

# FAMILY *to Family*



## DOWN TO A FINE ART

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Family Hospice  
Part of UPMC

Dear Friends,



We are pleased to present the spring edition of "Family to Family." As a team, we have spent this year thinking creatively and finding ways to take patient care and education to a higher level.

The Beckwith Institute generously awarded Family Hospice a grant that will directly impact and improve care. Our objective is to decrease emergency department visits and unnecessary hospitalizations among active hospice patients. This will be accomplished through educating staff and equipping them with pioneering technology.

We are grateful to the Fine Foundation for making our new Art Therapy program possible. Though their support and the work of a dedicated art therapist, we can provide an outlet for self-expression for patients and families. Art Therapy will also be available for our bereaved during support groups.

Also in this magazine, you will meet Kevin, one of our exceptional patient volunteers. He brings his years of professional experience in health care to his interactions with patients and families.

We invite you to join us for our spring symposium on May 14, 2020. This affords professionals a great opportunity to learn about innovations in holistic end-of-life care. It is our honor to welcome Edo Banach, President & CEO of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, as the keynote speaker. Details on this event are included on page four.

Your support is invaluable to the innovation that distinguishes our care and reaches more than 3,200 patients and families annually. We appreciate the opportunity to share those efforts here.

*Gratefully,*  
**Jennifer Vennare**  
*Vice President, Clinical Operations*

## A UNIQUE REMEMBRANCE

As an extension of our ongoing care, Family Hospice offers grieving families who have lost a loved one under our service a complimentary Remembrance Pillow. This 12" pillow is assembled from articles of loved one's clothing. Volunteers from Family Hospice will lend their talents to making this very meaningful keepsake for you. Pillow designs are original artworks by our volunteer seamstress.

"We are excited to offer Remembrance Pillows as part of bereavement outreach," Ed Lewis, Family Hospice Bereavement and Volunteer Manager, said. "The pillows will provide grieving family members the amazing opportunity to create an object linked to their loved one."

**For more information, please call the bereavement department at 412-572-8829.**



## INNOVATION AWARD AMPLIFIES PATIENTS' GOALS OF CARE

Honoring an individual's goals and values is the most important service we can provide in the care of our patients. The effectiveness of this service is magnified when we have the opportunity to empower our professional colleagues in other care environments to do the same.

Thanks to an Innovation Award from The Beckwith Institute, Family Hospice is embarking on the second phase of an initiative to partner with hospital emergency departments (EDs) in reducing unnecessary hospitalizations for our patients. The Beckwith Institute funds collaborative projects and research initiatives spanning the health care spectrum with the goal of achieving transferrable solutions that will advance the standards of care nationwide.

There are three desired outcomes in the collaboration between Family Hospice and its ED colleagues: to reduce the frequency of unnecessary ED visits, unnecessary hospitalizations, and the percentage of visits that result in hospitalization. EDs at UPMC Altoona, UPMC Northwest and UPMC Presbyterian are clinical partners in the project.

How does this relate to honoring an individual's goals of care at end of life? There are a several clinical considerations, explains Dr. Keith Lagnese, Family Hospice chief medical officer, as well as physician lead and project sponsor of the ED initiative.

"Presentations by patients with advanced end-of-life illness to the ED can be distressing for both patients and caregivers. EDs are often overburdened and are primarily equipped to deal with acute care needs. They are not the appropriate setting for patients with advanced serious illness who desire comfort and quality of life," says Keith. "A subsequent hospitalization can result in unwarranted care and poor outcomes as it pertains to the patient and family experience."



*Elena Nosal, Family Hospice Director of Clinical Operations, Keith Lagnese, Family Hospice Chief Medical Officer, and Jennifer Vennare, Family Hospice Vice President of Clinical Operations.*

From its inception, the project has engaged Family Hospice experts in quality and compliance, data analysis, education, and clinical emergency response in partnership with UPMC IT experts. The effort will ramp up in its second phase with the identification of ED champions at each hospital site. These champions will serve as experts in their specific environments as well as educators and facilitators in assessment, engagement, and disposition for hospice and hospice-appropriate patients.

