

Celebrating Life's Stories[®]

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR FRIENDS

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The mother of what we now know as Ohio's Hospice LifeCare was Fran Loess.

Back in the mid-1970s, Fran invited some local movers and shakers to sit at her kitchen table to talk about bringing hospice care to our communities. In 1982, when we served our first patients, Fran was in the very first volunteer training class. She continued as a hospice volunteer until early 2005, when she became a hospice patient. As Fran was facing the last months of her life, she stated many times that she wanted her legacy to be a program that allows patients to record their stories to leave behind for family and friends. We designed the Fran Loess Life Legacy Project while Fran was still here to have input, and it has been available to our patients ever since. At the time of her death, Fran's family made a generous donation to keep the program running for many years to come.

Today, the Loess Life Legacy Project continues to flourish and provide interested patients and families a wonderful outlet for sharing and preserving their stories. We recently completed two video projects—one that included a long-time dance instructor dancing with his wife, and another that included a gentleman singing his three favorite songs. The gentleman sang energetically in the afternoon as the volunteer assisted in recording his legacy video, but he experienced a dramatic change that evening and was soon gone. His daughter said it was like he had accomplished his last big goal.

Over the years, patients have recorded many powerful videos. As Christmas approached, "Harold" told his hospice social worker that he wanted to make a video as a gift to his children. On his video, he recorded his memories of his courtship of their mother. He also shared stories of what he remembered of each of his five sons' births and explained how he and his wife blended their parenting styles. He then sang his favorite Christmas carols to them and read his favorite scriptures. When he felt he was done, he asked that we make 17 copies of the DVD. He wanted one for each of his sons and their 12 children. We made the copies of the video and put them in a large gift bag with a big bow and tag that said, "To My Family, From Harold." As it happened, Harold died on Christmas morning. When his family arrived at the nursing home where Harold had been living, they found this extraordinary gift waiting for them.

This project is not something that every individual in hospice care wishes to undertake. But for those who do, and for their families, it can be a truly wonderful gift.

To find out how you can help support the Fran Loess Life Legacy Project, contact Rebecca McCurdy at 330.264.4899.

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Growing Our Angels



Kurt Holmes
Executive Director
Ohio's Hospice LifeCare

One of the best parts of being the director at Ohio's Hospice LifeCare is hearing from families about the care their loved ones received from team members.

A nurse called to a patient's home in the middle of the night when symptoms arise can seem like a visiting angel. The discreet yet profoundly personal care provided by a hospice specialist reinforces the human dignity of a patient who has difficulty accomplishing simple tasks on their own. When that inevitable time comes, looking back on all the joys and also the challenges, the social worker or chaplain appears to have been placed on the patient's path by the cosmos.

We hear this sentiment from family members often—"your staff are angels." But hospice care isn't a calling for everyone. The connections made can take a personal toll as team members grieve alongside family members. Sometimes staff members have to jump in and give themselves over to the mission to find out if they have what it takes. At Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, we refer to it as "growing our angels." Sometimes it takes time; sometimes a staff member has what it takes from day one.

Recently, a new personal care specialist (PCS) joined the team. On her first day, she was tasked with shadowing the inpatient unit team. We wanted to start her off slowly. That was the plan, anyway. The day started with the loss of a patient. She jumped right in, tending to the needs of that patient and family. She was then faced with several situations where a patient was struggling with symptoms and needed focused care. Her day was composed of one challenge after the other.

As the day ended, we wondered whether the heavy lifting of the hospice mission had been too much for our new teammate or if we had grown another angel in our midst. There is a grace to serving people in the last season of life. You hear the joy in a family gathering and are privileged to be welcomed into the fold. It is also a time of quiet reflection, and often your gift of service is merely time spent sitting at the bedside. The new PCS returned the next day confident in her calling and ready to serve—another Ohio's Hospice LifeCare angel among us.



Introducing Fritz, a Member of Our Pet Therapy Team

Meet Fritz. Fritz is an 11-year old Weimaraner with beautiful, compassionate green eyes. Fritz is proudly wearing his therapy dog vest. Like the seven other therapy dogs of Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, Fritz wears a vest that matches his human's vest. Our pet therapy dogs are very active and very effective, especially in the nursing homes where they serve a great number of patients. Their gentle demeanor and adorable social nature often results in them being invited into beds, chairs, and sometimes the laps of patients. We have a variety of dogs, including a collie, an Irish setter, a Yorkie, a beagle, and a dachshund. They wear their therapy dog vests with pride, and you can feel that pride as you observe them serving Ohio's Hospice LifeCare patients and their families.



