



MOMENTS MATTER

2022 SPRING UPDATE

A PATIENT STORY: VERNON SAUER

Written by Sara Cissin

Vernon was soft-spoken, kind, and compassionate with a laid-back attitude that put others at ease. He liked making others laugh, especially at his own expense. His pride was his 1997 red Chevy truck and he would grin watching others do a “double take” when we drove by. Although he was not blessed with good health, he rarely complained (as long as I had enough ice cream for him!).

We were the youngest of five siblings, six years apart. Our working years were busy, but we kept in touch. In 2014, I retired and became his caregiver. The first four years we laughed a lot, especially when he would beat me at Parcheesi! I miss his laugh most of all, but I know he is home now in God’s care and suffers no more.

It was a Monday morning, and my brother was worse. Our family had no history of dementia. The care I gave was no longer enough. I called Hospice of Washington County. Within 24 hours, a nurse evaluator, care nurse; nurse’s aide, social worker and chaplain arrived, his “team.” He was monitored

weekly. When I couldn’t cope, they counseled. We were so fortunate to have Chaplain Duane Musgrove provide spiritual support. When I couldn’t bathe Vernon, they did. When I needed help, they were available. There were times when it was 2 a.m., but they came within 10-20 minutes. When I couldn’t pray, they prayed for us and even sang to us. Chaplain Sakinah has a strong, beautiful voice! For a man who didn’t want “strangers” in his house, Vernon quickly changed his mind about Gail, Sandy, and Bebe. They said time and again how much they enjoyed coming to our house and we echoed that same opinion about them. It was something to look forward to!



Vernon Sauer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Patient Story: Vernon Sauer	1
Calendar of Events	2
CEO Corner	3
What do Grief and Bereavement Counselors do?	4
Bereavement Volunteers	5
Volunteer Week	6
Employee Spotlight	7
Social Work	8
Lifecare	9
Kass Scholarship	10
Upcoming Events	10
2021 HWC Giving Society Members	11

Patient Story Continued...

A year later, Vernon's earthly journey was ending and Doey's House was suggested for us. It was a blessing to be able to spend the night with him and have his bed rolled outside to enjoy the sunshine.

I know people say this frequently, but I truly don't know what we would have done without Hospice. All our family has passed. Vernon's "team" and the staff at Doey's House became our "family." Helping others may be their profession, but to us (and to them, I'm sure), the caring, kindness and compassion shown to us exceeded "just a job". Saying "thank you" feels inadequate to say the least. Even though every day could bring a new "normal" caring for Vernon, laughter was back in the house. That alone was priceless! It takes special people to devote their time and effort to helping others.

I had the benefit of very wise advice years ago: "When the challenges become overwhelming and you don't think you can handle any more: Thank God for carrying you this far and thank God again for guiding you to those who can help." This community is very, very fortunate to have Hospice of Washington County. No other organization or outreach like it exists to have help on so many levels in one location.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BEREAVEMENT

15

MAR

World Social Work Day
Tuesday, March 15

DEVELOPMENT

01

APR

Kass Scholarship Deadline
Friday, April 1

30

APR

Radiothon
Saturday, April 30

10

MAY

Washington County Gives
Tuesday, May 10

VOLUNTEERS

17-23

APR

National Volunteer Week
April 17-23



CEO CORNER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO, ERNESTO LOPEZ

The start of every new year brings new hope, ambitious goal setting, and renewed energy. But the beginning of 2022 cannot be categorized with prior years. The unique circumstances that we as a society have endured for the past two years deserves its own designation, as well as its own conservative outlook. The pandemic has made a lasting impact in everyone's lives. We have lost many individuals and endured great pain and discomfort. Every aspect that we are accustomed to has been changed, modified, or delayed due to the dire environment of combating the COVID-19 virus. For Hospice of Washington County, the journey has been similar to other healthcare provider experiences. Each day ensuring that we not only deliver the services, care, and experience that we are known for, but simultaneously ensuring that we are keeping our staff safe in order to keep our patients and families protected as well. A formidable challenge, but one that our organization has embraced and endured, built on our mission and purpose to serve our community and to ensure that every patient and family that needs us is able to receive care from our dedicated team.