"Early results are promising," says Jennifer Vennare, vice president of clinical operations, project co-sponsor, and nurse lead for Family Hospice. "We are grateful to the Beckwith Institute and to our UPMC partners who share our commitment to ensuring patients are supported in their goals. It's about securing and providing the right care at the right time."

## DOWN TO A FINE ART

Delivering creative approaches to meet emotional needs improves well-being and quality of life for patients and families alike. Family Hospice accomplishes this through complementary therapies and adjunct care plans that ease transitions for patients and their loved ones. Thanks to generous financial support from the Fine Foundation, Art Therapy is one such approach.

“The Fine Foundation recognizes the powerful role art therapy can play in providing comfort and connectedness for patients and families as they address end-of-life issues,” said Kathy Lachenauer, Executive Director of The Fine Foundation.

“Our grant reflects our deep appreciation for the dedication, care and professionalism of the organization’s staff and all they do in serving hospice patients and their families.”

Approaching end of life can be overwhelming for patients. The art therapy process is in concert with the goals of hospice in that it provides connectedness, validation, and caring as it pertains to their physical, psychological, social, and spiritual concerns.

The role of the art therapist is to provide an outlet for patients who are working to channel their emotions. They meet with patients to determine the best course of treatment and assist them in achieving goals that promote mental well-being and enhanced quality of life. Therapists require skills in using visual art, coupled with application of theories and techniques of human development, psychology, and counseling.

Rebekah Berna is a Registered Board-Certified Art Therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor who is integrated with the Family Hospice care team. She recognizes the sacred nature of the dying process and witnesses how art and creative expression can help in times of tension.

“I met with a woman whose husband was recently admitted to the Family Hospice inpatient unit,” Rebekah said. She invited me into her husband’s room where both made handprints on her painting. The couple was tearful and very appreciative for this opportunity to make imagery representing their love and lifetime together.”

Art therapy provides a safe place for honest exploration of feelings and experiences. Family Hospice offers art therapy to patients in Allegheny County at no cost. It is also being offered during grief counseling sessions for patients’ loved ones.



For more information about our services or to make a referral, please call 800-513-2148.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

When Nick Petti, Family Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, met Kevin Counihan in 2014, he knew his skills and interests could be put to good purpose as a volunteer.

Kevin spent most of his life as a retirement plan consultant but felt a higher calling late in his career. He received his nursing degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 2011 and spent a few years working in a progressive care unit at UPMC Mercy Hospital before retiring. He started volunteering with Family Hospice in 2014 after realizing how much flexibility and time retirement provided. “I was so busy for most of my life with my career and raising a family. I really enjoy this part of my life, now that I’m not as busy as I used to be,” Kevin said. “I’ve always said that if you have the time, energy, and health, you need to give back to the community.”

Kevin is an integral part of Family Hospice’s Candlelight Vigil program, which provides bedside presence to dying patients in assisted living facilities, so they are not alone at the end of life. “It’s reassuring to the patients. Sometimes I sit quietly with them and hold their hand, sometimes I’ll read to them or say a few prayers,” Kevin said. “I just want to be sure they’re comfortable.”

While the Candlelight Vigil program is run by professional staff during the week, Kevin helps to handle coordination of volunteers on the weekend. “We’re responsible for covering 12 hours – 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. If we get a call from a family requesting a volunteer, I’ll set up volunteers for the night,” Kevin said. He often volunteers to take the most difficult overnight shift from 3 to 7 a.m. in the morning.



Volunteer Kevin Counihan

Not only does Kevin assist with the Candlelight Vigil program, he visits a patient in their home weekly and has been doing so for the past year and a half. “I really enjoy visiting him because he feels comfortable with me and it allows his wife, who is his primary caregiver, to take care of other chores or appointments,” Kevin explained that he enjoys visiting patients in their

home, as they are usually more alert and communicative, so he’s able to converse and interact with them more.

