



Hospice of Cincinnati

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THE NATION'S
FOURTH OLDEST
HOSPICE

FALL 2019



Penpals give, receive love

Sometimes giving and receiving love is the best kind of medicine. According to Hospice of Cincinnati patient Bobbi Ackerman, the love showered upon her by a class of students at St. Catharine of Siena school in Westwood—along with the personalized care provided by Hospice of Cincinnati—has been the right treatment combination.

“It started when they were fifth graders,” Ackerman remembers. “Their religion class chose me as their prayer buddy and sent little notes home because I was ill.” The students knew her from a long history with the school’s parish—years as the house manager at the rectory, then as a volunteer who brought in treats like candy-filled Easter eggs and valentines.

Ackerman’s daughter, Mindy Plackey, says the students asked to continue sending inspirational notes to her mom after their assignment ended. “It’s amazing what the kids write,” she says. “The notes are so sweet. They make mom feel great.” Ackerman’s closet door is covered in cards. She keeps the remainder in a box under her coffee table so she can read them often.

While her prayer buddies feed her soul, Hospice of Cincinnati’s care team soothes Ackerman’s physical symptoms.

Case Manager Tracy Phipps visits weekly, providing and organizing medications for Ackerman that help her feel better and assisting in other ways. “She fell at home because her bed was too high,” Plackey notes. “That same day, Tracy arranged for the delivery of a hospital bed, bedside commode and walker to make sure she was safe. It was such a big help!”

Ackerman was so grateful and impressed with her young student helpers, she nominated them—and they were recognized—as Champions of Mercy by Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio. “My mom nominated the kids for going above and beyond in their efforts at keeping her spirits up,” Plackey says. “It was really very touching.”



Bobbi Ackerman is covered in love with a photo blanket from her special penpals.

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Former Hospice of Hamilton Medical Director remembered



Jim Lowes performs the ceremonial ribbon cutting Oct. 21 for the dedication of the newly renovated Dr. William Krall Family Room at the Hospice of Hamilton Inpatient Care Center. See story, page 3

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CEO Message: Expanding beyond hospice

DID YOU KNOW...



Social isolation can be fatal

Research by the National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging¹ demonstrates a link between social isolation/loneliness and a variety of health conditions, including: high blood pressure, heart disease, weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline and even death.

Brigham Young University professor Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD, explains that a lack of social connection heightens health risks as much as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, having an alcohol use disorder or being obese.²

For hospice patients, visits from loved ones and volunteers can greatly enhance overall well-being. Learn more about how Hospice of Cincinnati helps ensure the best possible end-of-life experience for patients. Visit [HospiceOfCincinnati.org](https://www.HospiceOfCincinnati.org) or call 513-891-7700.

¹ NIH/NIA, *Social isolation, loneliness in older people pose health risks*, April 23, 2019.

² *American Psychological Association, Social Isolation: It could kill you*, May 2019 Vol 50, No.5.



November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, making this a fitting time to reflect on the impact Hospice of Cincinnati has on our community today, along with ways we can continue to strengthen our impact moving forward.

We know that many people living with illness, and their families, can benefit from services long before hospice care is needed. I am very excited to announce that we are broadening the Hospice of Cincinnati mission to include “creating the best possible and most meaningful advanced illness experience,” along with our continued focus on end-of-life care.

We are adding new services to provide much-needed support to more people whose lives are impacted by illness and isolation. A single phone call will provide easy access to advance care planning, home-based palliative care, companion volunteers, supportive phone calls and caregiver support, in addition to hospice services. (See page 4.)

National Hospice and Palliative Care Month is also a time to pay tribute to Hospice of Cincinnati’s most precious resource—our team members and volunteers who make everything we do possible.

Through the generous support of a donor, we are thrilled to invest in our team members by providing them a day-long Resiliency Program as a way to create a healing culture—one that renews our team members’ commitments to themselves, our patients and families, and to their compassionate work. Over 40 team members attended the first session of the program in October, utilizing curriculum from the Remen Institute for the Study of Health and Illness (RISHI).

Thanks to each of you for your support in helping Hospice of Cincinnati be the trusted resource for serious illness and end-of-life care and services. Wishing you a happy fall and holiday season.

With Gratitude,

Gayle Mattson RN, BSN, MHA
President and CEO

OUR MISSION

Hospice of Cincinnati creates the best possible and most meaningful advanced illness and end-of-life experience for all who need care and support in our community.

