

Circles of Care

Spring/Summer 2019 Newsletter Vol. 26 No. 1

A Chaplain's touch:



soothing fears,
mending relationships,
healing hearts



Curtis Freed's warm smile and gentle handshake let you know he is someone you can trust. Without saying a word, he conveys "Hello, friend. How can I help?"

As a chaplain for Harbor Hospice, Curtis shares that warmth with patients and families every day as he helps them cope with their complex feelings of grief and loss, fear

and anger, joy and sadness—everything that bubbles up when someone is close to dying.

"My role is to inspire hope and help people heal relationships," he explains. "At the end of our life, it doesn't matter what we accomplished, what we did or didn't do. It is the people around us who count, and it's important that families have a sense of peace with each other, that nothing is left unsaid."

"No one teaches us what to do when someone we love is dying," he adds. "I help patients and family members get to the point where they feel they did everything and said everything they could."

To make those conversations easier, Curtis keeps a small card handy that contains the four phrases he believes matter most for us to say: Please forgive me. I forgive you. Thank you. I love you. Reconciliation, he says, can be a lot simpler than we think. Sometimes



Marilyn Rottshafer, retired Harbor Hospice Chaplain

Please forgive me.
I forgive you.
Thank you.
I love you.



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it's as easy as a patient being able to say, "I'm going to be OK. You don't need to worry about me." That can be a huge gift of comfort to a family.

Curtis offers his support to everyone—from those who are deeply religious, whatever their devotion may be, to those who do not have faith, and the many whose varied beliefs fall somewhere in the middle. His only agenda, he says, is to befriend them, to meet them where they are, and to help them find peace.

"When I am with them, in their home, their hospital room or wherever they are, I am on their sacred ground," says Curtis. "I connect to them by coming to understand what is most valuable to them."

One patient Curtis remembers fondly was a loner, estranged from several family members and not interested in talking about death or God. But he loved nature, and to Curtis's delight, the man taught him how to attract orioles to his backyard.

"He had a generous heart, and that all came out in our conversations," Curtis recalls. "He needed a friend, and I could be there for him."

Marilyn Rottshafer happily remembers her 15 years working as a chaplain with Harbor Hospice.

"I listened to patients," she says. "Listening is a huge part of helping those who are dying. Listening to their needs and fears and encouraging them to talk about their lives often makes it possible for them to share their thoughts about anything they feel is unsettling or unresolved. It can help to have a chaplain wade in a bit so they can let it out and let it go."

Marilyn often sang songs and hymns to patients, who lovingly nicknamed her the Singing Chaplain, and she recorded some of her favorite tunes on a CD titled Songs for the Winter of our Life. Both Marilyn and Curtis recall tender moments when they performed marriage ceremonies and baptisms, served communion and delivered eulogies at the request of their hospice patients and families.

Training to be a chaplain is rigorous and demanding, and it prepared Marilyn and Curtis for challenging work they love—"soothing fears, mending relationships, and healing hearts."

The Timeliness of Hospice

Ask anyone what they think of hospice care and they'll probably smile and talk about what a great program it is. The concept is familiar to most people now, yet most patients are in our care an average of only two weeks. Patients wait to call us, and that means we have little time to do all we can to support them.



Lisa Cummins, President/CEO

Years ago, when my partner Greg was undergoing treatment for cancer, he lost his taste for food. He also had difficulty swallowing because of sores in his mouth caused by chemotherapy. On top of all the issues he faced with the cancer itself, the cancer treatments

dealt additional blows to the quality of his life and of our life together.

Within two weeks of being in hospice care, Greg's mouth healed, and his appetite returned along with his ability to swallow. He could eat and appreciate food again, and we were able to go out to dinner again—something we had always enjoyed. He could travel again, and he got to take out his racecar again!

We shared so many wonderful moments together in those last months of his life that never would have happened if he had continued the treatment that was not making him better and had been in constant discomfort *because of treatment until he died.*

At Harbor Hospice, we know the decision to explore hospice care can seem daunting. That is why our nurses are happy for the opportunity to come talk to a patient considering it. Often, patients and family members are not familiar with *all we do*, and how much we can help improve the quality of a patient's life in the time they have remaining. The sooner we are involved, the more ways we can help.

For starters, our focus is always the patient—what they need, what they want, and what matters most to them.