Volunteers play a critical role in hospice care and are an important part of the hospice team. “Volunteers are essential for hospice,” Nick said. “We have more than 170 active volunteers here in Pittsburgh. They keep us connected to the community and the people we serve.”

## WHAT’S VOLUNTEER TRAINING ALL ABOUT?

“Patient volunteers are supported as valued members of the care team,” Nick said. “Training is the first step in that process.”

Patient volunteer trainings are held at various times throughout the year. Some topics discussed are:

- The goal of hospice
- Rights of a hospice patient
- Spirituality and family dynamics
- Grief
- Roles and responsibilities of a hospice volunteer

In addition to patient volunteering, there are many other volunteer opportunities available, depending on your interests, talents, and schedule. Contact the Volunteer Department at **412-572-8829** to learn more and schedule an introductory meeting.

We can find the best fit for you. Together, we can support individuals and families in our community who are making the most of life.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### “Advanced Dementia and the Hospice Patient”

Thursday, April 30, 2020, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The Whitehall House  
4201 Brownsville Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15227

Join speaker Dr. Myles Zuckerman, Family Hospice physician, for this free event. Dinner will be provided. Two continuing education credits are included for RNs and SWs. Please RSVP for this event to Mary Jo Greene at [412-595-8917](mailto:412-595-8917) or [Mgreene@artisMgmt.com](mailto:Mgreene@artisMgmt.com).

### A Tasteful Gathering

Thursday, April 30, 6 – 8 p.m.

The Amor  
5407 Steubenville Pike  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136



Try a variety of locally made wine, moonshine, bourbon and vodka. Distinguished purveyors include Four Twelve Project, Deer Creek Winery, Hammer Moonshine, and McLaughlin Distillery.

Fifth Season, Four Twelve Project, and Cadillac Ranch, local food vendors, are three of several menu contributors featured at the event.

Visit [familyhospicePA.org](http://familyhospicePA.org) for more information. Tickets are \$50 per person or \$80 per couple.

### “Ask the Experts”

Tuesday, May 5, 2020, Noon to 2 p.m.

Cumberland Woods Village Conference Center  
700 Cumberland Woods Drive  
Allison Park, PA 15101

Meet experts in the fields of elder law, Medicare/Medicaid benefits, funeral and burial planning during this interactive discussion. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP for this free event by Tuesday, April 28, 2020 to [fearonjonese2@upmc.edu](mailto:fearonjonese2@upmc.edu) or [412-651-0292](tel:412-651-0292).

This program is made possible through a generous donation from the McElhattan Foundation.

### 33rd Annual Charity Golf Outing

Monday, May 18, 2020, 10 a.m.

South Hills Country Club

Save the date for Family Hospice's annual golf benefit. Shotgun start begins at 10 a.m. A breakfast buffet and awards dinner are included.

Visit [familyhospicePA.org](http://familyhospicePA.org) for more information.



Follow Family Hospice on Facebook!

## ‘YOUR LUCKY DAY’ \$10,000 RAFFLE WINNER

Congratulations to Jill Hutchinson, the winner of the second annual ‘Your Lucky Day’ \$10,000 raffle.

In 2019, Jill became acquainted with Family Hospice through her friend and pastor who felt she could benefit from one of our bereavement programs after the loss of her husband.

The bereavement support group helps Jill manage and cope in a healthy way. “My initial relief came from knowing my feelings were normal. I have a long way to go, but a bright light did shine for me on my first visit,” Jill said.

Jill plans to replace her garage doors and share some of the winnings with a few other organizations that have been of comfort to her in her time of grief.

Look for information on the third annual ‘Your Lucky Day’ \$10,000 Raffle coming soon!



Need information about bereavement support? Call us at [412-572-8829](tel:412-572-8829).

## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Donations of \$500 or more are recognized in print. List reflects donations made in 2019.

