

What responsibilities will I have as a host?

In addition to providing a clean and comfortable place to sleep and access to a bathroom, we ask three things of you:

- When guests arrive at your home, give them a Hospitality Homes guest packet, which contains a Liability Release, a Guest Survey, and a donation envelope.
- Keep careful records of your "guest night" statistics and report them to us each month by e-mail or telephone.
- Welcome guests into the Hospitality Homes circle of friends and tell them that they will be included in our annual fundraising appeals.

How do I get more information about hosting?

Please call our office at (617) 482-4338 and speak with a member of our staff to request a hosting information packet. We will invite you to an orientation session, where you will meet our staff as well as some of our current hosts, and go over details and questions about the program. After your orientation session, a staff member will arrange a home visit to gather information specific to you and your home. This is the information used to match guests and hosts.



Becoming a Host: Questions & Answers



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Hosting Patients' Families Since 1983

What is Hospitality Homes?

Every year over 200,000 people travel to the Boston area for medical care. With them comes a parent, spouse, son or daughter, or friend to lend support at a difficult time. Many arrive knowing no one and in desperate need of inexpensive, convenient accommodations.

Hospitality Homes is a non-profit organization that was founded in Boston in 1983 in response to this critical need. The first program of its kind, Hospitality has a network of *volunteer hosts* who provide housing for families and friends of hospital patients. Under certain circumstances, the program can accommodate patients as well.

How does Hospitality Homes differ from other hospital-related housing?

There are two major differences:

- (1) Hospitality Homes' services are provided entirely by volunteers
- (2) The program is not specific to a particular illness, age group, or hospital.

Who are Hospitality Homes Hosts and what do they do?

Hospitality Homes Hosts are trained volunteers who provide a clean and comfortable place to sleep and access to a bathroom in their private homes. Many also offer limited kitchen use. Hosts do not provide meals or transportation. Most of our hosts live in areas with access to public transportation (subways/bus). At this time, few hosts live within walking distance of the major hospitals.

Why should I become a Hospitality Homes Host?

- *Hosting is a wonderful way to help people who are in very stressful and difficult circumstances – and it's easy and flexible.* You don't have to leave your home, you host only when it is convenient to do so, and you can tailor your hosting to fit with your lifestyle. For example, you determine how many guests you are willing to have, what length of stay you prefer, whether to accept children and/or patients, whether to offer kitchen privileges, etc.
- *Hosting allows you to contribute something other than money*, something far more personal – your home – and it allows you to help someone directly.
- *Hosting helps patients as well as guests.* Patients are comforted in knowing that their loved ones are staying in a comfortable, safe home setting instead of sitting alone in a hotel room.

How are guests screened for the program?

Most individuals are directed to the program by social workers, doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals; others learn about it through other non-profits and the internet.

Interested individuals call the Hospitality Homes office and complete an application over the telephone. They must also provide a personal reference for each adult guest. The Hospitality Homes staff contacts each reference and asks if the applicant is responsible, considerate, independent, and someone he or she would welcome in his or her own home. If any reference expresses any doubts, we will not make a placement; nor will we make a placement if we have any concerns based on our conversations with the applicant or the reference.

How are guests matched with hosts?

Following a satisfactory screening, the Hospitality Homes placement coordinator begins the process of matching the guest's needs to host "profiles," using information such as number of beds, flights of stairs, availability of parking, wheelchair access, and the presence of pets.

Once a list of potential hosts is compiled, the placement coordinator contacts hosts by phone or e-mail. If the timing or circumstances are not convenient, hosts should not hesitate to say "No." When a host accepts an opportunity, the placement coordinator contacts the guest, who is instructed to call the host directly to introduce himself/herself and confirm the arrangement.

What do guests pay for this service?

Hospitality Homes charges no fees. Instead, guests are encouraged to make donations to sustain the program.

Do hosts ever complain of troublesome guests?

This rarely happens because of our guest-screening process. However, if a host has any difficulties, he/she should contact the Hospitality Homes office immediately so that we can make other arrangements for the guest.

What if my guest has an accident?

All guests must sign a Liability Release when they arrive at a host home. In addition, hosts should check their homeowners' or renters' liability insurance coverage and inform their carriers that they are volunteering with Hospitality Homes. No guest has ever made a claim against the program or a host; however, it is always prudent to be cautious.