In the beginning, our support can be as little as managing medications. That means patients and family members no longer have to deal with the stress of remembering the pill schedule and making sure prescriptions are refilled and picked up on time. We take care of that. When a patient needs something—supplies, meds, equipment, spiritual support, a listening ear—we make sure they get it.

When a patient's condition changes, if they begin to experience pain or other issues, one call to Harbor Hospice brings a nurse to evaluate the patient's needs and address them quickly. Patients don't have to leave their home, where ever they call home. We go to them.

Instead of being round-the-clock caretakers, family members can return to their familiar role of round-the-clock daughter or son, spouse or partner. And when their loved one passes, we continue to walk alongside them to help them manage their grief and the often overwhelming feelings of loss.

If you think you or someone you love might be ready for Hospice care, or you just want to learn more, call us and let us share with you all we can do for you. Let us help you begin the conversation.



The Bob & Merle Scolnik HEALING CENTER

Grief doesn't care if you're male or female, where you were born, or how much money you make. It pays no attention to your age or education. It can hit you at any time of day or year, and it doesn't always strike immediately after you lose someone you love. In fact, it can take months or even years for grief to set in, and a new loss can trigger unresolved feelings from years earlier.

At Harbor Hospice, we understand grief, and we're here to listen and support. Our Bob and Merle Scolnik Healing Center provides a safe, welcoming place for those who are struggling with grief, where they can unpack their story *the way they need to*, whether it trickles out in tiny pieces or pours forth all at once.

Caring licensed professionals offer individual and group counseling. They are also available to talk by phone. And we have meaningful reading materials that can help those who prefer to deal with their grief privately.

Three ongoing gatherings are held at the Scolnik Healing Center in the Fricano Building in Muskegon. They are open and FREE to everyone. Drop-ins are always welcome!

S.O.L.O.S.

S.O.L.O.S. is for adults who have lost a spouse or partner. It meets every Thursday at 10 am.

GRIEF HEALING

Grief Healing welcomes anyone struggling with a death. It meets every Monday at 6 pm.

MOMS TOGETHER

Moms Together works with women who have lost a child or grandchild. Meetings are held on the last Saturday of every month at 9 am.

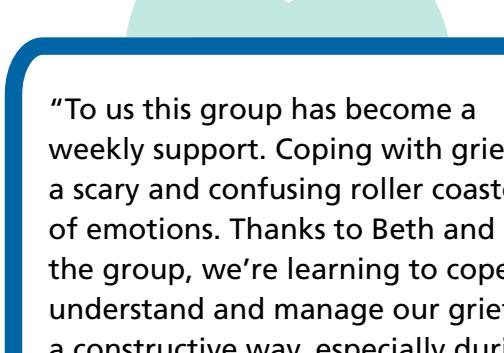
In addition, we offer special support programs during the holidays, intensive multi-week sessions, and support for those who are grieving the death of a pet. Each fall, we hold a moving Community Remembrance service to honor our patients, and we invite you to attend.

Please call Harbor Hospice for more information. Let us know how we can help.



"My first time coming to this support group was so painful, but now I feel like it is a lifeline for me. I feel validated in my journey of grief and no one understands me more."

—Colette Stevenson
Moms Together Grief Support Group



"To us this group has become a weekly support. Coping with grief is a scary and confusing roller coaster of emotions. Thanks to Beth and the group, we're learning to cope, understand and manage our grief in a constructive way, especially during the holidays."

—Tony & Juan Gallegos
father & son
Grief Healing Support Group



"I can talk about anything related to the loss of my husband and father, and never feel judged. We care about one another, and we don't tire of hearing one another's experiences. The facilitators are wonderful professionals who offer an unlimited supply of caring words, helpful suggestions and resources."

—Teresa Taylor-Williams
S.O.L.O.S Grief Support Group

The Healing Power of Grief Support

Jeanette Ogreen remembers the unimaginable shock when her son died.

"I did not think I would make it through my loss," she says now, recalling the terrible night when 21-year-old Gary Lee was caught in a hail of gunfire, the unintended victim of someone he did not know, who showed up at a party with a loaded weapon and a score to settle.

Trying to find ways to survive her overwhelming sadness, Jeanette began meeting with grief counselor Beth Bolthouse, who was working with other mothers also mourning their children. When one woman asked if she might be able to meet someone else who had lost a child, Beth invited all of them to gather together. With gentle guidance from Beth, they shared their stories of sons and daughters who died too young and often unexpectedly. Together, they found ways to remember and honor their children. They shared a unique understanding of each other's pain, and in giving each other support, they no longer felt so alone.