My hope continues to be that we emerge from the fog of the pandemic and that we are closer on the road to recovery than we have ever been before. That we take the lessons that we've learned along the way and design better systems

and frameworks of healthcare so that people can experience improved access, communication, and outcomes in the care that we provide. Our goal this year is to transition from the fatigue of this ultra-marathon and sprint to the fading finish line. To continue to strive for excellence and ensure that we are not only taking great care of our patients and families but that we are also taking great care of our staff and volunteers. Our renewed energy will be centered around our upcoming move to our new headquarters! After 16+ years of calling our main office at 747 Northern Avenue home, we are relocating to a new, streamlined, efficient, and centrally located space (1710 Underpass Way) that will allow our team to better connect with our patients and families and will group all our services under one primary roof. The new office space is in the middle of being remodeled in order to meet the unique needs of our organization. Staff will be able to come and go each day and secure the support and supplies they need for patient care. Our outpatient palliative care clinic will be located there as well, along with dedicated bereavement and grief counseling offices. More details will follow soon as we expect to move into the new location by April. I look forward to sharing the details of our ongoing journey and the start of a new promising year.

WHAT DO GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT COUNSELORS DO?

Written by Maria Reed

Hospice of Washington County offers grief and bereavement care services to children, teens, and adults. The Bereavement team follows up with family members of our Hospice patients in various ways, including phone calls and mailings. Bereavement Counselors offer a variety of support services including individual support for Hospice families and Community members, group support programming, educational workshops, and seasonal special remembrance and awareness events. Group programming includes Hearts of Hope, which is an ongoing grief support group for adults who are coping with the loss of a loved one, as well as specialty groups for teens and various types of loss. The annual Children's grief camp program is called DoveTales and is open

to any child who has experienced the loss of a special person. We encourage our community to memorialize their loved ones throughout the year by participating in our Community Remembrance Services, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness display (October), International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (November), and Remembrance Trees (December). All of these bereavement care services are offered at NO cost to our hospice and community clients.

Our bereavement team collaborates with the hospice clinical staff and volunteers to meet the needs of patients and the community. In the collective year of 2021, the total number of bereavement connections via mail, educational workshops, remembrance events, as well as phone, video, and in person visits **was over 21,000 contacts!**

We are looking forward to continuing to serve our community in various and creative ways in 2022. Stay tuned for expanded group programming, as well as updates for events and services in 2022 by following the calendar of events at www.hospiceofwc.org or the HWC Facebook page. If you are in need of grief support and would like to learn more about our services, please call us at 301-791-6360.

What do bereavement counselors do?

We accept your grief for what it is -- a natural reaction to change and the trauma of loss. Grief often impacts every area of our life, as well as how we feel, how we think, how we behave, and how our body physically works.

We do not expect you to have to explain or defend your grief, but rather allow you to just talk about it for what it is.

We respect your unique personality and coping style.

We truly listen.

We do not judge you, your family, or your loved one.

We love to learn and listen to stories about the person who died, what they were like, the good things and the painful things.

We walk with you, as you sort through all the mixed thoughts and feelings grief often brings.

We reassure you that you can hold on to the love and memories of your special person and let go of the pain of loss.

We witness the process of developing a new relationship with your loved one.

We offer education and normalization about the grief process.

We may share suggestions from other people on what has helped them in their grief.

We help to brainstorm coping strategies...things to do to get through the day, to get through the night.

We recognize and know that there will be difficult days, such as birthdays, holidays and anniversaries.

We discuss and encourage various mourning rituals that help you to honor and remember your loved one.

We remind you of hope and comfort, even in your darkest moments.

We validate that coping with grief is a dynamic process that often feels like a roller coaster.