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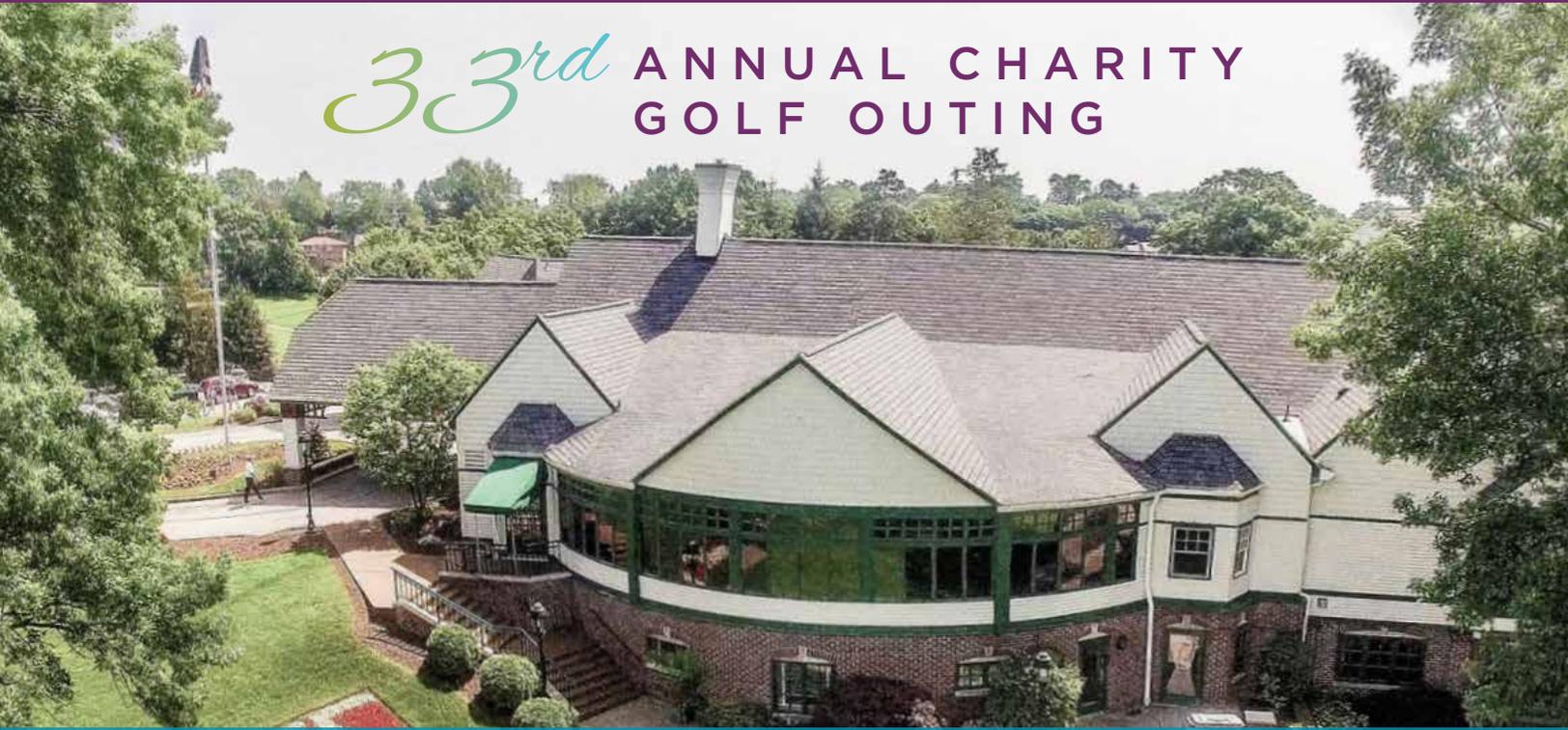
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FAMHOS514921 CK/TP 3/20



# 3<sup>3</sup><sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF OUTING

**MAY 18, 2020**  
**SOUTH HILLS COUNTRY CLUB PITTSBURGH, PA**

Visit [familyhospicePA.org](http://familyhospicePA.org) for registration information. Questions may be directed to Dianne Whetsell, Special Events Coordinator at **412-572-8874** or [whetselld@upmc.edu](mailto:whetselld@upmc.edu).