

Circles of Care

Fall/Winter 2020 Newsletter Vol.27 No.2

HARBOR
HOSPICE

HARBOR
PALLIATIVE CARE

“...Hospice workers became like family”

by Susan Newhof



“I hope my story can help someone who may be hesitating,” says Eva Berumen Reyna, softly. “When a visiting nurse suggested we bring in hospice care for

my mom, we hesitated, too. We wondered if hospice workers would be intrusive, if they would be at the house when we didn’t want them there.”

Still, family members knew they needed help for Eva’s mom who had been ill for many years. Eva has two brothers, and one lives out of state, so much of her mother’s care was in her father’s hands while Eva was working during the day. Eva knew he was weary. There was also the issue of her mother’s pain.

“Every little thing hurt my mom,” says Eva, remembering heartbreaking days and nights caring for Eva Luevano Berumen, the beloved mother for whom she is named. “Even the lancet we used to get a drop of blood to test her sugar hurt. Getting her to a doctor’s appointment became agonizing for her, so we decided to try hospice care.”

The family’s fears about hospice melted away quickly. Instead, Eva says, hospice workers became like family.

“They had a connection with my mom,” she recalls. “They knew her by name. They prayed with her and joked with her like she was their own mother or their friend. They spent hours with her and there was never any sense they had to hurry or that they were eager to move on to the next patient. They were all very present when they were with her, and with us as well.”

The arduous trips to the doctor stopped immediately, because hospice healthcare staff came to the house. They also checked in regularly and monitored medications to be sure Eva’s mom was getting what she needed and that she was comfortable. And they took over much of the care that family members were not confident doing.

The hospice chaplain became essential, too. “There were times when my mom was in pain, and after he prayed with her and sang with her, she was comfortable and able to

rest,” Eva remembers. “He gave us all words of encouragement and provided guidance and reassurance for my dad. He had empathy. He was such a gift to all of us.”

During the last week of her mom’s life, the nurse talked with the family about what was happening and what changes they would start seeing.

“She wanted us to be prepared,” says Eva. “The news was devastating, but the hospice workers walked with us, guiding us, and they told us how to help guide my mom, too. It was so helpful to have someone who has gone through that process with others be there to help us go through it.”

Staff explained, for example, that parents who are dying often don’t want to let go until they know their children will be ok. To Eva’s father, they suggested, “Let mom know you will take care of the children.”

“When I see the hospice staff in the community now, they remember my mom and ask how I am doing,” says Eva smiling. “We are very thankful for them.”

Eva will take on a new role next year translating our hospice and palliative care information into Spanish.

“I am excited for our Hispanic population to know more about Harbor Hospice and Harbor Palliative Care,” she says excitedly. “The services make it possible for you to enjoy your loved one and to know they are being taken care of. You will never regret calling them. Hard as it is to lose someone you love, hospice care makes it possible for you to have a sense of peace when they pass away. I am left with wonderful memories.”

Eva is a life coach with Oceana Lakeshore Employer Resource Network. She helps individuals develop plans to identify and overcome their challenges and reach their goals.

“They spent hours with her and there was never any sense they had to hurry or that they were eager to move on to the next patient.”

Eva Berumen Reyna





HOSPICE

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2020 Award Recipient

Heroes Among Us

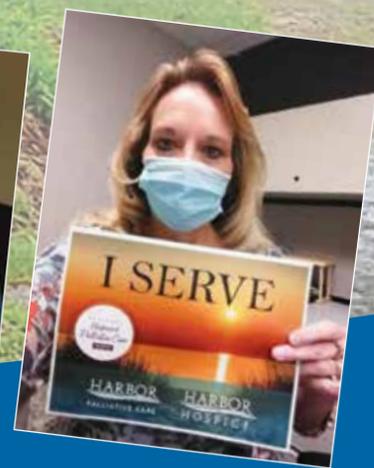
As the state (and the country, and the world) mobilized to fight a deadly once-in-a-century pandemic, our ideas about heroism in health care shifted — but did it really?

Not all heroes wear capes.

Healthcare workers are everyday heroes in every sense of these two words. Heroes who stepped up daily to continue providing exceptional care but to also provide safety measures for themselves and those around them.

