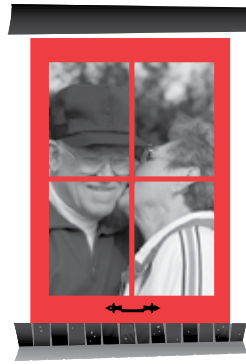


BRAVO!
2008



WINDOWS



ON THE LITTLE RED HOUSE
Vol. II, No. 2
SUMMER/FALL 2008

It's a Swing Thing!

The Be-Bop Spartans Swing into Spring Lake for Bravo! 2008

"In the Mood." "String of Pearls." "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy." These were among the many great tunes that underscored the 1940s, which was prime time for the generation of Americans we've come to call our "Greatest Generation."

They were the men and women who went to war and to work, heroes who saved the world while the Big Bands played. Their numbers are dwindling now. A precious few of them are still with us at The Little Red House. On **September 20, 2008**, we invite you to join us as we honor our greatest generation with **Bravo! 2008—It's a Swing Thing.**

For one night only, guests will relive the swing, swank, and sophistication of the Big Band Era. The Spring Lake Country Club ballroom will become "The White Orchid Supper Club and Lounge." After sipping cocktails and enjoying a fine dinner, you won't be able to stop your dancing feet as Michigan State University's world renowned Jazz Orchestra I, the "Be-Bop Spartans," fills the night with all your favorite Big Band numbers. Glenn Miller, Woody Herman, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Artie Shaw—they play them all, and just like at all the best supper clubs, there will be a "jazz singer" crooning along.

As our biggest annual fundraising event and the single largest source of revenue for our operations, "Bravo!" has truly become the one night that makes all our days here at The Little Red House possible. Executive Director Jody Herrelko and her Bravo! co-chair Sarah McDonald thought it was time to pull out all the stops. Said Jody, "Our guests at Bravo have been such faithful supporters in the past three years. We want to show our gratitude by creating a night they'll never forget." For some time, she had been thinking of a program with a big band theme, in honor of the participants of The Little Red House.

It was during a stay at The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island that Jody and husband Ed heard the Be-Bop Spartans for the first time. Awed by their performance, Jody enlisted the aid of Glen Miller, Director of Music for West Michigan Academy of Arts & Academics, and former Spring Lake High School band director. Glen and Jody wrote to Rodney Whitaker—Director of Jazz Studies at MSU and a legendary jazz musician and recording artist in his own right—and invited the Be-Bop Spartans to town. They accepted, and in addition to performing at Bravo! 2008 they will be conducting clinics with area high school musicians.

Bravo! 2008 sponsors (as of August 11):

Don and Cindy Anderson
Ken and Judy Betz
Dave and Mary Eagin
Ed and Jody Herrelko
Israel's Designs for Living
Whirlpool Foundation



The MSU Jazz Orchestra I, known as "The Be-Bop Spartans," will get Bravo! guests "in the mood" to dance.



Jody Herrelko and MSU's Director of Jazz Studies Rodney Whitaker discuss the Bravo! 2008 program.

continued on page 4



The View from My Window

By Jody Herrelko, Executive Director

Well, are you “in the mood” for some swing? I know I can’t wait until September 20. *Bravo!* 2008 is going to be spectacular, thanks to a very active Little Red House Board of Directors who are working hard to make it a night not to be missed. Once again, board member **Sarah McDonald** is my co-chair for the event. Together we met with Rodney Whitaker and wife Cookie at MSU in May and had a wonderful time planning the program with them. You’re going to love the Be-Bop Spartans!

Speaking of our terrific Board of Directors, in April **Don Anderson** brought the gavel down as President of the Board for the last time, having served the maximum six years provided in our by-laws. During his tenure, Don contributed both vision and direction as we developed into the vital, fiscally sound community nonprofit we have become. We shall miss Don, and we bid him farewell with the thanks of the grateful community he served so well. Board Member **Madonna Kramer** also completed her 6-year tenure on our board. Madonna served as president for three years, and her financial acumen helped us reach solid fiscal footing. She remains a good friend of The Little Red House and will always have our utmost regard and appreciation for all she accomplished here.

In June, we welcomed our former Secretary of the Board, **Nancy Ritchie**, to the President’s Chair. Nancy has been a board member for four years and is the Executive Director of Sanctuary at the Shore, formerly known as Shore Haven Living Center in Grand Haven. She brings unparalleled expertise in the field of care for the elderly to her role as Board President. Welcome Nancy. Board member **Lori DeMars-Olthoff** has graciously stepped into the Secretary slot in our slate of officers.



