

Comfort Care

Passion for excellence. Compassion for people.



A newsletter for family and friends of Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services

Spring 2019

A Family's Journey with Hospice

by Linda Kent

Every family who has experienced the benefits of hospice has a story to tell. This story is about my mom, Elaine.

Elaine's story with hospice began at home in March of 2017. I had watched my mom, who was living alone, get less active and need more assistance with her daily activities. However, even with my experience as a nurse, I never associated any of that with the end-of-life process. It was a casual conversation with a physician at work who mentioned her mother had been in hospice that led me to have a conversation with my mom.

I guess mom was ready because the very next day her doctor's office called me to say that she had called them asking for a hospice consult. Mom qualified and a hospice nurse and an aide visited two days a week. Mom had been so afraid to get into her bathtub, afraid of falling. But when the aides assisted her, she trusted them and was finally able to bathe in her own bathtub. They were absolutely wonderful to her and she looked forward to their visits.

Mom was adamant that she stay in her home. However, one night my mom called and said, "I know where I'm going when I can't stay here any longer – the Hospice House." She said it would be the perfect place for her. So she went on a waiting list.

We all know mom stayed in her home longer than it was probably safe for her to do so. But when she was ready, hospice staff made her feel very welcome at Hospice House. She was very comfortable and lamented she should have come sooner. The staff made a huge effort to get to know her right away. They literally spoiled her! Their loving care was like a big warm blanket wrapped around her making her feel cozy and comfortable.

The Hospice House had all the needed equipment, but in a comfortable home environment. Just outside her window was a beautiful flower garden with a bird feeder. She spent time watching the animals outside her window – birds, chipmunks, squirrels, deer and even turkeys. Periodically, someone cut fresh flowers for her to enjoy in her room.



(continued on page 3)

Understanding Grief - Spring Seminar 2019

Ted Bowman

Ted Bowman is an educator, author and consultant who specializes in change and transition, whether it occurs in families, an organization, or the community. His emphasis is on aiding people in utilizing their strengths and the resources of others in facing change and transition.

Bowman teaches a graduate course on grief and loss at the University of Saint Thomas. He was Senior Trainer for the Wilder Foundation in St. Paul. In addition, Ted taught Family Education courses at the University of Minnesota, was on the faculty of the National Center for Family Literacy in Louisville, Kentucky and the United Theological Seminary.

Ted Bowman has published extensively, has served on many boards both local and national, and has received a number of awards for his service.

SEMINAR ONE

Shattered Dreams, Resiliency – Finding Hope

A community seminar for grief, healing and hope

Thursday, April 4, 2019 | 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Complimentary public grief seminar. No charge.

Registration not required. Offers 2 CEUs-DSPS

Life rarely happens as desired or planned. Detours and surprises are the stuff of living. While many such detours are disappointing, others shatter dreams and can throw people off their usual resilient responses. Unexpected medical or mental health diagnoses, family tensions, miscarriage, loss of job and divorce are but a few examples. In order for many to move forward, we must grieve lost expectations in order to dream new dreams and create new plans. In this session, participants will be presented with frameworks and tools for understanding and responding to shattered dreams.

SEMINAR TWO

Grief and Hope in Life's Intersections: Multiple Responses to Immediate and Chronic Sorrow

A seminar that explores grief and compassionate bereavement support

Friday, April 5, 2019 | 9:00 am – Noon
Fee: \$50

Open to the Public. Registration required online or at the door. Offers 3 CEUs-DSPS

Compassionate and skillful practitioners must be adaptive to do their work well. Not only are the situations of disruptive changes, illness, dying and death widely variable, the ways people grieve are many. Further, families are rarely dealing with one thing at a time. Even as dying is occurring, someone else may have lost a job, be receiving addiction treatment, moving to a new house, or giving birth.

In this experiential workshop, the best of palliative and grief caring for a wide range of presenting behaviors will be addressed. Attention will also be given the well-being of the practitioner.

