July of 2020 marked the 40th Anniversary of hospice care in our community. HWC had plans to celebrate this milestone both externally and internally; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic our plans for a large social celebration were derailed. Instead, we diverted all of our attention to continuing our mission of bringing quality end-of-life care to our community in a safe and impactful manner.

This is why now more than ever it is important to call us to get help for you and your loved one. A simple conversation can lead you to receiving valuable and indispensable services and support.

It may seem counterintuitive to bring hospice staff into your home when all you hear is to continue to social distance. Please know our staff are specifically trained to give care while keeping patients and families safe. We maintain CDC guidelines, wear appropriate PPE and self-check every day. Hospice staff have been trained to prevent infectious disease transmissions. Our staff can adapt in any situation and in any emergency.

Our care and pain management are provided in the home. These services will help you and your loved one from having to leave your home and potentially being exposed to large groups of people. Our staff can coordinate with your doctors so that you can scale back on office visits. Hospice care is designed to prevent admittance and re-admittance to the hospital, helping you to stay home without compromising or delaying care and support.

Other key benefits include emotional support. Our social workers provide great comfort for those who have had to isolate because of pre-existing conditions or age. Hospice social workers assist families in identifying other available local services and resources for additional support. Social workers provide stability and mindfulness during difficult situations through empathy, advocacy and problem-solving skills.
Message from the CEO Continued...

Our patients and their families have access to our Spiritual Care Team. Hospice Chaplains assist in providing spiritual and emotional care for the individual patients and their families/friends during this difficult season of life. If desired by the patient, they provide support based on the patient’s personal beliefs and can serve as a link to a faith community. Regardless of religion, creed, or culture, the purpose of a Chaplain is to provide patients with compassionate spiritual and emotional support and counsel.

COVID-19 has highlighted the need for advance care plans. Having a structured plan will help ensure that your wishes are honored and that you and your loved one can navigate safely through the complex network of healthcare options and resources. Our staff can help design these plans and provide you and your loved one with the peace of mind that you have chosen a path and plan that meets your wishes and expectations.

We also offer bereavement services for all members of the family. Currently, we are offering virtual bereavement group and individual counseling.

Last but not least, you can call our clinical teams who can address your concerns 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We are just a phone call away. Our phones are always answered, and we have staff who can assist at any time.

In conclusion, during this pandemic do not be afraid to call Hospice of Washington County. As we have been for 40 years, we are here for you and ready to care for you and your loved one.

WAYS TO REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES DURING THIS TIME

As we cope with the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us are experiencing various forms of grief. We are grieving loved ones who we have lost recently or long ago. We are grieving not having the opportunity to perhaps say goodbye, or not being able to support each other in-person right now. We have grieved the loss of rituals, routines, and familiarity of day-to-day “normal” experiences.

Grief can be an isolating experience. While we may be practicing physical distancing between ourselves, we can explore ways to remain socially and spiritually connected. There are many creative and meaningful options in which you can express love and commemoration of your loved one(s).

The Hospice of Washington County Bereavement team is available to support you and your family during this difficult time. Hearts of Hope (open to any adult who is grieving the death of a love one) continues to “meet” regularly on 1st and 3rd Mondays (10:30 AM - Noon), as well as 2nd and 4th Thursdays (6:30 - 7 PM). Hearts of Hope is currently facilitated on the video chat platform called Zoom until further notice. Contact the Bereavement team by email to join the distribution list to receive the Zoom link (mdreed@hospiceofwc.org or mgreen@hospiceofwc.org).

WAYS TO COMMEMORATE AND REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES

1. Visit their final resting place when it is safe to do so. We can connect to our loved one, our faith and spiritual beliefs by talking to them and reflecting on their life and legacy.

2. If you scattered their cremains or ashes in a place that is special to them or to you, take time to make a special trip to the location. Take along a picture of your loved one and pack a picnic lunch with their favorite food and drink.

