough to walk beside him every step of the way. And for that, we will always be grateful.”



**\$2,600 saved** per family, each stay, on hotel and travel costs\*

\*Based on average Kelowna hotel cost and average stay length at JoeAnna’s House



**10%** of caregivers acknowledge **their own health** has suffered because of their responsibilities\*

\*2022 Stats Canada



**56%** of unpaid caregivers reported feeling tired due to their caregiving responsibilities\*

\*2022 Stats Canada





  
**42** Volunteers  
help to run  
JoeAnna's House

  
**96+** Volunteer  
shifts are filled  
each month

  
Volunteers  
ages range  
**from 18-84**

## VOLUNTEERS

# The Heart of the House

Every warm greeting, every tidy room, every listening ear, volunteers help make JoeAnna's House more than a place to stay. They make it a home.

At JoeAnna's House, care doesn't end at the hospital doors. It crosses the street with a warm hello, a wave from the garden, or a quiet moment

shared while washing dishes. Here, in this sanctuary built for families facing medical crisis, a special group of often unsung heroes shows up day after day: the volunteers. With compassion, warmth, and quiet consistency, they help bridge the emotional distance between hospital and home. Whether it's greeting weary parents after a long day in the NICU, keeping the common

areas cozy, clean, and inviting, or simply offering a kind word at just the right moment, their presence brings comfort in times of uncertainty. Thanks to generous donor support, JoeAnna's House exists, but it's the volunteers who make it feel like home. Their energy is the heartbeat of the house: not loud or showy, but steady, generous, and unmistakably human.



**MARIA MACDONNELL**  
Volunteering since 2021

For Maria, volunteering at JoeAnna's House began with a story shared at the KGH Foundation's Heart of Gold Gala in 2018. Moved by the families' experiences and the vision behind JoeAnna's House, she turned to her husband and said, "I need to volunteer there." A longtime community volunteer and proud "team mom," Maria felt a void after her youngest graduated. She found new purpose within the welcoming walls of JoeAnna's House.

Every Wednesday, she helps set up for Share a Meal night, preparing stations, folding napkins, and creating a warm, inviting space. On quieter evenings, she might do light housekeeping, write cards, or share tea with a guest. It's in these small, human moments, chatting about hometowns or hearing hospital stories, that she finds the most meaning.

One memory stands out: a young couple holding hands over dinner, savoring a rare moment of calm. "It's a joy, a purpose, and a reminder of how kindness connects us all."



**GORD BARBER**  
Volunteering since 2022

For Gord, volunteering at JoeAnna's House begins with a smile, and often a hug. From the moment he walks in, there's purpose and warmth. After checking the staff's task list, he sets about the day's work: repairing, adjusting, replacing, or making sure things run smoothly. Whether it's a wobbly chair or a loose fence post, his quiet commitment keeps the house safe and welcoming.

Affectionately nicknamed the "Maintenance God (with a silent R)," a nod to his name and knack for fixing anything, Gord sees his role as more than tools and tasks. One moment stands out: a guest offering to help repair a broken fence post. "It was a happy moment," he says, proof that connection often grows through shared purpose.

Volunteering here fills him up. Every small act of care makes a big difference. His hands may fix what's broken, but his heart helps make JoeAnna's House a home.



**KAITLIN HARRIS**  
Volunteering since 2024

For Kaitlin Harris, volunteering at JoeAnna's House was a natural next step. Having spent time in the KGH Gift Shop as a young volunteer, she already knew the KGH Foundation's impact. As soon as she was old enough, she applied to join the JoeAnna's House team and has been making a difference ever since.

Each shift begins with Kaitlin checking in, tidying the kitchen, and greeting families in the common areas. Her favourite task? Ensuring the kitchen is clean, organized, and welcoming, a small gesture that means a lot to guests navigating long hospital days. "A good day," she says, "is when everything runs smoothly, and you can feel the house is a positive place to be."

What stays with her most are the quiet, heartfelt conversations with guests. Volunteering here has deepened her appreciation for how strangers, even in their hardest moments, come together. For Kaitlin, JoeAnna's House truly embodies community.



GUEST STORY

# The Comfort of Company

When Val Cyr’s husband suffered a serious ATV accident in spring 2025, JoeAnna’s House became a much-needed soft place to land amidst the chaos. Herb suffered a severe head injury, along with multiple broken bones including his neck, back, ribs, sternum, shoulder blades, and pelvis. Herb was transported from their rural property in Vernon to KGH, and Val needed to be close by to support his recovery.

With Herb in the ICU for months, JoeAnna’s House became Val’s home for over four months. “It has saved me and my sanity,” she shares,

“To have to feel like the world is ending and have somebody with you who is going through the same thing makes you go to bed at night thinking you’re not alone.”

“The natural thing is to be by yourself. To hole up and cry. But JoeAnna’s House doesn’t let you do that. The design forces you to come downstairs and say hello.” It was in this shared space that Val met LuAnn, an unexpected lifeline and true friend who would help her through

those difficult months. Like most conversations at the house, it started with a simple hello in the morning and grew from there.

