Dear friends,

As I shared in our last newsletter, we are celebrating our 40th year of serving families in our community during one of the most sacred moments in their lives. Bringing comfort and compassion at this intimate time is an act so precious and so defining, it is hard to fathom that we have helped more than 42,000 patients at the end of life’s journey. Is it possible to remember the details of the final days of so many lives lived? In a sense, as an organization, we do.

Each of the individuals we serve has a story, many of which are shared among our team members and the community. These stories parallel our growth – the very first patient not only benefited from the loving care of our founding volunteers, they also taught this new team important information to help them care for the next patient. The families of those first patients guided us in creating bereavement programs. The first time we were approached by a family with a child experiencing advanced illness prompted us to establish our Chesapeake Kids program. The patients who came to us seeking comfort from an advanced illness that was not yet life-limiting led to creating Chesapeake Palliative Medicine. When we witnessed the impact of our first Honor Salute, that Veteran inspired us to create a rich program to better serve the needs of Veterans.

Our growth is more than need-based. It is people-based. For 40 years, people have entrusted us with their stories. We can only hope that we have honored them by writing new chapters to help in our mission of caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss.

Ben Marcantonio

17th Annual Golf Tournament
Thursday, Oct. 10, 2019 — Queenstown Harbor Golf Course
Reserve your foursome at www.hospicechesapeake.org/annual-golf-event.

Caring for the Continuum of Life: A 2019 Healthcare Symposium
Saturday, Oct. 19, 2019 — First Baptist Church of Highland Park, Landover, Maryland
Visit www.caringforlifemd.org for details.

Chesapeake Kids Fundraiser
Saturday, Oct. 26, 2019 — Rommel Harley-Davidson of Annapolis
Watch our website for details.

For tickets or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Chris Wilson, Director of Advancement, at 443-837-1530 or cwilson@hospicechesapeake.org.
It’s been 27 years since the Chesapeake Life Center created a welcoming, safe space for grieving children to learn new ways to cope with their loss while connecting with other kids who also knew something about loss. It was called Camp Nabi. It was the first and still is the only grief camp available to children in Anne Arundel County.

Through all the success of these programs, the nearly 1,500 children served, why would we change it? The harsh reality is that the times have changed. “Many more children suffer a traumatic loss each year than when we first started in 1992,” Chesapeake Life Center Director Susan Coale said. “These children do better with more structured programming. And being away from home overnight is often very unsettling for these children.” The opioid crisis and the alarming increase in deaths by suicide have impacted how we move forward in addressing the community needs through programming and planning, including camp programs.

In response, all grief camps will be day camps this year. And there will be more of them throughout the year, including our first camp to be held in Prince George’s County.

The first day camps were held June 21 and 22. Children ages 6 to 13 took over the John & Cathy Belcher Campus in Pasadena. The next venue will be at the College Park Airport and Aviation Museum from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. August 17. It will include activities in the museum. We’ll return to Anne Arundel County in the fall with a grief day camp experience planned in October.

What isn’t changing? Coale said our overall message remains the same as that first day back in 1992. “We want kids to understand that they are not alone,” she said. “There is a power that comes just from being together, hearing from others how they live with grief. And as it has been for nearly three decades, there will be many well-trained loving adults to help them on their path.”

“It’s all the same expertise. Just at new and more locations,” she said.
Making good choices.
Belcher Institute in its fifth year of empowering the community with knowledge

By Tammy Turner, Community Education Manager

Help us continue the important work of the Belcher Institute. Become a Caring for the Continuum of Life Symposium Sponsor.

Contact Jennifer Castellanos-Graham at 443-837-1527 or jcastellanos-graham@hospicechesapeake.org.

The minute we wake up, we face choices. Should I wear a sweater? Some are hard decisions: Should I switch cell phone carriers? Some are life-changing: When should we start having children?