3. Release butterflies. For many people, butterflies are a beautiful symbol of hope and renewal.

4. Write a letter, poem or express your love for them on social media or on a personal blog. Although our love is constant, our thoughts, feelings, regrets and memories can change over time. Writing can be very therapeutic and a healthy way to process very complicated emotions.

Fun idea for the whole family: Use dissolving paper to write or draw pictures to your loved one. Then dissolve the message into bubble solution. Send your message to your loved ones by releasing bubbles.

5. Play their favorite songs or music videos in order to connect with memories of joyful experiences and allow the songs to connect to your feelings and thoughts.

6. Attend or schedule a special remembrance ceremony either in person or through virtual experiences. Although we may be in a time of physical distancing, we can still connect emotionally and spiritually to remember, celebrate and honor our loved ones.

7. Develop a tree-planting ceremony to remember your loved one while helping to care for our planet.

8. Take time out to care for yourself. Whether you sit at home in quiet meditation, prayer and reflection, take a long walk in nature, sit by a stream or go to the ocean, take the time you need to attend to your feelings.

9. Create a beautiful bouquet to lay at your loved one’s resting place. Be inspired by the language of flowers to express your thoughts and feelings as you remember your loved one through a floral arrangement.

10. Dedicate a park bench, a brick at Doey’s House, or a seat in an auditorium in honor of your loved one.

11. Look through old photos, letters and personal belongings as you remember those you love.

12. Create memorial jewelry, necklaces with a fingerprint, purchase a locket or pendant, or consider contacting a local glass artisan to create a vase, orb or other work of art.

13. Shine a light to remember your loved one. Place candles in your home, use tealights or scented candles with a fragrance that brings back memories, use fireworx, or have a bonfire with s’mores to remember. Or simply spend time outside at night reflecting under the night stars.

14. Create an online memorial wall with pictures and stories about your loved one. Allow others to include their favorites.

15. Plant a memorial garden with personalized stepping stones. Watch as it grows and changes during each season.

16. Have family members and friends participate in a ritual at the same time on a given day, even if they are in a different location. Document your experience.
Hospice of Washington County (HWC) continues to move forward with our important mission. In the midst of all that is going on, many of our friends and supporters are looking forward to the future when they can enjoy community with friends and resume their regular activities.

In response to the current situation, Congress recently enacted several tax law changes. HWC has created this page to offer resources to help you with your tax planning and to offer some ideas for you to consider if you are thinking about making a gift in support of our mission during this time:

1. Cares Act
This recently passed law includes several charitable tax provisions to encourage giving. These include:

   - A new deduction for charitable donors who do not itemize when filing their tax returns. If you do not itemize but make a cash gift to charity, you will be allowed to take a special tax deduction, up to $300 (per taxpayer unit), to reduce your tax liability.

   - An increase in the deduction limit up to 100% of a donor’s annual income for cash gifts (previously the deduction was capped at 60% of annual income). If you make a gift you will be able to deduct more this year.

2. Donor Advised Funds
If you have a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) and wish to help us this year, you can make a gift from your DAF to support our work without affecting your personal financial security.

3. How to Donate to Charity from your IRA
Retirees don’t need to itemize to qualify for this charitable tax break. After years of contributing to tax-deferred 401(k)s and IRAs, income tax is due on that money when you take withdrawals during retirement. Annual withdrawals from traditional retirement accounts are required after age 70 1/2, and the penalty for skipping a required minimum distribution is 50% of the amount that should have been withdrawn. However, if you are in the fortunate position of not needing your distribution for living expenses and are charitably inclined, you can avoid income tax on your required withdrawal by donating your distribution directly to a qualifying charity. This must be done as a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian to a qualified 501(c)(3) organization for the distribution to be tax-free. HWC is a 501(c)(3) organization.

