

# 15 Years of Sustaining Compassionate End-of-Life Care

The Hospice Foundation was created in 2007 to provide four pillars of support for Center for Hospice Care: fundraising, stewardship, collaboration and education. In this issue, we take a look back at some of the milestones, facilities and programs that have developed and evolved with the generous support of a very giving community.

Much like the production crew that works behind the scenes of a Broadway play or musical, those who give to the Hospice Foundation (HF) to support Center for Hospice Care (CHC) are vital to CHC's mission "to improve the quality of living." From caring for those at the end of life, to supporting grieving family members, to honoring veterans, to educating our community - CHC and HF continue to provide the highest-quality care and service, including keeping our 43-year-old promise that no one eligible for hospice care would ever be turned away due to their inability to pay.

Our dedication to providing innovative care for those at the end of life was recently recognized by the American Hospital Association. Center for Hospice Care and the Hospice Foundation received a 2023 Circle of Life Award.



*"They are building a future in which clinicians and family members will recognize when patients would benefit from palliative care services and readily refer them to the compassionate support and comfort they deserve."*

2023 Circle of Life Award Brochure

"Celebrating Innovation in Palliative and End-of-Life Care."

# Caring for Patients Wherever They Call Home

Since opening its doors in 1980, CHC has cared for more than 44,000 patients – in private homes, in extended care facilities, in hospitals, in jails and in homeless centers. Wherever a patient calls home, CHC staff will be at their bedside to provide skilled, compassionate care. For patients who need the specialized pain and symptom management that an inpatient unit offers, CHC operates both of our communities' only dedicated inpatient units. Esther's House opened in 2008 as part CHC's Elkhart Campus. Tucked away just beyond the eastern edge of the city, this facility provides the best of care in a warm, homelike setting. Staff based here also provide in-home care to residents in Elkhart, LaGrange, and Kosciusko counties as well as parts of Marshall and St. Joseph counties.

While many donors made the Elkhart inpatient care facility possible, Dick and Rita Strefling provided the lead gift through the Strefling Foundation. After experiencing the care Dick's mother Esther received from CHC, both in-home and at our inpatient care facility in Roseland, they wanted to help create a similar facility in Elkhart County for their community. Their vision led to the creation of Esther's House.

Similarly, the late Ernestine M. Raclin provided the transformative gift for the eponymous inpatient unit on CHC's Mishawaka Campus. The 12-bed Ernestine M. Raclin House opened in 2020. Here, each room has a view of the St. Joseph River where patients and families can experience the peace and tranquility of the waterfront setting.



*"It's so beneficial to have a support network help process thoughts at this point of life. It's not a clinical relationship, it's a group of caring people."*

**Steve Colagrossi, CHC patient**



# Caring for Those Who Served

Center for Hospice Care recently expanded its participation in the "We Honor Veterans" program by achieving Level 5 designation, a collaboration between the Veterans Administration and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. As a Level 5 partner, CHC integrates veteran-specific content for staff, volunteer orientation and education. CHC is one of just 228 Level 5 partners out of 3,743 programs in the nation and is proud

to be a 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Commemorative Partner with the Department of Defense.

As part of our commitment to veterans, the Hospice Foundation hosts an annual dedication ceremony at the Captain Robert J. Hiler Jr. Veterans Memorial on our Mishawaka Campus for items donated in honor or memory of veterans



## Surviving Pearl Harbor

Jim "Jimmy" DeWitt's life story has the makings of a big screen blockbuster. Love, loss, war, peace all have their places in it. At only four years old, Jimmy was left at an orphanage in Mexico, Indiana after his parents died of tuberculosis. Although his older siblings also resided there, he never got to see them. In fact, Jimmy didn't have any contact with his siblings while growing up although he did have some contact once he joined the military. His older brother had joined the Navy, and Jimmy decided to follow in his footsteps. They were both assigned to the U.S.S. Medusa.

