

FAMILY

to Family



CELEBRITY HOOPS FOR HOSPICE

Scores

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Dear Friends,



Often, we meet patients and families coming into our care who are adjusting to the unexpected. This may take the form of a diagnosis or a difficult symptom. Maybe it is the economic or emotional strain of life-limiting illness. Perhaps it's the disruption to things planned that are now undone.

Our role is to help people adjust and prepare as best they can so that they can approach their emerging reality with confidence.

But that doesn't mean we don't love a *good* surprise!

As you'll read, our benefactors, including our volunteers, are agents of surprise in ways that create delight, bring relief, ease worries, and assure people navigating end of life that they are cherished and supported.

Haircut? Done. Christmas presents? Harry Potter-themed birthday party? Done and done. Caregiver respite? Air conditioner for a patient with pulmonary disease? Weighted silverware for a Parkinson's patient? Check, check, and check.

The list goes on and on, and it remains a hallmark of our care.

On behalf of our staff and our patients and families, thank you for all you do to help us deliver good surprises.

Gratefully,
Jennifer Vennare
President, Family Hospice

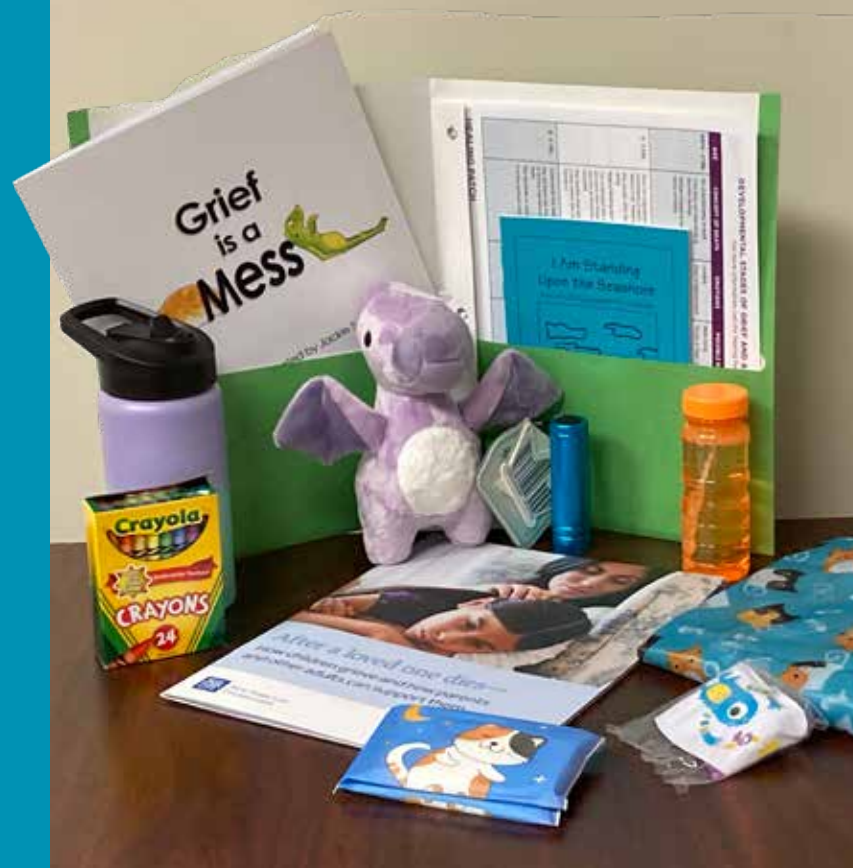
RESOURCES FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

As difficult as grief and death can be for adults, these experiences are even more complex when children are affected. Family Hospice staff have identified opportunities to support this vulnerable population with age-appropriate resources that create room for conversation, understanding, and comfort.

"Children experience grief differently than adults, and the adults around them are not always aware of how best to support them through and after a death," says Elizabeth Schandelmeier, Family Hospice senior bereavement counselor.

Selected with different developmental age ranges in mind, the inpatient hospice unit in Lawrenceville has secured a variety of children's books which can open a conversation with a child about a pending loss. Additionally, grief totes, colorful bags which include plush toy art activities, coloring books, journals, and legacy items, are distributed as needed to patients' young family members throughout our service area.

"These resources help families prepare for loss and help children cope with abstract concepts such as death," explains Erin Bernhardt, senior manager, clinical operations. "We are grateful for the benefactor support which allows us to address the unique needs of children."