Generosity impacts Hamilton community

Hamilton residents will continue to feel the comforting embrace of the late William Krall, MD, former Hospice of Hamilton Medical Director, through the memorial efforts of longtime friends Jim and Janett Lowes. Through their gift, the couple is updating the Family Room at the Hamilton Inpatient Care Center in memory of Dr. Krall, supporting Hospice of Hamilton's Charity Care Program and remembering Jim's father, Jack Lowes, who was cared for by Hospice of Hamilton last year.

"Bill Krall was a wonderful man and an excellent doctor," Janett says. "It is our honor and privilege to be able to provide this recognition in a tangible way that will benefit the patients and families served by Hospice of Hamilton."

A highly visible part of the Lowes gift, the newly renamed Dr. William Krall Family Room provides a warm, inviting place for families to gather, while recognizing Dr. Krall's tremendous legacy.

Opened with a community ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 21, the center refresh includes:

- Beautiful new artwork
- Comfortable new furniture, including two rockers
- New carpeting
- A cozy electric fireplace
- A wall-mounted television
- A photo plaque honoring Dr. Krall

The Lowes gift also supports Hospice of Hamilton's Charity Care Program, enabling dying patients who lack insurance to receive the organization's compassionate, personalized end-of-life care. "We wanted to make a gift that would benefit both Hamilton and Butler County," Jim remarks.

"Jim and Janett have deep roots in Hamilton," says Lori Asmus, Hospice of Cincinnati Development Officer. "It was a



Loyal supporters Janett and Jim Lowes (left) are joined by Joann Krall and Hospice of Cincinnati President and CEO Gayle Mattson as they pay tribute to longtime friend and husband, Dr. William Krall.



The Lowes are joined by friends Wanda and John Clark near a boulder in the inpatient care center gardens that memorializes Jim's father, who was cared for by Hospice of Hamilton last year.



The community joined Hospice of Hamilton for the Oct. 21 opening of the beautifully renovated Dr. William Krall Family Room, made possible by a gift from Jim and Janett Lowes.

pleasure to work with them on their philanthropic goals of supporting end-of-life care and honoring the memory of these two great men. Because of Jim and Janett, hundreds of patients right here in Hamilton will be comforted when they need it most."

To mark the generosity of Jim and Janett's gift and to celebrate the life of Jim's father, a garden boulder with a plaque was placed in the Hamilton Inpatient Care Center gardens. "Upon Jack's death, we decided that we wanted to make a gift to Hospice of Hamilton in recognition of the wonderful care he received," Janett says.

To learn about funding needs at our inpatient care centers in Hamilton, Blue Ash, Twin Towers and Beechmont Ave., contact Lori Asmus at 513-246-9230 or Lori.Asmus@TriHealth.com.

Light a tree, celebrate a life

Thousands of twinkling white lights illuminate our inpatient care centers each holiday season in remembrance of loved ones cared for by Hospice of Cincinnati. Honor someone special through our Celebration of Life displays and help Hospice of Cincinnati create the best possible and most meaningful end-of-life experience for all with your donation of \$25 per light. To participate in this year's Celebration of Life, please visit HospiceOfCincinnati.org/events or call 513-865-1616 to make a gift by phone.



The evergreens at our inpatient care centers glow with thousands of white lights during our annual Celebration of Life.

Brews, views and tunes

A variety of live musical groups from Caribbean to bluegrass to jazz had guests on their feet dancing at this year's Gourmet Melodies. More than \$105,000 in net revenue was raised for Hospice of Cincinnati, supporting its rich history of providing comfort, compassion and personalized end-of-life care to all those in need.

Held Aug. 10 at Anderson Pavilion in Smale Riverfront Park, the event treated guests to tasty small bites provided by the Anderson Pavilion catering team, paired with special wines and craft beers provided by Heidelberg Distributors. Many thanks to all our sponsors and guests for supporting Hospice of Cincinnati.



(left to right) Bethesda Foundation President Andy Swallow, Chris Swallow, Hospice of Cincinnati President and CEO Gayle Mattson, Jeff Anderson, Connie Dillhoff and Bethesda Foundation Board of Trustees member John Prout enjoy the live music at Gourmet Melodies.

Hikers unite

Nearly 1,000 people participated in this year's Hike for Hospice events held Sept. 7 at Summit Park in Blue Ash. Participants helped raise nearly \$40,000 in net revenue while remembering loved ones by walking in their memory. Their support helps us continue to provide programs that create the best possible and most meaningful end-of-life experience for patients and their families.



