“This is what life is about, helping each other through, even to the end.”

We guide and support individuals and their caregivers coping with illness, aging, dying, and loss by providing compassionate medical, emotional, spiritual, and personal care.

Hospice care inspired by our community since 1981.
This is what life is about, helping each other through, even to the end ~ Bobby

“As an admissions nurse for Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan, I often witness a common response from families when we first meet: contacting hospice feels like an admission of defeat, like throwing in the towel. I can see it on their faces as I enter the room.

I had a recent admission visit with a gentleman, his wife, and his son. The body language of all three sent a message that they were afraid and not interested in hearing what I had to say. Once they began to understand how pain management, comfort care, and the emphasis on quality of life could make such a difference in all of their lives, the atmosphere began to change quickly. The client began to relax, his face softened and he became friendly and talkative. His wife and son also participated in the conversation. I think they were all relieved and began to have a sense of belonging to the world again. We had started to build an atmosphere of trust. They could see that hospice would advocate for them and care for them. The client and his family realized that they had some quality time left and hospice was going to help them maximize that time together. Fear had left the room.

The clients and families I have met have had an impact on me. My interactions with my own family and with members of the community are different now. I react in a calmer, less fearful manner, and do what I can to help them face difficult choices and hardships in a better frame of mind. This is what life is about, helping each other through, even to the end.”

Bobby Shell, Admissions Nurse

Hospice gives you and your family hope that your time before the end of your life will be as comfortable and meaningful as possible. Our specialized team ensures that you will be cared for physically, emotionally and spiritually, and that your family will receive the care and support they need.
new grief group “gets it”

Katie Salik, Madalyn Gildea, and Usher Whitledge are each under 30 and all recently lost their fathers. They are three of the six people who attended our very first grief support group for 18 to 30 year-olds. All had tried other support groups and were unsatisfied, mostly because the participants were older and dealing with different types of grief.

With Hospice Grief Counselor Kate Kirk-Greenberg, LMSW, as their leader, they could create a supportive environment in which to share memories of loved ones and learn about common grief reactions. They were able to explore sibling relationships and changes in the family, as they developed ideas for commemoration and learned to move forward without forgetting.

Camaraderie is the first thing you notice about these three young women. They say that the 4 week support group was far from what they expected — everyone clicked. Madalyn says, “I have friends, but they can’t really understand like the friends I’ve made in this group.” Usher adds, “Kate gives us a topic and lets us go with it, it flows, there is no pressure. Kate gives us wisdom, empowerment, and validation of our feelings.”

One of the emotions central to the group was anger, Katie explains, “I lost this time with my Dad, it isn’t fair!” To release her anger Usher cut down a tree with a hand saw (of course wearing protective eye wear).

Kate Kirk-Greenberg also talks to the participants about self-care. Katie had a manicure the day we did this interview. Usher loves to bake. The group had a potluck their last session and Usher made cream puffs that looked like baby chicks.

When the young women were leaving the interview, they were already planning Usher’s 21st birthday party, including everyone from their group. “We stand together,” says Madalyn. “We call the group ‘Our Squad’.”

FYI: Kate also gave this group many helpful resources. One is called “What’s Your Grief” a blog started by two young women who are mental health professionals with 10+ years of experience in grief and bereavement.
There is something about Ellen. More than being the oldest guest at Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre, Ellen is a bright light, a smiling presence with more than a bit of spunk.

Ellen grew up on her German parents’ farm in Big Rapids, Michigan. She says, “It was work, work, work, all the time.” Her mother left when she was young and she and her brother and sisters were raised by their father alone. Her brother left school early to work the farm, and Ellen finally had to quit in the tenth grade to help out at home. She has many views on modern day conveniences and methods, especially about raising children with so much excess. She remembers that growing up she and her siblings had a set of blocks and a wagon to play with.

Ellen married a farmer and theirs was not an easy life. She has outlived her brother, her sisters, and two of her children, but she is still grateful to have so much family around. She lives with her daughter, Kathleen, who works as a court reporter. She has a second daughter, Rayleen, whom she visits in Saginaw, as well as seven grand and many great-grandchildren.

“I成人 Day is the perfect place for me”, says Ellen. “The staff couldn’t be better, and the food is good.”

Kathleen, Ellen’s primary caregiver, says, “Before Adult Day I had sad tears, now I have tears of relief. I desperately wanted to find a solution so I could work and keep Mom living at home, and Adult Day is the answer. Not only is it possible for me to work and take some time for myself, Mom just beams when she comes home from Adult Day. She doesn’t want to miss anything that goes on there!”