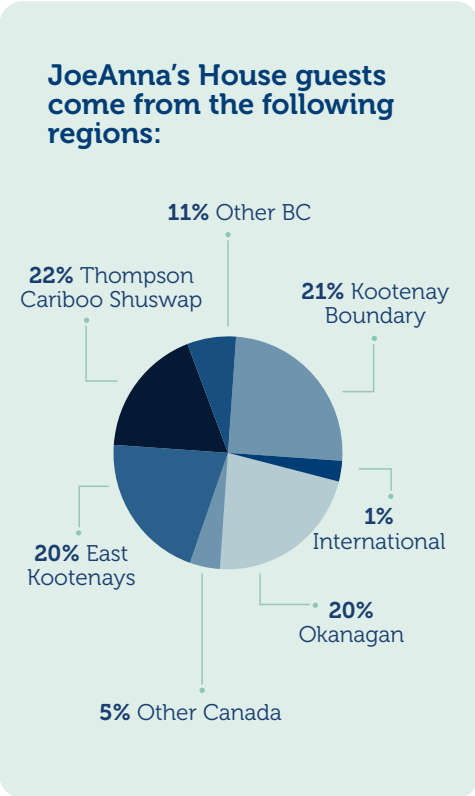
LuAnn and Val quickly fell into a comforting routine – morning coffee, walking side-by-side to the hospital, and sitting together at day’s end to talk through everything that happened. “It was her strength that gave me strength,” Val says. “I’ll be forever grateful to her for pushing me where I’ve never been pushed before in my life.”

After her brother was rushed from the Fernie area to KGH with a severe case of influenza that put him in the ICU, LuAnn had traveled from Ontario to be by his side. The two became fast friends, their guards completely down in shared grief. From simple hellos over coffee to sharing laughter and sarcastic remarks, they connected deeply over their similarities and the challenges they faced.

Despite finding each other in less-than-ideal circumstances, Val and LuAnn still talk on a regular basis and are planning trips together now that LuAnn has

returned home. “It was like I’d known her forever. I will be forever grateful for her.”

The magic of JoeAnna’s House is in bringing people together and offering comfort to caregivers during their toughest moments. It’s also where unexpected friendships often blossom in the time between. More than just temporary accommodation, JoeAnna’s House is a place where healing starts and lasting connections are formed.



(L-R) Val, LuAnn, Lindsay and Shawn Coates (read The Coates’ story on page 4) celebrating LuAnn’s birthday in Kelowna.

Val Cyr, a guest from Vernon, sitting in ‘her spot.’ This chair represented the daily meeting spot for her and new lifelong friend, LuAnn, whom she met while staying at the House.





# COMMUNITY Delicious Generosity

How community-led innovation is fueling change at JoeAnna’s House

In a world where fundraising often follows a familiar format, something refreshingly different was cooked up in a kitchen in downtown Kelowna. At Lakehouse Kitchens Cooking School, ten teams of local wealth advisors stepped into the unknown, not to talk finances, but to cook. The Wealth Advisors Black Box Cooking Competition, created and led by Cairy Holtby of RBC Dominion Securities, brought people together around shared purpose, friendly competition, and a creative approach to giving back.

With surprise ingredients like flank steak, taro root, radishes, and cherries, teams had just 45 minutes to prepare a dish worthy of the judges’ praise. While the pressure was real, so was the laughter, encouragement, and connection that filled the room. Cairy’s approach wasn’t just clever, it was strategic. Rather than asking her professional peers directly for support, she invited investment wholesalers and industry specialists to back the event, framing it as a premium opportunity for



The winning team of both the cooking competition and Calcutta-style auction.

- client connection and brand presence.
- The result was a shared experience that offered something valuable to everyone involved:
- Wholesalers gained meaningful face time with advisors.
- Advisors enjoyed a night of laughter, creativity, and collaboration.
- And families in crisis found renewed support at JoeAnna’s House.

This model of community-powered philanthropy reflects something bigger: a growing movement where innovation and generosity collide.

Before the ingredients were even revealed, attendees took part in a Calcutta-style auction, bidding on teams they believed would win. Half the pot went to the highest bidder of the winning team. The other half went directly to JoeAnna’s House. And in a generous gesture, the winning

bidder chose to donate their share back, doubling the impact. That single part of the night raised \$6,240. Altogether, the event raised \$36,840, enough to fund 413 nights for families who need to stay close to loved ones receiving care at Kelowna General Hospital.

“It wasn’t just about raising money. It was about creating an experience that brought people together for something bigger than themselves.”

**Cairy Holtby,**  
RBC Dominion Securities

What made this evening remarkable wasn’t just the creativity in the kitchen or the generosity in the room. It was the clarity of purpose behind every detail. From the structure of the event to the people invited to take part, it was designed to make space for fun and connection. And it gave people a new,

meaningful way to show their support. JoeAnna’s House is more than a place to stay, it’s a cause embraced by an entire community, one that stretches far beyond city limits, or even the walls of a kitchen. Thanks to passionate leaders like Cairy and those who rallied behind her, one inspired evening in a kitchen proved that when purpose leads, everyone wins.



Participants finding out for the first time what their mystery ingredients are.

15 third party fundraising events took place in the 2024/2025 Fiscal Year in support of JoeAnna’s House



Over \$161,000 was raised by third party events in the 2024/2025 Fiscal Year for JoeAnna’s House

“

**True healing** happens in  
community. It happens  
**in presence.**

**It happens here.**

**KGH**FOUNDATION

2268 Pandosy Street  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 1T2

P. 250.862.4438  
W. [kghfoundation.com](http://kghfoundation.com)



**JoeAnna's  
House**  
Better together.