Eventually, Jimmy was transferred to the U.S.S. Antares, a supply ship that soon had a front-row seat to the

beginning of the war in the Pacific. "We reached the entrance to Pearl Harbor at 5:30 that morning," Jimmy remembered. "The Japanese came in at 7:48 a.m. It was our ship that spotted the submarine." What was quite surprising is the sense of calm and peace prior to the attack. Jimmy recalled that beautiful Hawaiian music was being played over the intercom that morning. "It was a Sunday morning. We thought everything is peaceful." Then the music stopped suddenly, and they called out, "This is an air raid! Take cover!" They kept repeating that. Everything escalated from that point.

"They wouldn't let us in the harbor," Jimmy continued. "Because they knew

there was more trouble ahead." Shortly later, around 9:00 a.m., another attack ensued. This time, American guns were manned, and Jimmy remembered that shells and debris were dropping all over them. He, along with seven other crew members, were on the bow of the ship watching the dogfight over their heads; they were amazed how the Americans got eight planes in the air for the second attack.

Jimmy was one of the last few Pearl Harbor survivors left but his memory was astounding. He was even interviewed by the History Channel before his death. It was an honor for Center for Hospice Care's staff, along with his family and caregivers, to honor his service with a veteran pinning.



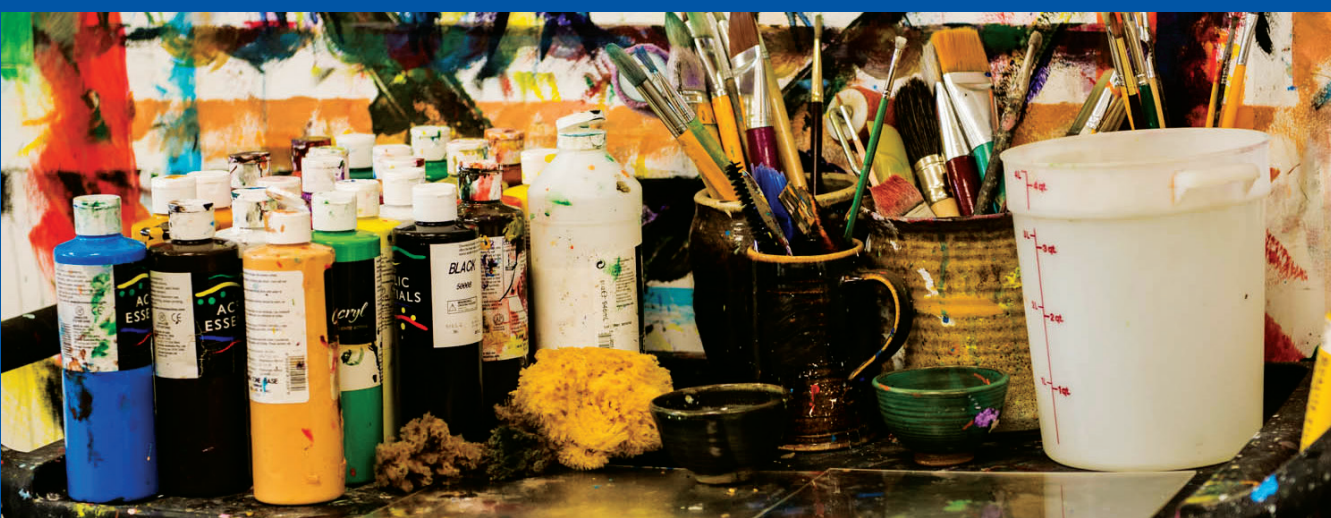
# Caring for the Community

The loss of a loved one is never easy. Grief is a natural response to experiencing the death of someone we love. The Hospice Foundation's support of Center for Hospice Care's Life Transition Center means our patients' families, as well as those in our community, don't have to face grief alone. Counselors and trained volunteers provide services and programs for children, teens and adults. Two examples of these community programs are Camp Evergreen and After Images.

Now in its 30th year, Camp Evergreen is a camp for grieving children of all ages who have experienced the death of someone significant in their lives. For the past 15 years, the Hospice Foundation has supported this camp through fundraising, events and volunteerism.