Team Marcia powers through with 20 hikers and a few furry companions. BACK ROW: Jim Knue, Tom Manner, Jason Sharp, Steve Kopicky, Laura Kopicky; MIDDLE ROW: Vicky Knue, Kathy Katrak, Marsha Manner, Laurie Sharp-Page, Kasey Kenkel, Linda Kenkel, Lauren Kopicky, Paula Gessiness, David Scacchetti; FRONT: Meg Ganulin, Beth Taylor, Leah Heiman, Olivia Kopicky, Alex Heiman and Gabriella Scacchetti, Hike for Hospice Committee chair.

Join the fun as a volunteer!

To join the volunteer fun for any of these annual events, contact Jen Beck at 513-865-1652 or Jennifer.Beck@TriHealth.com.

New program, one number to call

As our community ages, the need to support seriously ill patients is increasing. Hospice of Cincinnati aims to meet this need with a new range of services that addresses earlier stages of serious illness, well before hospice care is appropriate.

Just one phone call will provide access to all the resources needed, whether it's advance care planning, home-based palliative care, a companion volunteer, caregiver support, information and referral to community services, or education about care options.

"One hundred percent of people who call Hospice of Cincinnati need some level of support or care, and we want to be there for them," explains Gayle Mattson, President and CEO. "We want to relieve suffering and improve quality of life for all patients, beginning with advanced illness and throughout end-of-life care needs."

Look for more information on Hospice of Cincinnati's broadening range of services in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

Profiles in volunteering

Hospice of Cincinnati needs volunteers with all types of skills and interests. Here are just a few of our many talented volunteers who make a difference in the lives of patients and families every day.

Touching hearts

The melodic strains of an acoustic guitar float through the halls of the East Inpatient Care Center, bringing a smile to patients, families and staff. Hospice of Cincinnati volunteer and guitar player Steve Long enjoys touching people's lives with the melodies he plays and sings.

"It's such an uplifting experience," he explains. "Music has a healing balm to it, and I can see it touch the lives of patients, their families and the staff. Some even touch their hand to their heart." Long began sharing his music after several friends were patients at Hospice of Cincinnati. He thinks everyone in our community has a gift to share.

"Whether it's serving a meal, visiting a patient or whatever you want to do, we [volunteers] get so much more out of volunteering in return."

Ensuring no one dies alone

Volunteer Sandy Agricola turned intense grief into extreme empathy for people facing end-of-life issues. Trained in reiki and healing touch, her passion is working directly with patients.

"Every week, I spend time with a patient, giving the family some respite," she explains. "It allows them to run errands, attend appointments and take a break from the stress of caregiving." Agricola says she has developed softness where there was once



Volunteer Steve Long enjoys touching people's lives with his acoustic guitar at the East Inpatient Care Center.

grief from losing multiple family members, including her 16-year-old son. Because her son died alone in a tragic accident, Agricola trained as a vigil volunteer—a special person who sits with dying patients during their final hours.

"It's important to me that no one dies alone," she says. "I feel it's such an honor to be present during that spiritual transition."

Enhancing togetherness

Mary Donaldson, who delivers meals and helps feed

patients at The Margret J. Thomas Inpatient Care Center, saw a need for Hospice of Cincinnati volunteers at a time in her life when she was looking for something meaningful.

"The training gave me so much confidence," she says. "I like being a bright, smiling face—a happy person coming into a room, always trying to anticipate the patient and family's needs." She encourages anyone who wants to make a difference to volunteer for Hospice of Cincinnati.

Referring to the inpatient care center, she notes, "It is such a peaceful place. There is no heavy equipment or hospital smells. Loved ones are all around, and we all facilitate togetherness. It is really a nice opportunity."

For more information about volunteering, mail in the form below or contact Judy Russell, Volunteer Office Coordinator, at Judy_Russell@TriHealth.com or 513-246-9168.



Explore our volunteer opportunities!

Yes! I'm interested in learning about becoming a Hospice of Cincinnati volunteer. Please contact me.

Volunteers are the heart of Hospice of Cincinnati. From direct patient service (music, delivering meals, visiting with your certified pet or simply offering companionship) to behind-the-scenes office work, we love matching volunteers to their interests and talents! No experience is necessary, and we provide comprehensive training.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Tell us about any skills/interests you'd like to share: _____

Please return completed form in the enclosed envelope or visit HospiceOfCincinnati.org/volunteer/ and link to "Contact Us."

