

Sam & Liz James Lead the Way to Bring Serenity House to Huntersville

By Suzanne Donati
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Huntersville, NC – Serenity House of Mooresville has been in operation for over 7 years, yet many people in the region still don't know much about it. Partly that's because people generally don't want to talk about their final days. "We live in a society that has moved to not being around dying people," said Founder's Campaign Chair Sam James. "Hospitals and nursing home settings hide death. Because of this, death has become so foreign to us – almost dirty." Although Serenity House is a place where people die, it's not about death – it's about ensuring that the final days are full of life.

"It is hard to imagine a community where a home like Serenity House would not be needed," said James who resides and owns his business, James Funeral Home, in Huntersville. "Even in a town with a top-rated hospital, a state-of-the-art hospice house, and vivacious churches and organizations seeking to meet the needs of the community, there is a gap in service. That gap exists for those who are dying without something – maybe it's the financial resources, or it's not having the support of family to provide caregiving. This house will meet a need in the town of Huntersville that nobody else is meeting."

Carolina Comfort Coalition, the 501 (c) (3) organization that operates North Carolina's first comfort care home, Serenity House, is currently renovating the second Serenity House location on Stumptown Road in Huntersville, NC. Serenity House of Huntersville is slated to open in May 2014 pending successful fundraising through the Serenity House of Huntersville Founder's Campaign.

The addition of a second comfort care home will allow more residents of Huntersville and the North Mecklenburg region to receive end-of-life care in a home environment. Serenity House is a place that provides comfort and peace for both residents and their families during the final days of life. Volunteers and staff provide round-the-clock care at no cost for a maximum stay of three months. Since opening the first Serenity House in Mooresville in 2007, care has been provided for over 160 people; however, more than 250 requests for service could not be accommodated due to a shortage of empty beds.

Like Serenity House of Mooresville, donations will be vital for the operation of the Huntersville house. "We work with every hospice program as a safety net for terminally-ill local residents," said executive director Cheryl Pletcher. "Our support comes only from the community – we receive no insurance reimbursement." The Serenity House of Huntersville Founder's Campaign has been launched to raise \$100,000 for the first year of operation. "An operation like Serenity House depends solely on the generosity of the community," James said. "The biggest challenge we face is fulfilling our financial needs; however, I am reminded that the generosity of our community has sustained Serenity House of Mooresville through the days of being hand to mouth, and undoubtedly the community will not only sustain the new home in Huntersville, but will lead it to become a flourishing ministry."

The community is invited to attend the Serenity House of Huntersville's Opening and Blessing on Sunday, May 18th from 3 to 5 pm. For more information, visit <http://www.carolinacomfortcoalition.org>.

Contact

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