New to the Little Red House Board of Directors are (l-r) Sherrie Tamburello, M.D., Amy Florea, Gary Sherwood, and Marney Kloote. Not pictured: Budd Brink.

Several new members have joined our board. We are excited to welcome **Gary Sherwood**. Gary’s mother Barbara was a beloved participant at the Little Red House for several years until her death this past spring and we have much to learn from Gary’s experience as a caregiver.

We also welcome new board members **Budd Brink**, Vice President of Finance for Shape Corp.; **Amy Florea**, Area Planner for Senior Resources, our area agency on aging; **Sherrie Tamburello, M.D.**; and **Marney Kloote**, co-owner of J.E. Kloote Contracting, Inc. and a

long-time volunteer for The Little Red House. I am humbled by the skill, experience, and wisdom that the 14 individuals who comprise our board bring to The Little Red House. As dynamic as the past three years have been, I look forward to even more transformation and growth in the future with the guidance of this Board. Thank you one and all.

Thanks to the consummate planning and execution skills of Board Member **Dave Eagin** and former Board Member **Mary Eagin**, our annual “On the Green for Little Red” golf event was a great success. We were favored with a sunny day on May 19, and the greens were filled with golfers once again. After a day that included lunch, an 18-hole golf scramble with contests for special prizes, a reception, and an exciting golf ball drop, three lucky winners were in possession of cash prizes of \$1,000, \$400, and \$200 and The Little Red House received \$8,600 for our scholarship fund. Thank you, Dave and Mary for all your hard work—and thanks, as well, to all who contributed to the success of this popular event, as sponsors, golfers, volunteers, or by purchasing balls for the golf ball drop raffle.

continued on page 4

Rodney Whitaker and The Be-Bop Spartans are “Ambassadors of Jazz”

Growing up in Detroit, says Rodney Whitaker, he was a “diehard jazz fan.” He attended Wayne State University and studied double bass with Robert Gladstone, principal bass with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Whitaker’s talent has taken him around the world, playing and recording with such jazz greats as Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

In 1995, Michigan State University’s College of Music lured him back home to become a professor of double bass and, in 2001, Director of Jazz Studies. His international reputation as one of the world’s leading teachers and performers of double bass has helped him recruit world-class jazz musicians to be members of the jazz performance faculty, making it one of the fastest growing and best jazz programs in the country. He is the founder and artistic director of MSU’s “Professors of Jazz.” He has also served on the faculties of University of Michigan and Julliard Institute of Jazz and is a consultant with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the development of a jazz education department.

Whitaker’s life as a professor is no more settled than when he was touring as a performer. The Be-Bop Spartans toured five cities in Japan this summer and returned to Michigan in time to play at the International Jazz Festival in Detroit. 



LOVE LIVES ON IN GIFT TO



THE LITTLE RED HOUSE

Ken Ranta and Julie Smydra both grew up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula—Ken in Bruce Crossing and Julie in Ontonagan, but they didn't meet until years later, when both were living and working in Colorado. Julie was a manager with Xerox Corporation and Ken a high school teacher and coach when they were introduced by mutual friends—and a great romance began.

Ken and Julie were married, and the romance lasted for many years, through the birth of a daughter, Kyle, who grew up to become the youngest person ever accepted to University of Michigan Dental School. It lasted through a move to Michigan, where Ken became the Athletic Director for Grand Haven Area Public Schools and Julie continued working for Xerox Corporation, now from an office in her Michigan home.

By early this year, daughter Kyle was married, and working as a dentist in Chicago. Julie still worked for Xerox. Several years earlier Ken had left the A.D. post to devote himself to the work he loved best—teaching. Ken and Julie were still very much in love, and looking forward to a time in the near future when both would scale back their careers and just have fun—together.

It was not to be. On a visit to his beloved U.P. last spring, Ken Ranta's car went off the soft shoulder of a country road. And the community "down below" that knew and loved him reeled at the news of his death at only 57.



Grand Haven Area
community foundation
For good. For ever.