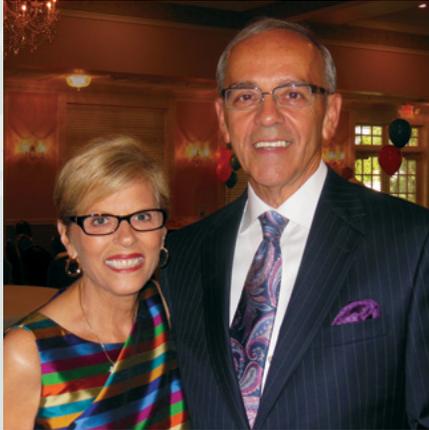
GRATEFUL GIVING

Inspiration, IRA powers couple's giving

John Dorr and his wife, Susan, have never had relatives cared for by Hospice of Cincinnati. Yet, they decided several years ago to include Hospice of Cincinnati as a recipient of generous annual distributions from John's IRA.

The decision came after learning about the compassionate, sensitive and respectful nature of hospice care through the care experiences of relatives living in other cities. They were so impressed by what they learned, they decided to explore their own local hospice as a potential charity to support.

The Dorrs knew friends whose parents received care from Hospice of Cincinnati, and they came to understand the impact of that care through many visits.



John and Susan Dorr appreciate the win-win aspect of leveraging John's IRA to both support Hospice of Cincinnati and improve their tax position.

"The concept of hospice care crosses boundaries," John says, noting how he and Susan became very interested in Hospice of Cincinnati over the years and decided to begin supporting its mission. "They really do take care of people and want them to be comfortable and have a dignified life to the end."

When John turned 70½, the couple's support turned to a tax-savings strategy that benefits donors as well as charities. The Dorrs now give each year by rolling over part of John's IRA required minimum distribution to Hospice of Cincinnati. This strategy better preserves their assets, which allows them to do even more for charities they support.

"We plan our giving. We know each year what we want to do," John explains. "We know the money is going to go to charity now or later so we've decided to do it now so we can see and enjoy how the money is being used."

With no children to inherit their estate, the Dorrs have used their strong Christian background as a touchstone for directing their giving.

"There's a strong need for hospice care for all of us in one way or another," he says. "Our hope for Hospice of Cincinnati is that they can care for more people through our support.

"We're caretakers of God's estate, and we're going to give it back."

Get more from your IRA

Your traditional IRA can help fuel your charitable goals. Consider the below:

- If you own an IRA and are 70½ years old, then every year you must take a withdrawal from your IRA—called a required minimum distribution (RMD)—which is subject to income tax.
- The RMD can push some IRA owners into a higher tax bracket, diminishing disposable income and charitable options.
- You can roll over your annual RMD directly to qualified charities using pre-tax assets. This is called an IRA charitable rollover, and it can help reduce your tax bill while supporting causes important to you.
- The law allows each IRA owner to roll over up to \$100,000 to charity per year. Married couples filing jointly can roll over up to \$200,000 each year if each spouse is an IRA owner.
- Your IRA charitable rollover gift counts against your IRA's RMD. This allows you to better control taxable distributions from your IRA and to preserve your assets.

If you're 70½, or older, rather than simply taking an IRA withdrawal this year, consider directing your IRA administrator to distribute a gift from your IRA to Hospice of Cincinnati. For more information, contact Laura Kumler at 513-865-5219 or Laura_Kumler@TriHealth.com.



Thanks for making a difference!

Gifts made in memory or in honor of loved ones help provide experienced and compassionate care to thousands of Hospice of Cincinnati patients and families each year. Please visit HospiceOfCincinnati.org to learn more about the impact of your donation and to view a complete listing of tribute gifts.

Community Gives Back

Santa goes ho-ho-ho for Hospice

Jeff Metz is no ordinary Santa Claus. Since his brother, Jim, passed away in Hospice of Cincinnati's care, Mr. Metz has played "Santa for Hospice" during the holiday season at local events and organizations for 12 years. He is honoring both Jim's lifelong commitment to Archbishop Moeller High School and Hospice of Cincinnati's assistance in enabling Jim to stay at home through his end of life. In lieu of payment, Mr. Metz requests a donation be made in memory of his brother to Hospice of Cincinnati.

"I feel blessed to do this in honor of my brother and Hospice," he says. "May God bless Hospice for allowing families to keep loved ones with them at home for as long as they can."

Mr. Metz has raised about \$10,000 in his brother's name over the past 12 years, supporting Hospice of Cincinnati's personalized, compassionate end-of-life care.

If you have an idea for a Hospice of Cincinnati fundraiser, we'd love to hear about it! Please contact Lori Asmus at 513-246-9230 or Lori_Asmus@TriHealth.com.



"Santa for Hospice" Jeff Metz joins "The Grinch" to entertain a group during the holiday season. His fee is for a donation to be made to Hospice of Cincinnati in his brother's name.

TriHealth Chief Nurse Executive joins Board

Jennifer Skinner, MSN, BSN, RN, Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive for TriHealth, recently joined the Hospice of Cincinnati Board of Trustees.

