

Corning area 'comfort home' closer to reality

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(Photo: FILE PHOTO)



Jim Dugan, of Painted Post, died last year, but his family hopes his legacy will live on with a new "comfort care" home planned for the Corning area.

That project, dubbed "Bampa's House," (a nickname bestowed on Dugan by his grandchildren), is moving ahead with a gift of land for the home and thousands of dollars in donations.

Now the group behind the home that will offer an end-of-life care alternative to nursing homes is seeking additional funds to help build the momentum needed to make Bampa's House a reality.

"Our first happiness is we have our own 501c3, and what that means for us is so many more grants are available to us," said Dugan's sister, Pat Dugan. "The Corning Lions Club began helping us immediately after Jim died. They have been an immense support. Jim was a loyal member and was president before he became ill. Their foundation gave us \$15,000. Because we were able to raise \$100,000 they have applied for a Lions International matching grant for us. Because a couple of Corning Lions are on the national board, it's very promising."

The newly-created board of Bampa's House also has several local fundraisers in the works, including one April 27 at the Southeast Steuben County Library.

Jim Dugan was 68 when he succumbed after a four-year battle was cancer in February 2016.

He spent the final weeks of his life in a nursing home, even though his family felt the institutionalized environment wasn't the best option for him.



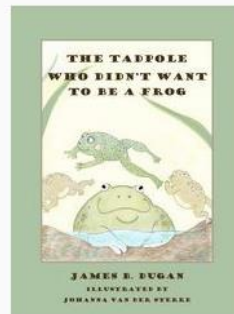
This is an artist's rendering of what Bampa's House might look like. (Photo: PROVIDED IMAGE)

Given his condition, staying home wasn't a viable choice either, and thus the idea for Bampa's House was born.

The home will be open to two patients at a time and will also offer amenities for their families. Volunteers will provide round-the-clock supervision, and CareFirst (formerly Southern Tier Hospice and Palliative Care) will bring in professional hospice services such as nursing care and counseling.

"We are absolutely thrilled with the work of the family," CareFirst Director of Innovation Robin Stawasz said after the project was announced. "What they went through and turned that around into helping others is awe-inspiring."

Jim Dugan, who majored in biology, wrote a children's book called "The Tadpole Who Didn't Want to be a Frog." The April 27 event will feature readings from the book and copies will also be for sale. Proceeds will support the Bampa's House project.



Copies of a children's book written by Jim Dugan will be available for sale at a fundraiser April 27 at the Southeast Steuben County Library. (Photo: PROVIDED IMAGE)

The Bampa's House board is also planning a "Pour & Pair" wine-tasting event April 30 at The Cellar on Market Street in Corning.

Future fundraising events will include a beer tasting May 6 at Carey's Brew House in Corning, a five-kilometer run and family walk Sept. 9 and a dinner in cooperation with the Corning Lions Club Oct. 7 at the Corning Country Club.

A donation of land in the Corning area will provide a location for Bampa's House. That location isn't being disclosed yet, but if plans fall into place, construction will hopefully start in late summer, Pat Dugan said.

About \$130,000 of the group's \$750,000 goal has been raised so far, with another \$135,000 in grants pending, she said.

"We need to build a house and to run the first year, so this is what we want in the bank. We need more support," Dugan said. "Since Corning doesn't have a comfort care home, we want them to have that choice. There's no charge to residents, and no reimbursement for Medicare. That's why we are doing all these fundraisers."

"Most of the care will be done by trained volunteers. We are still working with CareFirst to provide the skilled care. They are the decider of who would be coming to the house," she said. "If a person has three months or less to live, they would recommend our place to them. The care will be 24/7 and it's just comfortable and peaceful. We're trying to create that place."

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If you go

- The next fundraiser for Bampa's House will take place at 4 p.m. April 27 at the Southeast Steuben County Library, 300 Nasser Civic Center Plaza in Corning. The second Pour & Pair event is scheduled for 1 to 4 p.m. April 30 at The Cellar, 21 W. Market St. in Corning.
- For more information about upcoming events and plans for Bampa's House, go to bampashouse.org.