

Hospice of St. Mary's

Caring for Our Community

JUNE 2018

A Letter from the Hospice Director

Your Generosity Makes the Difference



Kathy Franzen
Interim Hospice Director

'Hospice matters. The end-of-life deserves as much beauty, care, and respect as the beginning.'

— Anonymous

Thirty five years ago, the Medicare Hospice Benefit was created to ensure patients have access to compassionate, quality care at the end of life. This benefit has enabled Hospice of St. Mary's to provide this much-needed care here in our local community.

The benefit covers the care patients receive at home, or in a facility. What it does not cover, however, are the 24/7 services provided in a facility beyond the medical coverage. So while a home patient would not be responsible for any substantial expenses, if any, a facility patient is responsible for room-and-board fees. Some people have long-term care insurance that can help, but for the vast majority, this comes right from the pocket.

Hospice of St. Mary's is a bit atypical compared to other hospices in that we provide a sliding scale, based on need, for our community. This means that for those patients who cannot afford the full load of the room-and-board expenses at Hospice House, we are able to offer a reduced rate - and, in some instances, no fees at all - by covering the expense as "charity care."

The need is greater than you might imagine. In 2017 alone, we were able to offer \$250,000 in free or reduced room and board, and \$82,000 for those patients who had no insurance coverage at all - a total of \$332,000.

How can we do this? Frankly, it is through the generosity of **you**, our community members, who make donations to support hospice. With these numbers in mind, you can see why we continually seek donations and why we so appreciate each one of you who donate in memory of a loved one, support a fundraising event, or volunteer your time and talents.

Death is an undeniable part of life and will come to us all eventually, so the need to assist our patients and families will never go away. We at Hospice of St. Mary's are committed to meeting that need, and we are grateful that our local community is here to help us with this commitment.



MedStar St. Mary's
Hospital
Hospice

HospiceofStMarys.org

A Letter from our Medical Director



Dr. Jennifer Schmidt
Medical Director

Pacemakers and Defibrillators

Pacemakers and defibrillators are amazing medical devices of modern medicine.

When used appropriately, they can relieve

symptoms of serious heart diseases and prevent sudden death.

There are significant differences between the two devices and how they may impact medical care at the end of life. A Reuters study in 2010 estimated that about three million Americans had pacemakers placed between 1993 and 2009. A review of registry data that appeared in the journal *Heart Rhythm* in 2012 estimated that U.S. physicians were implanting 10,000 defibrillators per month. These numbers demonstrate how common these devices are today, and the likelihood that you or someone you know will have one of these devices when facing end-of-life decisions.

A single function pacemaker is a small and relatively thin mini generator that is placed under the skin on the upper chest wall. The device has its own little battery that lasts about seven to 10 years. Two thin, insulated flexible wires exit the main compartment and the opposite ends are placed through a vein and into different chambers of the heart. Some pacemakers have wires that go to the right atrium (top chamber) and right ventricle (bottom chamber) of the heart. Others have wires that go to both ventricles (bottom chambers) of the heart.

The newest and smallest device is the size of a calcium tablet and the largest (oldest) pacers are the diameter of a small tangerine. As a general rule, pacemakers are placed when a person's heart is beating too slowly. When there is a problem with the timing and firing of the electrical system, the heart cannot beat fast enough to meet the oxygen needs of the patient's activity or

exercise. When that happens a person can feel extremely tired, and it may be difficult to perform even simple activities such as walking.

Once in place, the pacemaker works by monitoring the heart's electrical activity. If the heart rate becomes too slow (perhaps lower than 60 beats per minute), the generator sends a tiny electrical signal to the heart muscles, causing them to contract. The rate at which the pacer kicks in can be programmed wirelessly by a computer at the bedside.

Newer pacers can adjust based on the person's activity level by monitoring things like movement and breathing rate. The more intensive the person's activity, the faster you want the heart to beat. For most people, their own heart is beating appropriately for much of the time. The pacemaker acts as a safety device to make sure the heart does not beat dangerously slow.