The Harbor Hospice philosophy of care places the needs of patients and the families first. Our comprehensive care for terminally ill patients and resources for their families allows them to enjoy their last months, weeks, or days of their lives together as completely as possible for as long as possible.

Thank you to the Heroes Among Us for their compassion and resilience.



Providing Essential Care in Difficult Times

The emergence of COVID-19 has changed our world in a matter of months, and we continue to deal with this historic event, the likes of which we hope to never see again in our lifetime. Even as I write this, cases are spiking across the country once more, including here in Michigan.

The most inspiring thing I get to do these days is watch our staff at work and see the countless ways they step up to challenges in extraordinary ways. We have had much to learn, and we had to learn it quickly in order to navigate daily updates in public policy, regulations, testing, personal protection equipment requirements, and other clinical protocols. The pandemic has changed how we do business and transformed how we deliver care to patients and their families, but the quality of care and our commitment to provide the best remains unchanged.

Even with all the uncertainty, one thing we know more than ever is that our mission is significant and our work has purpose. As staff members go into the community each day to care for patients; and as we work from our homes, offices or from our hospice residence, we know you have our back to make sure we have supplies on hand, to expand understanding of how we can help, and to raise funds that support patients and programs. We are all acutely aware that you make our work possible, and we are deeply grateful to you. As volunteers, donors, community partners, families, and friends, your encouragement and support keeps us going and helps us heal when we become weary.

We continue to be vigilant in our practices of masking, sanitizing, and social distancing. And we continue to adapt and use new tools such as Harbor Tele-health so we can stay connected to patients. That technology was, at one time, merely an item on our wish list, but now it is both a necessity and an integral component of building and maintaining close relationships with our patients. Best of all, patients love it!

We look forward to 2021 and coming out on the other side of this pandemic with a renewed spirit and sense of optimism for the future. I am honored to lead a remarkable team, and with resilience and hope, we proudly serve the adults and children in our region.

We are here for you. Always. You can count on that.



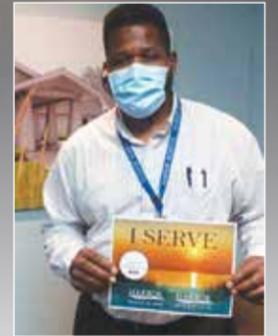
Sue Houseman
President & CEO

As volunteers, donors, community partners, families, and friends, your encouragement and support keeps us going and helps us heal when we become weary.





Layers of protective gear are helping keep patients, families, and staff safe



Members of our hospice and palliative care team relish the relationships they build with each of their patients. They spend hours quietly reassuring them, holding their hands, easing their pain and anxiety, balancing their medications, and comforting their caregivers and family members.

When the novel coronavirus came to town last spring, they were challenged to find new ways to “be there” for the patients and families who depend on them 24 hours a day.

In order to reduce the spread of the virus, staff visiting in-person began wearing Personal Protection Equipment or PPE — masks, gloves, gowns, and often face shields. And because of the sudden worldwide need for PPE, there were dire shortages.

We took PPE from our emergency inventory so the team could seamlessly continue seeing patients, and Bobbie Mead, our procurement expert, began earnestly searching for replacements.

In April, a year earlier than planned, Harbor Hospice and Harbor Palliative Care launched Harbor Tele-Health. Patients and caregivers could continue to talk “face-to-face” with our medical staff, even if they were miles apart.

From the beginning, patients loved it, and they use Tele-Health whenever possible. But many patients still required in-person care. For Jessica Goslin, RN, putting on layers of PPE and changing them between patients is all part of keeping her patients safe and comfortable.

“I know I can confidently care for my patients and protect them when I’m wearing PPE,” she explains. “And patients have told me they are comforted knowing our PPE protects them.”

When PPE finally became more readily available, we were shocked at the steep increases and fluctuations in prices. For example, last winter a

box of 50 disposable masks, ordinarily a six-month supply, was \$7.50 — about 15 cents per mask. Now a new disposable mask must be used for each visit with a patient. We recently ordered 10,000 masks to get a quantity price and to assure we have adequate stock. The bill: \$4,275 — more than 40 cents per mask.

Staff also received N-95 masks which can usually be reused several times, but must first be custom-fit to each wearer. To do that, we had to buy two “fit-test” machines at \$265 each.