For more information on how you can help support Fritz and his friends, contact Ohio's Hospice LifeCare at 330.264.4899.

5 Easy Ways to Support Our Mission

Our mission is to provide every family a compassionate and personalized end-of-life experience that exceeds their expectations.

Here are five easy steps you can take to support our mission and benefit patients and families in our community who are coping with life-limiting illnesses.

1

Annual & Memorial Gifts

Consider making a difference with your donation during our Annual Giving Campaign. A meaningful way to honor the memory of a loved one is to make a donation in their name.

2

Volunteer

Time is a valuable resource to our patients and their families. From friendly visits and flower deliveries to office support and data entry, every minute of volunteer time helps Ohio's Hospice LifeCare deliver on our mission.

3

United Way & Employer Match Programs

If you give to United Way, you can designate your charity of choice. In addition, many businesses offer matching funds when employees donate to charities.

4

Invite Us

Invite us to speak at your group's next meeting. We welcome the opportunity to let people know who we are and how we help.

5

Attend Our Events

Proceeds from our events benefit patient care. Please visit www.LifeCareHospice.org/News-and-Events/.

2019 Spring Gala – Save the Date!

Once upon a time...

...there was a hospice. This was no ordinary hospice, this was Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, your community not-for-profit hospice. Mark your calendars and join us for the Spring fundraiser, "Celebrating Life's Stories," at the Shisler Conference Center.

We invite you to be a part of our magically fun-filled evening and we encourage you to come dressed as your favorite book character.

For more information please contact JEpling@LifeCareHospice.org or call 234.249.0410.

LifeCareHospice.org/events/gala-2019



Gala 2019 "Once Upon A Time" Celebrating Life's Stories®
Saturday, March 30, 2019 @ 5:30 pm
Shisler Conference Center
1680 Madison Ave., Wooster, OH 44691

Volunteer Helps Hospice Patients Be Part of the Conversation

Bonnie Burnside, who has worked at Ohio's Hospice LifeCare for the past 18 years, noticed a dramatic change in her grandmother. Her health was declining, and when they moved her into a nursing home, it seemed as if her world had shrunk. Her grandma was starting to lose her hearing, making it difficult to communicate, and it was impossible to ignore her feelings of isolation. Her grandma was always a big presence in the family, Bonnie said, "she wanted to hear about our days, our kids, and even the weather." Her grandma began to draw inward when her hearing decline became noticeable. Her feelings of isolation increased when she learned that one of her grandchildren had become engaged. The family was abuzz with excitement for the news, but her grandma wasn't part of any of those conversations. Had her grandma been able to hear better, she would have loved to learn about every wedding detail. It was at this time that Bonnie and her family learned about the Hearing Aid Program available at Ohio's Hospice LifeCare.



The Hearing Aid Program came about by chance, when longtime Lifecare Volunteer Ray Beck and Craig Rowland, a medical professional, met on a Veteran's trip to Washington D.C. Craig was excited to hear about Ray's volunteer work with Ohio's Hospice LifeCare. Craig, a hearing care specialist, had always dreamed of incorporating hearing care into the community through volunteer efforts, it seemed these two people were destined to meet! Craig's idea was to make recycled hearing aids available to hospice patients at no charge so they could have the opportunity to hear from their friends and family in the last season of life when socialization and the sharing of memories is so important. Ray immediately connected Craig with the Ohio's Hospice LifeCare team. Craig completed his volunteer training and set off to work providing hearing aids to any hospice patient in need. Craig also worked with local nursing homes, fitting residents with gently used and donated hearing aids. This is how Grandma, along with many other patients and nursing home residents, was afforded the chance to hear and become part of the conversation again!



Pictured above left to right, Ray Beck and Craig Rowland..

Soon enough, her grandma was able to hear about all of the details of her grandson's wedding planning. The big day came, and while her grandma wasn't able to attend the wedding, she got some very special visitors at her door...the bride and groom! When she saw the happy couple, her smile lit up the room. Thanks to Craig Rowland and the Hearing Aid Program at Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, Bonnie's grandma has been able to continue to play a meaningful part in the life of her family. Bonnie and the rest of her family are eternally grateful. To learn more about other complimentary programs available to at Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, contact 330.264.4899.

Celebrating Life's Stories is published semiannually for patients, families, staff members and friends of Ohio's Hospice LifeCare.

Kent Anderson, President & CEO, Ohio's Hospice
Kurt Holmes, Executive Director, Ohio's Hospice LifeCare

Ohio's Hospice LifeCare has the privilege of providing superior care and superior service to members of our community. If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call us at 330.264.4899.

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