Pacemakers do not take over the work of the heart. The patient's heart still must have muscles that are strong enough to pump the blood effectively. The heart's cells must also be firing their own electricity in order for the heart to keep pumping with a pacemaker. When a person's heart stops beating during a natural death, the pacemaker will stop functioning. A pacemaker does not need to be "deactivated" when a person elects hospice care and a pacer will not cause the patient any discomfort during death.

A defibrillator is also known as an automated implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD). The main function of this device is to deliver a significant electrical shock to stop a lethal heart rhythm called ventricular fibrillation, or V-Fib. During V-Fib, the bottom chambers of the heart are beating so fast that it cannot pump any blood at all. The shock that the defibrillating device gives is the same type of energy that is delivered by two paddles placed on the chest during a cardiac code (as seen on TV).

This big shock of electricity jolts the heart muscles out of the dangerous rhythm to reset the electrical system. The shock is strong enough to be

very painful and people who have experienced it often describe it like "being kicked in the chest by a horse." A combination device also acts as a backup pacemaker if the person develops a slow heart rate either before or after a shock.

When a person is nearing the end of their life from cardiac illness or from another disease like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or cancer, it is important to consider deactivating a defibrillator device. The main goal of hospice and palliative care is to provide the most comfort possible at the end of life. It is very difficult to predict which patients will receive painful shocks during the natural dying process.

Deactivation is a simple and painless procedure that can be done at the bedside where ever the patient may be residing. In the majority of people, death does not occur immediately and the patient cannot even tell that the device has been turned off. Deactivation removes the backup measure that would prevent a natural event and helps to ensure comfort in a patient's last hours.

A consensus statement that was developed collaboratively by the American College of Cardiology, the American Geriatric Society, the American Heart Association, the American Academy of Hospice & Palliative Care, the Palliative Nurses Association, and the European Heart Rhythm Association released on May 13, 2010, in the journal "*Heart Rhythm*" supports the decisions of patients and physicians who choose to deactivate AICDs at the end of life. Patients or surrogate decision makers, however, are not required to deactivate cardiac devices in order to be eligible for hospice care.

All medical decisions should be discussed carefully with medical providers and family members so the patient's wishes can be followed as closely as possible. Please call us at 301-994-3023 if you have any other questions about how hospice can best meet the goals of you or someone you love toward the end of life.



Making Hospice House Friendlier for Kids

When a loved one is dying, family members of all ages try to come for a last goodbye. Often, young children do not understand what the visit is really about; they end up looking for something to do while the adults are visiting. Or, they are here while a family member meets with a bereavement coordinator. At Hospice House, we didn't have many options to keep these young ones occupied - but that has now changed.

Due to very generous contributions from the **Mechanicsville Optimist Club** and the **Tommy and Joy Bowes family**, a children's play area has been installed on our property. Last year, local Eagle Scout candidate **Dominic Johnson**, who himself was a once a young child experiencing the death of a loved one in hospice care, approached us with the idea of a play area.

Dominic researched and advised us on his idea, then personally helped us select the equipment, staked out the area, prepared the surface, and installed the base materials for our play equipment, including a surface of rubber mulch to protect against falls and rubber curbs to keep materials in place. He also included a sturdy wooden bench, marked with a plaque in memory of his parents.

The work continued this spring with another Eagle Scout candidate, **Corwin Paulsen**, who came with a crew of boy scouts to work on the assembly and installation of the play set structure. Corwin and his team installed concrete supports for the tower, and then returned to complete the final assembly of the slide and climbing features.

We look forward to seeing our younger visitors making good use of this new space!