BEREAVEMENT

BEREAVEMENT VOLUNTEERS

The bereavement team is grateful to partner with our HWC volunteers each week. Each bereavement volunteer is trained to offer compassionate care and education about our bereavement program and services. Although many in-person volunteering opportunities are on hold due to COVID-19, our volunteers have found great ways to help from home.



Terry Trovinger, one of our volunteers, has learned that the simple act of taking the time to listen can make a big difference to a grieving family or patient. Initially, Terry served as a patient companion and a member of our 11th Hour Vigil Team. “Being able to hold a person’s hand, playing music for them or perhaps saying a prayer for them gave me great gratification,” he says. COVID has changed his course as a volunteer. While he’s not able to serve with these in-person activities at this time, he is happy he can make calls on behalf of the Hospice Bereavement Team. Over the past two years, Terry, along with our other bereavement volunteers Joan Schupp and Debbie Spielman, have taken the task of completing follow-up condolence calls for all identified family members of a patient who died under care of Hospice of Washington County, Doey’s House, or Franklin Hospice service. During a call, they offer condolences for the loss of their loved one and ask how they are handling their grief. They are then able to make referrals to a bereavement counselor if needed. They have collectively completed over 1,800 calls in the year 2021 alone!

Joan Schupp’s first volunteer job at Hospice of Washington County was working at the front desk at Doey’s House. During the pandemic, she took on her new role of calling bereavement

clients and has found that it is a great way to connect with people and let them know that they are not alone. “I like to talk to people. I like to call and hear their stories, listen to them,” Joan says. “It makes me very proud to be representing Hospice when I make the calls.”

Debbie Spielman says that many of the families she reaches out to are appreciative. She particularly remembers a widower who started to cry on the phone. “He said, ‘I’m just so lonely, it’s so nice that you’re thinking of me.’”

Volunteers are a critical part of our bereavement team, and their impact can be seen in every phone call they make. Hospice wouldn’t be able to provide the care that we do without our volunteers. Thanks to them and our dedicated bereavement team, we are able to serve not only our patients, but their families and the community.

“This is something that we all have to face,” Joan Schupp says. “Death is inevitable for all of us. If you can ease someone’s burden through all the different phases of hospice, volunteering is a way to be able to do that.”

If you are interested in volunteering for Hospice, please call our number 301-791-6360 for more information on ways you can help.

VOLUNTEER WEEK



Volunteers are a crucial part of the team here at hospice, and for National Volunteer Week from April 17-23, we want to honor and recognize our volunteers and emphasize how important their work is to us. Hospice of Washington County has a group of 180 individual volunteers who have remained dedicated and committed throughout the challenges of the last two years.

During the last two years, our volunteers have been creating cards for patients, doing administrative duties at Doey's House, making bereavement calls, and conducting virtual veteran pinning ceremonies with our Vet-to-Vet program. Last year, volunteers donated 1,688 hours of their time and talent to assist us in providing compassionate care to our patients and their families.

For National Volunteer Week, we are looking to showcase the variety of ways that our volunteers have been participating in the hospice mission. We will be sharing their stories on Facebook through a series of posts. This would be a great time to like our Facebook page. In addition, we will be doing an appreciation thank you mailer to all our volunteers.

We would like to recognize the two volunteers who had the highest number of hours in 2021. They are Dennis and Ann Mazingo! This couple with hearts for volunteering have been Hospice volunteers for a combined 16 years of service. They are some of our longest-serving volunteers, and they've worn many hats over the years.

Ann was the first of the duo to volunteer for Hospice. After witnessing the quality hospice care her father received, Ann was inspired to pay it back and signed up to become a volunteer after her 2012 retirement from CitiBank. Prior to COVID, Ann had been a patient companion, an 11th Hour Vigil Team member, and an administrative assistant. She even became a part-time front desk receptionist staff person for a time. After she retired (for the second time!), she went right back to volunteering. "I was reminded that I was welcome back anytime as a volunteer... so here I am," she says.

