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The mission of Hospicare & Palliative Care Services is to bring medical expertise and compassionate, respectful care to people and their loved ones at any stage of a life-threatening illness and to provide information and education about advanced illness, dying and bereavement to the entire community.

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Message from the Director



Just under a year ago, I arrived at Hospicare, immediately immersed myself in the community, and witnessed firsthand what makes this place so special (spoiler alert: it's you).

I shadowed clinical staff and saw them work hand-in-hand with one another and our dedicated volunteers to offer compassionate and comprehensive care to our cherished patients and families. Loved ones who thought their worlds were ending after a death told me about the Hospicare counselors who helped them heal. I hugged swimmers as they climbed out of Cayuga Lake, having

traveled 1.2 miles in memory of a friend or family member, and generous donors met with me to ask, "How can I help?"

The Hospicare family is enormous and deeply intertwined. "Together, we are Hospicare" is an informal saying we've adopted as our way to demonstrate the strength and connectivity of us all in this work.

"Vision" is a perfect, albeit perhaps cliched, theme for the first newsletter of 2020.

For more than 35 years, Hospicare has served this community, and we are fortunate to have you, and so many other people, involved in caring for our neighbors and friends. We also know there are patients and families who need an added layer of support but do not know about our work, or who are too uneasy to call and ask questions.

Our goal is to serve the whole of Cortland and Tompkins counties, including its most rural areas. Whether your community has 1,000 people like Cincinnatus or 11,000 people like Lansing, Hospicare is here to provide care and support to you and your loved ones.

The following pages describe some of the key initiatives we have identified to help guide Hospicare through this next decade and beyond: expanding our palliative care program; building awareness of how hospice can support patients and their families; creating relationships with community leaders and like-minded organizations; and securing new sources of funding to cover the costs of unreimbursed expenses.

This community is a special place to call home, and its people make it so. Thank you for all the ways in which you support Hospicare's work. If you'd like to get more involved, please reach out.



Kim De Rosa



On the cover:

Local photographer Allison Usavage captured this beautiful moment between Wahtura Jackson LPN and Dorothy, a beloved resident and member of the Hospicare extended family. Allison's photographs are sprinkled throughout this issue. To find out more about her work, visit allisonusavage.com.



Hospicare Residence RN Meenu offers supportive hugs, and a dry blanket, to every swimmer who successfully crosses the lake.

JOHN MUNSON

Women Swimmin’ Make a Splash for Hospicare!

As one of the premier summer events in the region, Women Swimmin’ for Hospicare inspires swimmers, escort boaters, volunteers, and donors to come together in support of patients and families in Cortland and Tompkins counties. **Join us!**

SWIM—Swim 1.2 miles across Cayuga Lake on August 8th, or swim laps in a pool all season long.

BOAT—Help escort our swimmers across the lake in your canoe, kayak, stand-up paddleboard or power boat.

VOLUNTEER—Help out before the event or on swim day.

DONATE—Support your favorite swimmer or donate directly to the event.

SPONSOR—Our generous sponsors guarantee that every dollar raised goes directly to supporting patients and families.

This is truly a community event and we couldn’t do it without you! Visit our new event website or contact Terry for more information or to get involved.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect when my dad was transferred from the Cortland hospital to the Hospicare residence. I was taken by the sense of peace, beauty and comfort. The staff immediately took over the care of my dad, which gave us the opportunity to spend quality time bird watching through the large windows at the side of his room and talking together quietly. One day, I asked dad what he would change if he had his life to live over again. He replied, ‘Why change a good thing.’ I support Women Swimmin’ in memory of my dad and the blessing Hospicare was to our family.”

—Mary Coffey

womenswimmin.org | 607-272-0212 | womenswimmin@hospicare.org

2020 Vision

Caring for and Sustaining our Community

“You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.”

—Cecily Saunders, RN, founder of the modern hospice movement



ALLISON USAVAGE

Foot ailments become more common with age and serious illness. Daily visits from Lena, a home health Aide, has made a big difference in Ed's feet and his quality of life. His pup enjoys her visits too!

A barrier to accessing this care is often as simple as not knowing that Hospicare is in the community; confusion about when and who makes the first call; or misunderstanding the costs associated with end-of-life care.

