

2016  
fall  
news

# hospice

AN AMAZING GIFT FOR THE LIVING



35 years  
of hospice care  
inspired by our  
community



**HOSPICE  
CARE** *of*  
Southwest  
Michigan

# brenda HAHN

Brenda Hahn remembers well her first impression of Kalamazoo in 1968. Looking down from the small plane that brought her from Chicago to Kalamazoo, she thought, “What have I done?”

For a young African-American woman from Atlanta, 1968 was a turbulent time. Born into a large family without much money, Brenda worked hard in school, became valedictorian of her class, and won a scholarship to Kalamazoo College. Her move to Michigan brought her into a very different environment. The culture, the weather, and racial integration were all new to her.

Brenda studied biology at K and participated in community civil rights activities. She also met and married her husband, a student at Western Michigan University. Their son Calvin was born while they were both still at school.

From college, Brenda went to work for the Upjohn Company. For nearly 20 years, she did everything from research to training and development.

After she left Upjohn, Brenda worked for several companies throughout the United States. She and her second husband even lived in Italy for a time.

Brenda returned to Kalamazoo in 2009. She bought a house just down the street from her son and his family. Although she wasn’t able to work again for health reasons, Brenda volunteered for her church and for social justice organizations.

A sudden diagnosis of cancer in 2014 led to immediate surgery and a round of chemo therapy that left Brenda feeling ill and exhausted. Friends and family convinced her to try one more round of chemo in January of 2015, but her quality of life was terrible and she decided “no more.” Her doctor told her in July of that year, “Do the things you want to do and see the people you want to see.”

Her doctor told her...

“Do the things you want to do and see the people you want to see.”

Over the next months, Brenda visited loved ones and got her affairs in order, including planning her funeral. One day an acquaintance suggested hospice. Like many people, Brenda thought that hospice was only for the very end. Still, in May, she decided to give hospice a try.

Hospice care has far exceeded Brenda’s expectations. Dr. Seagle has managed her pain. She feels supported by her hospice team, who are dedicated to making her quality of life the best it can be. She is also working with grief support counselor, Layla Jabboori, to prepare her family for her death.

Brenda says that it is such a relief to have her medications delivered and the insurance billing handled. It takes so much of the stress out of her situation. She is able to save her energy for the things she loves, like working in her garden and visiting with her grandchildren. She has organized her garage and even power-washed her back deck!

Brenda decided to work with a volunteer and the Story Catcher program to record her life story. She wanted to leave a history for her family, to remind them of who she was, her life experiences, and what is important in life. She loves that she is able to tell her story in her own voice. The Volunteer Department made copies for Brenda’s son and family and for all of her siblings.

Brenda concludes, “Hospice is not at all what I thought it was. It’s an amazing gift for the living.”

Hospice has a firm policy of keeping all information about clients, including their names, in the strictest confidence. However, the clients profiled in this edition have given us permission to share their stories.



Brenda loves that she is able to tell her story in her own voice.

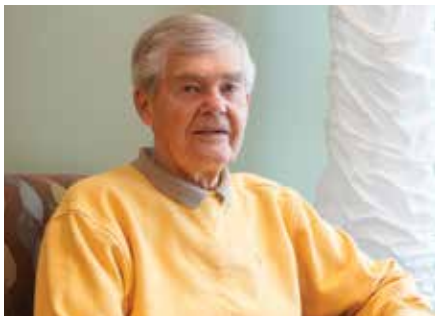
an amazing gift  
for the

living

# kathleen HAGEN



# KEN warren



## The President's Call to Service Lifetime Achievement Award

recognizes the importance of volunteers to America's strength and national identity. 2016 award winners from our agency are:

**Freeman Russell, Hildy Kerney,  
and Larry Janssen**

## 2016 HOLT AWARD WINNERS

The Reverend James C. Holt of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Kalamazoo played an important role in the creation of our agency in the early 1980s. Each year this award is given to volunteers who have consistently promoted the hospice philosophy and shown support and commitment to its mission.

**Kathleen Hagen**, shown left, at the awards ceremony with her daughter Regina, has earned the award for her service at Rose Arbor Hospice Residence. Kathy is a person who places herself where she is most needed. In 2015 Kathy contributed more than 200 hours of service, most of which was doing laundry at Rose Arbor. The balance was spent providing pet therapy to our clients as a team with her dog Snoopy (now retired).

