



impressions

LEGACIES OF LOVE AND FINGERPRINTS ON THE WORLD



special issue:

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

SENIOR *i*NDPENDENCE[®]
Home Health & Hospice



April is National Volunteer Month

and we are thrilled to devote an entire issue of *Impressions* to recognizing our volunteers – the special group of people that helps us further our mission by touching the lives of those we serve.

While there are millions of volunteers across the U.S. who give of themselves to help others, hospice volunteers play an especially important role.

These volunteers give so much to patients, their families and hospice organizations as a whole. In fact, hospice began in this country more than 30 years ago as a volunteer movement. Since that time, countless hours have been given by volunteers to bring compassion, support and dignity to patients and their families.

At Senior Independence Hospice, our volunteers have a passion for giving back and they've found many ways to do so.

Some volunteers visit with patients; a seemingly simple activity but extremely meaningful for a person who may find themselves isolated and alone. And there are those who provide the ultimate gift – a hand to hold or a soothing presence as a person takes their last breath.

Whether helping out in the office, playing music for a patient, delivering holiday wreaths or helping to make a special wish come true, all of our volunteers make an immense impact.

On the following pages, you'll read about a few of our many special volunteers and the ways they've brought joy, hope, comfort and compassion to our patients, their families and even our staff. We are grateful to all of our volunteers, past and present, for all they have given. ●

The last good thing that may happen
in a person's life is a *hospice volunteer*.

~ Unknown

A true calling



Sister Juanita Henley (above) is the longest-serving volunteer in Senior Independence's **Akron/Canton region**.

The 84-year-old nun has been in a giving profession most of her life, and since 2008 has extended her service to God and others by working with hospice.

Officially retired after more than 40 years as a Catholic schoolteacher, Sister Juanita knows the value of feeling useful. She advises other retirees to “reach out to others; find something useful within [your] community.”

“I enjoy it. It’s definitely for me,” she said of being a hospice volunteer.

Sister Juanita frequently visits patients at Rockynol, Senior Independence’s sister community in Akron.

Her convent, Our Lady of the Elms, is located right next door to Rockynol, where her father lived for three years. His experience is part of the reason she became a volunteer.

Getting to know the patients is something Sister Juanita particularly enjoys. “One of the things I really like is finding out about their lives, to relate to them. They might have been a nurse or even a ballet dancer,” she shared.

Listening and gently responding are just some of the skills she practices as part of her volunteerism. “I respond in a spiritual way so [the patients] feel God is with them, so they feel more comfortable,” she explained.

Daphne Massaro, volunteer coordinator, said that Sister Juanita is a delight to work with. “She is committed, loyal and has provided a countless number of volunteer hours to our patients,” Daphne said, adding, “We are honored to have her as our volunteer.” ●



Akron/Canton volunteers

Lynne Basic
Barb Chokreff & Cooper
Shelby Funk
Judy Gabric
Sister Juanita Henley
Derek Hill

Kathy Holder
Mike Hoofman
Veronica Kovach-Dodd
Darlene Lambert
Ben Masserey
Suzanne Murphy

Tonya Okolo
Kris & Ben Rosenfeld
Ed Sauer
Caroline Stilwell
Steve Thompson
Hanna Wilson



End-of-life compassion



At Senior Independence Hospice, we do everything in our power to make sure that no patient ever has to die alone.

In the final hours of life, a person’s family may or may not be able to be by their side to offer comfort and companionship. That’s why volunteers like **Kim Iverson** (*top left*) and **Heidi Hafer** (*bottom left*) are so important to our patients, their families and our organization as a whole.

Often referred to as “journey” or “vigil” volunteers, people like Kim and Heidi are specially trained for end-of-life situations, and do whatever they can to help the patient and their family.

Both women serve patients in Senior Independence’s **Central Ohio region**, and have gotten as much from their experiences as they have given.

Kim became interested in volunteering after experiencing hospice when her father died. She explained, “It’s important for patients and families to have support as they learn to cope with end of life. And it’s helpful to have someone there in those final hours.”

Even if a patient appears to be unconscious or unaware of their surroundings, Kim always speaks to them, reads to them or just tries to offer an “emotional presence.”

Heidi, who is working toward a career as a medical practitioner, has been a hospice volunteer for years and is grateful she can be there for patients, especially at the end of life. “Everyone needs someone,” she stated.

Heidi says her volunteer experiences have enriched her life, and she’s shared many special moments with patients. She recalled one such instance with a patient who liked to listen to Nat King Cole. Heidi and the woman would listen to his music and “dance” along together.