4. Charitable Gift Annuity
If you are concerned about your financial security given the ups and downs of the stock market, you may want to consider making a gift to fund a charitable gift annuity. You might be surprised by the benefits. You can exchange your low-performing stock, CDs or cash for guaranteed, lifetime fixed payments. If you make a gift of an appreciated asset, you will not have to pay capital gains when you fund the annuity. You may also benefit from a charitable tax deduction this year and a portion of your payments could be tax-free.

5. Secure Act
In December, Congress passed the SECURE Act, limiting stretch payments to IRA beneficiaries to 10 years. If you planned to benefit your children with your IRA, your heirs will now pay higher taxes on the inheritance they receive from you. When you revisit your estate plan, consider funding a testamentary charitable remainder unitrust with your IRA balance. This plan can provide lifetime payments to your heirs and spread out the taxes on their inheritance.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these ideas, please contact Hospice of Washington County. Please know that we encourage you to consult with your accountant or tax attorney to review before you give a donation.
BENEVOLENCE FUND
HELPING PATIENTS WITH BASIC NEEDS AND ASSISTANCE

Hospice of Washington County (HWC) works every day to enhance the quality of life for individuals and their families facing a life-limiting illness even in ways that are outside the scope of the traditional hospice benefit. The Benevolence Fund is a great example of this help.

"Often our nurses, nursing assistants, chaplains, social workers and volunteers visit our new patients and find that they have insufficient food, inadequate heating or cooling, gas to go to doctor’s appointments, and much more," stated Karen Giffin, Associate Vice President of Mission Advancement. "If we can help our patients and their families with their immediate needs, we will be able to allow them to focus on living their life to the fullest and allow our staff to focus on their care."

The Benevolence Fund was started by HWC staff. The employees of HWC formed a committee to review basic immediate need requests and continue to be committed to providing not only the basic needs but comfort needs to patients as well. This program is a stopgap measure while our social workers work with many community organizations that can provide ongoing support.

"The Benevolence Fund provides assistance for immediate needs for our families experiencing difficulties," stated Sandra Weaver, a social worker for HWC. "In one instance, I used the fund for a patient and spouse that needed to choose between food and medication, and were having a very hard time. Despite the difficulty accepting the gift, they were beyond grateful."

The fund also helps our patient’s families who are in need of assistance with funeral expenses. “The Benevolence Fund has been very supportive to our patients and families who are having financial difficulties in addition to the stress of a terminal illness. Assistance with funeral expenses has been very much appreciated by our families who have very limited resources," stated Ms. Weaver. "A recent patient at Doey’s House was previously homeless, and a passerby befriended him and supported him with obtaining housing through his end-of-life journey. HWC was able to give funds to assist with funeral expenses and allow our patient to have a dignified burial."

HWC does not turn away patients from care because of their inability to pay or lack of insurance. “We are able to do this because of the generosity of the community,” stated Ms. Giffin.

HWC is able to provide quality care for patients and their families facing life’s final journey. And thanks to so many generous individuals, HWC consistently goes above and beyond to offer much-needed services that are not reimbursed by Medicare and other payers."

If you are interested in donating to the Benevolence Fund, you can call 301-791-6380 or visit hospiceofwc.org.

FREDERIC H. KASS III M.D. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP
2020 WINNERS

Three students pursuing careers in the healthcare field were recently named as the recipients of the 2020 Frederic H. Kass III, M.D. Endowed Scholarship Fund. Dr. Frederic Kass is one of the founders of Hospice of Washington County, Inc. (HWC). The organization is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

To honor Dr. Kass’s tireless efforts, HWC’s Board of Directors established the Frederic H. Kass III, M.D. Endowed Scholarship Fund. This fund helps students in Washington County pursuing a career in the healthcare field. Individuals and organizations have given generously to support these scholarships.

This year’s scholarship recipients were Alex Gwizdala, a graduate of Washington County Technical School attending the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in the honors college, majoring in Biological Sciences in order to work in genetic research; Diya Patel, a recent graduate of Williamsport High School who will be attending the University of Maryland, in the honors college majoring in Biology and planning to become a pediatrician; and Lauren Moore, a graduate of Boonsboro High School attending Saint Francis University in the Physician Assistant Science program.