The staff at Rose Arbor states that Kathy's smile enters the room first. Always taking the time to share her good humor and pictures of her grandchildren, she looks for ways to make the work of others a bit easier, even though she works full time herself.

**Ken Warren**, shown left, has earned the award for his work in hospice homecare. In 2015, Ken drove 10,094 miles visiting 31 clients throughout the year. He gave 593 hours of his time to volunteering. He visited 5 days a week and for 50 weeks. That left him 2 weeks for a personal vacation! On average, Ken offers companionship, respite, and transportation to up to 10 clients at a time. Ken is a truly unassuming, compassionate, and committed volunteer.

**All of our winners are proof that volunteers are people who don't want to be thanked for helping others, but want to thank others for giving them the opportunity to help.**



## berry THE SHOW DOG THAT SHOWS LOVE

Hospice therapy dogs are remarkable, gentle, and perceptive. Berry is no exception. She and her owner Debra Root Arnett have been with us as a therapy dog team since 2015.

Berry has an impressive pedigree. Born in 2009, she is an American Pitbull Terrier and Grand Champion show dog. Meeting Berry for the first time might be intimidating, but more likely than not, she will just come up quietly and lean against your leg. She radiates those qualities that a therapy dog must have to work successfully with hospice clients.

One recent client really loved Berry's visits. Berry weighs about 55 pounds, but she was allowed to climb up on the client's bed and the two of them often fell asleep together.

When the client died, her family insisted that their mother's dear friend, Berry, attend her funeral. Debra brought Berry into the church on the day of the service. Introductions were made, and someone slipped Berry a piece of cheese. But Berry was distracted and kept tugging Debra towards the front of the church. When they reached the casket, Berry put her nose close to her old friend. The client's daughter, Debra, and others who observed Berry's farewell were touched by her gentle loyalty and affection.

Debra says that she and Berry are honored to have contributed to this family's peace and comfort at the end of their mother's life.

how that got messed up. is there a certain type of video you want?

Thank you  
Debra Arnett



# rose ARBOR

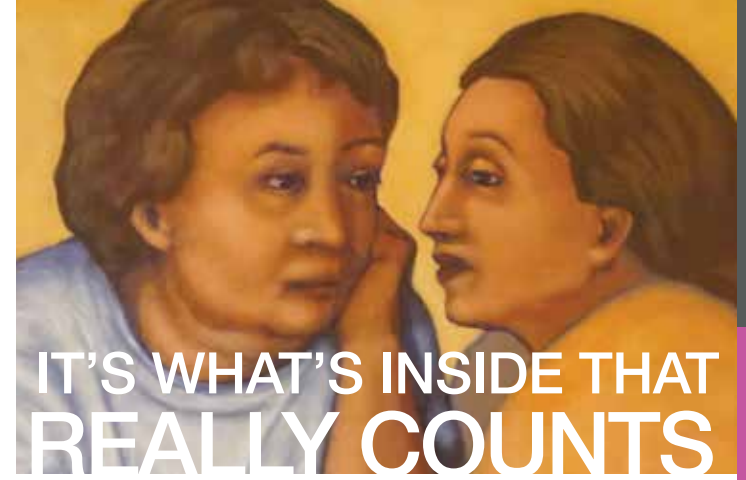
There is a good reason many people know us best for Rose Arbor, our hospice residence. It's not just because of its longevity or size, or its cottage-like construction and beautiful grounds.

They know Rose Arbor for what is inside, the real inside; the warmth and affection, the caring and comfort for clients and families.

The staff and volunteers at Rose Arbor take every opportunity to give relief to clients and families, to take away their burdens and stress, with gracious, soothing professionalism. Doctors and nurses, aides, social workers, chaplains, counselors, and volunteers are all trained in end-of-life care. They create a quiet and peaceful atmosphere, while nurturing times of true joy and laughter.

There are rooms personalized with items from home, pet therapy and family pets (even a client's parrot who

Beautiful birds sing and fly in the aviary. Families may purchase a rose so the memory of their loved one can be inscribed in our hand-made book. Paintings abound throughout the hallways and add to the peaceful environment. Well-kept family rooms give clients and families a private place to gather and even enjoy a meal together.



learned to say the nurse's name when she walked into the room), music therapy, tomatoes grown outdoors for a client who loved gardening, client and family trips to baseball games and movies, birthdays and holidays embraced and celebrated. There are birds singing in the aviary and volunteers playing piano in the great room, a quiet space for reflection. Favorite foods are brought in on request, and so much more.