This year, we're going to be more proactive in seeking out opportunities in Cortland and Tompkins counties. We want to speak to large and small community groups, participate in more education and outreach-appropriate events, and build even stronger relationships with nursing facilities and medical offices, understanding that these are natural places for people to turn for guidance.

Hospicare has work to do because our support is available to everyone, not just those who seek us out.

How you can help!

Do you know of a group or club that would welcome a guest speaker? Or a community event where we could host an information table? Let us know! Please email Sara Worden at sworden@hospicare.org or call 607-272-0212.

Patient (and Family) Care

"Live until you die" is the philosophy of care at the core of hospice. At Hospicare, patients and families are at the center of every care plan and decision.

Time and time again, research has shown that hospice services positively benefit both the patient and their loved ones. By reducing the symptoms and stress of dying, hospice allows families time to build new memories, make amends, and have final, peaceful times together.

Hospicare also steps up to support loved ones and caregivers after a patient

dies. One-on-one counseling sessions, support groups, and bereavement activities are just a few of the services available to families and friends during this tender time.

Department of Health statistics paint a difficult picture: many people who could benefit from our care are dying without hospice. This is especially true in our more rural communities, including much of Cortland County.

For Hospicare, this unmet need isn't about data and numbers, though. It's about the people who need us and aren't connected early enough (or at all) to our services.

“Our commitment to the community extends to every corner of Cortland and Tompkins counties, from Newfield to Trumansburg and Marathon to Preble. Every person deserves the highest quality of life when facing serious illness, the end of life, or profound grief, and Hospicare will work tirelessly to ensure that everyone who needs our care can access it.”

—Leah Gugino, Director of Patient Services

Palliative Care

Many people will tell you that the experience of receiving a diagnosis of a serious illness is surreal. Time stops, although the barrage of information and treatment plans continues. It can feel exhausting and time consuming for patients to manage this new reality and its logistics while balancing their own stress and emotions with those of their loved ones.

Palliative care is specialized medical care that focuses on relieving the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal of palliative care is to improve quality of life in all its forms. A specially trained team of doctors, nurses, and other specialists work together with a patient's own doctors to provide an extra layer of support.

Hospicare is conducting a search for a nurse practitioner who will expand and lead the agency's palliative care program, serving patients at any age and at any stage of a serious illness and supporting those who are pursuing curative treatment.

Hospicare also received a bequest gift last fall that is funding a comprehensive outreach and communications initiative to saturate both counties with information and education about the benefits of palliative care. Hospicare's website is undergoing a tune-up, and we're collecting personal stories from patients and families about the value of palliative care when facing illness.



ALLISON USAVAGE

The earlier someone is brought on to our services, the more time we have to build meaningful relationships. John served as Janice's nurse through many phases of her illness and supported her through her transition from her home in Cortland to our residence in Ithaca. Their connection was palpable and a testimony to their friendship.

How you can help!

If you have a story to share about your experience with palliative care, please email Sara Worden at sworden@hospicare.org or call 607-272-0212.

Building Our Community of Donors

Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance cover only about 83% of Hospicare's services. Our generous community bridges the gap with financial and in-kind contributions that allow Hospicare to provide exceptional care to all who need it.

Women Swimmin' for Hospicare generates about half of the private support that Hospicare requires to meet its annual budget. Our goal for 2020 is to continue

to strengthen this phenomenal fundraiser while also seeking new sources of funding to diversify our revenue stream and weather inevitable economic ups and downs.

How you can help!

Whether you support Hospicare with a financial contribution or with the purchase of an item from our wish list, your generosity provides...

...the Gift of Comfort

Contributions help caregivers make their home accessible and support individuals at any stage of a serious illness through palliative care.

...the Gift of Support

Donations help a child participate in a workshop to create a memory box; support a patient who wishes to talk about advanced planning; and provide training to staff and volunteers to stay current on best practices in patient care.

...the Gift of Tranquility

Philanthropy brings therapeutic music to a patient and helps maintain the perennial gardens that provide beauty and solace to all who visit.

...the Gift of Peace

Contributions help Hospicare provide emotional support to patients who are struggling with complicated family dynamics; help a grieving spouse find a path forward; and provide counseling to a community group after a suicide.

