



Fisher House of Illinois: A Long Awaited Dream Comes True for DMS Pharmaceutical Group

What started out as a dream for DMS Pharmaceutical Group's Sam Lazich and Bill Anderson back in 2005, became a reality over this past Memorial Day weekend with a very special ceremony marking the official opening of the first Fisher House in Illinois. The new facility sits on the grounds of the Hines VA Hospital located 12 miles west of downtown Chicago in Hines, Illinois.

Sam Lazich, DMS Pharmaceutical president and Bill Anderson, DMS executive vice president, made the decision five years ago to team up with the Fisher House Foundation to bring a much needed Fisher House to the "Chicagoland" area. A large amount of funding would be needed to make the project happen, so the foundation challenged DMS to raise enough funds to help build the Fisher House at Hines VA Hospital, with those monies being matched by the foundation. Lazich and Anderson passionately took on the challenge. Through continu-

ous fundraisers, by July 2008, the two had raised enough money to make the Hines Fisher House a reality. Ground was broken in the fall of 2008 with completion in March 2010 and celebrated on May 29, 2010.

Along with DMS Pharmaceutical Group's Lazich and Anderson, many dignitaries were among the nearly 800 who witnessed the official dedication. Included were: Illinois Governor Pat Quinn; Senator Richard Durbin; Lieutenant General David H. Huntoon Jr., Director of the Army Staff; Tammy Duckworth, VA's Assistant Secretary for Public and



Getting ready to cut the ribbon are, from left: Ranger Jones, Lt. Gen. David Huntoon Jr., Sharon Heiman, Tammy Duckworth, Debbie Rickert, Ken Fisher, Bob Oberwetter, Sam Lazich, Holly Wright, Lisa Lanz, and David Coker.

Intergovernmental Affairs; Kenneth Fisher, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Fisher House Foundation; Dave Coker, President of the Fisher House Foundation; and Sharon Helman,



DMS Pharmaceutical Group along with four other organizations and an “anonymous donor” were honored with a bronze plaque that hangs in the foyer of the Hines Fisher House.

Director of the Hines VA Medical Center. CBS 2 Chicago’s Jay Levine emceed the ceremony.

Also present were a group of 40 motorcyclists from the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association (CVMA) and members of Operation Support Our Troops, IL

Since its opening in March, the \$6.2 million Hines Fisher House has served more than 75 families. The house has 20 bedrooms, a fully stocked kitchen and

several common living room and dining room areas for families to gather and offer each other support and friendship while their loved ones are hospitalized at Hines.

More information on the Fisher House program and a history of DMS Pharmaceutical Group’s involvement in the building of the Hines Fisher House can be found on the company’s Web site at www.dmspharma.com.

See **DMS** on page 48

Throughout the opening ceremonies and tour of the Illinois Fisher House many heart-felt, emotional comments were expressed by veterans, patients, and guests. The following is a selection from some of those comments.

“It is a proud day for the state of Illinois. I want you all to know that there are some very special people at the Hines VA Hospital who treat the heroes from our state who put their lives on the line for our country. Opening this Fisher House in Illinois is a dream in which I feel lucky to play just a small part.”
Illinois Governor Pat Quinn

“Ms. Duckworth is a true American hero. “As veterans, we are so thankful that Hines will have a Fisher House for the families of people like her. They deserve nothing but the best.”
Ryan Hennessey, CVMA member.

“Veterans and service members seeking care at Hines VA Hospital often travel as far as 200 miles to take advantage of the many specialty services we proudly provide. These veterans are often accompanied by their husbands, wives, children or parents. Offering them the beautiful accommodations in our Fisher House is nothing less than they deserve.”
Sharon Helman, Hines Director

“I was overwhelmed by the generosity and compassion that I felt every day that I stayed in the Fisher House. It really brought home to me how much our country appreciates the sacrifices of our military men and women.”
Ellie Whiteman, the daughter of a World War II POW Veteran and former resident of the Hines Fisher House.

“It really does feel like home away from home. Other families here, we hug one another, cry on each other’s shoulders.”
Carol Thomas, wife of patient who receives kidney dialysis

“Our mission was to give back to these heroes who have given so much to us.”

DMS President, Sam Lazich

“If this was not here, a lot of families would not be able to be with their loved ones. We welcome them. They get a beautiful facility and kitchen.”
Holly Wright, Fisher House Manager

“This house, as with all others, will honor the sacrifices of those who have served our nation’s veterans and the

world-class healthcare professionals to carry out that work.”
Ken Fisher, Fisher House Foundation Chairman

“We plan to come out and cook dinner for the residents of the house regularly and support them in any way we can. We consider it a true honor...”
Deb Rickert, president, Operation Support Our Troops, IL

“They need to focus on healing, and the idea that family is taken care of and the wonderful places of refuge make all the difference.”
Lt. Gen. David Huntoon Jr., U.S. Army

“This day is a dream come true for the many people who worked extraordinarily hard to make the Hines VA Fisher House a reality. This facility will be a tremendous comfort not only to family members, but to wounded service members who need their support.”
Dan Grant, director, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs

“The hospital saved my life. Fisher House taught me how to live again.”
Tammy Duckworth, VA Asst. Sec., Public and Intergovernmental Affairs.

SPECIAL REPORT



Sam Lazich, right, and Lt. Gen. David Huntoon Jr, greet one other in the well-appointed kitchen area.



Sam and Angie Lazich on the front porch of the Hines Fisher House.



DMS Pharmaceutical Group's Bill Anderson and Sam Lazich with Skokie VFW Bob Oberwetter, one of the many veterans who were present for the opening ceremonies.



Sam and Angie Lazich converse with Dr. Gerald Schutter, center, chief of the Blind Rehabilitation Center at Hines.



DMS' Sam Lazich is congratulated by Ken Fisher for the company's efforts in making the Hines Fisher House a reality. The inset photo shows the Fisher House Patriot Award presented to Lazich for DMS Pharmaceutical Group's support.