Both seminars will be held at:

Holiday Inn & Suites – Cedar Creek, 1000 Imperial Avenue, Rothschild, WI

For more information or a program brochure contact: Wings—a Grief Education Ministry

Nan or Gary Zastrow 715.845.4159 or wings1@charter.net

Or Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services, Amy Kitsembel 715.847.2703 or Amy.Kitsembel@aspirus.org

Professional CEU's approved by WI DSPS for both programs.

Presented by Wings™-a Grief Education Ministry who partners with Aspirus Comfort Care & Hospice Services to provide these seminars as a community service. Other major sponsors include Brainard Funeral Home & Cremation Centers, Helke Funeral Home & Cremation Services, and Peterson/Kraemer Funeral Homes & Crematory. For a complete list of sponsors, visit www.wingsgrief.org

Walking Through Your Grief

by Amy L. Kitsembel, M.Ed., CSW, FT
Bereavement Coordinator



There are a lot of quotes, cards, sentiments and musings about grief. Wisdom from all humankind of all ages, creeds and beliefs abound in books and bumper stickers. The one I continue to be most fond of is: *You cannot go around grief - you must go through it.*

Grief is certainly not easy. In fact it is downright exhausting. Who can blame a soul for wanting to minimize this pain? It can take a toll on our energy, our spirit, our relationships and sometimes our well-being. Often times I will listen to folks who come to a crossroads in their need to walk through loss. For months or even years they have avoided looking their loss square in the “eye.” They tell the world and themselves they are fine, yet they are not.

Part of why we may push or compartmentalize our loss is society’s short attention span and social cue to be ‘better’ and ‘get better’...before we are ready. This is

where our head and heart really collide. One technique that can be helpful is intentional time of remembrance. I call it intentional ritual. This is time we set aside, shared with others or alone, that embraces remembrance, celebration, mournful missing of those we love that have died.

While funerals and life celebrations are powerful rituals, our hearts can greatly benefit through multiple times of ritual. We may need to find where we “commune” with our loved one in our grief and walk through the loss. Some find cemetery markers a sacred space; others may find sacred space at a fishing spot on the lake, camp fire, or perhaps at the dining room table with coffee. Sacred space and time may be to look at pictures, tell stories, listen to your loved one’s favorite song, select items of clothing to be made into a blanket, or raise a glass and toast as we remember them.

It is not time that heals a wound – it is what you do with the time. Be gentle with yourself – putting one foot in front of the other as you walk “through.”

“The best way out is through.” – Robert Frost

A Family’s Journey with Hospice (continued)

After living alone for many years, she enjoyed the company at Hospice House. She enjoyed the staff and volunteers, and sitting outside on the patio in the afternoon. She especially looked forward to hearing piano music offered in the great room by a volunteer.

My Mom loved trips to Door County. We knew how important her annual trip to Door County with her daughters and niece was, so we made plans to do it. Hospice staff made all the arrangements with another hospice program nearby in case help was needed. It was difficult, and when she came back she was exhausted, but it meant the world to her! Hospice helped us make that happen for her - they helped us maintain and strengthen our family bond.

Mom’s last night at Hospice House was Saturday, October 28, 2017. It would have been her 45th Wedding Anniversary. We played polkas and big band music for her and told stories.

I know it is their job as hospice nurses and aides to provide skilled, compassionate care, but they do it with a passion that is beyond their job description. We have such gratitude for this – their care of our entire family has made a difference in our lives that we will never forget.

We are so blessed to have this hospice program in our community and even more blessed to have the option of the beautiful Hospice House. To other people, my mom wasn’t anybody special or important, but the hospice staff and volunteers made her feel like the most special person in the world – they treat everybody that way. Every person should have the pleasure of being cared for like my mom when they are making their last journey on earth.

Record Breaking Year for Festival of Trees

It was a record-setting year for the 22nd Annual Festival of Trees. The event held by the Aspirus Health Foundation raised \$222,000 this year – the largest amount ever. Proceeds will support compassionate end-of-life care offered by Aspirus Comfort Care and Hospice Services, including two community bedrooms at Aspirus Hospice House for patients with identified financial need.

