



When I was approached by John, the Night Manager at Almost Home, to be a part of the Almost Home Fall Campaign, I could not have thought of a better way to express our gratitude and thanks to all the individuals who have made it possible for my family and other families just like ours to have a warm, safe, clean and friendly place to stay while our children receive medical treatment.

On June 5, 2009 our lives were drastically changed. Our 2 year old daughter was diagnosed with leukemia. Not only were we heartbroken by this news, but we knew that along with the blow there were going to be many changes in our lives. I immediately took a leave of absence from work so I could be by Lexis' side so together we could battle this horrible disease. Now we are a one income family. How were we going to continue to provide a home and all the necessities for our daughter? We still have a mortgage to pay, and bills, new driving expenses, long distance phone bills, etc. My husband would also love to stay in Kingston all the time to support our daughter, but the hospital does not provide accommodation for both parents. Besides, he has a new far more senior job now, not only so that he can be Lexis' biggest support, but also to be the lone provider for our family.

My husband Keely has driven back and forth to Kingston after work in Cramahe Township to be with us during Lexis' inpatient chemotherapy treatments. We were very fortunate to learn about Almost Home. Almost Home allows families to stay close to the hospital at more than reasonable rates and provides all the amenities of hotel accommodations plus kitchen facilities and support from staff, volunteers, and other families staying there. Staying at Almost Home provides relief from the financial burden that comes with coping with family illness and makes the long drive back and forth to our home unnecessary.

We have been very fortunate to have Lexis' stays funded by the Almost Home Kimmy Fund. This fund was established by Reg and Brenda Taylor in memory of their daughter Kim. Its mission is "to ensure that families of children being treated for cancer can stay together through the journey, maintaining as much normality as possible

I remember during one long stay at the hospital when Lexis was granted an overnight pass. My husband prepared us a home cooked meal, we used the laundry facilities and were able to spend the night together as a family – it felt so good to be together – we felt normal again.



The type of leukemia my daughter has requires some long and aggressive treatments; infections are inevitable too. We have had many long inpatient stays as well as day appointments. We often stay at Almost Home the night before a big appointment since it is a more manageable adjustment for a 2 year old, as we can have up to 3 appointments a week or as few as 1 appointment a week.

The staff at Almost Home is an amazing group of people, always courteous, supportive, and hospitable. My daughter has come to know and love many of the volunteers there. Lexis feels at home at Almost home whether she is watching TV, reading books in the family room, playing with the dolls and blocks in the toy room, helping launder clothing, assisting us to prepare a meal in the kitchen or walking into the office to chat with whoever is there, as she knows she is welcome to do. We have all felt very welcome at Almost Home.

We hope that by hearing our story people will see how much good is provided by Almost Home. Having a sick child is emotionally devastating, physically tiring, and can be financially stressful. Nothing is more important than your child and the health of your child. No one is ever prepared to have to face a challenge like this. We never dreamed that something like this would happen to us. Lexis' illness has made us more aware that we are not invincible and we are most thankful for these charities that have helped enormously.

I hope everyone will see the importance of supporting such a worthy cause.

We would like to thank Reg and Brenda Taylor of the Kimmy Fund, and John, Nancy, Jennifer, Mavis, Bev, and all the other volunteers of Almost Home for the gift you have blessed us with. Thank You for helping to make our journey to recovery a more positive one.

Our sincere thanks,

Kimberly, Keeley and Lexis Biron

