

Circles of Care

Fall 2018 Newsletter Vol. 25 No. 2

HARBOR
HOSPICE

Your Journey. Your Terms. Our Expertise.



Marilyn Sondy and Harbor Hospice social worker Pamela Wingard, LMSW

From her heart and her experience, Marilyn Sondy says,

“Don’t wait to call Hospice!”

by Susan Newhof

“My very dear friend, Mickey, was receiving hospice care,” remembers Marilyn Sondy, “and I saw how much it helped her and her family.”

Two years later, Marilyn was diagnosed with cancer, which, she says, “...blew me away.”

She was offered treatments, which she turned down. When her medical team offered to arrange hospice care for her, she turned that down, too. She told them she wasn’t ready. A short while later, Mickey’s daughter brought Holy Communion to Marilyn at her house.

“She had been through this with her mother, and she told me to call Hospice,” Marilyn recalls. “She told me not to wait. She said they want to get to know you and your family before a crisis occurs.”

The next Monday morning, Marilyn called Harbor Hospice. It was a call that changed her life and the lives of her children, too.

“It has been wonderful support for all of us,” she says with enthusiasm. Marilyn feels *terrific* on this particular morning. She has just returned from picking up pizzas at Prince of Peace Church. It is a regular fundraiser, and she tries not to miss it.

“Things are going very well, and the Harbor Hospice staff has been on top of everything as it came up,” Marilyn explains. “They recognized when I needed a change in medications. They understand where I’m coming from...my frustrations and when I need to talk. They listen to me, and they reassure me that I need to listen to my body, to rest when that’s what my body is telling me I need to do.”



They even came up with a solution to Marilyn’s concern for cleaning up her beautiful milkweed garden, whose blossoms host hundreds of butterflies every summer.

“The folks at Harbor Hospice found a volunteer to help me,” she says, calling it a *blessing*. “And they helped me with the process of getting a handicap parking permit. Those kinds of things really take a load off me.” Marilyn also wrote a

warm and revealing memoir of her life, with help from a Harbor Hospice volunteer.

Marilyn is thrilled that Harbor Hospice has helped her children, too, and will support them through their grief and loss. And she chuckles at the way the good news about hospice care spreads.

“My daughter even told a friend of hers that they need to call Hospice to help support her parents!” she says.

Much of Marilyn’s life has been filled with service to others. Her voice trails off when she explains that she can’t use her gifts to help others anymore. That is one reason why she offered to tell her story of how much hospice care has helped her and her family. She has an important message, and it’s her *gift* to everyone who reads this.

“I have the prayers of hundreds of friends and church people,” she says, now several months after her diagnosis. “But I know that all the prayers on earth won’t keep you on earth forever. We have Harbor Hospice to help us. Don’t wait to call.”

“The Hospice staff recognized when I needed a change in medications. They understand where I’m coming from...my frustrations and when I need to talk. They listen to me, and they reassure me...”





Walking Alongside You

Lisa Cummins, President/CEO

During the past decade, we recognized a tremendous need for a continuum of care that begins by managing the symptoms of serious illnesses and medical conditions, and the side effects of treatments.

Palliative care has emerged as that new specialty. Our palliative care team works in partnership alongside a patient's primary physician to help improve such things as loss of appetite, constipation, breathing difficulties and, of course, pain, all with the goal of improving the quality of the patient's life.

And we know that when we can make life easier and better for a patient, we make it easier and better for the patient's family, too.

If the time comes that a patient is ready to discontinue treatment for their illness, or if treatments stop working, the patient can make a seamless transition into hospice care.

In this newsletter, you'll learn more about palliative care and how it helps. You'll also get an update on the work we're doing at the Leila & Cyrus Poppen Hospice Residence to keep it fresh and welcoming. And if you saw the cover story, you've already met our newest ambassador for hospice care whose message to anyone who might be thinking about calling Harbor Hospice is, "Don't wait!"

We're ready whenever you need us.



Palliative Care—A partnership for the right support at the right time

Harbor Palliative Care is expanding services, and we're excited to share with you how this relatively new and specialized field of medicine is helping patients.

Palliative care focuses on improving the quality of a patient's life by providing relief from the symptoms and side effects of serious illnesses, chronic diseases and medical treatments. Our team of specialists, headed by Dr. Gerald Harriman, works in partnership with the patient and the patient's doctor to address everything from depression, fatigue and shortness of breath to anxiety, nausea and pain that the patient is experiencing.