Those are just two examples of why we are asking for your support this year. Your gift will help us cover the extraordinary increase in the cost of keeping our patients, their families, and our front line staff safe.

In spite of all the challenges we’ve faced in the past eight months, our doors remain open. We continue to warmly welcome new patients, to provide hospice and palliative care throughout our region, and to offer life-changing counseling to children and adults seeking help with grief.

And we continue to be deeply grateful to you for making it possible.



“Many of our patients feel very isolated these days, so our in-person visits are an opportunity to provide them with social, emotional and spiritual support as well as medical care.”

– Jessica Goslin, RN, Harbor Hospice



Corporate Partners

With gratitude to our West Michigan businesses and organizations that support our hospice and palliative care services through their membership in the Corporate Partners Program who touch the lives of our patients and families through their sustaining support of the Harbor Hospice Foundation.

"Harbor Hospice is one of those quiet but very important parts of our community. When you have a need for their services, they are always there to help, especially in difficult times. That is why we are happy to support of their mission of quality and compassionate care to all they serve."

— Mike Olthoff,
CEO Nichols Paper & Supply Company

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Bobby and Sandy Cox, and their son Jeremy Cox

Congratulations to our Hospice Hero Award Winner Bobby and Sandy Cox

The Hospice Hero award recognizes a volunteer who best reflects the concept of volunteerism in its truest sense — serving as inspiration to others. Bobby and Sandy Cox are a beautiful team, inspiring others every day.

They work hard every year to win the Harbor Hospice Regatta race to the finish line plus the race to raise the most money. To date, they have raised an astounding \$17,000 for Harbor Hospice, the most brought in by any racing team in the Challenge! They have recruited others to take part in the event, too, and offer up the good-natured challenge, "Go ahead...raise more money than we do!"

The intrepid couple is also thrilled to have had their name on the Judy Miller Challenge Award for eight of the past ten years!

Bobby and Sandy had observed the wonderful care Sandy's mother received from a hospice organization on the east side of the state, and they had heard great things about Harbor Hospice. They were delighted that the Judy Miller Challenge gave them a way to honor their friend as well as raise money for an organization they respected.

"Harbor Hospice continues to expand and is doing more and more for the community," says Bobby. "Sandy and I are so happy to add to the funds they have to work with!"

Those funds are especially important because they help Harbor Hospice continue to offer the programs and services needed in the community and to provide them to anyone who needs them regardless of their ability to pay.



Compassionate Givers was created by people who want to harness the power of giving as one of many and have a significant impact on a specific Harbor Hospice or Harbor Palliative Care program. The group meets quarterly and votes annually to determine how their combined funds will be used.

"I became a Compassionate Giver to show my consistent commitment to Harbor Hospice and the great work you do for our community. The social aspect was also appealing, to gather with a group of other individuals who have an affinity and passion for hospice care."

— Kristi Nagengast, Vice President of Finance,
Mercy Health Muskegon

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Ammy Seymour
Blaire Adamczak
Bobbie Hilleary
Bonnie Kay Adamczak-Brown
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Dee Kwiecien
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Mishelle Comstock
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Pamela Bogie
Pamela Wingard
Peggy Jacobs
Mhairi Blacklock
Shari Simon
Susan Crain
Susan Houseman
Thomas Serio





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



Kathy Moore
Chief Executive Health Officer/Public Health Director,
Public Health Muskegon County

"I was previously a Harbor Hospice board member and admired and respected the passion and professional approach of the board and staff. I'm a firm believer that you should always give time, talent, and treasure to the community. Harbor Hospice is an amazing agency that does a lot for our community, and I felt it was time to rejoin and support them in supporting Muskegon County residents."



Roger Morgenstern
Senior Public Information Director, Consumers Energy

"I am honored to be returning to the Harbor Hospice Board of directors. This is a very well-run organization with a laser-focused mission on helping others at pivotal times in their lives. I am pleased to work alongside other community leaders to make sure the mission is fulfilled every day for our patients and families."



Become an essential part of our team.

2021 volunteer training sessions will take place if regulations allow and we can keep our senior population, community and staff healthy and safe. Because of the changing environment surrounding the pandemic, we're unable to confirm any dates at this time.