HOSPICE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY IS CELEBRATING
- 2000’S HIGHLIGHTS -

2000
Accreditation by the Joint Commission.

2004
HWC offices moved to 3rd floor of Western Maryland Hospital; first Chaplain hired.

2006
HWC purchased building at 747 Northern Avenue.

2008
First ‘in-house’ Medical Director is hired, Dr. Anne Egbert.

2009
HWC partners with Coast Hospice, Mombasa, Kenya through FHSSA (now Global Partners in Care).

2010
Seven staff members, known as Team 7, travel to Mombasa, Kenya to visit Hospice of Washington County.

2018
New Medical Director, Dr. Cynthia Kutter-Sands is hired (served until 2011).

2019
Coast Hospice, Mombasa, Kenya to visit Hospice of Washington County.

2020
- 2000’S HIGHLIGHTS -

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A team of advanced practice nurses supports the mission of Hospice of Washington County (HWC). In 2010, federal regulations for hospice introduced the need for nurse practitioners to assist physicians by performing a face-to-face visit to evaluate each hospice patient at the end of the patient’s certification period. Using specific hospice training and education, the nurse practitioner visits each Medicare and Medicaid patient and shares observations and evaluations with the hospice physicians.

The nurse practitioners of Hospice of Washington County continue to perform these face-to-face visits as required by regulation, but their special skills are used in numerous ways within our organization. The years of experience of this small team are invaluable in support of the clinical team of HWC. On a daily basis, The Registered Nurse Case Managers (RNCM) encounter changing symptoms with the patients they manage; at times, the general solutions are specific to relieving pain and symptoms do not bring the desired comfort to the patient. The nurse practitioners along with the hospice physicians are often asked to perform a consult with an RNCM to work together to quickly lessen a patient’s suffering and create a more comfortable status.

In addition, the nursing team is the primary providers for the LifeCare Advanced Illness Management practice for palliative medicine. The practice, located in Boonsboro, is dedicated to providing symptom management for patients who have a chronic or serious illness. Working closely with the patient’s primary or specialists, the nurse practitioners focus on those symptoms that diminish a patient’s quality of life while aggressively treating their disease or illness. The LifeCare practice sees patients in the clinic in Boonsboro, in many facilities in the community, and also in the patients’ homes to assess symptoms and work to relieve or reduce symptoms of various illnesses. The nurse practitioners collaborate with the patients’ primary care providers and specialists, help to connect the patients with community resources to provide specific needs for care, assess and coordinate care with other professionals when needed, and provide a resource for an extra set of eyes and ears for patients between visits with their physicians in the community.

The team of nurse practitioners serving HWC as well as LifeCare are Stephanie Comer-Concordia, Rebecca Johnson, Patricia Jones and Barbara Spencer. Cara Barker also supports the team on a per diem basis to assist with face to face visits. One of the nurse practitioners, Rebecca Johnson, serves the organization as Associate Vice President of Clinical Services; she oversees and coordinates care within the different service lines and disciplines within the organization. Her special skills as a nurse practitioner allow her to oversee the Doey’s House team as well as the other patient care teams to ensure best practices are established for each patient’s comfort and care.

Nurse Practitioner Stephanie Comer Concordia shared how the LifeCare practice is different from the care patients receive from other practitioners. She said, “When providing palliative care we relieve suffering and improve the lives of people at any age and any stage of their illness.” The nurse practitioner is able to take all components of the patient’s concerns into crafting an individualized approach to relieving the symptoms of their illness. Pat Jones added that the best part of being a hospice and palliative care nurse practitioner is when patients “tell me that what we are doing works for them, their pain is well controlled, their blood pressure is down, they can breathe easier, or they can function in their homes or at least can rest and be comfortable. This is what we hope to achieve.”