"I can honestly say I have no idea where I would be if not for Harbor Hospice and Beth Bolthouse," recalls Jeanette, who attended those early meetings.

Today, the group is called Moms Together. It meets monthly at the Bob and Merle Scolnik Healing Center at Harbor Hospice in Muskegon, and it's one of many ways Harbor Hospice grief counselors help children and adults struggling with loss.

"The need for grief support is huge," says Beth. "We receive calls every day—from individuals seeking help for themselves as well as referrals from friends and family members, clergy, law enforcement, physicians, and other counselors. Sometimes someone says their loved one died years earlier, but they feel the need *now* to get help, and we welcome them. Grief has no timetable."

Children who have lost someone close are encouraged to attend Harbor Hospice's *Camp Courage*, an annual three-day summer camp at Big Blue Lake. While taking part in traditional camp activities, counselors help the children identify and express their feelings. And they learn meaningful ways to remember the person they loved so much,

Because we believe so strongly in the healing power of grief support, and want camp available to kids who need it, we do not charge for this program. Camp Courage costs on average \$700 per child, is open to children in our five-county region for just \$10 registration fee, which we waive for any family who cannot afford it.

And that's why we come to you to ask for your support.

When you donate to the Harbor Hospice Foundation, *you make all our life-changing grief support programs possible*. Please...walk alongside us. Help provide safe places where sadness is understood, where light can find its way back into lives shattered by loss.

Thank you.

"The Moms Together group has allowed me to set aside some time to heal. I find it hard to do that for myself. I am very grateful"

—Nancy Quinn

The Bob & Merle Scolnik
HEALING CENTER



Welcome to our incoming director of the Harbor Hospice Foundation Board



Kim Suarez
Retired Executive from
Spectrum Health

"When I was asked to join the Harbor Hospice Foundation Board, I was thrilled, having served on the Harbor Hospice Board in the past. Working in the health care industry for my entire career, I understand the important role hospice plays in the continuum of care. More important, I have seen the positive impact of Harbor Hospice on families. To walk alongside patients and families when they are at their most vulnerable is a special calling and I am pleased to be able to part of this wonderful organization."



Steve Rauschert
Partner of Lakeshore
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Harbor Hospice Foundation
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"We believe in the staff and volunteers of Harbor Hospice and value the mission they represent. We feel our support as a Corporate Partner helps all the Harbor Hospice programs provide excellent end of life care to our community."



Our Silver Seal of Transparency

Harbor Hospice Foundation earned a 2018 Silver Seal of Transparency on @GuideStarUSA! Now our community, potential donors, funders, and key decision makers can tangibly see our commitment to financial accountability. Check us out: Guidestar.org/Profile/9448121

In memoriam, Bob Harvey

Anita and Bob Harvey knew each other in college, and really connected again a year later when both were boating in Europe.

"Bob was a great guy, and he loved sailing," says Anita of her beloved husband of 38 years. "If Hospice was going to have a regatta, he thought, 'Let's have a good race!' He wanted people to have fun on the course, so he stepped up to help organize it. We've had many family members who were helped by Harbor Hospice, which is a part of our community, and of course we wanted to support our community!"



We are grateful for Bob's enthusiastic leadership and vision, which helped make the Harbor Hospice Regatta a tremendously successful annual event. Sadly, Bob died this past December. He will be deeply missed by all of us.

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**"So very grateful for
remembering our
loved ones
in this way."**

—2018 Attendee



Join us at the 6th Annual Community Remembrance

Monday, September 23, 6:00 pm

A program of The Bob & Merle Scolnik Healing Center of Harbor Hospice encompassing beautiful music, readings and bulb planting to help individuals and families in our community to both mourn the death and honor the life of a loved one. The Community Remembrance is held annually at the Heritage Memorial Garden located at 545 West Western Avenue and welcomes 80–100 attendees each year.

Local community supporter, Pam Babbitt, developed the beautiful garden in honor of her late husband; a haven located in downtown Muskegon and an incredible representation of the love that remains even after a person dies.

In our culture, mourning is becoming increasingly taboo. Grief is a natural and normal response to loss, and mourning is how one heals. It is our privilege to offer this opportunity to mourn and heal in an environment of acceptance and understanding. If you would like to participate in this meaningful event, **please RSVP by Friday, September 20.**

For more information on grief support programs including individual and group counseling please visit HarborHospiceMI.org.