Nobody is going to give you a hard time for asking questions to make these decisions. In fact, planning to start a family is supported by a multimillion-dollar industry eager to help you make your choices. Our society is less prepared, and even afraid, to offer input on the best way to die.

We know this must change. And we are the people in the best position to change it. With our strong community partnerships, well-respected expertise in hospice and palliative care, and holistic approach to compassionate care for patients and their loved ones, we can and want to be the change-makers. After all, we have a history of it. Forty years ago, we were among the first in the nation to provide hospice care, forever changing the way our community chooses to die.

In 2014, the John & Cathy Belcher Institute for Complex Illness Care was established as a vehicle for us to create a network of collaboration, research and learning for advancing health practices. It guided us in creating the rapidly growing Chesapeake Palliative Medicine practice, our Courageous Conversations community education series, continuing education programs for medical practices, facilities and professionals in the community and, most recently, the Caring for the Continuum of Life Healthcare Symposium – a free day of learning about the many facets of caregiving and planning for advanced illness and end of life. This, and more, has occurred in just five years.

TOP - Social worker Lauren Strong talks to a group of Johns Hopkins medical students visiting the Rebecca Fortney Inpatient Care Center to learn more about hospice care.

BOTTOM - The Chesapeake Life Center has been offering continuing education to our community’s social workers, therapists and counselors for many years, including this Grief in the 21st Century presentation by Sarah Montgomery and Amy Stapleton at Anne Arundel Community College.
Chief Medical Officer Dr. Eric Bush is a committed advocate for helping patients and families understand the options they have when facing advanced illness and end of life and takes great pride in the growth and depth of our educational programs. “The communities we serve have the right to be the most informed consumers they can be, especially when it pertains to healthcare,” Bush said. “By providing this type of invaluable education we help patients and families have more informed discussions with their physicians and healthcare providers to optimize their healthcare choices and experience.”

Along with creating multiple vehicles for educating the community, we must also concentrate on how we do it and who we are teaching. For example, many in our community place a great deal of trust in their religious leaders in helping them to make important life decisions. To help us reach these families, we seek counsel with respected members of the faith community, most notably the Collective Empowerment Group. We participate in church health fairs, present workshops to church groups and are incorporating more sessions to include faith’s role in healthcare in this year’s Symposium, which will take place Oct. 19 at the First Baptist Church of Highland Park.

We know we need to reach the children and grandchildren of our aging community. These generations frequently turn to social media and other virtual media to become more informed. This year, we began offering twice-monthly Facebook Live interviews – 15 minutes spent talking with our team experts about what we do. We are looking to offer podcasts in the fall.

Here’s the fact: Everybody dies. So, we must reach everybody. The best outcome for any patient is: First, when they begin to realize they have choices and; second, when they understand what those choices are.
Volunteer Spotlight: Terri Hussman

We always hear about the light at the end of the tunnel from people who have had near death experiences. It is reassuring, giving us a hopeful glimpse of our loved ones crossing over to a better world.

Terri Hussman sees that light among the living. She knows from experience there is a darkness that first falls around those who have lost someone dear: She lost her father in 1990, her first husband in 2000, her brother in 2009 and just last year, her mother died in the Rebecca Fortney Inpatient Care Center. Yet, she confidently reports that after these and many other losses, there is light at the end of the tunnel of grief.

We are fortunate to have her share that perspective with our patients, families and team members on several levels. She is a facilitator for our Loss of Life Partner or Spouse and Parenting While Grieving groups. She has worked with the Belcher Institute as it planted the seeds for hospice, palliative and bereavement care community education through Courageous Conversations presentations. She has provided valuable insight as a member of the Prince George’s County Advisory Board and the Hospice of the Chesapeake Foundation Board of Directors. And she and her husband, John Hussman, are the underwriters of the Hussman Palliative Care Center, which opened last fall on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus in Pasadena. Hussman offers us 27 years as a systems analyst for the Goddard Space Flight Center that is tempered with a loving spirit who earnestly feels others’ loss, understands their fears and can help them find a way through it.