No one was more bereaved than Julie. Wishing to create a lasting legacy to Ken, Julie—along with her sister Margie Fett—visited Grand Haven Area Community Foundation just days after Ken's death. In the office of Holly Johnson, Development Director, Julie

asked for guidance. She wanted to direct the gifts given in Ken's memory to something meaningful. Holly told Julie about several funds already established, but nothing seemed to click. Then she told Julie about The Little Red House, and how it provided compassionate care for people with Alzheimer's disease, and respite for their caregivers.



Jody Herrelko and Julie Smydra pose behind The Little Red House bus in June.

For a moment, the grief on Julie's face became a smile. She explained that Ken and his family had cared for Ken's mother when she suffered from Alzheimer's disease, and they would have had great relief if the community where their mother lived had offered a place such as The Little Red House. "I knew right away that Ken would love this," said Julie. "It seemed like the perfect thing to do."



Ken Ranta

And so The Kenneth Ranta Memorial Fund for The Little Red House was established.


Holly Johnson explained, "This fund is a permanent endowment, governed by the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, and all gifts to it will grow in perpetuity. The Little Red House will have access to the income from the fund to use at its discretion."

Jody Herrelko, Executive Director, was overwhelmed when she heard the news. "Since The Little Red House began, the board of directors knew we would need to establish an endowment fund to provide for the future, but we never had any money we could call 'extra' to begin one. When we would receive gifts in memory or honor of one of our participants, the money sometimes had to be used to pay the bills."

She added, "The news of this gift came at an especially auspicious moment. Now we are on stronger financial footing, and we are planning for a future when we can serve even more of our neighbors who need us. This will help us achieve that goal."

Initial gifts to the fund in memory of Ken Ranta totaled \$2,500, which included the proceeds from the sale of tee shirts that Ken's students at Lakeshore Middle School designed. The shirts read "It's All Good," one of Ken's favorite sayings.

Other memorial gifts doubled the fund balance. In the future, any memorial gifts to The Little Red House will be placed in this fund, and the memory of each participant or friend will be preserved forever as the fund grows and the income from the fund helps The Little Red House serve this community, for good and for ever.

You can almost hear Ken saying, "Yep. It's all good." 



On June 11, Holly Johnson (left) Development Director of Grand Haven Area Community Foundation and Julie Smydra (center) presented a check for \$2,500 to Jody Herrelko to establish the Kenneth Ranta Fund for The Little Red House.

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Tickets for Bravo 2008—
“It’s a Swing Thing” are \$150 per person, which includes cocktail hour with martini bar, a fabulous, four-course dinner, and dancing till midnight. Sponsored tables for eight are available for \$2,500. And, because we want to share the opportunity to hear the Be-Bop Spartans with as many friends as possible, this year there will be a limited number of tickets available at \$50 each for those who would like to join us at 9:00 p.m. just for dancing. A cash bar will be available all evening, and guests are encouraged to wear formal attire: formal gowns or cocktail dresses for the ladies; tuxedos, white dinner jackets, or dark suits and ties for the gentlemen. For tickets to *Bravo!* call us at 846-5720. 

The View From My Window continued from page 2

As I have mentioned in this column often, there are many organizations in the community that partner with The Little Red House in our vital mission of compassionate care for vulnerable adults and respite for their caregivers. **Greater Ottawa County United Way** once again provided a generous grant for participant scholarships and transportation assistance. Recognizing the rising fuel costs we face, the community investment panel increased our grant this year, and we are inexpressibly grateful. As a small gesture of thanks, our staff and volunteers collected donations during our annual Senior Ice Cream Social on June 19, which we contributed to United Way. The work of our United Way touches one in four people in Ottawa County, and every day I get to see the good that comes from it.

Financial assistance isn’t the only way the community helps us. Hard work, skill, and sweat are poured into this place by many. Once again, the team from **Herman Miller**, coordinated by Kerry Davis, arrived on a sunny day for a “spring cleanup” in our yard and gardens. Unfortunately, the sun soon gave way to thunder, lightning, and wind, but these intrepid community servants persevered. Flowers and tomatoes were planted, beds were weeded, mulch was spread, grass was mowed, gutters were cleaned—even with rain delays. We so appreciate Herman Miller’s partnership with The Little Red House. We value them, their time, and their willingness to make this nonprofit organization “look good.”

So, don’t forget to wear your “string of pearls” and “I’ll be seeing you” for Bravo! 2008. 



Cheryl Johnston smiles while she plants.



The Herman Miller team sought shelter from the storm under The Little Red House awning, and were all smiles despite rain, wind, thunder and lightning.