Whether you give a gift via a check, through your IRA, or in your will, you provide comprehensive, compassionate care to all in our community who need us. Contact Jennifer Gabriel at jgabriel@hospicare.org or visit hospicare.org/donate to learn more about making a gift, or to view the special items on our wish list.

Meet Our New Medical Director

Team Member Profile: Lucia Jander, MD

BY SARA WORDEN



Job Title: Medical Director

Residence: Ithaca

Family: Husband Georg, four children (two away at college and two in high school living at home) and a menagerie of “low maintenance pets,” including canaries, fish and a bunny

Hobbies: Hiking, x-country skiing, traveling (most recently to Ottawa to visit her sister and to Costa Rica for spring break)

With the start of the new year, Hospicare celebrated Dr. Suzanne Anderson’s retirement and welcomed Dr. Lucia Jander as our new part-time medical director. In just a few short months, Dr. Jander has been seeing patients, getting to know her in-house team, and introducing herself to physicians in Cortland and Tompkins counties. Relationships are at the heart of good hospice and palliative care. In interviewing Dr. Jander, I felt an immediate sense of ease and connection, making it clear to me that she excels in creating personal connections.

Many in the community know Dr. Jander through her work with Dr. Ann Costello, Bonnie Lefkowitz White, and Jessa Dauria at Primary Care Internal Medicine of Ithaca, and she will continue to attend to her patients through this practice. She finds her patient relationships extremely rewarding and believes that, as a doctor “in the trenches,” these connections keep her in tune with community needs.

Dr. Jander was born in Bratislava, educated in Prague and came to the United States at the age of 24 for her residency at Boston University. She then worked to provide care to people

living at home with severe disabilities, preparing her well for geriatrics, hospice, and home care.

In 2002, Dr. Jander and her husband moved to Ithaca, where he conducts research at Cornell University in molecular-level insect and plant interactions. For several years, Dr. Jander juggled parenting and practicing medicine at local nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Dr. Jander says her vision for Hospicare is “to continue to provide excellent patient care, raise awareness about our services, and expand outpatient palliative care.” She recognizes the importance of our work and its connection to the greater medical system, adding that “we need to work together to find creative ways to meet the demands of our aging population.”

Dr. Jander believes in the value of hospice and palliative care’s home care models and interdisciplinary teamwork. She wishes that all of health care used this model as it gives patients the best chance of having their social, medical, and spiritual needs met.

Hospicare welcomes Dr. Jander and looks forward to working with her to make our community even stronger!



It is with bitter-sweetness that we honor the retirement of Donna George, Manager of Bereavement Services. Donna has worked tirelessly to expand our community grief support services and has touched countless lives in her years providing grief support. We will miss her at Hospicare! (Left to right: Laura Ward, Donna George and Liz Wood, at Donna’s retirement party)

Creating a Vision for How We Live and How We Die

BY SARA WORDEN

“None of us knows how much time we have upon this earth. What a blessing it is—to both our loved ones and ourselves—to feel that there is truly nothing left unsaid when our own time comes. Why wait to mend and tend our most important relationships?”

—Edie Reagan, Spiritual Care Coordinator

We all know the feeling: the sudden flash of insight accompanied by heart-wrenching emotion when we realize that a loved one won't **be here forever in our lives.**

Sometimes it's that acknowledgment of life's preciousness or the fear of loss that inspires us to spend an extra moment with a loved one and express our appreciation for them. These profound moments are a gift when we stop to contemplate the meaning that our friends and family bring to our lives.

In our society it's easier to prepare for birth than it is for death, even though both experiences are a part of life. Preparing for the end of life and communicating our desires are some of the ways we can show our love for family, caregivers and friends. By contemplating our priorities and making preparations, we show that we are thinking of them and care about their experience as we transition out of this life.