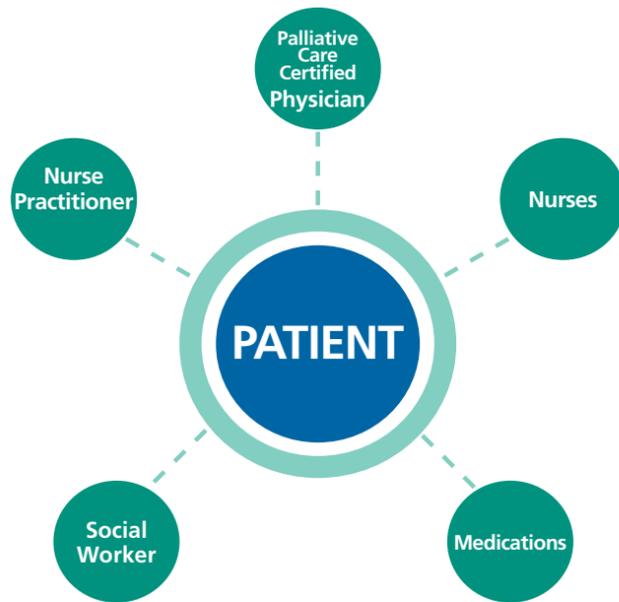
We provide an extra layer of support to help patients feel better, and if they wish, they can continue to receive aggressive treatments for their medical condition while receiving palliative care.

This fall, we added a social worker and another nurse practitioner to the Harbor Palliative Care team.

"We'll be able to spend more time with our patients and get to know them better," explains Dr. Harriman. "That will help us more fully evaluate their needs and offer resources that may be worthwhile for them."

At the same time, Dr. Harriman is working with the medical community to help them recognize patients who will benefit from palliative care.

Dr. Kelly Parling-Lynch, a medical oncologist at the Johnson Cancer Center in Muskegon has observed first-hand how palliative care helps her patients.



"Patients are often worried and anxious when they are undergoing treatment for a serious illness," she explains. "With palliative care, they seem calmer, less anxious, and more comfortable both physically and emotionally."

Referrals for palliative care are usually made by the patient's doctor, but a patient or family member can initiate a call to Harbor Palliative Care, too. Our palliative care team will contact the doctor and take it from there.

"Hospitals and doctors are so busy," says Dr. Harriman. "They need help managing their patients' care. By working as a team with the patient's doctor, we offer another tool to help the patient feel better, live better, and live longer."

Do you have questions about palliative care? Call us at 231-722.0382 or visit EmbraceTheTime.org





These are the rooms at the Poppen Hospice Residence prior to their upcoming makeover.



“The Poppen is such an open, private, peaceful place”

—Marilyn Rottschafer

Phase Two refresh will begin early next year

It has been fourteen years since we cut the ceremonial ribbon and began welcoming patients and their visitors to the Leila and Cyrus Poppen Hospice Residence in Muskegon! Since that long-awaited day, approximately 3,500 men and women seeking skilled, individualized end-of-life care have chosen the Poppen.

As with any home that is well loved and well used, it came time to update furnishings and incorporate new items designed to increase the comfort and safety of our residents. Thanks to many of you, Phase One of the Poppen refresh was launched and will be completed by the end of this year.

We are eager to share with you that new wider, longer beds have been installed for each resident. They provide plenty of room to snuggle with a beloved spouse, a giggly child, and even a cherished pet. New over-the-bed tables make mealtimes easy for residents and are equally handy for writing notes, doing a puzzle or sharing coffee with a friend. Comfy recliners and sofa sleepers have been ordered so family members can continue to sleep overnight right in the room with their loved one.

Marilyn Rottschafer was a chaplain at the Poppen when doctors told her nothing more could be done for her ailing husband, Raymond Andriese. She asked that he be moved from the hospital to the Poppen, and before nightfall, he was comfortably settled in.

“The Poppen was such a peaceful place for him,” she remembers, “...so different from the busy hospital setting. We loved the large private room and the big windows so he could see outside. Within 48 hours, Raymond had no more pain. We were able to have a wonderful family Thanksgiving there. A few days later a group of good friends came to visit, and they laughed and told stories and had a great time together. Raymond fell asleep a short while later and died peacefully.”

Now, we’re embarking on Phase Two at the Poppen. During the next year, we want to

give all the walls a facelift, paint the patients’ rooms and common areas, and brighten the lobby with both paint and new furniture so the Poppen will feel as fresh and inviting as it did when we opened.

The work will be carried out so that everything our patients tell us they love about the Poppen—the specialized care, privacy, and plenty of room for gathering with family and friends—can continue without interruption.

To bring the Poppen up to date and maintain the high standards we set when we first envisioned this much-needed residence, we will raise \$50,000. And we plan to complete the work by the end of 2019.

The Poppen fills a critical need in West Michigan for individuals who are nearing the end of their life and who are not able to remain in their homes. And at the Poppen, patients experience our unique blend of progressive, individualized, round-the-clock care regardless of their ability to pay.

