

High Peaks Hospice, Inc.

...providing end of life care that listens with respect, cares with compassion, supports with choice, and comforts with understanding, wherever one calls home.

www.HighPeaksHospice.org

# A Gear of Learning



I would tag 2017 as the year of learning for High Peaks Hospice. The year began with me learning the new role of Executive Director after shifting from being on the Board of Directors. While my business experiences prepared me for running the company, the staff trained me for understanding what hospice really has to offer. Every day has been a learning experience and I have the honor of working with some of the most dedicated people I have ever met.

We learned from each other, and as the year progressed, a shift occurred that transformed three separate offices into two teams serving the patients and families of our five county area of New York State. One of our accomplishments, that brought us closer together, was holding quarterly all--agency days. They were held in each corner of our catchment area and included learning, fun, and getting to know the people "on the other end of the phone."

When the going got tough, we talked through ideas and people worked beyond their job description to support each other and High Peaks Hospice. Financially, we looked at

everything and questioned if there was a way to save money. We researched resources and renegotiated contracts. We were able to finish 2017 on a slightly positive note, reversing the negative trend from the previous few years. We are going into 2018 continuing to look for additional ways to be more efficient and cost effective with our finances. All that I have learned this past year reinforces what I see as great potential within High Peaks Hospice. The support we receive from donors, volunteers, and staff fills me with an abundance of gratitude.

If you have questions, want to offer ideas, or learn more about hospice and High Peaks Hospice, please contact us.

Thank you,

Nick...

Nicholas George Executive Director

# ... Reinforces Great Potential

# We Welcome Change

#### **Executive Director** Nicholas George

#### Chief Financial Officer Tina Moody

Our Volunteer Board of Directors Robert Flynn, President\* Vicki Morse, Vice President\* Chervl Tucker, PhD., Vice President Ray Agnew, Secretary\* Julie Connors, Treasurer James Horwitz, Esq. D. Tucker Slingerland, M.D.\* Peggy Wiltberger, BSN Amy Foy Jacquelyn Dunn Sr. Donna Irvine, SSND Michael Miles. MD Mark Quaresima, MD

\* 2017 outgoing board member

High Peaks Hospice is governed by an active and talented, volunteer board of directors, hailing from all ends of our organization's large geographic service area, including Warren County, Essex County and the High Peaks area. Board members play a key role in our organization, fulfilling our mission and vision by actively overseeing the clinical, ethical, financial and administrative operations of the agency. Each member brings their individual expertise, representing the fields of medicine, nursing, social work, psychology, law, banking, pastoral care and business.

We welcomed several new members in 2017, and look forward to their support and guidance, as they work closely with Executive Director, Nick George, to meet the unique challenges facing a small rural hospice and adapt to today's rapidly changing health care system. We also had several of our long time board members move on. We appreciate the years of dedicated service and commitment they offered to our organization, and wish them much success as they begin new adventures.



## ....While Retaining our Foundation

Social workers and chaplains assist with the emotional psychosocial and spiritual aspects of

Considered to be the model for quality, hospice involves a team-oriented approach to providing compassionate and specialized healthcare, from the point at which an illness or injury is diagnosed as terminal, to the end of life. Focused on patient comfort, as well as support for family and caregivers, hospice helps patients achieve a peaceful life closure, aligned to their values, wishes and needs.

The hospice interdisciplinary team forms a "circle of care" that includes the patient's personal physician, a hospice physician, RN's, LPN's, nurse's aide, social worker, chaplain trained volunteer, and a bereavement counselor. An individualized care plan is developed that meets each patient's needs and helps maintain their independence for as long as possible.

## A Warm Caring Environment

Hospice support depends on the needs of the patient and families at any given time. It may be a visit, just to give reassurance that things are going as they should, or it could include all aspects of hospice care. Our Patient Care Coordinator, Bonnie Underwood, is responsible for overseeing the entire clinical team. Here's what Bonnie had to say about our year...