This is the community's home away from home and if you or someone you love is facing a serious illness, we trust you will find comfort here.



client  
story

volunteers  
rose arbor

friends  
of hospice

adult day services  
grief support

events  
non discrimination



Jean Maile, CEO,  
Hospice Care of  
Southwest Michigan

# dear friends

**Donors to our annual Friends campaign strengthen and support our commitment to help all those who are coping with illness, aging, dying, and loss in our community.**

Their generosity ensures that,

- **Grief support** is there to provide grieving children and adults with the understanding and skills they need to learn to cope with their changed lives.
- **Music therapy** brings the healing power of music to our hospice clients, as well as to our guests at Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre.
- **Rose Arbor's** extraordinary care and peaceful surroundings are available for every hospice client who needs it.
- **Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre** creates a safe and welcoming atmosphere where older adults can enjoy their days, engaged in friendship and interesting activities.

You have your own reasons for supporting our work. Perhaps we cared for a friend or family member. You may know someone who was helped by one of our

grief groups. Or perhaps you simply believe that those at the end of life deserve the comfort and care that hospice provides.

**Sharon Soltesz has been a consistent donor to our agency since 1999. She describes her reasons for giving this way,**

**“My first experience of hospice came when I was in college and the mother of a good friend was dying. I saw how enormously comforting hospice support could be for the whole family.**

**I’ve been fortunate in my life and I believe in giving back. I also believe in the power of hospice care to make a difference in people’s lives.**

**I give to Hospice because they help people at what can be a very difficult time of life. They treat patients with kindness and compassion, making their last weeks and months much better than they would be otherwise. But they don’t just help the person who has entered Hospice! They also help the family and friends, during this time but also after their loved one is gone.”**

I know that you receive many donation requests every year. I hope that this year you will find your reasons for supporting our work and consider a gift to Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jean Maile, CEO



# friends of hospice

This list represents those who have generously donated through our annual **2015 Friends Campaign** since March 15, 2016. Without you our work could not be done.

## individuals

Connie Ashcraft  
Barbara Brundage  
Margaret Cancro  
Bill and Denise Clegg  
Donald and Dolores Cook  
Jo Ella Crouse  
Ray DeHaan

Allen and Maggie Dowd  
Barbara Farris  
Henry and Bonnie Franken  
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Sharon Soltesz  
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Pamela VanDerKlok  
Michael Verburg  
Charles and Peggy Vlieg  
John Waugh  
Ina Way  
Royal and Sharon Weaver  
F. Louise Whiffin  
Arno Yurk  
Alan Zupke

## organizations

The Burdick-Thorne  
Foundation  
The Mike and Sharon Seelye  
Family Foundation

## matching gifts

John E. Fetzer Institute Inc  
Pfizer Foundation Matching  
Gifts Program

Sharon Soltesz, left, has  
consistently donated to our  
agency since 1999.



# GRIEF support

During one of the most difficult times in your life, Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan is there. Our grief support programs are free and open to anyone in the community. For details visit:

[hospiceswmi.org/grief-support-calendar](http://hospiceswmi.org/grief-support-calendar)

## **grief connection drop-in group**

for those who have recently experienced the death of a loved one, meets twice monthly. morning & evening options.

## **grief matters**

for any adult who has experienced loss through death.

## **partner loss**

for those mourning the death of a spouse or significant other.

## **children/teens: Journeys**

a program for grieving children, teens and their families. meets year round.

## **grieving parents**

for those mourning the death of a child of any age beyond infancy.

## **parent loss**

a six-week workshop for adults grieving the death of a parent.



## **beth CODE** HOSPICE, A TEAM THAT GUIDES YOU IN UNEXPECTED WAYS

One morning at 9:30, Chaplain Beth Code received an urgent call from a client's fiancée. Could Beth help them arrange a wedding at their home — for that afternoon?

Beth immediately consulted with another one of our chaplains, Mary Beth Sarhatt, and Social Worker, April Davenport, and they began planning how they could make this important event happen. April contacted the County Clerk, who agreed to waive the three day waiting requirement and issue the marriage license. While Mary Beth and April arranged for flowers for the bride, Beth began preparing to perform her first wedding — ever. The client's fiancée told Beth that they had been together many years. They were devoted to each other and had been planning an August wedding when they realized that her fiancée was too ill to wait until then.

Beth and April arrived at the client's home and turned the client's bedside table into a sacred space with candles and a table scarf. Mary Beth lent Beth a clergy stole. The bride, marriage license in hand, was presented with a bridal bouquet. Everything was ready.

