

Hospital, restaurant fulfilled Arizona family's needs, wishes

My wife and I were in Pittsburgh last month while our daughter had two heart surgeries (one scheduled, and the other one ... well, not so much) at Children's Hospital. Neither of us had ever been to Pittsburgh before, and we didn't really know what to expect. We now have a new appreciation for GPS navigation, and for several places and people in your city.

The staff at Children's was amazing. We spent all week in the intensive care unit surrounded by kids who were really desperately sick, and the whole time the staff was warm and composed and attentive. Perhaps you get tired of hearing it, and I'm sure you must hear it often, but they were so helpful, professional and inspired great confidence at a time when we were very worried about the health of our child.

Thanks to the amazing Dr. Victor Morell, who caressed the heart of our child with his hands, and Ann's nurses Kyra, April, Sarah, Christina, and certainly the rest, whose names escape us.

Additional thanks to those contributors in your city who made the Family House concept a reality. We stayed there and were inspired by the teamwork it took, and takes, to make the houses what they are. We are the beneficiaries of the vision launched many years ago.

Another bright spot is our new friends at Cafe Sam on Baum near Liberty -- Dan, Mary, Carissa, Angel, Michelle, Carly. We ate some of the finest meals we have eaten anywhere there. We talked hockey, football, school, and they helped us vent and process the anxiety we were going through. We're looking forward to the quarterly recipe newsletter!

The "Steel town" has a heart of gold, and your people aren't afraid to let it show. Thank you all so much for softening the edges on what could have been a very different week for a couple of lost and worried out-of-towners.

Our daughter's treatment went well, and she is expected to make a full recovery. I hope one day we can visit Pittsburgh for fun instead of necessity.

DAVID and COLLEEN VANGELDER

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