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Each year, a local artist creates a custom design for the Women Swimmin' for Hospicare event t-shirts. This year, Lisa Cowden created a beautiful paper cutout design that perfectly captured the spirit of our "Go the Distance" event.



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Our newsletter is mailed twice a year to patients and family members, donors, community supporters, and other friends of Hospicare. If you have received multiple copies of this newsletter, please let us know so we can correct the mailing error. In addition, we welcome your thoughts or feedback about the contents. Contact us at communications@hospicare.org.

Find more articles and information on hospice, palliative care, advance care planning, and grief support at hospicare.org.

To receive the Hospicare e-newsletter, subscribe online at hospicare.org

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FINDING OUR RHYTHM

Message from Joe Sammons, Our Executive Director

Dear friends:

As many days as possible, I try to walk outside around the beautiful grounds of our King Road residence and administration building. Now, as we swing from summer into fall, watching the skies change and the goldenrod bloom, I'm reminded of one of my favorite quotes: "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."—Lao Tzu

It reminds me that the steadiness and the rhythms of nature can guide us and ground us, if only we get out in the world and keep walking, and if only our eyes and hearts are open to the wonder, the cadence of our world.

It is a cadence that has its high points and low points—and Hospicare has certainly seen its share of those swings as we've struggled with COVID 19, with the larger healthcare worker crisis, and with our own leadership changes. Through it all, our staff, volunteers and supporters have kept their eyes and hearts open, and we have kept walking, serving our patients and their families with care and compassion and helping them live with love and die with dignity.

We view this work as sacred; we believe that it is an honor and responsibility to steward this work and this amazing organization, not merely to survive the times that we face now, but to thrive and grow so that everyone in our community can have access to the care we provide. Our vision is focused on two simple goals: provide high-quality services to everyone who needs and wants them, and create a healthy organization that is the very best place to work.

This vision—high-quality services and being the best place to work—is ultimately the "North Star" that guides our agency forward, and we can get there if we combine thoughtful risk-taking with consistent, heart-focused management. We've taken steps forward in service of this vision over the past few months: We've dramatically increased wages for our patient services and many other staff, we've added positions in psychosocial, field hospice and finance, and we've made our buildings and grounds position full-time.

In the end, it is the people and our relationships that make up Hospicare, and investing in those are crucial to the heart-centered work that we do in the community.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter! Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or comments.

Joe Sammons
Executive Director



PHOTO BY CASEY MARTIN



Photo by Joe Wilensky

On the cover:

This year, 49 new swimmers participated in Women Swimmin', including a yet-to-be-born member of the next generation of swimmin' women. Christine Miller (pictured here with long-time swimmin' sisters Eve and Ellen Abrams) jumped right in just weeks before welcoming her baby girl into the world. Ken Goetz designed the archway behind the swimmers.

Our 18th Annual Women Swimmin' for Hospicare

Staying Nimble in the Face of Change

In the face of constant change, our staff and dedicated volunteer planning committee adapted to the times by creating a hybrid event that successfully raised over \$460,000!

All summer long our participants “went the distance” for Hospicare by walkin’, swimmin’ laps, knittin’, bikin’, and pickin’ up trash, and on August 14th we were excited to be back in the water for a modified swim. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, threats of harmful algal blooms (HABs), and high winds that caused us to change the course at the last minute for the safety of our boaters and swimmers, we were able to pull off a meaningful event. Our amazing extended Hospicare family helped make it possible.

We thank all our participants, swimmers, boaters, volunteers, corporate sponsors, and donors who came together in support of compassionate care in our community!



PHOTO BY EDNA BROWN



PHOTO BY JOE WILENSKY

Flipping Pancakes in Memory of Ray



Melissa Travis Dunham, in her own version of “Go the Distance for Hospicare,” committed to “RAC-ing” this summer—not running or swimming, but by practicing Random Acts of Connection, or RAC. She says that setting a goal of connection “helped me push myself to say yes when it would have been easier to say no.” One random act was inviting friends and family

to her front yard for a pancake breakfast in memory of Ray Oglesby, a dedicated Hospicare volunteer who died from complications related to COVID-19.

