



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Hospicare's 40-Year Timeline • A Vision for Nonprofit Hospices' Future • Save the Date for the 20th Annual Women Swimmin' for Hospicare!

On the Cover: A fluffy dog and a supportive nurse can really brighten the day! Nurse Suzy enjoys a moment in our gardens with Bob and his son, Neil, who is joined by his faithful companion, Jack. Cover photo: Casey Martin

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Honoring 40 years of care

Hospicare's roots in Central New York

Community support for Hospicare comes in many forms. Our generous corporate sponsors give cash and in-kind donations, including this 1994 Aerostar Van. Creative fundraising events, such as the Angel Auction and Elegant Yard Sale, raise crucial funds for a growing program and services.



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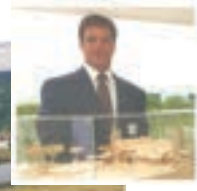
The Tompkins County Health Planning Council board votes to create an *ad-hoc* committee to determine the need for a local hospice, and Rev. David Evans agrees to chair the committee. A two-year grant is awarded to hire staff. Family & Children's Services agrees to receive and process the funds, space is offered in the Biggs Building, and Fran Ahern Smith, R.N. Ph.D., is hired to coordinate the program and provide nursing care for patients. In 1983, Hospicare of Tompkins County incorporates as a not-for-profit organization.



Mid 1990s



The dream for New York's first free-standing hospice residence is brought to fruition by Jerry Nye, our second executive director, Judy and Bernie Malloy, and Bernie's brother Chris. It's financed by the sale of a "spec" house built by volunteers. The residence is designed by architect Peter Newell and constructed by Schickel Construction Co. The Hospicare gardens, designed by Paula Horrigan, create a restorative and healing landscape setting for residents, visitors, and staff.



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Early 2000s

Our bereavement services are expanded to anyone in the community who is grieving a loss, not just those whose loved one died on hospice services.

Hospicare is renamed Hospicare & Palliative Care Services, to reflect the addition of a palliative care program (comfort care at any stage of an illness, including non-terminal illness), one of the first in the state.

2002

Ongoing



Generous do
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are while working together to ensure our future!

stretch back more than 40 years. Here are some of our historical highlights:



Hospicare expands to provide hospice services in Cortland County.



2014

The Hospicare presence is honored in honor of Miller upon retirement as executive director.

2015

Women Swimmin' for Hospicare adds pool lap swimming as an opportunity for those who can't swim the lake. Swimmers set their own goals and raise money for Hospicare. This also opens up the event to swimmers worldwide.

music program added, with the grant, by and musicologist Makos, CTHP, uses on music for the end of life.

2020

In an inspirational pandemic pivot, Women Swimmin' for Hospicare expands to include "Go the Distance." We increase our virtual grief support and advance care planning programming. The Threshold Choir hosts virtual song baths for the community.

and co-founders swim lake, accompanied by 120 swimmers, Hospicare. Together, and a little \$54,000.

sponsors and fundraisers help retrofit our aging residence nurse's station, accessible bathtub, and renovations of family room, and several bedrooms.



Joe Sammons, seasoned nonprofit leader who earlier led Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County and Challenge Workforce Solutions, becomes Executive Director.

2021

Hospicare honors 40 years of compassionate care since its inception as a nonprofit organization.

2023

An extraordinary community, comprising swimmers, boaters, volunteers, sponsors, donors, countless community cheerleaders, and a planning committee, celebrates the 20th Annual Women Swimmin' for Hospicare.

The Present

Hospicare now has a staff of about 45, plus approximately 80 patient-care volunteers who serve more than 500 patients each year in Cortland and Tompkins Counties.

The Future

Hospice agencies in many rural areas are closing and, on a national scale, for-profit replacements are changing the landscape of end-of-life care for the worse—making profits by providing less care, less bereavement support, no hospice residences, and fewer house calls. The future is up to us, the people of this region. If we want to keep compassionate, not-for-profit patient and family care available to all, we must continue the tradition.

What a rich and beloved tradition it is!

Letter from Our Executive Director

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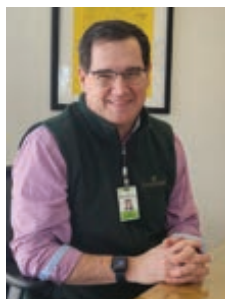
Our newsletter is mailed twice a year to patients and family members, donors, community supporters, and other friends of Hospicare. If you have received multiple copies of this newsletter, please let us know so we can correct the mailing error. In addition, we welcome your thoughts or feedback about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



Dear friends,

Mark Twain once said that “the two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.” I always liked that quote, because it reminds us that we don’t just measure what is most important in terms of days or dollars, but in terms of purpose—what it means to others and the world around us.

As we celebrate 40 years since our agency was born, the most important thing for us to do—and every year, really—is to remember and recommit to the purpose for which we were born: expert, compassionate, community-based hospice and palliative care, available to all in our community regardless of income or insurance.

We know what this mission, this commitment, means to the patients and families we serve. We remember the remarkable souls whose lives we have changed, whose deaths were a little more peaceful, with a little more dignity, than they might have been without our staff and volunteers. People like Barbara L., who was able to live and die at home, surrounded by family and friends, even practicing her Tai Chi with dedication and reverence right up until the end of her days.

For 40 years the work of Hospicare has always been to provide our patients and their families with the care they deserve when and where they need it most, but the tools and regulations and funding for this work have changed dramatically and continue to change today in ways that threaten the very foundations of our work.

For instance, while costs for staffing and medicines and equipment have increased 15 to 30% in the past few years, our reimbursement from Medicare, our largest funder, has increased less than 4%. The shortage of nurses and direct care staff like aides has led to unprecedented turnover in our ranks and delays in getting patients into care that we haven’t experienced in years. At Hospicare, we’ve answered the challenge, increasing wages and benefits while maintaining the highest quality of care levels for our patients, but we’ve paid the price financially, posting the largest deficit in our history last year.

But as Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “The greatest thing in this world is not where we stand but in what direction we are going.” At Hospicare, we are moving confidently forward with our eyes on the three most important things for our future—finding and keeping amazing staff, providing high-quality care, and creating innovative partnerships and support in the community. This is our “North Star” that will allow our services to survive and thrive today and tomorrow. And I know we can reach that north star if we walk with purpose, commitment and the resolve to give people the compassionate, expert, healing and respectful services that we all deserve.

Warmly,

Joe Sammons
Executive Director

Upcoming Events

Earth Day Garden Work Party—Saturday, April 22
Volunteers are invited to pitch in for a day of cleaning and sprucing up Hospicare’s gardens. 9:00 a.m.–noon or 2:00–4:30 p.m. Call to sign up for a time slot or email avanorman@hospicare.org.

Illuminations Community Memorial—Thursday, June 8, 7:30–9:00 p.m. All are welcome to this outdoors, rain or shine, program of remembrance.

20th Annual Women Swimmin’ for Hospicare—Saturday, August 12 at the Ithaca Yacht Club. Registration for swimmers and folks who want to Go the Distance opens on May 9th.

Visit hospicare.org/events or email events@hospicare.org for more information.