It was a busy year for High Peaks Hospice! Our team worked hard to manage care for our patients, provide comfort, supplies, and equipment, and also support their families. Our RN's oversaw all aspects of care for our patients, controlling their pain and symptoms, while doing their best to admit new patients to our services in a timely manner. Our LPN's and hospice aide visited patients to assist with personal care, perform status checks, and help with the activities of daily living in a warm caring environment. Our social workers, chaplain, and

Sue Bevilacqua, LPN Heather Borachok, RN, Per Diem Susan Brumgard-Johr, RN, PCC Courtney Celotti, RN Glen Chapman, MD, Hospice Phys. Stacy Chapman, Hospice Aide Nicole Clement, RN Debbie Cox, RN, Per Diem Noreen Deltoro, RN

Shannon Dora, RN, Per Diem Joseph DuFour, NP Laura Duncan, BSW, Social Worker Rev. Richard Engert, Chaplain Jay Federman, MD, Hospice Physician Denise Ferrando, MD, Hospice Phys. Jacqueline Foster, Volunteer Coord. Neil Francett, RN Elaine Frechette, LPN, Per Diem

Elaine Gibb, Volunteer Coord. Susan Gillingham, Office Manager Nina Gustafson, LPN Chasity Hanchett, Office Manager Denise Hermanson, RN Phyllis Howk, RN Jan Hunt, RN Sara Hurlburt, LMSW, Per Diem Joanna Irvine, LMSW, Social Worker

bereavement team assisted with the emotional and spiritual aspects of the end of life journey, helping to identify strengths, and developing ways to cope.

Throughout 2017, our clinical team focused on becoming one unit that functions together, no matter what county our patients live in. We continue to work hard to assist our patients in their goals and wishes, whatever they maybe. I am proud to be part of this wonderful organization and honored to work with such a caring, staff.

Johanna Kelly, RN, Per Diem Caitlin Lee, RN, Per Diem Lacy Mallette, Hospice Aide Marie Marvullo, CASAC, LC, Bereavement Coord. Linda McFarren, Reception, Per Diem Kathleen McNulty, RN James North, MD, Hospice Physician Marijke Ormel, NP

Phillip Pekar, RN Twila Quaid, LMSW, Social Worker Ann Rand, RN Patricia Romanko, LPN Suzanne Scott, Volunteer Coord. Paula Sheridan, RN, Triage Kelly Smith, RN, Per Diem Steven Smith, Chaplain Wade Sullivan, RN, Per Diem



Ally Rand, Chasity Hanchett, Ashley White, Sue Bevilacqua and Marie Marvullo

William Tedesco, MD, Medical Dir. Carol Thomas, LPN, Ref./ Info. Coord. Barbara Touby, RN, Triage Bonnie Underwood, RN, PCC Marie VanNortwick, Clinical Admin. Darlene Whiddon, LPN Ashley White, RN

## Our Diverse Volunteers Have a Common Thread



Volunteer Karen Gatus with some of the Memory Bears she created. Memorv Bears are made with fabric from a loved one's clothing, becoming a family treasure that can be held for ever. Karen also adds a special touch, embroidering the bears with names. dates, quotes, and nicknames.

Volunteers are an integral part of High Peaks Hospice and fulfill a variety of functions. Patient care volunteers are required to complete 16-20 hours of training that includes confidentiality, working with families, listening skills, signs and symptoms of approaching death, loss, grief and bereavement support. Many are inspired by personal losses of their own. They honor that journey by bringing comfort and reassurance to patients, caregivers, and families at a challenging time of life. Some volunteers offer their many talents to hospice. The Chrysalis Singers are a volunteer group that brings the healing

Glenna Aldrich Bob Brown Carole Amell Gib Brown Patricia Aunchman Pat Brown Karen Baker Debra Cartier Linda Baker Mary Cherniske Nancy Baker Carolyn Clynes Kevin Belden Sioux Collier Matthew Collins Liz Bennett Gene Connell **Rick Bergeron** Marilyn Bigelow Karen Conrad Ann Blanchard Jenifer Deming Jim Brady Leo Demong Bob Breen Elaine Dewar Jeanne Breen Dennis Dominick Martha Donnelly Nancy Duncan Kathy Easterly Mary Ellen Ellithorpe Dawn Faller Geri Feeder Carol Finke Darlene Fischer Dorothy Fobare Cindy Freebern Gail Garrow Karen Gatus Sarah Ghent Jessie Gibb Donna Girouard Norma Goff Roxy Griesmer Barbara Halla Bonnie Harlan-Stankus Ken Harris Jenny Hayes Mary Heverly Phoebe Hunt-Fontaine Barbara Kearns Joan Kelly Mary Kennedy Karen Kerby Fay LaFond

# ...,Strong Commitment to Our Mission

power of music into homes and nursing facilities. Volunteers knit and sew items of comfort to be distributed to patients. Memory bears are created using cherished clothing items for bereaved family members. Those with technical skills or public speaking ability are welcome to augment office staff and outreach/development events. Each of our volunteers have a common thread; commitment to our mission of providing end of life care that listens with respect, cares with compassion, supports with choice, and comforts with understanding, wherever one calls home.