Heidi makes every effort to learn about her patients’ interests. “I like to be there for them,” she said. ●

Central Ohio volunteers

- David Azer
- Janice Beaty
- Alyssa Berelsman
- Lauren Caldwell
- Janine Cirko
- Maxine Cramton
- Jenny Doone
- Daniel Fendt
- Yuliya Fonin
- Aly Green
- Heidi Hafer
- Blake Horne
- Kim Iverson
- Sheila Lehman
- Roger Lewis
- Lori McCullough
- Lizzy Miles
- Josephine Mustapha
- Mary Petro
- Kola Prasada Rao
- Torrie Reichert
- Allen Reta
- Emily Schornstein
- Brooke Siesel
- Cindi Stokes
- Michael Warren
- Ruthellen Wise

A special friendship



Excerpts from "Angelo"

"As a hospice volunteer it is my pleasure to know
A handsome/distinguished older gentleman named Angelo
Angelo Congin, such a beautiful "old country" Italian name
In 1946 oldest brother Tony added an "n," what a shame"

"... in 1943 this cocky young stud was off to the far Pacific
He served bravely on Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall's to be specific
Before the war Angelo met lovely Silvia and took her as bride
She cooked him great Italian, but he never did get 2 feet wide"

"...Now with his body weakened by bothersome ailments galore
But mind still sharp as a tack, quoting details from long before
By his openness and honest acceptance of things as they be
Angelo seems perfectly able to still live alone we all can agree
I love to pop in at Broadmoor for an hour's visit now and then
When I stand to leave I am inspired by Angelo all over again"

The relationship between **Dick Whitaker** (above, right) and Angelo Congin (above, left) is more than just volunteer and hospice patient; the two veterans have forged a genuine friendship.

Both Dick and Angelo served in the Navy, and the two have bonded over shared experiences. But they exchange more than war stories when they meet. Dick

has really gotten to know Angelo and has written a life review poem for his friend.

Pam Lewis, volunteer coordinator for Senior Independence Hospice in the **Greater Cleveland region**, says she has great respect for the work Dick is doing with Angelo.

"So much of their conversations include

their shared experiences and situations that only veteran-to-veteran can really understand and appreciate," said Pam.

It has been rewarding for Pam to know that they were able to find the perfect volunteer/patient match and the two men have such a wonderful connection. "Sometimes it seems like it was just meant to be," Pam shared. ●

Greater Cleveland volunteers

Pat Baker
Colette Bauer
Tara Bayan
Jim Boyd
Arline Coleman

Kristen Evans
JT Hillen
Annemarie Johnson
Kathy Koman
Christine Noble

Dick Whitaker
Rebecca Woehrle
Sister Frances Wood
Doug Yates



Easing grief by helping others

About five years ago, **Sue Oberholtzer** (*right*) heard a representative of Senior Independence give a talk about becoming a hospice volunteer, and she decided to give it a try.

Her son had died of cancer three years earlier and Sue thought giving back would be a good way to honor him and might also be good for her, too. It has been. “A lot of it has helped me so much,” she stated.

Keeping busy has helped to ease Sue’s grief. She thinks hospice may have even benefited her son, had that been possible. “He went fast, but I think hospice could have helped him. I do this for him,” Sue explained.

Carol Davis, volunteer coordinator for Senior Independence’s **Mahoning Valley region**, said she really appreciates the way Sue works with patients.

“She makes volunteering a priority; I wish I had about ten of her!” Carol exclaimed.

Sue has been willing to jump into any opportunity to help, from wrapping Christmas presents to visiting with patients.

Because Sue doesn’t drive, Carol picks her up and they visit people together.

“We talk with them, work a puzzle, play bingo and share a lot of things,” said Sue of her time with patients.

When the weather is nice, they might even sit out on a patio and enjoy the sunshine. Sometimes they laugh, sometimes they cry.

“[They] become family to you,” Sue said.

She recalled one patient who shared her whole life history, from her career as a teacher to her extensive travels. Another woman gave Sue her favorite cookie recipe.

Sue recommends volunteering with hospice to anyone who might be considering it. “Do it – it’s rewarding,” she said •



Mahoning Valley volunteers

Don Agler
Sally Allen
Darlene Berresford
Linda Boyd
Charlotte Burkholder
Myrna Clement
Alice Drummond
Renee Flickenger
Brenda Harling
Dee Hirt
Louise Horner
Linda Kinsley
Terry Lather
Kayla LeMasters
Sue Oberholtzer
Kay Payne
Evelyn Queen
Abdul Rehman
Betty Rupenthal
Marilyn Travis

Miami Valley volunteers

Kristin Allen	Betty Setsor-Prescott
Stephanie Defore	Bill Shinall
Thomas Fent	Carol Shinall
Nancy Paul	Mikalah Shinall
Beth Pruefer	Tonya Slonaker



Caring couple called to give back



Nancy Paul (*above, right*) was an aide for Senior Independence before she retired.