At TriHealth, Skinner focuses on best practices to ensure a consistent patient experience and standardized nursing care across the health care system. Prior to this role, she was a key contributor to organizational transformation and business objectives as Senior Director of Organizational Effectiveness.

In 2015, Skinner was asked to join other leading educators as well as technology and thought leaders at The White House Upskill America Summit. In 2016, she took part in The White House Employer Roundtable on Building a Skilled Workforce.



TriHealth Senior Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive Jennifer Skinner recently joined the Hospice of Cincinnati Board of Trustees.

"Being a nurse and experiencing Hospice's compassionate care firsthand during the death of my father, I understand the importance of patient advocacy," Skinner says. "I'm looking forward to bringing both my professional and personal experience to my new role on the Board."

Skinner's inspiration for becoming a nurse was her sister, who lives with some disabilities. She realized her sister needed someone to be her voice, just as nurses are a voice for their patients.

Hospice of Cincinnati President and CEO Gayle Mattson looks forward to Skinner's contributions. "We are thrilled to have Jenny join our Board of Trustees! Jenny brings deep knowledge and expertise in developing organizations and shaping clinical care to ensure patients and families receive the very best care experience."

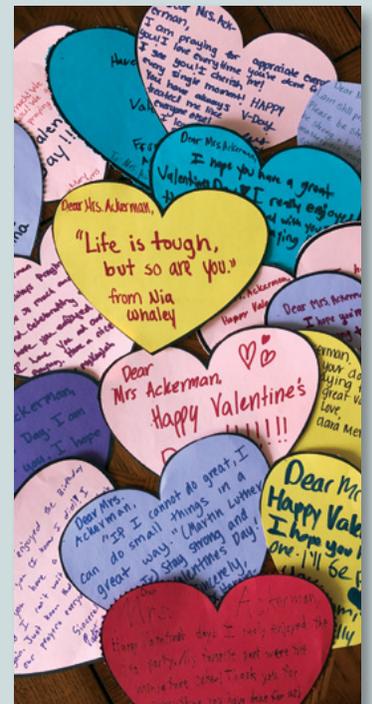
Penpals

Continued from page 1

"I really believe I wouldn't be here without them," Ackerman says. "I just can't let them down."

Hospice patients with strong family and social connections avoid social isolation and its effects. Ackerman's relationship with her prayer buddies and the Hospice of Cincinnati team have kept her energized and hopeful during her end-of-life journey. To learn more about the negative health effects of social isolation, see page 2.

Editor's note: Surrounded by love from family and her special friends, Bobbi Ackerman passed away in May.



Cheerful, encouraging notes from students—like these valentines—have been some of the best medicine for Hospice of Cincinnati patient Bobbi Ackerman.

Hospice of Cincinnati is sponsored by
Bethesda Inc., in collaboration with
TriHealth and Bon Secours Mercy Health.



LIVING WITH LOSS

Guidance from The Goldstein Family Grief Center

Tips for surviving the holidays

Facing the holidays while grieving the death of a loved one can be difficult. Here are some suggestions from our grief counselors to help make the season a little easier.



1. Be realistic

You can't do everything. Respect what your mind and body are telling you and lower your expectations about being at your peak during the holiday season.

2. Plan ahead

Think about how you want to handle family and holiday gatherings. Discuss your needs and share your thoughts with your family.

3. Embrace memories

Unpacking holiday decorations and writing or receiving cards can stir up memories. Allow yourself to cry, laugh or smile. Memories are made in love. No one can take these memories away.

4. Let your wishes be known

Talk with family and friends and let them know your needs. It's helpful to let your feelings be heard.

5. Change something

Don't be afraid to do something you never used to do. You can always stop if it doesn't feel right.

6. Recognize everyone has different needs

No two people grieve alike. Within your family, your needs will likely be different. What can you do as a family to support one another?

7. Maintain a routine for children

Children need some structure in their lives, and it's especially important to adhere to this during the holidays. Meal times, bed-times and regular sitters are all important, as is avoiding too much caffeine and sugar.

8. Set limits

Ask others to take over specific tasks such as baking, shopping and decorating. Don't try to live up to perceived expectations of others.

A service of Hospice of Cincinnati and Fernside, The Goldstein Family Grief Center offers free adult and children's programs available to all, including individual counseling. For more information, please call Hospice of Cincinnati at 513-891-7700 (option 4), Fernside at 513-246-9140 or visit HospiceOfCincinnati.org/grief-services.

The Goldstein Family
Grief Center

Promoting Healing for Life After Loss

