

Caring HANDS



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Letter from Chris Wilson

Dear Friends,

If there has ever been a year for change, 2020 has got to be at the top of the list. You will read in this newsletter about a change in leadership at Hospice of the Chesapeake as Ben Marcantonio accepted a new role as Chief Operating Officer for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. As the Board of Directors conducts a search for a replacement, Mike Brady, who has been our organization's Chief Financial Officer since 2017, is our Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Another change you may have noticed is on the cover of this newsletter. Our new logo. After a year of extensive research and a brand audit of how we present all of our program services, we are honored to share with you a new suite of logos for all our programs that are unified and focused on our commitment to caring and supporting our community. As well, last month, we expanded our reach into Maryland by acquiring Hospice of Charles County. More details on both endeavors can be found throughout the newsletter.

Watch your emails for news on our new volunteer training service as we change from using Teaching Transitions to Relias. The Relias system is what is used by our clinical and administrative teams for training and compliance. It offers a user-friendly format and more options for completing in-service training from your home.

In this spirit of positive change, why not take this opportunity to try something new? For the many Volunteers who have been sidelined from making in-person visits or helping at events that have been canceled, there are opportunities to give of your time and talents in physically distanced ways. We need your passion for compassion as Caring Callers, Companionship Callers, Honor Salute Kit Deliverers, Homebased Administrative Support, Thank You Card Creators and more. We also need people to be ambassadors by sharing, liking and retweeting our posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram.

Social distancing is temporary – family is forever. Each of you are an important part of our family. We miss you but know that when the time is right our family will be together again. Until then, watch for opportunities to catch up with one another virtually such as our Virtual Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 9. If you ever have questions or concerns, reach out to us. We are so honored that so many of you are there when we need you. We always want you to know that we are there when you need us, too.

With gratitude,



Christine Wilson, CFRE
Director of Advancement and Volunteer Services



“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.”

— Oscar Wilde

LETTER FROM OUR *Chief Medical Officer*

Dear Volunteers,

Despite the ongoing pandemic, we know there are still people with advanced illnesses like congestive heart failure and kidney disease. People still need treatment for cancer. People still need care for dementia. People besides coronavirus patients are still dying. And there are people who need to grieve the loss of a loved one. Just as they did before the pandemic, our clinical teams continue to care for the community experiencing all these things.

While many things are the same, some things have changed starting with a protocol that protects patients, families, and care teams from exposure. I know how difficult it is for many of you to not be able to care for patients and families in the way you were trained. As an organization that began with four Volunteers who willed Hospice of the Chesapeake into existence, make no mistake — there continues to be a role for you here. Care provided by Volunteers, whether in-person or remotely, still is one of the key elements that makes hospice care so remarkable. As Chris Wilson shares in her message to you in this newsletter, there are many other much needed ways you can help.

Truthfully, I, too long for a return to the time when Volunteers are able to visit patients again, work in the inpatient care centers, facilitate in-person grief support groups, help with outreach and onsite fundraising events, but we are committed to protecting the medical and care teams as our highest priority so they can continue uninterrupted caring for those living with illness and loss. We have asked our administrative teams to continue providing their much-valued support from a remote location until the end of 2020 to ensure we are successful in our efforts to protect everyone. For now, I will ask that Volunteers continue to refrain from in-person visits for the exact same reasons. As always, I will revisit these decisions as we move into the fall season and we review news on possible vaccines.

Thank you for your patience. Thank you for understanding how essential your role is to our team and our community. We need you and are indebted to your service to the patients and families we serve.

Gratefully,



Eric Bush, MD, RPh, MBA
Chief Medical Officer



New Leadership at Hospice of the Chesapeake

On Sept. 25, we bade a fond farewell to Ben Marcantonio who resigned as president and CEO of Hospice of the Chesapeake. He accepted a position as the chief operating officer for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. Demonstrating his leadership stripes, he allowed time to be able to work with the Board of Directors, who appointed our chief financial officer, Michael Brady, to serve as acting CEO while the board conducts a search for a new president and CEO. Ben and Mike have been working together to ensure a smooth transition through the summer.

Ben joined us as Chief Operating Officer in 2013 and was quickly promoted to President and CEO in 2015. “Ben has been a guiding force and a strong advocate for Hospice of the Chesapeake. We are grateful for his commitment and dedication to our mission since joining our team in 2013 and his focus on the expansion of care provided by the organization,” Brian Gibbons, chairman of the board said. “Ben has worked tirelessly during his tenure as CEO and the organization has reach many milestones including caring for more than 550 hospice patients per day in mid-2020, the construction and opening of the Rebecca Fortney Inpatient Care Center in 2015 and the Hussman Outpatient Supportive Care Center in 2018.”

Mike joined us as our CFO in 2017. Before that, he served as CFO with the National Lutheran Communities and Services in Rockville, which is the parent organization of three nonprofit faith-based senior care communities and two home health/home care entities. Mike is currently chairman of the Leading Age Maryland Board of Directors and a 2020 Leadership Anne Arundel graduate.

“I am very confident that Mike will provide strong leadership and bring valuable insight in this interim role.” Gibbons said.

Mike is looking forward to the opportunity to meet online with Volunteers at the Virtual Holiday Party planned for 5 p.m. Dec. 9.



Michael Brady- above
Ben Marcantonio - below

Commitment and Expertise Lead to Extraordinary Growth

During an unprecedented time in history that is filled with uncertainty and anxiety for so many in our community, Hospice of the Chesapeake has turned this year into a time of unprecedented growth and commitment.