She's still a part of the team, however, just now as a hospice volunteer in the **Miami Valley region**.

From her early days as a candy striper in a hospital, Nancy has always been drawn to jobs that allowed her to help others. She has also cared for several family members, including a brother who was blind.

Supporting and caring for those who are nearing the end of life is not difficult for Nancy. "I've been around it enough to be able to look on it as a part of life," she explained.

Nancy recalled one of her most memorable experiences as a volunteer, in which she bonded with the wife of a patient. She helped to keep her new friend calm during a difficult time, offering encouragement and sometimes just a shoulder to cry on.

Nancy enjoys volunteering so much that she convinced her fiancé, **Tom Fent** (*above, left*), to join her in the endeavor.

Tom, who is a Vietnam veteran, has found that working with hospice patients adds a lot to his life. "I think God saved me for something like this," he stated.

After his military service, Tom struggled with life and even battled alcoholism. Now several years sober, he credits God, Nancy and support groups for getting him through.

Tom's volunteerism is also helping; he feels that God has sent him activities like working with hospice patients to help him stay focused.

One patient in particular made an impression on Tom. His name was Joe, and although he usually didn't care much for talking, he and Tom hit it off. Joe was interested in Tom's military service, and eventually talked about his own life, including where he grew up and things he used to do.

Tom and Nancy both have many stories about the hospice patients they have worked with. But it's safe to say they've given just as much as they've received. ●



Generations of kindness

Three generations of family – father, daughter and granddaughter – are giving their time as volunteers in Senior Independence’s **Greater Toledo region**.

Dale Martin (*above, left*), **Dana Martin-Hayden** (*above, center*) and **Raeanna Martin-Hayden** (*above, right*) spend time visiting with patients, either as a group or individually.

Fifteen-year-old Raeanna started the family’s volunteer journey. She shadowed a doctor last year and loved interacting with patients, so she decided to try volunteering with hospice.

Mom Dana was uncertain at first, not knowing how emotional or intense the experience could be for her daughter. So she got involved herself and quickly realized how rewarding it is. “It’s been wonderful, especially for kids her age,” Dana said. “We get to know the patients and learn about this important journey.”

Eventually, granddad Dale got involved too and particularly enjoys helping out during nighttime vigils when the hours pass quietly. And just recently, grandma **Adell Martin** also got involved by sewing hospice bears for patients’ families.

This family certainly proves that volunteering with hospice is timeless – that anyone of any age can make a difference. ●

Greater Toledo volunteers

Elizabeth Bialorucki
Darla Brubaker
Donald Buckenmeyer
Sandra Burke
Sr. Margaret Collins
Amanda Ferrell
Margaret Fetcho
Matthew Fink
Dylan Francis
Howard Hatfield
Jennifer Janowski
Linda Johnston
Barbara Konoff
Emma Krietemeyer
Rita Kuetemeyer
Kerry Kurth
Ryanna Lauriel
Dale Martin
Dana Martin-Hayden
Raeanna Martin-Hayden
Jessica Mason
Mary McCarty
Patrick McVicker
Brian Pietz
Hannah Salsbury
Gessica Santos-Filgueiras
Kayla Singer
Brent Wang
Payton Warncke
Zachary Wielfaert
Coltin Winchester
Brenda Winchester
Rita Wulf



A new passion

When **Tom Gannon's** (*far right*) wife suggested he look into becoming a hospice volunteer for Senior Independence's **Southwest Ohio region**, his reaction was, "Are you kidding me?"

Tom is no stranger to volunteering, and several of his family members had positive experiences with hospice; he just wasn't sure visiting patients was the right fit for him.

Instead, Tom agreed to volunteer doing office work. That lasted about two days.

Volunteer Coordinator Heather Cockram invited Tom to go with her to meet a few patients. He was reluctant, but went along. And that's when everything changed.

Many months later, Tom is a devoted volunteer visitor. "It's one of the most satisfying things I've ever done," he said.

Like other volunteers, Tom enjoys getting to know the patients he visits, and always seems to find a way to bond with them.

One patient loved music, especially the songs "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" and "Wild Irish Rose." She and Tom would sing



together, and they both had a great time. "I enjoyed it and I didn't care if people thought 'He can't sing a lick!'" he shared.

Another woman was unable to communicate, and at first Tom was unsure of what he should do or say. But he found out that ultimately it didn't matter – just being there was enough.

Tom has come a long way from that first suggestion of volunteering, now completely comfortable bringing love and attention to the patients he visits. "You just have to be a friend and help them enjoy their remaining days," he explained.