Dennis joined his wife in volunteering for Hospice in 2016 after a long career as a Hedgesville Elementary school teacher. Before volunteering for HWC, he had volunteered at the Discovery Station. Then, Dennis decided it was time to work with adults for a change. Like Ann, Dennis started as a patient companion prior to COVID. He now volunteers as a front desk receptionist at Doey's House on weekend shifts, where he enjoys organizing the various forms into folders. "I tend to like some order," he says. "We both feel a closeness with Hospice as a result of the care received by our family members and friends. We are proud to be a part of the giving community of Washington County," they shared.

The impact of what our volunteers do for our patients and staff is immeasurable. And, it is just as rewarding to the volunteers as it is to Hospice. We could not do what we do without the generous support of our volunteers. We THANK YOU during this National Volunteer Week.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SARAH WILLIAMS

CLINICAL NURSE MANAGER AT DOEY'S HOUSE

Sarah Williams is a clinical nurse manager at Doey's House, an inpatient facility that offers symptom management and emotional and spiritual care to Hospice of Washington County patients. She joined the HWC care team in 2021. Sarah manages an interdisciplinary care team and provides skillful, highly personalized care for each patient and family member she serves. She was first inspired to become a nurse after volunteering at a combat hospital while serving in the U.S. military in Afghanistan. A decade later, she enrolled in nursing school. She learned about life-saving practices and intensive care, but she was drawn to hospice care. "I wanted to be able to educate people and just provide that comfort during a time that's also important—just as important as bringing a life into this world." Sarah found the hospice environment to be emotionally intense and intimate. She also found it to be fraught with misconceptions. "I wish people would know that hospice is about more than dying," she says. "We provide a beautiful service." Many people do not know about the symptom management that hospice provides



Sarah Williams
Clinical Nurse Manager

to patients, she says, and the year-long bereavement care services for grieving family members. Recently, Sarah was called to visit a hospital to assess a patient for admission. "When I walked into the room, I just knew that I arrived a little bit too late," she says. The patient

had died and was still surrounded by her family members. Sarah was not able to care for the patient, but she talked with her husband about the grieving process and services available to him "I was still able to provide that comfort to him in his time of need." Outside of work, Sarah likes spending time with family, exercising and reading. She loves to spend time in Washington, D.C. especially going to Nationals games!

"I was still able to provide that comfort to him in his time of need."



SOCIAL WORK HIGHLIGHT

Social workers are a vital part of the interdisciplinary teams here at Hospice of Washington County. Our Social Workers advocate for each patient's end-of-life wishes and help individuals address the emotional aspects of late-stage illnesses. Hospice social workers also assist families in identifying other available local services and resources for additional support.

Social Work Month is celebrated each March, and Social Work Day is celebrated March 15. This year's theme is The Time is Right for Social Work. The time is always right for social work, and now more than ever, social workers have proven to be a saving grace during these times of uncertainty and sickness of COVID-19. Our social workers at hospice work tirelessly to guide our patients and their families through their hospice journey. But what does social work look like in hospice? Beth Layman, our longest-serving social worker with 15 years of service, helped explained what it means to work in hospice.

Q: What does your day-to-day look like as a social worker?

I would say every day is different. I cannot say that any day [is the same] except every other Thursday when I have my interdisciplinary team (IDT) meeting in the morning from 8:30 to 12. But other than that, the work I do with patients and families is different every day. I really like that about hospice care, that it's not the same thing every day. The social worker does a lot of the communication with the patient and families. A lot of times I'm educating and providing a lot of encouragement. Sometimes you're just providing a presence and supportive listening.

Q: Why did you become a social worker?

I became interested in social work, in psychology, in college. I went to Frostburg State University and ended up getting my BSW from there. I liked working with people. I ended up graduating and becoming a CNA. I received my MSW from Univ. Of MD at Baltimore, and then worked to obtain clinical licensure (LCSW-C), all during the time of raising my 2 children. For seven years, I was a CNA/med tech/social worker in group homes and assisted living. I say I couldn't do what I do today without that experience.

Q: What drew you to working for hospice specifically?

