

AU dedicates 'Joel's House'

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Maybe chief executive officers "aren't supposed to cry," but Joel Moskowitz, a member of Alfred University's Class of 1961 and a member of the AU board of trustees, clearly had tears in his eyes and so did many in the audience as the University dedicated "Joel's House" to Moskowitz and his wife, Ann. Ann and Joel Moskowitz, who is founder and still president and CEO of Ceradyne, Inc., were supposed to be in Alfred last October for the dedication. Instead, Joel Moskowitz was undergoing treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Responding to notes from the residents of Joel's House, Moskowitz wrote to them, "thank you so much for the warm notes I read every one of them and my eyes filled with tears. CEO's of \$300-million companies are not supposed to cry," but he did, he told the 22 AU students who made Joel's House their home for the 2004-2005 academic year. His cancer, he told the students in his letter, "is both treatable and curable and I hope to visit with all of you in May." Now considered to be cancer-free, Joel Moskowitz kept that pledge this past weekend, when he and Ann were able to make their first visit to the home they helped to create. The former Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity house, although occupied, still was not finished in May 2002 when the Board of Trustees made what Chairman Robert McComsey called "a painful decision for many of us," to phase out fraternities and sororities. Because the University had co-signed on the mortgage, "when the fraternity went out of business, we found ourselves owning a house that wasn't complete and still needed a great deal of work." Joel and Ann Moskowitz stepped in with the funds needed to complete the house, transforming it into a residence for 22 AU students, all of whom were dedicated, in one way or another, to serving their community. This year, the residents were members of the AU Rescue Squad, Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, the Alfred chapter of Habitat for Humanity, and WALF Radio. As trustees and guests tour the Joel's House, "what you won't see - but will feel - is the spirit that grew in Joel's House, as residents became friends, and then almost family," said McComsey. "That's important. When we talk to our students, one thing they say about Alfred University is how much they feel at home and grow to love this community in which they live. Places like Joel's House intensify those connections that not only connect them to each other, but to Alfred University, through the bonds of friendship." Residents of the house, represented by senior Devin Anderman, quoted James Barrie as saying, "Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." Ann and Joel, please know that every day we have lived here over the past 10 months has been full of your sunshine and your shared love of Alfred," Anderman told the Moskowitzes as she presented them with a scrapbook of photos and notes that the residents have created over the past year. "Our hope is that within (the scrapbook), you will see how truly blessed and happy we have been to live here," she said. Their hopes for the house have been fulfilled, said Ann Moskowitz. The first name proposed was "Moskowitz Hall," but Ann Moskowitz said she rejected the name as not reflecting the warmth and homey feeling they wanted. Joel's House is the perfect name, Ann Moskowitz said, "because Joel's heart is here at Alfred, and we wanted people to think of it as a home, not a hall." She said the notes, phone calls and e-mails they received from trustees, faculty, staff and students while Joel was undergoing treatment "really made a difference. You really added sunshine to our lives."