Camp Evergreen has benefited from the generosity of the Lloyd family, who created the Linda Lloyd Mission Endowment for Camp Evergreen. Their support has helped ensure that all grieving children in our community have access to this life-changing program.

For some, expressing their grief through art provides a path to healing. The *After Images* art counseling program, directed by Dave Labrum, offers participants the time and space to work through their grief with art. Those who take part in the program create their artwork alone in the program's studio space with Labrum's support and guidance. The studio is a place where clients feel safe and can express their grief openly and honestly.



# Educating our Community about End of Life

One of the Hospice Foundation's four pillars is helping people – including healthcare providers, trusted advisors and healthy adults – have conversations about end of life and understand the importance of having advance directives that document their end-of-life wishes. These directives not only help ensure those wishes are honored, but they also help alleviate stress from families who may otherwise have to make difficult healthcare choices.

Since 2018, Honoring Choices® Indiana – North Central has made its home at the foundation. This organization was formed to advance the idea that everyone should receive care that honors their personal values and goals in catastrophic situations or at the end of life. It began as a grassroots effort as leaders from healthcare providers, faith-based communities and non-profit organizations met to discuss the best approach to facilitating advance care planning in Elkhart, Marshall and St. Joseph counties.

In part because a growing number of people have learned about the benefits of hospice and palliative care, the demand for this

care continues to outpace the number of trained medical staff entering the field. The Hospice Foundation is also committed to providing education for college students, providers in formation and the medical community at large. A generous gift from the Vera Z. Dwyer Charitable Trust in the form of a \$1 million matching grant has enabled us to establish the Vera Z. Dwyer Fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. This gift endows an annual position for a physician in a one-year, post-residency program at the Indiana University School of Medicine.

The "Introduction to Hospice and Palliative Care Class" that CHC and the Hospice Foundation staff teach every spring at the University of Notre Dame is an example of the foundation's collaborations with colleges and universities. This 1.5 credit-hour class provides undergraduate students, particularly those who are interested in careers in medicine, with an overview of palliative and hospice care. Staff from the foundation and CHC also play an integral role in teaching undergraduate students in the new palliative care minor offered through the Vera Z. Dwyer College of Health Sciences at Indiana University South Bend.

*"Educating future health care providers about the hospice concept and introducing them to the benefits hospice and palliative care provides those facing serious, life-limiting illnesses is at the core of the Hospice Foundation's mission."*

**Mike Wargo,  
VP/COO Hospice Foundation**



# Caring Knows No Borders

In 2008, CHC and HF were partnered with the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU), whose mission is “to promote and support affordable and culturally appropriate palliative care throughout Uganda.” The partnership was made possible by Global Partners in Care, formerly known as the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa (FHSSA). The focus of this partnership, now celebrating its 15th year in 2023, is to support PCAU’s strategic initiatives around its mission to provide culturally appropriate palliative care to all in Uganda.

One method of raising awareness of palliative care provision in Sub-Saharan Africa and the plight of those left behind by dying parents was the creation of two documentary films. The first, the award-winning *Okuyamba*, includes interviews with some of Uganda’s leading palliative care experts such as Rose Kiwanuka, then country director of PCAU.

The second film, *Road to Hope*, showed what happens when a child becomes the primary caregiver for a parent with a life-threatening disease. With few resources, the child is often forced to quit school to earn whatever living can be found, while still caring for his or her dying parent.

The film was inspired by the Road to Hope Fund that was created to provide educational, emotional and social assistance for children in their time of need. Since its founding in 2012, the Road to Hope program has supported close to 80 children in their individual growth and education. Currently there are:

- 22 children in the program enrolled in primary school.
- 22 children in the program enrolled in secondary school.
- 23 children in vocation school.
- 7 have graduated in the fields of medicine, development studies, motor mechanics, electrical installation and maintenance, beautician, seamstress and accounting.

The values of caring and compassion know no borders. In the 15 years of partnership with PCAU as twinned organizations under the Global Partners in Care (GPIC) umbrella, CHC and the foundation have worked with PCAU to bring palliative care to those in need throughout Uganda.