Tricia Roekle, program assistant, says, “I loved Ellen from the first time I met her. She may be in a wheelchair, but it doesn’t stop her from getting around and sharing her stories.”

Recently, Ellen is feeling the full weight of her 99 years and wonders why she is still around. Nicole Troxell, program assistant, tries to motivate Ellen to keep going, reminding her of what she can do rather than what she can’t. What she can do is share her empathy with the other guests. Because of the difficulty and loss in her life, she can see when others need encouragement. If she spots someone who is sad, or confused, she is the first one over to comfort and cheer them up with her quick wit, amazing smile and maybe even a game of cards. Ellen, to everyone who knows her, is someone special.
I truly believe that with her family and friends around her all the time, she was happy. ~ Rick

Jerri Remynse led what some might call a typical life for her time. She married young and delighted in her four children when they began to arrive. They and her home were her first priority.

Her children were grown when her first marriage ended and a year later she met Rick Remynse and a new life began for them both. They married in November of 2009 and honeymooned in Cabo San Lucas. Back home the focus was again on family, grown larger with the blending of their two families and the addition of grandchildren. Jerri helped care for Rick’s parents, worked part-time, and volunteered. She and Rick began to build a new house. Life was full and satisfying.

Just two years later, Jerri received a diagnosis of breast cancer. After extended treatment, the disease went into remission, but returned in August of 2014. With the support of her family, Jerri went to Rose Arbor, our hospice residence. They wanted to be sure that she would never be alone and would have all of the medical support she needed to keep her comfortable.

Jerri’s mother died at Rose Arbor, so this was the family’s first choice when Jerri could not stay at home. “Jerri was comfortable there, physically, and emotionally,” Rick tells us. “She never complained, or wanted for anything.”

Rick says that Jerri’s time at Rose Arbor somehow made it easier for him and the family to let her go. “The quiet steady pace of the professional staff was comforting to us”, Rick says, “We were kept informed of everything we needed to know. There were no surprises.”

Jerri was able to enjoy her family and Rick was able to bring Jerri’s much-loved kitten, Hunter, to Rose Arbor for day visits. Seeing Hunter added to Jerri’s comfort and feeling of home. Jerri also enjoyed the music therapy that is available to all of our clients.

Rick says that on Jerri’s last day, the family asked how she would die. “One of the staff carefully explained what would happen with her breathing. And it was exactly how she passed away. Knowing what to expect, I was able to be there and hold her as she passed away. I just wanted to hold her so she wouldn’t be alone.” Jerri died on February 16, 2015 at Rose Arbor, surrounded by the people she loved.

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.
I believe in the power of giving.

hospiceswmi.org/donations

Thanks to our generous donors we are able to do the right thing every day.

2016 Friends Campaign

The following list of individuals, businesses and organizations represents those who have generously donated to Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan through our annual as of March 31, 2017.

We are also grateful to those who support our work through memorial, United Way, matching, and planned gifts, as well as event sponsorships and participation. Thank you to all of our generous donors. If you would like to make a donation, please call Laura Latiolais at 269.345.0273.
help more people

**Glenn Arbor Hospice Residence** in Battle Creek, part of our new area of service.

Glenn Arbor is designed with our clients and their families in mind: quiet, beautifully kept grounds, outdoor spaces with comfortable seating, cottage-style rooms that allow families to stay overnight, and family gathering rooms. The residence offers comfort, privacy, and dignity for the whole family. Every client room has a view into the woods.

At Glenn Arbor registered nurses deliver skilled care, including pain and symptom management, as needed 24-hours a day. Our hospice physicians evaluate clients on a routine basis. Professional counselors provide emotional, spiritual and grief support.

Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan serves Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph & Van Buren Counties.
...our focus is always on guiding and supporting those who are coping with illness, aging, dying, and loss. ~ Jean

true to mission

During 2016, we strengthened our ability to prepare our organization for the future, while caring for more people in our community.

- We announced the plan to purchase the Bronson at Home hospice program, (including a ten-bed facility in Battle Creek), in March 2017. During 2016, we worked with Bronson to complete due diligence and prepare for a smooth transition for clients, staff and volunteers.
- We saw steady growth in the number of clients we serve in our hospice and adult day programs, achieving our highest numbers in both programs in the fall.
- The Board of Directors approved changes in the bylaws and articles of incorporation to move the organization from a membership to a directorship organization.
- We provided training to three community organizations to help them establish programs that would expand awareness of the importance of having conversations about end-of-life wishes and advance directives.
- The Board of Directors voted to provide one million dollars toward an endowment that will establish a Fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine at the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker MD School of Medicine. As part of their fellowship curriculum, physicians will rotate through our hospice program. We will have an active role in educating the next generation of doctors in hospice and palliative care, increasing the capacity and availability of this important area of healthcare in our community.