Some of our wonderful Hospice veteran volunteers.

Fall 2019 Volunteer Trainings

Basic Orientation Training Monday

Oct 7 9:00 am to 4:00 pm



Did you know?

Our hospice and palliative care organization offers many in-service trainings for groups or businesses. Specific needs of your staff can be met by creating and tailoring services.

- Palliative Care Services (anyone seeking information about palliative care)
- Pain Management (for all caregivers)
- Preparation and Care for the Time of Death (End of Life Care) (for all caregivers)
- Hospice Services (Hospice 101) (anyone seeking information about hospice)
- Nutrition and Hydration Issues at the End of Life (anyone seeking more information on this topic area)
- Multidimensional Care at the End of Life (anyone interested in providing great care)
- Hospice Care and the Alzheimer's Patient (anyone who might be caring for an Alzheimer's individual)
- Grief Support Services (for all caregivers and anyone who has experienced a death)

For more information on in-services please call us at 231.782.3442 or 1.800.497.9559 or email info@HarborHospiceMI.org to discuss scheduling or other educational opportunities.

Patient Care Training (2nd Step) Monday

Oct 21 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

There are several steps prior to basic orientation so please contact us for more information at 231.728.3442 or 1.800.497.9559, email info@HarborHospiceMI.org or visit our website at HarborHospiceMI.org.



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Look for the latest edition of Harbor Hospice Touching Lives magazine in your physician's office. Within its covers, you will find:



- National story, *The best plan for you*
- Thanks to palliative care
- Getting through grief... with a little help from your friends

2019

Calendar of Events

5th Annual Purse Auction Sunday, May 5

Round up your friends and head to the White Lake Eagles on Sunday, May 5 for the 5th Annual Purse Party hosted by Ladies of the White Lake Community. Get great purses while you support Camp Courage, a local three-day sleep-away summer camp that helps children who are grieving the death of someone close.

Doors open at 1:00 pm for the much-anticipated Purse Party, which features both live and silent auctions with hundreds of fabulous selections from casual clutches to high-end designer bags. Prices start at just \$5! Eagle membership is not needed to attend this fun event.

Donations of gently used and new purses, bags and totes can be dropped off by April 26 at Harbor Hospice, The Leila and Cyrus Poppen Hospice Residence or at Fetch Brewing Company.



SAVE THE DATES

All proceeds supporting the compassionate grief support programs and services of the Bob & Merle Scolnik Healing Center of Harbor Hospice.

Harbor Hospice Regatta and Awards Wednesday, August 7

Celebrating its 12th year, West Michigan sailors love this race, and in the past 11 years have helped raise over \$362,000 to support local hospice care.

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13th Annual Ride To Remember Saturday, May 25

Join members of the Fruitport Lions Club, X-cell Integrative Health, and Fruitport Chiropractic Center for their annual 15-mile *Ride to Remember* around Spring Lake to support the Poppen Hospice Residence on May 25.

The ride is held in conjunction with Fruitport's Old Fashioned Days, beginning at 11:00 am from Fruitport Edgewood Elementary, 3255 Pontaluna Road. Check-in is at 10:30 am.

Proceeds from this event will benefit the Leila & Cyrus Poppen Hospice Residence, a program of Harbor Hospice.



Proceeds to benefit the Leila and Cyrus Poppen Hospice Residence

For more information on special events, please call us at 231.782.3442 or 1.800.497.9559 or email us at info@HarborHospiceMI.org to discuss scheduling or other educational opportunities.

26th Annual Camp Courage June 21–23

Harbor Hospice has been offering Camp Courage for 25 years as a way to help children and their families following the death of a loved one. The emotions of grief can be overwhelming and isolating for children who have not yet developed the verbal and emotional skills to navigate the grief process.

Children grieve differently than adults and need time to just "be kids" as well as time to honor and remember their loved one. Kids often feel alone in their grief and thrive when able to connect with others who understand their unique experience.

This weekend overnight camping experience for children ages 6–12, and teens for junior counselor program, is held at Pioneer Trails on Big Blue Lake in Muskegon County. *Application deadline is Friday, May 10.* The only cost is a \$10 registration fee per camper.



A Celebration for the Harbor Hospice Foundation—Buoys, Boats, and Brews Saturday, September 28

An afternoon of amazing local beverage tastings, food pairings, live entertainment, auctions, raffle and friends.