Please consider partnering with us again. When you support our work, you support the hundreds of families who turn to us for help each year, and who find the peace and comfort they hope for at the Poppen Residence.

Thank you for your generosity.



Thank You Corporate Partners



Rob Johnson
Owner of Cofessco Fire Protection LLC

"We are honored to be able to support Harbor Hospice as they provide care in our community. Donating fire extinguishers for their home care patients helps to protect the employees and the patients."



Jason and Randilynn Talsma
Owners of Blended Furniture Market

"Coping with grief is one of the hardest things a person has to deal with. Having an organization, staff, and volunteers who love so strongly is a blessing to our community. Thank you Harbor Hospice!"



"The Harbor Hospice Foundation Corporate Partner Program signifies a meaningful commitment to our mission as corporations and organizations demonstrate philanthropy by giving, advocating and volunteering with true passion. We are grateful for their support as we assist those who are facing end of life issues."

–Ammy Seymour
Director of Development
Harbor Hospice Foundation



Shape Corp. Veterans Group volunteered for the Poppen mulch project.



Our Corporate Partners—thank you for your continued support



Welcome to our new members of the Harbor Hospice Board of Directors



Kim Maguire
VP Patient Care Services & Chief Nursing Officer
Mercy Health

"As a lifelong resident of Muskegon, I choose to give back to the community by serving. I want to lend whatever skills, knowledge, and expertise I have to an agency that models the best that humankind has to offer making a positive impact on our family, neighbors and friends. I can't think of an organization better than Harbor Hospice that would allow me to do that."



Patrick Brown
Vice President of Finance
Trinity Health At Home

"My first personal experience with Hospice was when one of my neighbors in the town I grew up in was diagnosed with a recurrence of her cancer. I was new to the health care field, not very knowledgeable about Hospice, and went to visit her just to provide support to the family. It was evident to me that she wanted something other than the intensive treatment that the physicians were planning, and I helped guide her to Hospice. The family valued their month long hospice experience; friends and relatives would come by and

it brought such joy to our neighbor, it's something I remember now, even after some 20 years have passed.

I consider myself incredibly fortunate to be a member of the Harbor Hospice Board of Directors; as a member of the Mercy Health Home Care team, I know firsthand the excellent care that Harbor Hospice provides to the community. I'm hoping that my presence on the Board will bring value to Harbor Hospice; I know that I will learn much from my fellow Board members and plan to share what I learn with my colleagues."

Spring 2019 Volunteer Trainings

**Basic Orientation Training
Wednesday**

May 15 9:00 am
to
4:00 pm

**Patient Care Training (2nd Step)
Wednesday**

May 29 9:00 am
to
3:00 pm

There are several steps prior to basic orientation so please contact us for more information.

Phone: 231.728.3442 or 1.800.497.9559

Email: info@HarborHospiceMI.org

Website: HarborHospiceMI.org



Congratulations to our 2017 Volunteer of the Year

"Simply stated, I receive much, much more from my volunteer work with Harbor Hospice than I give. I feel honored!"

—Jim Kenny, Harbor Hospice Volunteer since February 2014

**Thank you to all our hospice volunteers,
you truly are an essential part of our hospice team!**



Jim Kenny and Paula Poel, Harbor Hospice Volunteer Coordinator



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Look for the latest edition of *Harbor Hospice Touching Lives* magazine in your physician's office. Within its cover, you will find national story, *7 Ways to Celebrate Life*, as well as local articles *Thanks to palliative care*, and *Getting through grief... with a little help from your friends*.

If you would like copies for your church, organization or business, please email or call us today.

HARBOR HOSPICE

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The Bob & Merle Scolnik HEALING CENTER

Tips for Coping through the Holidays

If you don't know where to start

- **It's impossible to know exactly how you'll feel.** Take care of your health, get adequate sleep, and find ways to be active.
- **Approach the holidays with curiosity rather than expectancy.** It may surprise you how you cope with important days. There is no right or wrong way.

If it all seems too overwhelming

- **Set limits.** Only do things that are important to you.
- **Avoid overdoing it.** Sometimes we keep busy to stay distracted from pain. Remember pain in grief serves a purpose.
- **Recruit help.** Be kind to yourself and allow loved ones to help.

If you're worried about facing others

- **Be prepared with a canned answer.** "I'm doing OK" or "some days are better than others" is completely acceptable.
- **Don't be afraid to cry in public.** Surround yourself with people who are good listeners, people who will be understanding.
- **Prepare an exit strategy.** Only commit to certain times after events begin. Create a reason to leave if you need to, even to go home.

Facing the years ahead

- **What you choose to do the first year can always change.** Experiment with new family rituals. There are many ways to honor your loved one on special days.