Hospice of Washington County and LifeCare Advanced Illness Management is fortunate to have a strong team of nurse practitioners who support our patients with years of symptom management education and experience. Their years of experiences in oncology, dementia-related symptoms, nursing home care, nephrology, intensive care, emergency rooms, and many other areas contribute to their developing the most effective management of pain and symptoms. Having these strong practitioners gives our patients a better quality of life and more comfort every day.

**Employee Spotlight**

**Nurse Practitioners in Our Midst...**

**Picture from left to right: Stephanie Comer-Concordia, Rebecca Johnson & Patricia Jones**

Volunteers at Hospice of Washington County are finding unique ways to connect with patients and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Before the pandemic, many of our volunteers offered services to our patients in their home or where they called home such as assisted living facilities or nursing homes,” stated Earla Gust, HWC’s Volunteer Department Manager. “These services have included companionship, light housekeeping, haircuts, errands and special therapies.”

Because of COVID-19, HWC has had to suspend their face-to-face volunteer services. “HWC volunteers continue to provide valuable services for our patients and staff, and are being creative in order to connect as well,” stated Ms. Gust.

Here are some of the services being performed:

- Volunteers are currently making support calls to their assigned patients and caregivers. They are providing active listening, emotional support and socialization for our patients and for caregivers. This is most often appreciated especially when many patients and families cannot venture outside the home.
- Volunteers are sending occasional cards and letters to their assigned patients and family members. The patients love to receive happy mail, and it keeps them connected to HWC.
- Some volunteers are making bereavement calls to those that have lost a loved one while in the hospice program as needed.

**OUR VOLUNTEERS**

**Hospice Volunteers Find Innovative Ways to Continue Serving Patients During COVID-19**

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Here are some of the services being performed:

- Office projects that can be worked on from a volunteer’s home are being completed. They are picking up supplies for projects at the main office and completing them in their home.
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CELEBRITY WAITER BECOMES CELEBRITY CHALLENGE AND GOES VIRTUAL

Dear Friends,

2020 has been a very challenging year for everyone. We are all concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, we are worried about our health and safety of our friends and families. We are also grieving the socialization that we once had, including our special events and programs that helped organizations such as Hospice of Washington County.

I am very proud to be a Board Member of Hospice of Washington County and serve as the Development Chair. We have a Development Committee and Staff that work very hard to raise funds to continue the mission of hospice for our friends and neighbors. I am amazed at the time and talent that our committee and others give to the fundraising efforts so that our patients can have quality end-of-life care and assistance with basic needs.

This year our committee has implemented some creative ideas to continue our programs and create “fun” fundraisers including utilizing the parking lot for the Dr. Frederic H. Kass, III Scholarship Presentation and Washington County Oives. Next up is one of our largest fundraisers, Celebrity Waiter. We normally do a large dinner and have waiters compete for tips, and the waiters did this in many unique and fun ways. However, Covid-19 does not permit us to have this event as planned. So, our Development Committee has come up with a new endeavor 2020

Celebrity Challenge. We are seeking 15 to 20 individuals to compete as local Celebrities and help us raise money for the Rory’s House Oxygen Ventilator Project and some of our other programs. The challenge will occur from October 16, 2020 to November 16, 2020. The celebrities will create virtual or private fundraisers, help encourage individuals to join a fundraising society, and obtain silent auction items. There will be a number of awards given to waiters for a variety of achievements such as most unique fundraiser, most virtual events, the highest number of new donors and the highest total dollars raised, etc. The overall winner of the Celebrity contest will be the person who raises the most money from events, sponsorships, and the silent auction.

We need your help. We are looking for those who would like to be a Celebrity and for individuals to support our celebrities through our website. If you are interested, please contact our Associate Vice President of Mission Advancement Karen Olfen at 501-791-8560 or email kmolfe@hospiceofwc.org.

The Hospice of Washington County Development Team is determined to continue to meet their goal and help the important programs and projects for our families and patients. In the next newsletter, we will outline how our Rory’s House Lights for Love Event will be held this year so that you can know your loved ones.

