

NEWS RELEASE

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Office of Communication & Outreach



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The Fisher House at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center Provides a Home Away from Home During Difficult Times

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Pictured in photo from left: Janice Lebron, NF/SGVHS Fisher House Manager, Clay Perdue and Kathleen Lebron-Wilson

GAINESVILLE, FL. Mother and daughter duo Kathleen and Janice Lebron are feeling blessed after a recent medical scare involving their father/husband.

91-year-old, Army Veteran, Jose Lebron was not feeling like himself when daughter Kathleen decided to bring him to the [Malcom Randall VA Medical Center](#) in Gainesville Florida - a mere two-hour drive from their home in Citrus Hills.

“My father was hearing metallic ringing noises, seemed really depressed, and just wasn’t acting like himself,” said Kathleen. “These were new symptoms and my mother, and I were beginning to become very concerned.”

Suspicious that the new symptoms were just now being brought on from the Veteran’s time spent in Korea, they decided to bring to the VA.

“We finally got him to agree to come and get some medical attention,” said Janice. “He is normally a healthy guy and really doesn’t need to go to the doctors. Thank goodness he actually listened to us and let us bring him here.”

After settling into the emergency room, doctors detected additional issues that resulted in the Veteran being admitted to the hospital.

“We knew that he had dementia, low blood pressure and that he felt weak, but we didn’t know about the atrial fibrillation,” said Kathleen. “I truly believe that if we would’ve brought him anywhere else, he might not be here with us today.”

As it began to get late, the mother and daughter decided to go downtown to find a hotel room to settle into for the night.

“There was a big event going on in Gainesville and we were striking out every place that we tried stay,” said Janice. “So, we decided to just come back to the hospital where we knew that we’d be safe and sleep in our car that was parked in the parking lot.”

When the two woke up the next morning, they were sore from sleeping in the cramped space so, they decided to head into the main hospital to charge their phones and find a comfortable place to sit until they could get an update from the doctors.

While waiting to hear some news, an employee approached them, asked about their situation, and directed them to the patient advocate’s office for additional assistance.

“Once NF/SGVHS, Patient Advocate, Misty Carter heard our story she reached out to Clay Perdue, NF/SGVHS Fisher House Manager to help us secure a place to stay,” said Kathleen. “We had never heard about the [Fisher House](#) before, but we were so relieved when we learned that we did not have to leave my dad at the hospital by himself and return to our home in Citrus Hills.”

Perdue assisted the family to their room where both Kathleen and Janice were able to take warm showers and get some rest.

“I still can’t believe how quickly Clay was able to accommodate us,” said Janice. “He gave us all of the comforts of home and we couldn’t have asked for more!”

Feeling welcomed, comforted, and valued the two say that they are blessed to be able to now call themselves Fisher House Alumni.

“Everything here has been so comfortable, immaculate, and well stocked. No details have been overlooked,” said Janice. “Clay and his team here at the Fisher House really do a remarkable job! These are characteristics that are so important to those of us who are dealing with their loved ones during a very vulnerable time.”

Having made so many new friends Kathleen says that coming together while going through a hard time must be what this house is all about.

“I think that we all have a story to tell. When we have the chance to sit in the kitchen and talk to each other, it becomes apparent that we all have more in common than we think,” said Kathleen.”

“Our house is set up to encourage a sense of community while giving Veteran’s loved one’s private respite. They are welcome to anything in the kitchen and are provided the opportunity to stay near their Veteran while he or she is undergoing care, free of charge,” said Perdue. “None of us really know each other at the start of someone’s stay with us, but we really do try to go above and beyond to connect and give all of our guests whatever it is that they need to make themselves comfortable until they are ready to check out.”

To learn more about the Fisher House at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, please visit: [Fisher House | VA North Florida/South Georgia Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#). For questions related to staying at the Fisher House or how you can get involved, email: vhanflqvfisherhouse2@va.gov.

About the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

NF/SGVHS is one of the nation’s leading VA healthcare systems employing more than 5,800 medical professionals and support staff dedicated to providing high quality care to Veterans residing throughout North Florida and South Georgia. The organization operates 14 facilities to include two medical centers located in Gainesville and Lake City, a domiciliary and clinics located throughout a 50-county service area.

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*"...to care for him who shall have borne the battle
and his widow, and his orphan..."*

- President Abraham Lincoln



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System

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