Farewell to our Furry Friend

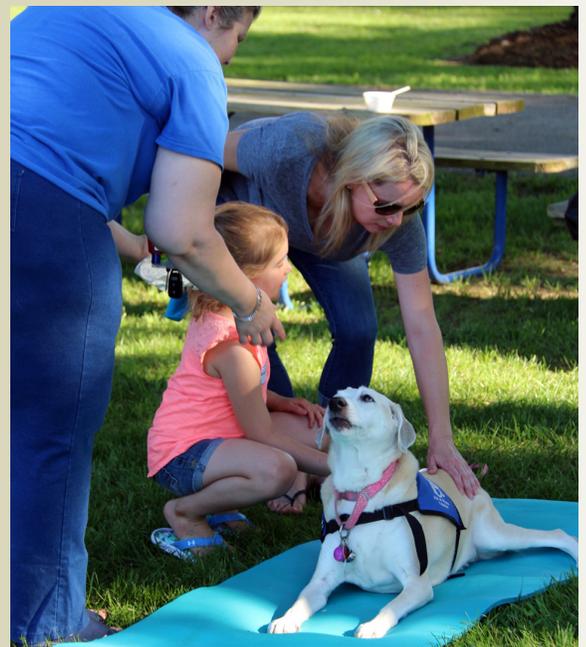


Many volunteers assist at Hospice in a myriad of ways – and some of them stand on four legs.

For several years Cookie, a yellow Labrador retriever, has visited patients in the Hospice House as a therapy pet. Her owner's business card read: "Providing friendly pet visits to help lick loneliness since 1982." Cookie performed this service for many years.

Her most recent stint of volunteering was at our Camp Sunrise held last June. Cookie was well received by young attendees, patiently receiving love from them, and giving her love in return.

Shortly after camp ended, we heard from Tanya Parker, Cookie's human, that our friend had gone to the Rainbow Bridge. Thank you, Cookie, for all the cuddles and love you have given through your years. We will miss you.



The mission of Hospice of St. Mary's is to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their families and bereavement care to those families and the community.

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Annual Run and Fun Walk a Success Thanks to Community Support



The 23rd Annual Hospice Run and Fun Walk took place on April 14. It was humbling to see the support our hospice receives from this community. We saw so many people wearing bibs in memory of loved ones helped by hospice. There were many hugs between hospice staff and grateful families.

This year's race had 1,250 pre-registrations, and Saturday dawned beautifully clear with a promise of warm sunshine and bringing a record number of same-day registrations as well.

The 2018 race raised more than \$65,000! As always, thank you to our steadfast committee members who have been putting together this race for 23 years: Jim Dicus, Jeff Thomas, Jamie Thomas, Laurie Lawrence, Jennifer Overstreet, and Katy Crowell. They are a well-oiled machine that ensures the race runs like clockwork. Many thanks also go out to:

- The St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office and the State Police for managing traffic and keeping us safe.
- EMS and Leonardtown Rescue Squad for being there to help with any injuries.
- Parks and Recreation, especially Kenny Sothoron and Art Shepherd, for providing access to the drill hall at all hours of the day and night.
- The Town of Leonardtown, and especially Maria Fleming, for assisting in the coordination of permits and being the liaison with EMS.
- John and Ann Richards for handling all the permits for our world-famous post race brunch.
- The St. Mary's County Commissioners for their support and participation in our event.

Special thanks to our wonderful community of sponsors who supported this event:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
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Finally, thank you to the local Leonardtown community who is understanding of the inconveniences our event might cause. We appreciate your patience as our many walkers and runners temporarily close roads and slow down traffic. ***We look forward to seeing you all next year at the 24th annual race!***



Meet Our Newest Staff Members:



Maryann Granata, BS
Hospice Department Secretary

After finishing graduate work for teacher training, I moved to St. Mary's for a teaching job and it has been my home for more than a decade. After leaving teaching, I started a family and worked part-time as the education coordinator at the Historic Sotterley Plantation.

I am pleased to be part of the hospice team, a true cornerstone of our community comprised of dedicated volunteers and staff; one which cares about patients and families.

Away from work I enjoy being outside with my family.



Theron "TJ" Hudson
Bereavement Coordinator

In the U.S. Navy I was assigned as a hospital corpsman. During that time I often found myself in the position of listening while my fellow servicemen and women sought advice or opinions on various subjects. I became drawn to the counseling profession after having several individuals tell me

that I helped them through very troubling times in their lives just because I listened and didn't judge them.

I decided to enroll in the master's program at Walden University. My attention to hospice came after losing my father and brother within a month and a half of each other. It seemed to be by divine order when the position of bereavement coordinator was posted by Hospice of St. Mary's. I am honored to be a part of this very professional organization.