Susan Landry Marty Lawthers Jeff Letson Carleen Madigan Sr. Carolyn Madden Evie Martelle Nina Matteau Linda McFarren Ted Merrihew Anita MeseroleJoyDorothy MetzDiaCaroleigh MeseroleMeBeverly MilazzoLinVictoria MooreJucTed MorganJeaRyan MurrayClaDave MyersDaErica NortonLenCorrie O'DeaKaSuzanne PeckSalTammy PelletieriJoaBronwen PerkinsBe

Mark Piper

Dignity, Comfort, and Peace At The End Of Life

Joyce Rayome Diane Reandeau Melanie Reding Linda Reichardt Judy Richards Jean Saltsman Claire Santerre Dan Santerre Lena Skeels Karen Smith Sally Spadaro Joan Storey Beryl Szwed Jane Terlouw Elizabeth Trachte Anne Turek Frank Turner Tim Tyree Helene Vanderburgh Patsy Walker Jerrie Walsh Nancy Warner Suzanne Weirich Mona White Ruth Woodward Dick Wright Suzanne Wright Margaret Zollo



Our Volunteers Worked 2,237 Hours Saving \$63,239

# The Healing Power of Music



For centuries, people have known that music has the power to comfort and heal. High Peaks Hospice offers music as a means to improve the lives of its patients. Under the direction of Larry Vanderburgh, the Chrysalis Singers are a group of volunteers dedicated to improving the lives of terminally ill patients and their families by using music to bring them comfort, hope, healing, and peace. They bring music to patients in their private homes, nursing homes, or hospital rooms. Most

members come from local choirs, chorales, and other singing groups. Each visit lasts 30 to 45 minutes and is planned to meet the needs of each situation. Their repertoire includes familiar hymns, folk and secular songs, anthems, spirituals, sacred chants and rounds, and some tunes without words. Their services are provided at no charge as a loving gift to those who request them.

Chrysalis Singers Mary Bell Shirlev Bullard Neil Chippendale Carolyn Comegys David Comegys

Karen East Judy Frogette Carole Harsh Robert Harsh Kathy Hyatt Ernie Huntington Elaine Langdon Sharon Moore Mavnard Nelson Pat Nelson Beryl Reneau Bonnie Reid

Marjorie Treadway Anne Turek Helene Vanderburgh Larry Vanderburgh Marion Weaver

## Raising Awareness in Our Communities

Community outreach is vital to the mission and ongoing work of High Peaks Hospice. Our Outreach Coordinator, Tracey LaBelle, is dedicated to raising awareness of the wide range of treatment and support High Peaks Hospice offers. Through speaker programs, in-service training, health fairs, and educational forums, she educates community members on hospice services, advance care planning, grief and loss.

In an effort to establish and maintain professional relationships, Tracey focuses on partnering with hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and physicians. In 2017, Tracey developed or retained contracts with the Center Health Facilities, Elderwood Facilities, The Pines, and Mercy Care. These partnerships serve to "bridge the gap" and provide as near to seamless services to our patients as possible. Physician-related factors are shown to play a significant role in determining timing of referral to hospice and subsequent length of stay. While physicians are not the patient and family's single source of information about the hospice, they are an influential part in the decision.1 And because the physician must certify a patient as having six months or less to live in order to receive hospice services, physicians serve as de facto gatekeepers to hospice care.<sub>2</sub>

Tracey reaches out to our communities in a number of ways for our services to be known, understood, and utilized. Through her ongoing efforts, we look forward to supporting individuals throughout our service area in making informed health care decisions.

1. Hyman RB, Bulkin W. Physician reported incentives and disincentives for referring patients to hospice. Hosp J 1991;6:39-63. 2. Farnon C. Hofmann M. Factors contributing to late hospice admission and proposals for change. Am J Hosp Palliat Care 1997;14:212-218.



Outreach Coordinator. Tracey LaBelle, with Patient Care Coordinator, Sue Johr,

# Straight from the Heart: A Story of Love

We have entered the final stage of this dementia disease. Annie, my mother-in-law, is preparing to leave this world to join the loved ones who have gone before her. It could be tonight, or take weeks. I pray that the Lord takes her soon, but not this weekend. I am selfish, and want her great grandson to be able to hug her and for my youngest son to say his good bye ...