A Cut Above

Michaëlle Pilardi and Bob Whitfield



Hospice as a movement and a model of care for people at end of life was founded by volunteers, and volunteers remain vital to a strong, compassionate hospice program. As members of the multidisciplinary care team, skillful patient volunteers are often called upon to meet needs beyond the scope of what other team members can provide. Their unique contributions to quality of life ease the experience of life-limiting illness for both patients and caregivers.

One such person is Michaëlle Pilardi, who has been volunteering with Family Hospice since 1996 when she answered a call for volunteers that appeared in her church bulletin. Michaëlle is a hair stylist of long-standing in the community and continues to work part-time at a salon. She subscribes to the adage, "If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life."

This sentiment applies to her role as a volunteer as well. Over the years, Michaëlle has visited countless hospice patients to cut and style their hair.

True to the hospice philosophy, she tailors her efforts to each person's expressed wishes.

"I give them a mirror when I am finished. I can see how grateful they are, and that is my reward," says Michaëlle.

What Michaëlle describes in simple, humble terms has a profound impact. Just ask Wendy Whitfield, whose father, Bob, has had the benefit of Michaëlle's care.

"I can't get Dad out of the house, so it's a godsend to me. He still has a good head of hair, and it's important to him," Wendy says. "When we know Michaëlle is coming, we look forward to it. She makes him feel good about himself and makes him feel special."

Known as a loving and caring man in word and deed, Bob amplifies his gratitude with hugs. Wendy notes that a visit from Michaëlle means it is likely to be a three or four hug occasion, a measure of a good day. Says Wendy, "It's uplifting for both of us."

Become a Volunteer

There are many opportunities to volunteer with UPMC hospice providers in support of patients and families. These include:

- Patient/family companionship, including patients at our inpatient unit, in patients' homes, or senior living communities
- Bereavement support
- Pet-assisted visits
- Sharing musical talents
- Providing haircut and styling services
- Sewing
- Reiki
- Assisting with fundraising events
- Office clerical support

All volunteers receive training and orientation. Training programs are offered at various locations and times to accommodate the busy schedules of our diverse volunteer population. Volunteer training is free.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering with Family Hospice, please contact Nick Petti at **412-651-1602** or pettin@upmc.edu.

Support for the Family Hospice Foundation impacts daily life for 2,100 friends and neighbors in western Pennsylvania annually who are navigating end of life with the benefit of the expertise and compassion our multidisciplinary team.

We are pleased to share a summary of how that support is applied to enhance care.



Gifts at Work

Family Support

Family members tending to loved ones in the home setting often experience heightened levels of stress as they oversee medical, personal, financial, and household needs. Donor support has alleviated caregiver stressors with the provision of washable bed pads, extra large twin sheets to fit electric beds, medication aids such as pill crushers and pill minders, and handbooks with personal planners and caregiver fatigue information for family members.

In addition to items for the home, Family Hospice also provided respite stays for caregivers at Hope Grows Iris Respite House. This bed and breakfast offers private rooms, specialized counseling and therapy sessions, garden tours, and an indoor pool. A rested, relaxed, and recharged caregiver will be better able to support their loved one when they return.

Outside community support was also made available to families with children during a “Cooking With Kids” class. The workshop provided a safe space for parents and children to discuss their grief and strengthen their bond. Maggie Cagney took the class with her daughter after losing her father and her daughter’s “Pap Pap.”

“Living life alongside my dad was a blessing to my daughter and me,” she reflects. “When his cancer progressed and our time was limited, Family Hospice offered comfort and community resources like the cooking class to help us cope with his illness and his loss.”

General Donations

A total of \$91,621 will fund the following in 2024:

Bereavement

- **Stationery** for comforting notes, community memorial services in spring and fall, grief support groups. This benefits 4,000 bereaved.
- **Cooking for One classes.** The class size is 16 for each program.
- **Grief totes** for children containing activities that promote healthy habits and supportive resources for adults, and age-appropriate children’s books covering grief. This benefits 230 children.
- **Personalized grief text messaging** program benefits 35 bereaved.

Clinical and Complementary Care

- **Caregiver toolkits** containing tailored bedding, a pill crusher, handbook, and planner for patients at home benefits 650 families.
- **Treatments not covered under Medicare Benefit** such as dialysis, IV cardiac medications, radiation, and blood transfusions for patients transitioning to hospice. This benefits 30 patients.
- **Aroma, art, massage therapy, and comfort music** are all used to help patients. Personalized care programs to alleviate pain and stress and enhance physical and emotional well-being benefit 500 patients and families.
- **Overnight stays at the Hope Grows Iris Respite House** for fatigued caregivers benefits 24 caregivers.

