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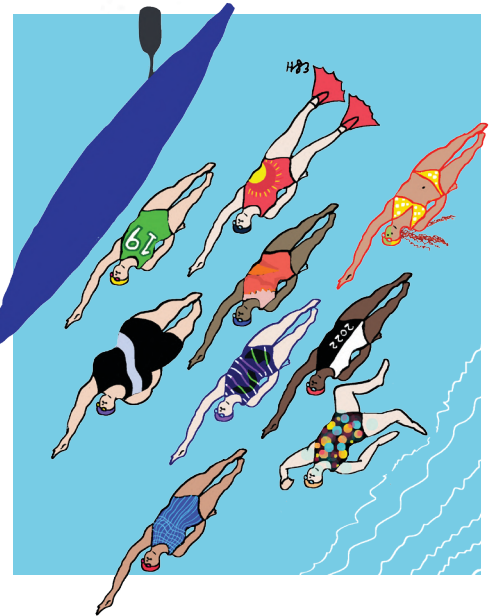
**Women Swimmn's Return
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Each year, a local artist creates a custom design for the Women Swimmn' for Hospicare event t-shirts and posters. This year's illustration is by Hospicare's own Outreach and Development Manager, Emily Hopkins, who is also a New Yorker magazine cartoonist and award-winning illustrator.



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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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Letter from Joe: “40 years made possible by a community that never gives up.”



PHOTO BY CASEY MARTIN

Dear friends,

As I stood on the lawn of the Ithaca Yacht Club on a beautiful late-summer morning at our 19th Women Swimmin’ event in August, I reminded everyone of the old proverb:

“Those who say it cannot be done should never get in the way of the people doing it.”

This year, hundreds of swimmers and boaters and walkers and volunteers and supporters connected with their friends and families to raise over \$600,000 for Hospicare, well beyond the largest total in our storied history. It wasn’t easy—it was our first time back to an across-the-lake swim since 2019, and many experts were worried about the effect of the economy on fundraising this summer—but with heart and commitment and persistence, this community did what it took to ensure that our mission can thrive and survive in the most difficult of times.

Now we turn the page to autumn. The goldenrod is bursting around the pond, and I think of the work that lies ahead of us, today and every day. We are recognized every year by Medicare as one of the highest quality hospice providers in New York State, one that never turns patients away for their lack of ability to pay for services. We are also one of the few hospices that continue to operate a beautiful residence. We hold true to the founding principles of hospice, as Dame Cicely Saunders said to her first patients in the late 1960’s, that we, “... will do all we can to not only help you die peacefully, but to help you live until you die.”

It’s been nearly 40 years since we began our work to advance that mission, and it is humbling to continue to do that work today.

It certainly hasn’t gotten easier over time, with new regulations and costs and changes in health care. There are, in fact, a significant number of “experts” who say that this work cannot be done in today’s fiscal and health care environment. But like our Women Swimmin’ community demonstrates every year, we say to skeptics: “Never fear. We’ve got this.”

We are so grateful. Thank you for everything you do to help us care for our community.

Joe Sammons
Executive Director

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 to view our community events.

SAVE THE DATE! Join us for Light of My Life (12/2, 6:30 p.m., Homer Green) and Winter Solace Community Memorial (12/4, 3-5 p.m., First Unitarian Society of Ithaca). Email events@hospicare.org for more information.

OUR 19TH ANNUAL WOMEN SWIMMIN' FOR HOSPICARE

It's our favorite day of the year!



PHOTOS BY: TOP-ROBYN WISHNA, MIDDLE LEFT-BOB SCHULTZ, MIDDLE RIGHT-EDNA BROWN, BOTTOM-ROBYN WISHNA

Hundreds of women woke up much earlier than usual on an unexpectedly chilly August morning, pulled on swimsuits, made their way to the ice rink parking lot at Cass Park, and got ready to get into the water for the first en masse across-the-lake Women Swimmin' for Hospicare swim in three years.

Also up early were hundreds of boaters, volunteers, and fans.

There were 278 swimmers on the lake that day and they were joined (in person and in spirit) by more fellow fundraisers than ever before, with 137 Go The Distance fundraisers and fundraising boaters. The amazing \$601,000 raised is thanks to that larger-than-ever group of fundraisers.