I had encountered hospice workers by working in the hospital. I liked the multi-disciplinary approach of working with the nurse, chaplain, and doctor, and they would all come into the hospital to visit a patient and they would each be doing their own little thing, and I liked that.

Q: What are some gratifying moments you've had working for hospice?

I've had lots of gratifying moments. When you can know, that even if you just did one thing right during the day, that you made a difference... when a patient and families tell you, "You made a difference, thank you," and they feel at peace about their loved one passing, that is gratifying. And I love the dogs [when I visit patients]!

EARLY INTERVENTION BRINGING BETTER DAYS TO PATIENTS

For folks living in Maryland in the neighborhoods of Washington County, Hospice of Washington County had the foresight to begin a program called LifeCare to assist patients who have chronic diseases or serious illnesses. *LifeCare Advanced Illness Management* is a palliative care service for patients who are not ready for hospice care.

A young woman diagnosed with stage IV breast cancer whose chemo and radiation treatments are causing side effects of pain, exhaustion, and sleeplessness robbing her of spending precious time with her children; an elderly man with breathing issues is having trouble getting out to his doctor appointments since his son had to take a job a long distance away; a husband fears he is falling behind in caring for his bed-bound wife and sees her health deteriorating; a single young man with no family support is battling cancer and the difficult treatments alone. Each of these scenarios are typical of the patients who are seen by the nurse practitioners of LifeCare every day.

LifeCare is an individualized treatment of the symptoms that are the result of a chronic illness or serious illness with a goal to sustain or improve the quality of daily lives by providing the following services:

Careful assessment of the patient's and family's needs that could improve their quality of daily living.

Determining the individualized goals and outcomes desired by the patient and family.

Managing pain with interventions and medications carefully balanced to bring relief.

Providing coordination of care by communication with the various physicians, specialists, and agencies to address all needs – physical, spiritual, and social.

Bringing in other resources as needed to make caregiving safer and more effective.

LifeCare is an in-home service performed by Nurse Practitioners who have expertise in symptom and pain management, coordination of care, and the early identification of increasing needs to proactively intervene with the best treatment. The assessments take place in your home and each visit is planned to provide an individualized approach that targets the particular needs of each patient and family. Dr. Ever Ponciano oversees and reviews the clinical team.

If you think LifeCare could help you or someone you know, please go to the website for LifeCare at <https://hospiceofwc.org/care-services/lifecare-advanced-illness-management> or call *LifeCare Advanced Illness Management* at 301-671-2171.



KASS SCHOLARSHIP

Frederic H. Kass III, M.D. Endowed Scholarship Fund Taking Applications.

Applications for the 2022 Frederic H. Kass III, M.D. Endowed Scholarship Fund are now available. Dr. Kass is one of the founders of Hospice of Washington County, Inc. (HWC) which began in 1980 and has cared for our community for over 40 years.

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 is designed to support students in Washington County pursuing a career in the healthcare field. The fund is made possible by individuals and organizations who have given generously to encourage these pursuits.

"I am very proud that the funds from the scholarship assist those pursuing careers in healthcare," stated Frederic H. Kass III, M.D.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how vital healthcare education and providers are in our community. I am proud that we are able to help deserving recipients, and this year we are adding an additional scholarship, bringing our total to four. Because of the generosity of our community, we are not only continuing this tradition but expanding it."

In 2022, four scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded. Individuals who apply must be a resident of Washington County, Maryland, who is a graduating high school senior and is accepted to an accredited college majoring in a healthcare field with a minimum GPA of 3.0; or a resident of Washington County, Maryland, who is a current student at an accredited college majoring in a healthcare field with a minimum GPA of 3.0; or an employee of HWC, or an immediate family member of an HWC employee who is a current student or accepted to an accredited college majoring in a healthcare field, with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Applications for the scholarships must be completed by April 1, 2022. Individuals who are interested in applying for the scholarship can apply on Hospice of Washington County's website at www.hospiceofwc.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars for these confirmed events, and keep on the lookout for more events to come!



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