

August 17, 2017
San Francisco, California

Family House in San Francisco is mourning the loss of one of the organization's founders, Dr. Arthur Ablin. For over 35 years, Family House has served as a home away from home and a pediatric guesthouse for families of children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses being treated at UCSF Children's Hospital. Now located in San Francisco's Mission Bay neighborhood, Family House has served over 40,000 children since the organization's founding in 1981.

Dr. Ablin was Professor Emeritus at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, where he served as Chief of Pediatric Oncology and was a leader in his field. Dr. Ablin was both a general pediatrician and pediatric oncologist who treated scores of young patients since the 1950s. Among his many good works is the creation of Family House that was created because of his vision and commitment to all families whose children face cancer and other life-threatening diseases.

Out of a desire to provide family-centered care in partnership with UCSF, Dr. Ablin's vision was to provide free housing and basic needs for the families of seriously ill young patients. The idea for Family House germinated in the 1970's as UCSF Medical Center began pioneering pediatric cancer research and treatments. Many children with life-threatening illnesses could not be cared for in their own communities and would need travel to San Francisco for care. The influx of young patients from all over the country and the world whose families had nowhere to stay forced many to sleep on the hospital floor, in waiting room chairs, or even in their cars.

"Family House was set up as cost-free place for families to stay, but also as a center based very much on communal experience, so these families could share with each other what they were going through," Dr. Ablin said.

In 1981, Dr. Ablin and others raised nearly \$500,000 to buy housing from the Mormon Church that sat adjacent to the UCSF Children's Hospital in San Francisco's Sunset neighborhood. With the opening of the new Nancy and Stephen Grand Family House in 2016 in Mission Bay, Dr. Ablin and his wife Debbie have ensured that families will always have a home to turn to when patients need medical attention in San Francisco.

While Dr. Ablin was a highly regarded physician and internationally sought-after speaker on the topic of pediatric hematology, his compassion and unwavering dedication to children and families at Family House for the past 36 years has produced a model of community that is celebrated this day and every day of the year. Those of us who had the unbelievable pleasure of working with Dr. Ablin since Family House was founded 36 years ago know that his talent, passion, wisdom, humor, and loving spirit infuse every aspect of our organization and the work we do for kids and families. Dr. Ablin's inherent talent for nurturing what is best in us will live on as we are inspired by his values and humanity.

At Dr. Ablin's request there will be a memorial service at the Nancy and Stephen Grand Family House at 540 Mission Bay Blvd North at 3rd Street on Wednesday, November 1.