I recently had the privilege of witnessing Edie Reagan, our spiritual care coordinator, and Kira Lallas, a per diem social worker, speak to a group at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. They led participants through an exercise based on the work of Dr. Ira Byock, an international leader in palliative care and author

of *The Four Things That Matter Most*. Participants were asked to reflect on those in their lives whom they love, whom they have previously loved, or who matter most to them. Then they were asked to consider how these four simple phrases apply to those relationships:

- Please forgive me
- I forgive you
- Thank you
- I love you

These phrases carry enormous power to mend and nurture our relationships and inner lives. As Dr. Byock says, “The sentiments they convey can help us resolve interpersonal difficulties with integrity and grace.”

Experience this exercise at home by considering the people you cherish most, and thoughtfully ask yourself, “To whom might I want/need to express these statements?” It can be helpful to write them down, or share them with a trusted friend or loved one. Given the unexpected turns of life, you may find that this exercise shifts how you relate to family or friends on a daily basis.

For me, this process was extremely helpful. I was pleasantly surprised how much healing I experienced, even though one from whom I seek forgiveness has already left this world. This exercise helped me find more peace and acceptance.

We thank you for your involvement in Hospicare. Your participation shows that you care enough to engage in challenging conversations around the end of life. Whether it is navigating a wave of grief, holding the hand of a loved one through a life-limiting illness, volunteering, or preparing your living will, we honor you on this path. We know it's not always easy, so please reach out anytime with questions.

“Dying doesn't cause suffering. Resistance to dying does.”

—Dr. Ira Byock

We Will Speak with Your Group

Did you know? Department of Health statistics show that many people who would be appropriate for support are dying without hospice. We need your help to spread awareness about the programs we offer that support families and alleviate suffering. If you are involved in a community organization in Cortland or Tompkins county, we'd love to offer a presentation on a topic that would be relevant and interesting to your group.

Possible presentations include:

- **When to Call?**—How to know if hospice is the right choice for your loved one.
- **When Your Health Is Changing**—Learn about the palliative approach to health.
- **Till the End and Then Some...**—Grief support from Hospicare and tools for healing hearts.
- **The Ins and Outs of End-of-Life Planning**—Demystifying advanced directives and health care proxies.
- **Taking Care of Unfinished Business**—Tending to our stories, our relationships and what matters most.

For more information contact: Sara Worden, assistant director of Community Engagement at 607-272-0212 or sworden@hospicare.org.

MYTH vs. FACT

MYTH: My disease is not curable so there is nothing else I can do.

FACT: Hospice provides emotional, medical, and spiritual support, and you will have access to care from an interdisciplinary team made up of physicians, nurses, social workers, grief counselors, home health aides, and volunteers. The goal is to improve quality of life for you and your family by focusing on symptom and pain management and comfort care, rather than on curing the disease.

It's never too early to call and ask questions:
607-272-0212

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. This newsletter is also available online at hospicare.org/newsletters.



Join Us for Illuminations

June 11, 7:30–9 p.m.
The Nina K. Miller Hospicare Center
172 East King Road, Ithaca

Illuminations is an annual memorial event open to anyone and everyone. Light a luminaria in memory of a loved one, enjoy refreshments and wander the Hospicare gardens. The evening of remembrance features live music and poetry and concludes with a candlelit “Taps” ceremony around our pond. This special event will be held rain or shine, but will be held indoors if there is inclement weather. Attendance is free of charge. Please RSVP by emailing events@hospicare.org or calling 607-272-0212.

Bereavement Programs

Advanced registration for special programs is required. In addition, Hospicare offers ongoing support groups for anyone 18 years of age or older. For more information about current offerings, please contact Liz Wood at bereavement@hospicare.org or 607-272-0212, or visit hospicare.org.

Meditation for Grief—with Phil Asaph
April 18, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
YWCA, 114 Clayton Avenue, Cortland

Clay for the Healing Heart for Adults—with Julia Dean
April 26, 5–7 p.m.
The Clay School, 950 Danby Road, Ithaca

Finding Forgiveness: Healing after the Loss of a Parent
May 7 & 14, 6–8 p.m.
172 East King Road, Ithaca

Grieving Together: General Support Group for Adults (Ithaca)
First and third Wednesday of the month
5:30–7 p.m. at Hospicare, 172 East King Road, Ithaca

Grieving Together: General Support Group for Adults (Cortland)
First and third Tuesday of the month
10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. at the YWCA, 114 Clayton Avenue, Cortland



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