If you would like to get involved with the Development Program or become a donor, please do not hesitate to call. It is an important cause and you will be glad to meet and work with our team.

Sincerely,
Jason Malott

DOVETALES CAMP 2020 GOES VIRTUAL

DoveTales is designed for children (ages 6 – 13) who are dealing with the death of a loved one. DoveTales is an educational and nurturing experience for children to share their “Tales” and meet others who “get it.”

Due to COVID-19 and considerations for the safety of our children and community, DoveTales 2020 will be a virtual experience instead of a face-to-face traditional camp. The bereavement team is excited to announce our partnership with BEACON House Inc. to create a weekly virtual and interactive program for children and families for the Fall 2020. All of the children who register for the program will receive a special care package including a DoveTales t-shirt, canvas bag, workbook, comfort blanket, and all of the art and craft materials needed to complete weekly activities.

The web-based program will officially kick off on Friday October 30, 2020, and be facilitated for a total of 6 consecutive weeks. Families will be invited to complete creative activities focused on grief education, as well as participate in live video sessions via Zoom to meet bereavement counselors, mentors, and other families for support each week. Children and families will have the opportunity to build meaningful connections, as well as learn effective and practical skills for coping with their grief.

Looking for a fun and unique VOLUNTEER opportunity? Consider applying to be a DoveTales Volunteer. Volunteers will have the opportunity to be a virtual “Big Buddy” and a mentor to children and families via the online program. Training and education will be provided to all volunteers.

DoveTales is offered at NO cost to families. Registration is open to children and families who reside in Washington County, Maryland as well as Franklin County, Pennsylvania. The deadline for camper registrations and volunteer applications is Friday October 16, 2020. Go to www.hospiceofwc.org to complete the online form.

Please contact Maria Reed, bereavement counselor, at mreed@hospiceofwc.org for more information.

Thank you to Anthony Williams, Founder/Chief Executive Officer/Chief Creative Officer of BEACON House Inc, for offering your time and talents to create an innovative virtual grief education and support program to serve our community! Learn more about the mission and programs of BEACON House Inc at: https://thebeaconhouseinc.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Hearts of Hope Via Zoom
HWC is continuing to serve the community with Bereavement Services. Hearts of Hope is available via Zoom (an online video chat platform). Hearts of Hope is an ongoing, open support group available to any adult who has experienced a death of a loved one. Individuals can use Zoom on their computer, tablet, or phone. Participants can utilize the video and audio, or simply the audio feature. If you would like to participate or have questions, please contact Maria Reed at mreed@hospiceofwc.org by 10am the day of.

Shred Event
747 Northern Avenue
Shredding: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
This event will offer community residents the opportunity to shred important documents for a suggested donation of $10 per box. All proceeds to benefit Hospice of Washington County. A special thanks to our sponsor - Jim Galles First Home Mortgage.

DoveTales: Camp for Children
This event will begin on October 30th and will be a 6-week virtual event. Applications are due October 16th. For more information contact Maria Reed, mreed@hospiceofwc.org

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DOVETALES SPONSOR A CAMPER

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO A YOUNG GRIEVING CHILD

Sponsor a camper to DoveTails for $200! DoveTails is a special camp designed for children who have experienced the death of a loved one or a significant loss. It is an educational, nurturing, and safe place for children to talk with one another and to learn effective and actual skills for coping with their grief. Individuals can sponsor a camper for $200, which will underwrite all of their materials, food, and supplies.

NAME

NAME OF BUSINESS (IF APPLICABLE)

ADDRESS

IN MEMORY OF

Billing address (if different from above)

ADDRESS

NAME ON CARD

CREDIT CARD #

SIGNATURE OF DONOR(S)

EXPIRATION DATE

SECURITY CODE

PLEASE MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO:
Hospice of Washington County – DoveTails Program, 747 Northern Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21742
Questions? Please call us at 301-791-6360 or email info@hospiceofwc.org.

All gifts are tax deductible as charitable contributions in accordance with IRS regulations.