PHOTO BY EDNA BROWN

“There is so much infectious warmth, caring, camaraderie, and joy that it is impossible not to get swept up in the moment. The energy could fuel a few more laps across the lake! There is no better feeling than the feeling of knowing that we all collectively are taking away the financial burden from one of the journeys in all of our lives that should be focused on nothing but a meaningful process, family and loved ones, and quiet closure.”

—Assemblywoman Anna Kelles, who swam for the eleventh time this year

Scrapbook of Women Swimmin' Love for 19 Years!



PHOTO BY EMILY HOPKINS

Starfish and Jake's Girls team member Kathy Eliason, who also volunteers every week making meals in the Hospicare Residence kitchen, has been compiling this beautiful scrapbook for 19 years, since she swam in the first Women Swimmin' for Hospicare. Our Starfish are the 38 swimmers who have each raised more than \$30,000 for Hospicare since the event began.

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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To view our full list of supporters, visit womenswimmin.org.

Growing with Transition **Team Member Profile: Anna Osterhoudt, MSW**

BY SARA WORDEN

PHOTO BY SARAH NICKERSON



Job Title: Social worker

Residence: Genoa, NY

Family: Wife Molly and 2 daughters (ages 3 and 2)

Hobbies: Cooking, exercising, lake time with family, corn mazes, and carving pumpkins

It was fortuitous that I sat down with Anna on a warm autumnal day in the residence garden, since she happens to be such a fan of pumpkin spice and all things fall. It's something all her friends and team members know about her. This appreciation for a season that transitions us to winter prepares her well for hospice work as she helps people navigate life's final threshold.

Anna's path to Hospicare began when her mother introduced her to volunteerism in elementary school. Mother and daughter volunteered together at a local long-term care facility. Since then, helping people has been a constant in her life. Her mentor in elementary school was a social worker, and in fourth grade Anna decided that she wanted to be one too. Anna says, "She taught me so much and I knew that I wanted to be that person for others, the way she was for me."

Anna earned her MSW from University at Buffalo, which emphasizes a trauma-informed approach to care. This pedagogical background continues to inform how Anna provides care to our patients. She says, "I assume that everyone I encounter has endured some type of trauma. Everyone's trauma affects them differently and it's important to recognize how these life experiences impact them today."

At intake, through conversation, Anna screens for trauma and then uses that information to customize the patient's care plan. For example, a patient who has experienced sexual assault may have a strong preference for the gender of their

nurse, something the team can work to accommodate. War veterans, too, may have special needs. Anna remembers one resident who was triggered by loud noises. The staff was able to prepare the patient and provide additional support when a thunderstorm rolled in. Anna says, "We make a conscious effort to not accidentally retraumatize them so that they can have the best possible experience."

It's wonderful to see Anna light up when she talks about her patients. She does acknowledge that the work can be hard at times, especially when she gets close with the patient's family and sees them suffer at the time of death. Anna always makes sure to help connect them to our bereavement support services and writes a special message on our team condolence card.

Anna stays resilient by remembering what she learned from her mom and her elementary school social worker, and of course by treating herself to her favorite treat, the occasional pumpkin spice latte, no matter what the season.

Comfort for the Bereaved: Hospicare's Origin Story

Every year Women Swimmin's co-founder Dr. Ann Costello sends a Women Swimmin' letter to her many friends, relatives, and supporters, inviting them to make a gift in support of her swim for Hospicare. This year, her letter was about the history of Hospicare's founding nearly 40 years ago. Here's an excerpt:

"Hospicare began as an idea when Nina [Miller] was working as the director at Suicide Prevention & Crisis Services. Some of the calls on the crisis line were from people who were struggling with caring for a loved one who was dying and suffering from intractable pain. Nina felt something



Nina and Ann on Swim Day!

PHOTO BY WOLFGANG SACHSE

needed to happen to address this need. Together with other community members, a newly constituted board of directors set

up a 501(c)3 in 1983 and the organization Hospicare was born ... Initially the Board hired a nurse to provide information and support services to terminally ill patients and their loved ones. As the program grew, more staff and services were added, and when the organization became certified by New York State ... After some years of providing care in patients' homes, the Hospicare board of directors realized that some people needed a place offering specialized care at the end of life. They raised funds as well as awareness, and in 1995 opened the Hospicare Residence, the first such facility in New York State."