As we seek out additional ways to ensure that everyone in our community has access to quality hospice care, we know that there is work that must come first. Whether we are helping individuals and families talk about, reflect on, and document their wishes for end-of-life care, or helping young medical professionals develop expertise in hospice and palliative care, our focus is always on guiding and supporting those who are coping with illness, aging, dying, and loss.

Jean Maile, CEO
Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan
jean.maile@hospiceswmi.org
Hospice Butterfly Release

6.16.17

HOSPICE CARE of Southwest Michigan

golf4hospice.com

Every swing goes a long way for hospice!
Angels Crossing Golf Club, Vicksburg • 9 a.m. Scramble
2 p.m. Lunch & Awards
To register or sponsor, visit golf4hospice.com
or call Sarah Kerry at 269.345.0273

Major Sponsors

Druskovich Dental PC
In honor of Dawn & Randy Vander Ploeg

Humphrey®

8.19.17

Hospice Butterfly Release

Release a butterfly to honor or remember a loved one.
Leila Arboretum, Battle Creek • 9 a.m. Flutter Fun Walk
11 a.m. Butterfly Release
To order a butterfly or sponsor this event, visit the events tab
at hospiceswmi.org or call Melissa Mackinder at 269.345.0273

Major Sponsor:

Feldpausch Family Foundation
 Maximum impact, minimum effort.
Downtown Kalamazoo Mall • 4 p.m. activities begin
6 p.m. Point 1K Kick-Off & Raffle Drawing
To sponsor or participate visit point1k.com
or call Sarah Kerry at 269.345.0273

Major Sponsors:

Every calendar helps us support special services (like pet therapy!) in our community.
Pre-orders begin Oct. 1 • Community sales begin Nov. 1
Purchase calendars at Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan offices, Pet Supplies Plus in Kalamazoo, and other community sites.
For a complete list of retail sites, visit the events tab at hospiceswmi.org.
For sponsorship opportunities, call Sarah Kerry at 269.345.0273

Major Sponsor:
I want to make every moment, even at the end, joyful and lived the way the client wishes. ~ Lynne

“One of my favorite volunteer assignments was with a client who wanted her husband’s wooden Christmas ornaments repainted. It took four visits to complete the task, but we had the best time! We talked about everything and I think I made her days a little lighter.”

Lynne Desimone trained with our volunteer department last fall and made her first volunteer visit a short time later. However, Lynne is not new to volunteering. She grew up in Iowa where her father was a pastor. She says her whole life has involved volunteerism of some kind. Lynne moved to Kalamazoo five years ago when her husband got a job here. They have two grown sons, 24 and 27, who are both married and settled back in Iowa. Lynne wanted a regular, but flexible volunteer schedule; that’s why she chose our agency.

Because of Lynne’s outgoing demeanor, our volunteer coordinator Kelly Rand, suggested that Lynne would excel with hospice homecare clients. “I was surprised to find how easy it is to interact with clients and find things in common,” Lynne says. “I want to help someone in a tough situation stay at home if that’s what they want to do.”

“I thought that the volunteer training was involved, yet incredibly necessary. There were no surprises because I was so prepared for almost every situation. I’m not here to judge, I’m here to help.” Lynne explains. “My duty, and my instinct, is to provide happiness and compassion to my clients. I truly believe the hospice philosophy of making every moment, even at the end, joyful and lived the way the client wishes.”

Lynne and all of our other volunteers do important work every day. If this story piqued your interest and enthusiasm to volunteer, please call Cindy Buckley at 269.345.0273, or visit hospiceswmi.org/volunteers.

Volunteers needed:

• Journeys Grief Support for Children & Teens
• Adult Day Services at Oakland Centre
• Hospice Home Care
• Rose Arbor & Glenn Arbor Hospice Residences
We couldn’t have cared for mom alone. We just couldn’t have. ~ Dawn

“When my mother was critically ill and we called in Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan they sat down and talked to us about a lot of things, about how they were going to proceed. And they talked to my mom too because her mind was fine.