"I was given a great life, and I just want to pay it back," Tom said, adding, "I'm not special. Anyone can do this; it's a mind-set." ●

Southwest Ohio volunteers

Laurel Brown
Maria Dodd
Chet Fleming
Tom Gannon
William Gibson

Ginny Greenlee
Ashley Hardee
Helen Leukhardt
Shirley Lindner
Janet Nintrup

Sam Oberhill
Lois Phillips
Emily Schneider
Stacy Sidney
Diana Wooton



HIDDEN GEMS

Student volunteers an asset to Senior Independence Hospice

Being a hospice volunteer can be a great activity for many retirees, as they often have the time and inclination to help others.

But Senior Independence Hospice has also discovered hidden gems in younger volunteers – college and high school students who want to give back while gaining academic advantages as well as career and life experience.

Some students play musical instruments to provide entertainment for patients. Others read to them, help with yard work or even complete administrative tasks for Senior Independence.

Below are just a few of the student volunteers who have blessed Senior Independence Hospice and its patients with their giving hearts. ●



Student volunteer **Shelby Funk** helps out at a Make it Happen ice cream social for hospice patients.

Shelby is a local college student who helps out in Senior Independence's Akron/Canton region.



These three high school students have given nearly 100 combined hours over two years to benefit hospice patients in the Greater Toledo region. Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Van Vorhis calls (L-R) **Coltyn Winchester, Dylan Francis** and **Brian Pietz** “phenomenal volunteers.”



Kayla LeMasters poses next to a wall she helped decorate in a hospice patient's room.

Kayla is a 10th grade high school student who volunteers in Senior Independence's Mahoning Valley region.

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

By Sue Brookins, MSN, RN, CHPN, CNS
Corporate Director of Hospice Support



Dear volunteers, We literally can't do it without you!

Did you know that five percent (5%) of the direct contact hours a hospice patient receives must be provided by volunteers?

This rule was established in 1983 as a cost savings measure when Medicare began paying for hospice care. Hospices nationwide are required to document the cost savings – and expansion of care and services – achieved through the use of volunteers.

It's not enough for volunteers to make sporadic visits; volunteers must be integrated into the daily patient care and operations routine. Volunteers are considered a part of the care planning process, and their services are based on initial and ongoing assessments

of patient and family needs. Their roles for each patient are specific and defined.

What's more, patients and families must have trust that the volunteers coming into their homes have been properly screened and trained. For this reason, volunteer training is closely aligned with that of staff. All volunteers receive criminal background checks, and receive a detailed orientation to hospice philosophy and processes.

All of this means that patients and families are receiving the best care possible, in large part because of our dedicated volunteers. We can't do it without you. Thank you for all you do for our patients and families! ●

“...it is equally as important to help and care for those leaving our world as it is to help and nurture those entering it... and hospice volunteers play such an important part.”

~ Torrey DeVitto
Hospice ambassador & volunteer

Thank you for your generosity



The following donations were made between December 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016 in support of Senior Independence Hospice. If you believe your name to be omitted or printed in error, please accept our sincerest apologies and call the OPRS Foundation at 1-800-686-7800.

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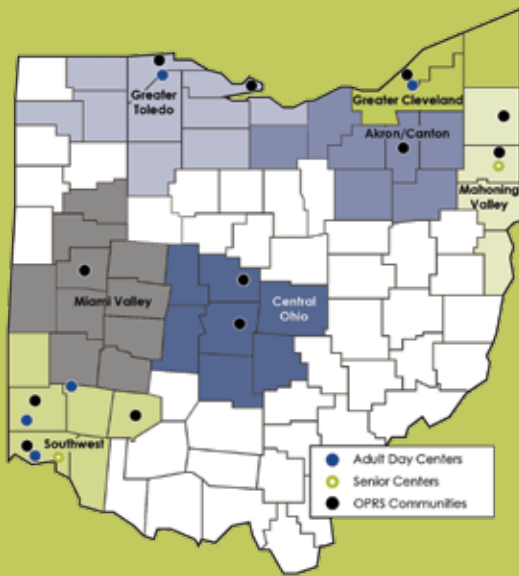
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Give Back.

Become a Hospice Volunteer!

As you've seen in this special issue, the contributions of volunteers are essential to the important work provided by Senior Independence Hospice.

You can share your skills and interests to enrich the lives of patients and families who rely on hospice services.

From companionship visits to office clerical work to helping with special events, there's an opportunity for you!

Visit seniorindependence.org/hospice/volunteer for more information, or call your local office at the number listed above and ask to speak with the volunteer coordinator.

You can make an impression in the lives of those we serve.