Ray, also known as the “Pancake Man” or “Pancake Ray,” made breakfast for anyone who was at the residence on Wednesdays, including patients, family members, visitors, and staff.

“Ray joyfully and selflessly gave of himself to the community. He became a bright spot at Hospicare on Wednesday mornings, delivering breakfast with a smile and a cup of real maple syrup. We are grateful for the time, energy and joy he shared with us.”

—Wendy Yettru, Manager of Volunteer Services

We thank our corporate sponsors for underwriting the cost of the event! Because of their support, all money raised goes directly to patient services.

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Going the Distance: A Nurse's Dedicated Hospicare Journey

Team Member Profile: Kirsten Miller, RN

BY BARRY MILLER



PHOTO BY JON REIS

Job Title: Associate Director of Patient Services

Residence: Brooktondale

Family: Husband, Jeremy, son, Max, and dog, Winston

Hobbies: Gardening, knitting, and playing Trivia with friends

For Kirsten Miller, the journey to Hospicare began on a personal note. While working as an ER nurse at Cayuga Medical Center in the mid-2000s, Kirsten befriended Hospicare nurse Leslie McLean while Leslie made visits to hospice patients.

“My grandfather was at the end of his life at the time, and Leslie taught me a lot about the dying process and symptom management. With her support and education, I became my grandfather’s non-hospice hospice nurse,” says Kirsten. “This profound experience guided me toward my hospice work.”

While Kirsten’s primary role at Hospicare is to ensure the clinical team has the tools and support it needs to function in the midst of regulatory changes and ever-changing demands of the healthcare field, her involvement extends well beyond the job’s perfunctory duties.

“I really love Hospicare. It is incredibly rewarding to assist our team members in helping to empower patients and caregivers during this very intimate process,” says

Kirsten. “I feel fortunate that Hospicare is the hospice I work for.”

Beyond her work role, Kirsten is also passionate about Hospicare’s biggest fundraising event, Women Swimmin’.

“One year,” says Kirsten. “I made origami swans in remembrance of each of my patients who had died the previous year and released them in the water as I swam.”

To “Go the Distance” for the pandemic-modified event in 2020, Kirsten and her mother, Gundy (who participated in the event even before Kirsten started working for Hospicare) walked the length of the lake, from Montezuma to Ithaca, over several Saturday mornings.

Participating in the event helps Kirsten process her experiences at Hospicare and connects her and her mother with others in the community who have lost loved ones. “Varying weather and the pandemic couldn’t keep us from going the distance!” reflects Kirsten.

Sara Worden Takes on New Role as Director of Development and Community Relations

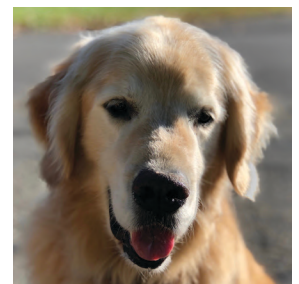


“The holistic model of care is what originally drew me to hospice work,” says Sara. “I’ve come to understand that although there may not be a cure, there is a possibility for profound healing on many different levels at the end of life, and the Hospicare interdisciplinary team helps facilitate that healing. It’s an honor to work to support the clinical team in all they do for our patients and their families.”

Upcoming Events

Our community memorials, grief support groups, and educational programs are free and available to all residents of Cortland and Tompkins counties. Visit [hospicare.org/events](https://www.hospicare.org/events) to view our community events.

SAVE THE DATE! Join us for a Song Bath with the Threshold Choir (11/14, 3-4pm via Zoom), Light of My Life (12/3, 6:30pm, Homer Green), and Winter Solace Community Memorial 12/5, 7-8pm via Zoom).



One of our most faithful and beloved volunteers crossed the Rainbow Bridge this spring. For the past 10 years Follensby, a beautiful Golden Retriever, was a frequent visitor to the Hospicare residence. With a thankful heart, we say goodbye.