I am married, and we have adult children ages 18 to 24 and one 3-year-old grandchild. We enjoy traveling, spending time with family, and social/civic activities.



Heather Oliver, RN, BSN

I graduated from the College of Southern Maryland with my Associate's in Nursing, then went on to get my Bachelor's of Science in Nursing through

Chamberlain College of Nursing. I started working at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital in June 2015 in the Intensive Care Center. I transferred to hospice in 2017 and am so grateful for the opportunity to be able to provide care to those in our local community. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my husband of eight years and our two children.



Karen Tippett, CNA

I have lived in St. Mary's County my entire life. In 2005, I started working as a nurse tech at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital. I became interested in hospice work when my

aunt was under the care of Hospice of St. Mary's. In December 2017, I transferred from the hospital to hospice as a home health aide, which I find very gratifying. My personal interests are walking, hiking, beaches, backyard birds, and spending time with my family.

Brownie Troop Raises Money for Hospice

Brownie Troop #2458 hosted a Rock Sale and Painting Party at Cecil's Country Store to complete their "Take Action" project in their current journey, and to benefit hospice. In particular, they wanted to help the pets of people in hospice care, such as the Pet Peace of Mind organization.

Not only did the girls sell rocks (donated by Dirtworks Excavation), they hosted a painting party inside Cecil's Country Store, and held a rock raffle for beautifully painted rocks donated by Mary Lou Troutman, Jonas Schommer, Bonnie Witlam, and Janice Hall.

Through all their efforts, the girls raised \$770!
Not bad for rocks!





THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS, SUPPORTERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Festival of Trees Celebrates 10 Years of Giving

Dec. 2, 2017, marked a milestone - the 10th anniversary of Hospice of St. Mary's Festival of Trees. Each year there is more of the same, and yet more things that are different.

As in prior years, beautifully decorated trees and wreaths were on display for the public to view. The best viewing was at the Jingle and Mingle event held on Friday evening, allowing for a display illuminated with just the lights from the trees and wreaths.

Friday also brought a preview to the Marketplace, which featured wooden pallet trees in a large variety of styles and sizes constructed with donated materials by the members of the Asbury Woodshop Group. They were in hot competition with the wooden reindeer and snowmen constructed by local resident, Donald Fletcher.



The doors opened to the public on Saturday this year with no admission fee charged. Children lined up to have their photos taken with Santa, and all who attended had an opportunity to vote for their favorite tree or wreath. The People's Choice winner for best tree was the canine-themed "Yappy Howlidays," a dog lovers dream. This was sponsored and decorated by Leonardtown Grants, LLC. Visitors also chose "Peace on Earth" as the best wreath. Decorated with delicate wooden village scenes, the wreath was sponsored by Glen and Barbara Ives and decorated by Mary Ann Stamm.



The 2018 Festival of Trees raised nearly \$50,000! Thank you to the sponsors, decorators, performers, volunteers, and everyone who attended this annual holiday event. We look forward to seeing you at the 11th Annual Festival of Trees on Nov.30 and Dec. 1.

This is the perfect time to think about becoming a sponsor or decorator for 2018. Contact our office with any questions; we'd love to have you participate and join the fun!

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- ▶ Billy Breslin
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- ▶ David Norris
- ▶ Gospel Choir
- ▶ Jen Narkevicius
- ▶ Josh Riley
- ▶ McKenna Randall
- ▶ St. Clair's

Hospice Volunteer Experience Can be Life Changing

By Becky Schaefer

Hospice has intrigued me since childhood. I remember my family calling in hospice for my grandfather when I was 10 years old. They focused on my grandfather's care, while also providing support to my mom and her siblings. I recall their presence within my family during his illness and even after he passed away. And so, my journey began.

When I was 13, I helped organize a bake sale fundraiser benefiting Hospice of St. Mary's. Doing something to benefit hospice touched my heart. From there, my volunteer work evolved. I have volunteered locally for the St. Mary's Animal Welfare League, the WARM Program helping the homeless, the St. John's Charitable Society, food distribution events via Farming for Hunger, St. Paul's Soup Kitchen, and as a youth basketball coach. I have also been fortunate to journey on international mission trips to Belize and Botswana. With each of these opportunities I have always somehow received more than I gave.

