NEW CITY — As an emergency-room nurse, Piedad Dingle knows that she needs to be ready for anything, but there was no way she could have anticipated the telephone call she got while on duty early Monday morning.

The first call was from an ambulance corps telling her to get the emergency room at Good Samaritan Hospital ready for six victims of a house fire in New City.

The second was from a paramedic she knew with news that almost made her fall to the floor: the fire victims were her own family.

Her husband, who is paralyzed, their four children and her daughter's boyfriend were all injured when their Lake Lucille home in north New City went up in flames early Monday morning.

"We lost everything, but each other," Dingle said Friday as she sat in the lobby of the Suffern hospital.

"Once they came in the ambulance and I saw them, I knew they were going to be OK," she said.

Her husband, Rafael Almonte, 53, is still recovering at Good Samaritan. Dingle and the couple's four children ranging in age from 18-23, are living temporarily in a hotel.

The fire in the small home they rented was the latest in a run of bad luck for the family.

Almonte fell from a ladder at the couple's home five years ago, breaking his spine and leaving him paralyzed. Soon after, the family lost their Spring Valley home due to foreclosure.

Their oldest son, Rafael, who has special needs, lost his job in the produce department when the Pathmark in Monsey closed last month.

Dingle, who has worked at Good Samaritan for 10 years, also was working extra shifts in the emergency room at Nyack Hospital to pay the family's expenses and college tuition for her two daughters.

"I was trying to make ends meet," she said.
Philippines and she has no one nearby to help.

Many nurses and emergency medical workers throughout Rockland know Dingle, who goes by the name Pie, and are rallying to help.

"It's a terrible situation," said Neil Marcus, a volunteer with the Spring Hill and Haverstraw ambulance corps. "Especially with her husband being paralyzed."

He and others are planning a fundraiser for the family at 8 p.m. Nov. 18 at Shamrock Hotel Restaurant and Bar in Suffern.

The family's biggest immediate need is for rental housing that is handicapped accessible. The American Red Cross and other agencies are trying to help them find housing.

"I hope we find something soon," Dingle said. "I don't know what is going to happen to us after we leave the hotel."

How to help

Donations for Piedad Dingle and her family can be sent to Clare Brady, senior vice president, mission, Bon Secours Charity Health System, Good Samaritan Hospital, 255 Lafayette Ave., Suffern, NY 10901.

If you go

What: Fundraiser for Piedad Dingle and her family

When: 8 p.m. Nov. 18
Where: Shamrock Hotel Restaurant and Bar, 84 Orange Ave., Suffern.
Cost: $25.