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

call: [231.728.3442](tel:231.728.3442) or [1.800.497.9559](tel:1.800.497.9559)
email: info@HarborHospiceMI.org
visit our website: HarborHospiceMI.org

Welcome to our new member of the Harbor Hospice Foundation Board of Directors



Merica Dobry, Esq.
Lawyer and Owner, Dobry Law Offices

"I've read that great losses are absorbed by those who survive, and if we let it, the loss can carve us into different, kinder creatures. I joined the Board of Directors to share my gifts with the Harbor Hospice organization, as Harbor Hospice helped my family absorb our own great losses with compassion and kindness. I believe in the mission of Harbor Hospice, and hope to ensure that Harbor Hospice continues to help new generations be carved into different and kinder creatures."



Thank you
Joyce Busman
for over 30 years
of volunteer service.

Congratulations to our 2019 Volunteer of the Year, and thank you to all our hospice volunteers

"I am thankful to be a volunteer for Harbor Hospice and have the opportunity to provide compassionate care for patients and their caregivers. I feel blessed to have worked with so many families over these past 12 years."

– Lynne Cavazos, Harbor Hospice Volunteer since May 2008



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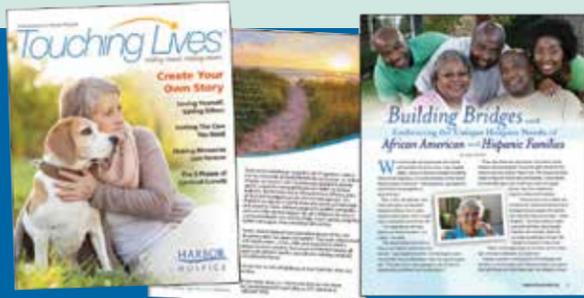
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Look for the latest edition of *Harbor Hospice Touching Lives* magazine in your physician's office. Within its cover, you will find national story, *Create Your Own Story*, as well as local articles *Building Bridges* and *Embracing the Unique Hospice Needs of African American and Hispanic Families*, and more.

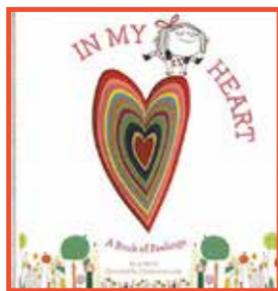
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Instead of children going to Camp Courage this summer, Camp Courage came to them!

What do you do when the summer camp you've held for 26 years has to be cancelled because of the coronavirus?

"We got creative and resourceful!" says social worker Kari Allen, who co-directs Harbor Hospice's popular Camp Courage with colleague Laura Ecker. "We couldn't be with the children in person, so we found other ways to support them and help them explore and process their grief."

Instead of spending two nights and three days at camp, the 23 "campers," ages seven to nineteen, received decorated care packages during the summer and had access to online videos made just for them. Like Camp Courage, the packages and videos offered a combination of experiences that were both healing and fun.

In June, the youngest children received the hardcover picture book, *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings*, by Jo Witek, plus an activity sheet and crayons to help them explore a range of emotions from expressing feelings to conquering fears. The teenagers received a grief journaling packet. Kari, who is also facilities supervisor at the Poppen Hospice Residence, read the book aloud on the video, and Laura demonstrated how to do the activity sheet.

July's package was a beach towel and beach ball. The video shows Laura and Kari tossing the ball back and forth, demonstrating how to use cues written on their beach ball to talk about feelings.

In August, each child received a back-to-school backpack, water bottle and small journal. The video carried an enthusiastic message of support from camp volunteers.

"So many kids come from families where the adults are grieving the loss of the loved one, too," says Laura, a bereavement counselor with Harbor Hospice. "They need to be able to express how they feel and have people to talk with about their grief, so it was important that we find ways to reach out to them."

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 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.

If you know children who are grieving

- *Involve them in making a decoration in honor of their loved one.* This encourages them to share memories and express feelings freely.
- *Make a memory box or scrapbook together.* Decorate it for the season and fill it with pictures and special items.
- *Ask children and others what they miss about their loved one.* This gives everyone an opportunity to share a memory and acknowledges that this special person is not here.

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.