Seriously, to me it’s bigger than just yourself to have hospice in place. Mom was really thankful for them. It was good we had hospice because it gave me somebody to call if I needed to and I needed to! My mother wasn’t sad… I think back how the nurse explained everything to my mother. And my mother wanted us to be okay and it was very peaceful being with her when she died.

The caring, really caring, we felt that. So, I would say to anyone who has reservations and maybe didn’t know anything about hospice… me and my brothers and sisters we couldn’t have done it with just us, we couldn’t have. We wouldn’t have known what avenues to go through to get things done. And with hospice, it couldn’t have been done any better.”
hospice is a team that supports and guides you in any language.

We serve everyone regardless of race, color, ethnic or religious background, national origin, citizenship, age, height, weight, disability, marital status, familial status, or gender and do not discriminate based on citizenship, age, height, weight, disability, marital status, familial status, or gender.

ATTENTION: Language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1.269.345.0273 (TTY: 1.844.578.6563).

Espanol Servimos a todas las personas independientemente de su raza, color, origen etnico, formación religiosa, nacionalidad, ciudadanía, edad, altura, peso, discapacidad, estado civil, situación familiar o género, y no discriminamos por motivos de embarazo, estereotipos sexuales, identidad de género, orientación sexual o cualquier otra característica protegida por la legislación federal o estatal.

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safe place for grieving kids

A young family suddenly lost their husband and father, Roger, to a heart attack 18 months ago. The staff at Bronson Hospital recommended that they contact Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan about Journeys, a grief support program for children, teens, and their families. They met with grief counselor Jamie Nowaczynski to make sure that Journeys could give them the support they needed. Six weeks after Roger died, the family attended their first Journeys group.

Mom, Amanda, says, “We were lost before we went to Journeys. The girls, Marti, 16, and Lilly, 13, were having some troubling emotions, so many things changed when my husband died. With Journeys they are steadier.”

Amanda also has a two-year-old son, Zayden. Two teenagers and a toddler mean that Amanda has a busy schedule. She appreciates that dinner is provided on group nights. While Zayden plays in the nursery, Amanda joins the support group for parents and caregivers to learn how best to help her children during this difficult time.

Marti, a budding fiction writer, likes the focus of Journeys. She belongs to the “Lime” group with other teens around her age. “I liked the music therapy in my group. The teens got to play instruments along with the music therapist; it really felt good.”

Memorial activities, like the holiday ornament, allow her to honor her father in a positive light. She also has made some Facebook friends among her peer group.

Lilly, belongs to the “Orange” group and says, “I am shy and Journeys helps me come out of my shell. I can even connect more with friends outside Journeys, like with my one friend whose dog died. It’s still a loss. I really liked the board game we played at Journeys where we went through the emotions we were feeling and put them into words. In my room, one of the volunteers leading our group is also a school counselor, that’s kind of cool.”

Journeys is open to all children and teens at no charge and supported by donations from the community. Since 2002, Journeys has helped hundreds of families in this community heal after the death of a loved one. If you know a grieving child, whom you think could benefit from this program, email journeys@hospiceswmi.org, or call 269.345.0273.

We were lost before we went to Journeys. ~ Amanda

I understand it’s not my responsibility to save everyone. I hope that my faith in humanity is not wasted. ~

Taken from a Journeys group exercise by Marti Lynn Horein
Frequently when working with hospice patients and families I find myself reaching back to the original reasons I became a physician to find the intellectual and emotional skills I need to be present and helpful to them. Their poignant situations strip away the hopefulness of medical education and the ever-present idea that there will be something to do that will lead to improvement and a happy ending. On the contrary, one becomes inescapably aware of the truth that someone is dying. Our sole obligation in these situations is to help find meaning and alleviate suffering, in short, to be part of a healing process.

I have never concentrated on the healing process so singularly, as when I am with a patient who is dying. To make a connection that provides healing and comfort at the end of life is a tremendous experience that enriches both parties in ways that are difficult to describe, but one that happens routinely in hospice care. The feeling for me is very close to what I envisioned being a physician would be like when I mused about it early in my training.

Michael Raphelson MD, Medical Director, Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan

This care and connection is what we would all wish for our loved ones, friends, and neighbors at the end of life. With your support, Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan will continue this important work and seek out new ways to be part of the healing process.

Whether you support our work through memorials, our annual Friends of Hospice campaign, United Way, or a planned gift, every contribution is important and makes this special care, this human connection, available to everyone in the community, regardless of financial circumstances. Thank you.

hospice. believe in the power of giving.