Our mission to educate the community is something she fully supports. Like us, she hopes one day preparing for the “best ending ever” becomes everyday discussion. She knows our outreach efforts are working because she benefited from it. Courageous Conversations gave her the language she needed to talk with her mother about palliative care. “I was able to ask my mom, ‘What are your goals?’ I was able to say to her, ‘You have choices.’”

Chesapeake Life Center Director Susan Coale said that having navigated the grief process as a young parent, Hussman is both compassionate and passionate about her work. “She offers us ideas and suggestions around what is helpful for grieving adults and children and is right on target with her responses to grievers in our support groups,” Coale said. “Her thoughtfulness and her bright energy are a real gift to both staff and grievers.”

It brings Hussman great joy to be able to tell others that there will be a day they think of their loved one and laugh from good memories. They will be happy again. “It’s not going to be the same, but you will be happy,” she said. And most importantly, “You will like the person you are on the other side of the strength you gain.”
Be a part of our pathway of history

Part of celebrating four decades of caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is something that will take all who participate into the next 40 years of that journey. We are offering 40th anniversary Commemorative Bricks that people can purchase to be included in our commemorative 40th anniversary walkway at the Rebecca Fortney Inpatient Care Center.

It was such an honor to have as one of our first bricks one honoring Fran Grauch. Purchased by her son Ted Grauch and her good friend Mary Foley, it was a perfect way for them to honor the legacy of one of our co-founders.

“My mom was enthusiastic and passionate about the higher purpose of hospice care, so I know she is watching from above and loudly cheering that the institution she founded has grown beyond her wildest dreams while staying true to its original vision,” her son said.

Foley witnessed firsthand the passion of co-founders Grauch and Martha O’Herlihy as they started the organization, driven to make hospice services available to the people of Anne Arundel County. The love for her friend is evident as she shared stories of Fran’s grit. “Whenever a problem occurred, she found a solution. When Arundel Hospice did not have the finances for an office, she turned her family’s dining room into the original headquarters. When referrals from physicians were sparse, she spoke with local oncologists and convinced them hospice referrals would help both their patients and their practices,” Foley said. “Her determination was something to behold.”

When people help to fill our walkway with proud legacies, beautiful memories and moments of gratitude, it helps us to continue to do the amazing work started by Fran and Martha. We find it fitting that the very beginnings of our foundation, represented in that gift from Ted Grauch and Mary Foley, are part of a path that leads to one of our most recent accomplishments also made possible by our community – the state-of-the-art inpatient care center on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus.

We invite you to be a part of our history. Honor a loved one, remember a friend or say thank you to our hospice care team by purchasing a personalized, inscribed brick. Your generous donation of $1,000 will create a lasting memory on a 4-by-8-inch brick and you’ll be invited to the dedication of the 40th anniversary walkway.

To purchase your anniversary brick, contact Meredith Pscherer at 443-837-1528 or mpscherer@hospicechesapeake.org.
THE GIFT OF

Community

“It’s really about the people that you meet. They inspire you with their goodness and their philanthropy. I think I have become a better person by becoming a part of Hospice of the Chesapeake.”

– Kevin Campion, Foundation Board Member

hospicechesapeake.org

Be an Angel

Support Hospice of the Chesapeake

Your gift will help a patient or family member in need, provide comfort to someone grieving a loss and ensure quality care for our community.

- General and Designated Gifts
- Event Sponsorships
- Tribute Gifts and Gifts of Gratitude
- Workplace Giving
- Monthly Giving
- Corporate Partnerships
- Gifts of Stock and Securities
- Matching Gifts
- Bequests, Beneficiary Designations and IRA Gifts

Make a gift online at www.hospicechesapeake.org/giving.
Call 443-837-3385 for more information or to make a credit card gift over the phone.
Mail a check made out to Hospice of the Chesapeake Foundation.

Thank you for your support!