The success of this partnership is why CHC/HF was tapped as a search began for a new home for GPIC – an organization created to support Africa’s hospice and palliative care programs’ ability

to provide compassionate care. GPIC officially became a part of the HF family in January of 2017. Partners engage in capacity building, strategic planning, education, fundraising and technical assistance to expand and improve services for those in need.

Today, the partnership network includes 80 organizations and extends to 10 African countries and 16 states in the US. Since 2004, GPIC and its US partners have sent more than \$7 million dollars to support the vital palliative care work in low-resource settings.

*It’s important to note that no donations to Center for Hospice Care or the Hospice Foundation are used to support global initiatives unless explicitly requested by the donor.*

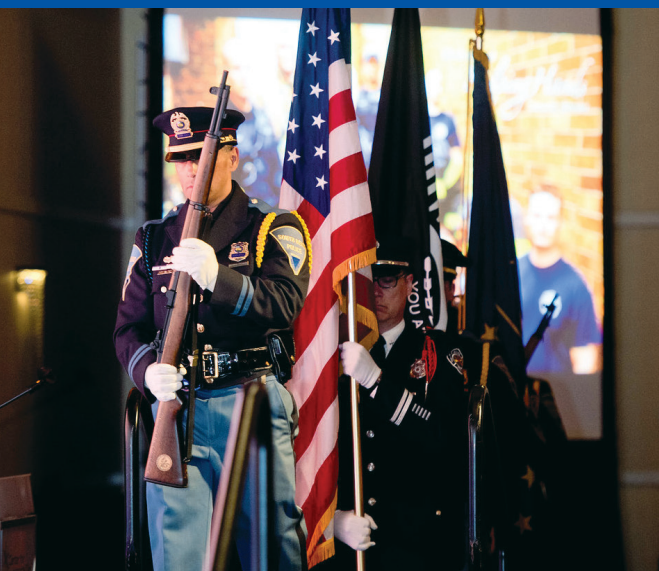


# Thank You to Everyone in our Circle of Caring!

None of the accomplishments outlined here would be possible without the compassion and generosity of our supporters. And nowhere was this more evident than the support CHC/HF received during the *Cornerstones for Living: The Crossroads Campaign*. This was our most extensive comprehensive fundraising campaign and was the byproduct of a strategic planning process whose goals were to create a warm, welcoming campus that brings together services in one location and facilitates care of the highest caliber while reducing expenditures and to ensure sustainable sources of funding that will provide essential and emerging programs over the long term. The campaign successfully concluded in 2019 after raising more than \$14 million in contributions and pledges.

Since 1985, Center for Hospice Care has recognized those who have demonstrated civic and charitable stewardship to improve the quality of living in the communities we service. These awards are given at the Helping Hands Award Dinner held in May in South Bend and at the Circle of Caring Award Dinner held in November in Elkhart. Funds raised in support of these dinners help us keep our promise that no one in our nine-county service area eligible for our services will be turned away due to an inability to pay.

*The impact your gifts make each day go beyond what we can share in one magazine, newsletter or brochure, but we hope that this special edition will show how much every gift helps.*





**Circle of Caring  
Award Recipients**

2022 – Tim Portolese and Bruce Newswanger

*Helping Hands*  
award

**Helping Hands Award  
Recipients Since 2008**

2008 – Carmi and Chris Murphy  
 2009 – Burkhart/Miller Families  
 2010 – Wiekamp Family  
 2011 – Rev. Richard V. Warner, CSC  
 2012 – Mary Osmanski Ferlic  
 2013 – Ann Manion  
 2014 – Robert Deputy  
 2015 – Lou Behre  
 2016 – Joseph Kernan and Robert C. Beutter  
 2017 – First Responders  
 2018 – Sister Carmel Marie Sallows, C.S.C.  
 2019 – Catherine Hiler  
 2020/21 – Drs. Zoreen and Rafat Ansari  
 2022 – Gladys Muhammad  
 2023 – Mary and Phil Newbold