What I have learned on this journey:

No one is prepared for this role as caregiver! No textbooks or guidelines can prepare you, as every journey is so different;

Your loved one will become someone you don't know. They will accuse you of stealing, hiding things, and lying to them;

They will repeat the same question over and over until you think you will scream;

I am fortunate that Annie didn't mind her showers, but she did not like having to get cleaned up after lunch or dinner to get ready for bed;

Going to the bathroom is a 20-minute loop of alternate decision making;

"Sundowners!" What can I say here...it should be called the "mean time" or "constant

movement." At times I just want to sit down and cry. This is not your loved one, it is the dementia; Towards the end, your loved one may need assistance from more than one person. They may get outside and not be able to find the way back. They won't remember this and will repeatedly try. We have a baby monitor, bed alarm, sensors on the bedroom door, and a sheriff bracelet:

They will have moments of clarity and those brief times you live for;



Annie, celebrating her 85th birthday

They love to see the young children and babies come. Some instinct gets in and brings smiles; They understand love;

They may not recall your name or that you are a loved one. They do know that you are their safe haven and will look for you when they feel frightened, needing to hear that you are there with them;

When the final stage comes there is no warning. A week ago today Annie was telling her hospice CNA to get out of her house. Then, on Monday, after she was cleaned and had lunch, we went out on the porch. I noticed her breathing was labored, so I put her to bed with oxygen. She slept for 3 hours. *Tuesday* she took liquids and soft food in her chair. Wednesday she sat in her recliner but didn't eat. She lost her ability to swallow. Today (Thursday) she is not able to eat, speak, or recognize anyone, but responds to people with tears;

People will say, "Let me know if I can help." then they are gone; Caregivers lose their sense of who they are. I remember being asked, "What do you want to do if the new medicine works?" ... I laughed and said, "I don't know." Most of all, I would absolutely do it again. We've had lots of laughter together. It's like having a baby; you will remember that you had pain, but the moment the child is in your arms, the pain is nothing;

As I've been typing, my mother-in-law, Anne Elaine, at the age of 85 has passed away. She waited for me to leave the room. I told her that Jeff, my husband, was home from work and he was going to sit with her. I told her that I loved her and she opened her eyes and looked directly into mine. Fly high Mom; you are free!

\*We were graciously provided permission to print this article by writer, caregiver, and artist, Sharon Straight.



this time. "Durina myself to paint. Some days I would get 15 minutes or an hour and would go to my art space; still within hearing if I was needed "

## Mourning is not an end

2017 brought great work for the High Peaks Hospice Bereavement team as we started off the year celebrating Jessie Gibb, a hospice volunteer, as our second trained facilitator for our Rainbows for All Children program. Her first group was our winter session with ten children being provided support on their grief journey.

Spring brought three remembrance gatherings starting in Saranac Lake, followed by Queensbury and Port Henry. Our team was honored to participate in *Cody's Climb* at Prospect Mountain, Lake George, in conjunction with the Warren/Washington County Suicide Coalition.

The summer months brought us strong attendance at our three support groups which cover our catchment area, leading us to look at areas to expand in an effort to offer more support throughout the Adirondacks in 2018. Summer also brought another successful *Rainbows* children's support grouping that led to a showing of support at the 2017 Walk for Alzheimer's in Glens Falls.

Fall brought us the opportunity again to celebrate life at our fall remembrance services in Port Henry and Queensbury, as well as take part in the "Out of the



# ....but a new beginning

Double H Ranch in Lake Luzerne, in conjunction with Glens Falls Hospital and the C.R. Wood Cancer Center. This supports local children as they prepare to start a journey beyond their choosing, without their loved one. High Peaks Hospice proudly had four children attend this weekend camp including several *Rainbows* attendees, and the staffing efforts of Jessie Gibb and myself.

As the holidays approached, the bereavement team looked to support our communities. Three events were held with the goal of providing hope, support, reflection and awareness to those on their grieving journey at this normally joyful time of the year. These events were held respectively throughout our service area and were very well received.

As we look toward 2018, we are excited to see our support efforts expand with the intent of bringing the program to the high peaks region. We'll also continue our efforts to expand our bereavement volunteer base, as we would not have a bereavement team to come along side our families without them.

Thank you to all who support this program and partner with us throughout the year. We look forward to another successful year of life and healing together! written by Marie Marvullo, CASAC, LC, High Peaks Hospice Bereavement Coordinator, and Post-Vention Lead for Warren County



## Notes On My Time With Hospice

What a gift it is to do my job when each home I walk into contains a family that greets me with gratitude for the RN, Aide, LPN, and Chaplain visit they have received.

