



# Restoring *Hope* Transplant House

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## RESTORING HOPE RECEIVES CONSTRUCTION APPROVAL

Restoring Hope Transplant House is overjoyed to announce that their charitable cause received the unanimous approval for their renovation and expansion plans from the Middleton Planning Commission on September 22nd. As Mayor Brar of Middleton stated at the end of the hour-long Zoom public hearing session, “Go ahead and build that house, Cindy!” This is a very exciting moment for the future of Restoring Hope and the entire transplant community. While largely an online



business meeting, it was also incredibly moving and emotional to hear all the kind words during that session from city officials. Mayor Brar even mentioned the incredible support RHTH has received from Lions Clubs in this public session. How special to have him recognize the generous contributions from Lions statewide and beyond for their years of support.

This has been a long, nerve-wracking and all-consuming process and ultimately all the years of dedication and sacrifice on the part of so many incredible people to get to this point largely hinged on that critical gathering of city officials and their vote. As a historic building in the heart of ever-expanding downtown Middleton, there were several challenges and hurdles to clear. To have so many of those key decision-makers really step up for this house and the visiting transplant families who have come to call it their home away from home, was one of the greatest feelings you could possibly imagine for the people who have dreamed about this day for a long, long time!

There is obviously a lot of work ahead, timelines and final details that need to be ironed out and fundraising that will become the centerpiece of RHTH’s efforts while

they are in construction, but for the moment, they would like to take time to pause and celebrate this great moment because this was a total team effort that helped to transform what was once just a dream into what now will be a reality for future generations of transplant families. As RHTH Co-Founder and Executive Director Cindy Herbst declared, “We are so incredibly grateful to all of the Lions who have given so much of their time, talents and kindness over the years to help make such an unforgettable moment like this possible. The dreams we are realizing for Restoring Hope Transplant House today would quite simply not have been possible without our Lions friends!”

With construction on the near horizon, RHTH has secured a rental property 1 mile from the house in which they will be able to store all of their belongings in a climate controlled environment. This rental will also serve as office space, meeting area and RHTH headquarters throughout construction. With such a large house and so many belongings, the rental was deemed a necessary solution, but it comes at the steep expense of \$2,450 a month. One of the local Lions anonymously donated the first months rent which was such a relief given the shortage of fundraising options since COVID-19 and the house is hopeful that more contributions may follow to help offset this additional expense.

While going through the construction timeline, Lions from at least 7 different area Clubs have helped with social distance friendly projects at RHTH led by DG Tammy Rockenbach. After temperature checks and while wearing mandatory masks, Lions have helped prepare the grounds for construction, have emptied out the garage and



have begun moving shelving units and other large items from RHTH to their rental unit. “It has taken a village to raise this house. What these hard-working Lions have accomplished during these volunteer days would have taken us months to do on

our own. Their compassion and dedication for our cause and the excitement we see in their faces knowing that they are helping to create a lasting legacy for transplant families is such a powerful example of what it means to be a Lion,” Herbst said.

While 2020 has led RHTH to the realization of their construction and expansion dreams, getting through a life-changing pandemic has not been without its challenges. Virtually all of Restoring Hope’s annual fundraisers have been cancelled this year. Speaking opportunities, events, conventions and all social gatherings have

mostly been scrapped. It has had a huge impact on the non-profit in terms of offsetting its regular operating expenses. With a recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Dane County, UW Hospital has recently made the decision to restrict all visitor access to the hospital once again. This has also had a major impact on RHTH's visiting families and the house in recent weeks. The pandemic has touched everyone in a major way, but Herbst hopes that the excitement and momentum created by RHTH going to construction will serve as a rallying point for all Lions as they begin to move forward through so many of the challenges. "We have already seen the uplifting nature of our construction news and the impact it has had on our families, community and supporters. The momentum has given us all purpose, hope and excitement for each day. It has ignited our passions and reminded us of our purpose and the collective strength we have to overcome any adversity when we do it together. This house was largely built upon a loving foundation of Lions and we need you all more than ever right now in any way you possibly can," Herbst said.

Construction at Restoring Hope is tentatively scheduled to begin in late October. We will be following their progress throughout.