Specialized Support Programs

- **Recognition and honor guard ceremonies** for nurses and veterans. A presentation of flowers, pins, certificates, and blankets to nurses and veterans who have served their community and country. Benefits 200 patients.
- **Literature, prayer items, and other resources** used for spiritual and emotional support. Benefits 600 patients and families.

Angels On Call Fund

Funding is for resources for patients with financial limitations and is provided as requests are submitted.

In 2023, the Angels On Call Fund fulfilled the following requests in the amount of \$1,950:

- Fidget pillows for patients with dementia.
- New power chair arm trough and a new back pad for ALS patients.
- Weighted silverware for a patient with Parkinson’s disease and hand tremors.
- Grocery gift card for a patient facing eviction and no means to buy food.
- Air conditioner for a home patient with COPD.
- Pajamas, sheets, and blanket for a patient under home care.

Carol Sayers Vockel Fund

In 2023, the Carol Sayers Vockel Fund for Community and Volunteer Education provided \$1,800 in support for a “lunch and learn” event. Volunteers learned how to identify family burnout and provide self-care tips.

Imagine Harmony Fund

Funding for final life experiences is provided as requests are submitted.

In 2023, the Imagine Harmony Fund fulfilled the following requests in the amount of \$4,920:

- Thanksgiving meals for patients and their families. Twenty-two patients were served turkey dinners to relieve stress and enjoy what very well may have been their last holiday together.
- Wheelchair transport for a patient to celebrate her 97th birthday at her son’s home.
- Birthday parties for five patients, including a special Harry Potter themed party for an 11-year-old girl.
- Wedding anniversary parties for two patients.
- Haircut and wig for a 62-year-old woman with lung cancer.
- Wheelchair transport for a patient to visit the casino.
- Christmas presents for the four children of a 35-year-old mother.



CELEBRITY HOOPS FOR HOSPICE

Scores



2023 marked the first-ever Celebrity Hoops for Hospice event benefiting resources and support for bereaved children. This includes coping sessions, totes filled with materials to help with the grieving process, remembrance pillows, books, and the Cooking with Kids bereavement workshop.

Thank you to all our sponsors, players, and guests who came out for the inaugural Celebrity Hoops for Hospice event in October 2023. Pittsburgh Pirate legend Steve Blass coached his Blasters to a slim 48-47 victory over Wregget's Wreckers, coached by Stanley Cup Champion Ken Wregget. While a competitive spirit was on full display, players spoke graciously about their common purpose and the meaningful cause.

Pittsburgh Steelers Louis Lipps and Mike Logan, Pittsburgh Pirate Neil Walker, Pittsburgh Penguin Tyler Kennedy, and Heidi Lagares-Greenblatt of "Survivor" are among the 2024 celebrity participants confirmed at time of publication.

2024 Sponsors



Mark your calendars for 2024 Celebrity Hoops for Hospice, on Wednesday, Oct. 9 at Baldwin High School. Tickets go on sale this summer. Visit UPMC.com/FamilyHospiceDonate. Sponsorships are available. Contact **Christine** at 412-295-1472 or **Dianne** at 412-639-4975.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Donations of \$500 or more are recognized in print. List reflects donations made in 2023.

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Please direct questions, comments, and/or requests to **Christine Jamison**, Director of Development, at **412-572-8812** or **jamisonc2@upmc.edu**.

Go Green! If you would prefer to receive your copy of our newsletter via e-mail, contact **Helen Stickney**, Development Assistant and Donor Database Manager, at **412-572-8457** or **stickneyhe@upmc.edu**.



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Upcoming Family Hospice Events

By participating in a Family Hospice special event or fundraising activity, you are also supporting our mission of providing quality, compassionate end-of-life care to our patients and families across western Pennsylvania.

For questions, ticket ordering, or more information, contact Dianne Whetsell at **whetselld@upmc.edu**, call **412-572-8874**, or visit **UPMC.com/FamilyHospiceDonate**.



**The 37th Annual
Charity Golf Outing
Monday, May 13, 2024**

South Hills Country Club

Shotgun start 10 a.m.



**Spring Raffle
Tickets on sale now**

Single chance \$10
Six chances for \$50

Drawing Monday, May 13, 2024



**Celebrity Hoops for Hospice
Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024
Baldwin High School**

7 - 8 p.m.



**Holiday Memorial Doves
Oct. 25, 2024 - Jan. 5, 2025**

On display at five local malls and
our Lawrenceville inpatient unit