The guests who had been invited to visit the client that day didn't know that they would be attending a wedding, but someone had thoughtfully brought a wonderful meal that served as the wedding feast.

What Beth remembers from that day is how her teammates all worked together to make this unexpected and difficult time into an event of joy and celebration.



# jackie & LILLIE

## SPREAD THE GOOD WORD ABOUT ADULT DAY SERVICES

When Jackie needed a place for her mom, Lillie, to stay during the day, a family member suggested Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre. Jackie and Lillie took a tour and immediately agreed, "This is it!" The hours and activity schedule were perfect. Plus, they loved the beautiful environment.

Jackie taught first grade on the South Side of Chicago for many years. She and Lillie moved to Kalamazoo when Jackie bought a barbering and beauty business. Owning her own business makes for very busy days and Jackie says that she couldn't make it work if she didn't feel that Lillie was in a safe, caring place. Adult Day gives her peace of mind. She feels comfortable that Lillie is with people who are professional and skilled in working with older adults. She comments about "how kind, how nice" the staff is.

Lillie worked at the Chicago Board of Education, and she was very social and active in her younger days. She and her husband had seven children. Five are still living, but all except Jackie live out of state. When Lillie was diagnosed with dementia, Jackie found herself pretty much alone in caring for her.



Finding Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre has really helped Jackie and Lillie looks forward to coming. She asks Jackie every day if her shower is ready because she needs to go to Adult Day or everyone will miss her. And there is no doubt they would!

Lillie sang in choirs in earlier days and enjoys the singing and music activities at Adult Day. She also loves sports and used to play on a softball team. Now she plays balloon volley ball, one of our liveliest (and most competitive) activities. "The food is good here, and I exercise every day," Lillie says. She loves to dress up for the many holiday events at Adult Day, and on her birthday she brings in treats for all of her friends.

Jackie is pleased that Dr. Mirza, Lillie's neurologist, has taken her off some of her medications because he has seen so much cognitive improvement since Lillie began coming to Adult Day Services. At home, Jackie tells us her mom talks about the other guests she has befriended, and reports what a great day she had. Her beautiful smile shows Jackie that she means it.



Lillie is 89 years old, her older sister, Ida Johnson, above right, is 96. Ida recently moved, and on her way out to Florida, she joined Lillie at Adult Day for a week. There she participated in all the activities and she and Lillie dressed alike every day.





# fund RAISER THE WARM AND FURRY KIND

Our 2017 calendars highlight one of Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan's most beneficial services. The dogs who posed for the calendar and their owner volunteers are trained and certified for pet therapy. The simple sight

of these dogs and feel of their fur can bring peace and joy.

Our extraordinary volunteers and their animals have committed their time and passion to help our clients live well and are essential to the work we do whether in home hospice care or grief support, at Rose Arbor Hospice Residence or at Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre.

Our commitment to care is only possible through your support. Calendar sales help us provide hospice care, grief support and special services (like pet therapy) to everyone in our community.

SOLD @  
nov. 1 through dec. 31

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- Bark's Fifth Avenue
- Confections with Convictions
- Happytail Boarding Kennel
- Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan
- Kalamazoo Nature Connection
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- Milan Salon
- Oak Ridge Feed
- Pet Supplies Plus Westnedge & Gull Rd.

## cass/van buren

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- First State Bank, Decatur
- Mattawan Pet Supplies
- Urban Cottage, Mattawan

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if you would like to sponsor one of our events, contact [sarah.kerry@hospiceswmi.org](mailto:sarah.kerry@hospiceswmi.org), or 269.345.0273

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**hospice. an amazing gift for the living.**

**Volunteer** 160 active volunteers logged 13,424 volunteer hours for our agency in 2015. Our volunteers are nothing less than extraordinary because they commit their time to helping clients live well. They volunteer in clients' homes and nursing facilities, for our pet therapy program, at Rose Arbor Hospice Residence, with grief support for children and teens, and at Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre. Please join our amazing group of volunteers by emailing [volunteer.mail@hospiceswmi.org](mailto:volunteer.mail@hospiceswmi.org) or calling 269.345.0273. **Like us on Facebook** for events, stories and contests

**we would love  
to share**

we welcome the opportunity to speak at your club, church, or service organization and share the many ways Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan can help when someone is coping with serious illness, with aging, or with the loss of a loved one. Speakers are available almost any time at no charge. For more information, please contact Laura Latiolais at 269.345.0273.

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