Last fall, I found myself with free time in the evenings for the first time in a long time. I had stepped back from my other volunteer activities and decided that now was the time to explore hospice. I did some research online, filled out an application, and was called in for an interview. I met with the volunteer coordinator and we talked about all of the different ways you can volunteer. There are so many ways to help! I eagerly attended the initial four-hour Hospice "Bootcamp" training, filled out the necessary paperwork, got blood work done, received the flu vaccine, and got my picture taken at the hospital for my badge.

So now it's official! I'm a MedStar volunteer for the Hospice & Palliative Care department. I was so moved when I received my badge. I had no idea I would be so overwhelmed with emotions. It is truly a dream finally realized, and it has not disappointed. The team of hospice associates and volunteers is amazing! They are so good at what they do and they do it with great care. The friendships I have developed and the connections I have made with the patients have been life changing. The first patient I connected with (pictured, bottom right) has inspired me to travel further in my journey, to take risks, and to step outside of my comfort zone. I am forever grateful for this opportunity.

If you are being called to volunteer, please take that first step and contact the volunteer coordinator, Katy Crowell, at mary.k.crowell@medstar.net. A rewarding experience could be right around the corner.



Stephanie Gleason, Hospice Volunteer, and her friend, Mike Cahall, provide a bedside concert for one of our patients at Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. This was especially touching for this gentleman as he himself played the violin.



Thank you to Dave Spore!

In January 1996, Dave Spore took the hospice volunteer class and has been a vital part of Hospice of St. Mary's ever since. As a volunteer, board treasurer, and president, David helped navigate our journey as we joined the hospital, and was involved with the conception and building of the Hospice House.

After many years of dedicated service to us, David has hung up his volunteer hat as he and his wife have moved to be closer to family. Interim Director Kathryn Franzen and volunteer coordinator Katy Crowell had an opportunity to take Dave out to lunch before his big move, and presented him with a certificate to thank him for his 22 years of service.



MedStar St. Mary's Hospital Hospice

HospiceofStMarys.org

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Dart Tournament Raises \$10,000 for Hospice

The Tricoda Dart Association hosts a tournament each year in February with darters coming from near and far to compete. Along with lots of fun, Tricoda's tournament raises a lot of money for Hospice of St. Mary's. Since 2008, Tricoda has raised a grand total of \$54,960.

This year's Tricoda President Jim Dillow and Vice President Robbie Tejchman worked tirelessly to organize both the tournament and the awards banquet. The main sponsor of the event, Bozick Distributors, along with Charlie Moore, donated all of the banners and placards along with their sponsorship.

The awards banquet was held April 28 at the Elks Lodge #2092. A wonderful dinner was catered by Personalized Touch Catering.

With heartfelt thanks, Kathryn Franzen, interim director of Hospice of St. Mary's, and Cindy Beakes, vice president of the board of directors, accepted the biggest donation ever from Tricoda: a check for \$10,000! All money raised goes to providing the highest-quality, end-of-life care to any in our community who are in need.

Generous sponsors of this year's tournament were:

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'Bluegrass for Hospice' 2017 Raises More Than \$32,000

The 9th annual Bluegrass for Hospice music festival included artists with national name recognition. Sister Sadie is an all-female group well known by fans in and out of the Bluegrass genre. A highlight of their performance included the moment when the ladies invited Jay Armsworthy onstage to perform with them!

Along with the headliners, several other groups performed throughout the day-long event, including 15 Strings, The Dixie Ramblers, Patuxent Partners, Recycled Bluegrass, The Virginia Ramblers, Martin Brothers & Aspen Run, and Bubby Abell & Spoon Creek.

The Southern Maryland community is a vital part of this event, both by sponsoring and donating auction & raffle items. Add to this the numerous volunteers, the time put in by the organizers, and it all adds up to many hours of work coming together to bring this event to the community.

Thank you, Jay and Michelle and all of your many helpers, as your event raised more than \$32,000 to support the mission of Hospice!

Karen & John Garner
John Felicitas & Christine Wray
Jan Barnes
Imagine One Technology
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