Executive Director, Kalynn Pempek, thinks there are a few reasons for the increase. “I think it’s the value that our community places on the hospice program and the end-of-life care at Aspirus. But I think it’s also a holiday tradition that many people have come to enjoy as a way to remember someone who may have passed in their life or to honor someone who is still with us.”

The main focus of the event is the many decorated and themed trees. Pempek describes a few of the more popular trees this year. “There was a tree that was decorated by Lynn Shields from River Valley Bank and it was in the theme of a little red truck. Another tree was called ‘The Back 40’, and it included all sorts of outdoor things – from fishing poles to ice skates to just things you would find in the outdoors.”

“We are extremely grateful for the support of businesses, individuals, and volunteers who helped make this community fundraising event a huge success,” stated Pempek. “We couldn’t accomplish this event without their leadership and involvement.”



Ken and Diane Becher decorated “Woodland Friends” tree. They have created Festival silent auction items for 11 years.

Camp Hope

Camp HOPE (Helping Others’ Pain End) is a wonderful place in central Wisconsin where children and teenagers can gather to work through the grieving process after a loved one dies. The camp gently guides the children and teenagers through the complex emotions by showing them that they are not alone. Parents can also participate in a retreat that runs in conjunction with their child’s program, but is kept separate.

Fun is the top priority at Camp HOPE. The children and teenagers learn that it is okay to laugh and play and that to do so is not disrespectful to the memory of the person who died. Through playing, sharing, and being together with peers and staff who know the pain, the children and teenagers realize that the emotions they are feeling are a normal part of grief. What is happening to them happens to others everywhere, and at Camp HOPE, their pain is understood and shared.

Because of the generosity of many individuals, groups and businesses, Camp HOPE is offered free of charge. The next camp dates are May 18-19 and September 28-29. For more information, visit www.camphopeforkids.org.

Thank you for your generous community support

Your donations are used to support our work beyond the reimbursement provided by insurance and other sources. This important funding is critical to meeting the needs of patients suffering from life-limiting and terminal illness and providing comfort for their families and friends.

Thank you! We are grateful to the many individuals, organizations, and corporations that help us fulfill our mission to provide compassionate hospice, palliative, and grief care for people in north central Wisconsin.

Partners in Health donors

We are grateful to you and the following individuals who have chosen to celebrate the life of another through a memorial or an annual gift. This list represents gifts from September 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. All attempts are made to accurately recognize donors. If you notice a misspelling, error, or omission, please contact the Aspirus Health Foundation at 715-847-2470.

Health (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Give With Liberty Employee Donations
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Clark welcomes guests to the Festival.

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Enid and Ann offer the gift of time at Festival of Trees.

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For his Eagle Scout project, Christopher Schneider from St. Anne's Boy Scout Troop 427, built and installed six bird feeders at Hospice House this fall.

Shirley Voge
Peggy Walton
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Judy Zillman
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Clark and Marilyn Zunker

Event and in-kind donors

Thank you to the many individuals and businesses that have provided important support for hospice through special events from September 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

2510
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Grief Support Opportunities

Memorial Services

Open to all community members.

Spring dates & locations: To be determined

Finding the Other Side of Sadness: Living the New Normal After Loss

Designed for those who have done some grief work and are ready to move forward.

Tuesdays – May 21 & 28 and June 4 & 11

6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Aspirus Wausau Hospital

No charge. Pre-registration required. Space limited.

Contact: Nan & Gary Zastrow, 715.845.4159

Family Memorial Art – “Treasuring Memories”

An art project for children (of all ages) and their families to memorialize a loved one.

Wednesday, July 24

1:00 – 3:00 p.m., Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum

Registration required. Please call 715.845.7010

Community Memorial Walk

Open to all. No cost.

Thursday, September 26

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon

The Compassionate Friends

A self-help support group for parents, grandparents and adult siblings.

Meets the third Wednesday of the month

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Contact Pamela at 715.581.4343

Please notify us if you change your address, or if you prefer not to receive *Comfort Care*.

715.847.2470 - ahf@aspirus.org