I have heard praise for the level of skill and knowledge given by Kelly; the gentle and confident care given by Paula; the depth of answers to hard questions that Phil brings; and the efficient and warm care provided by Kathy. I am constantly met with thanks for the tender, compassionate, and gentle hands that Patty extends to people every day; the creativity, professionalism, and kindness that is displayed by Nina; and appreciation for the humor, tenacity, and extra attention Staci is always willing to give, regardless of the time it takes out of her day.

What a gift it is to do my job when I know that each person who grieves, each hand I press to mine and tears I see, will hear the voice of Sue when they call our office in distress, fear or grief. Her tone and patience on the phone is the voice of hospice, and fears are soothed when it is she who answers.

What a gift it is to do my job when I know that a fearful patient, who doesn't have the words to pray all of their worries out loud, has the powerful voice of the Reverend Dick praying for them, offering comfort that lasts far beyond what we do in this life.

What a gift it is to do my job when I know the families I love and grieve with, will be loved and carried by Marie when the time comes, and will be comforted by her warmth, humor, and constant creativity.

What a gift it is to do my job when I know that I have a team that walks with me, that links arms and leans on each other. When I walk in each morning, I have an unrelenting support system and leader in Bonnie, who never ceases to advocate, instruct, and shoulder the burden when our shoulders get weary.

After two years in Hospice, it's hard for me to know what is more of a gift; Each patient and their families, who hold my hands tightly and trust me to hear their deepest fears, who opens their homes and lives to me (a stranger!), who offer me a place to sit and an opportunity to speak comfort and hope into their lives, or the staff on my team, who do this most holy, messy, powerful work, the work of dressing wounds and addressing fears, whose feet hit the floor in the middle of the night to rush to the family who is panic stricken and afraid, now comforted and hopeful that hospice is on the way.

I don't know which of these is more of a gift to me; I just know that I am blessed and blessed and blessed, each day I am part of the hospice team.

written by Joanna Irvine, LMSW



Joanna Irvine, Social Worker with Nina Gustafson, LPN (left) and Staci Chapman, Hospice Aide (right).





# Support Staff

Tracey LaBelle, Outreach Coordinator Tania McCabe, Outreach Coordinator Lisa Nester, Billing Coordinator Myrddin Roddy, Administrative Assistant

home of Martha Anne & Tad Zelski, Keene

Firecracker 4 miler benefitting Rainbows, Essex

SUNOCO, to benefit Rainbows, Oueensbury

Roger and Kay Sullivan Golf Tournament, Tupper Lake

Creative Bloc. Paint-n-Sip.

Adirondack Aktion Club coin drop proceeds donated at WNBZ's 26th Annual Radio Day Saranac Lake



Essex Davs. Essex



Allison Rand, IT Specialist/ Quality Assurance Coord. Susan Rdzanek, Development Coordinator Elaine Sater, Compliance Coordinator Marie VanNortwick, Business Office Admin. Assistant



Dr. Chervl Tucker Warthogs Motorcycle Club Barrie and DeeDee Wigmore Foundation Angels (Gifts of \$500-\$999) Adirondack Cedar Chairs, LLC Adirondack Foundation -Stefy Holderied Charitable Fund -Woods and Pearl McCahill Family Fund Ames Goldsmith Corp. Ascent Wellness Baxter Mountain Tavern Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bissell Mr. and Mrs. Dale Boardman Lynn H. Boillot Family Fund Ms. Kellie Bosenberg **Boquet Foundation** Mr James M Brooks Burnham Financial Services, LLC C2 Imaging Cape Air Mr. and Mrs. James Carnell Mr. and Mrs. Kent Cauley Mr. Clark John Chandler and Ms. Roberta Ott Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Collette

Lamb Lumber Barnes

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Patient Care

Home Care 16.531

**Inpatient Care** 36

> Respite 24

Total 16,591



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# DIRECT MAIL APPEALS \$98,799 GRANTS \$27,375 **OTHER**

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#### \$775

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**Total Patient** Days 16,591

Avg. Length of Stay **99** *days* 

**Patients Served** 378



#### Office Hours: 8am-4pm Mon-Fri

#### **Referral Line: 518-891-0606**

#### **Northern Clinical**

PO Box 192, Port Henry, NY 12974 47 Tom Phelps Way, Mineville, NY 12956 Phone: 518-942-6513 Fax: 518-942-6516

#### Administration

PO Box 840 309 County Rte. 47, Ste. 3 Saranac Lake, NY 12983 Phone: 518-891-9631 Fax: 518-891-5379

#### Urgent Care Support 24/7

#### **Southern Clinical**

454 Glen Street Glens Falls, NY 12801 Phone: 518-743-1672 Fax: 518-743-0544