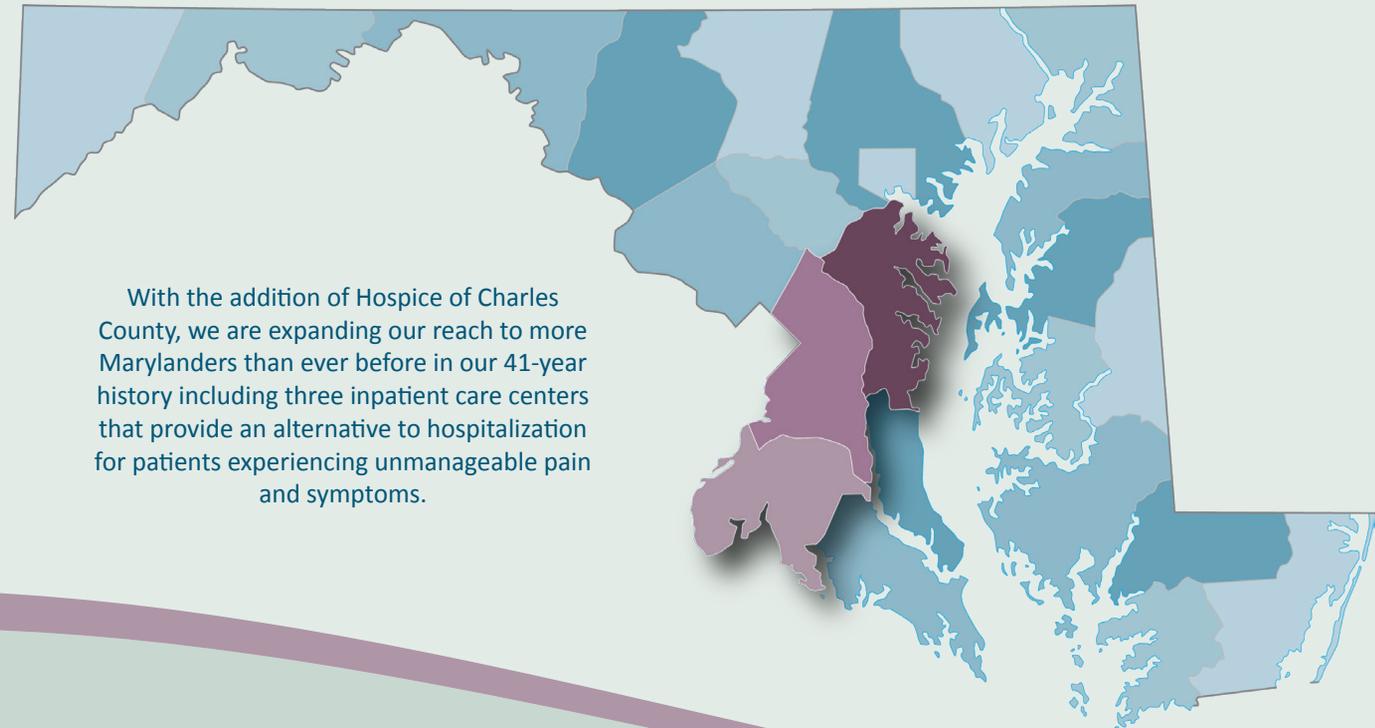
While pivoting to keep pace with the constant changes brought on by the ferocity of the COVID-19 pandemic, we cared for an average of more than 580 hospice patients each day, which is a number never seen before in our 41-year history.

As part of our long-term strategic planning process undertaken in 2019, we committed to caring for more Maryland citizens than ever before in our history. In early 2020, we began conversations about a potential partnership with Hospice of Charles County around the expansion of supportive care. After many months of collaborative conversations, the two leadership teams agreed that a merger of the organizations would be the most beneficial. We are honored to announce that on Oct. 1 we began to integrate the two local nonprofit organizations. Our goal for the citizens of Charles County is to strengthen their access to care for those living with advanced complex illness as well as to provide grief support.

Hospice of Charles County brings with it a long-standing heritage in its community. It, too, was founded by local Volunteers and supported by many community organizations and local leaders. Hopefully, you will get to meet some of our Charles County counterparts online when we gather for our Virtual Holiday Party in December.

In addition to growing our hospice care geographically, we also focused on expanding our supportive care services to reach more patients who are living with advanced complex illnesses. We are serving those who can benefit from additional support as they navigate the complexity of a new diagnosis or rapidly advancing illness but are not quite at the point of needing hospice care. Through collaboration with our local healthcare partners, we have significantly increased the care we provide in reach and depth.

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With the addition of Hospice of Charles County, we are expanding our reach to more Marylanders than ever before in our 41-year history including three inpatient care centers that provide an alternative to hospitalization for patients experiencing unmanageable pain and symptoms.



During this time of growth, it became apparent that it was time to change the perception of Hospice of the Chesapeake in our community. In the last 15 years, we have grown from a traditional hospice team in Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties into regional experts in hospice care, supportive care, general inpatient care, grief support for those who have lost a love one to illness and trauma, as well as grief education. As we progressed down this winding path, our brand and logo needed to more accurately represent the NEW Hospice of the Chesapeake and the many new ways we care for the community. In response, we launched a full-scale brand audit and research campaign to gather community and professional opinions on our evolution. That in-depth analysis and reflection gave birth to new logos and creative for each of our business lines. We have included them with this article and are happy to share that we launched these new looks on Sept. 1. We truly believe this path represents the future of our organization and leaves room for more growth in ways we might not anticipate today.

Throughout all these positive changes, we know we have your support as we promise one this will never change: We will always be an organization that is caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss. With the help of our Volunteers, we know we will always be there when the community needs us.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Caring Callers

Since the very beginning of Hospice of the Chesapeake, an organization founded by Volunteers, the importance of touch when providing comfort and care is always emphasized. Holding hands, offering hugs, providing massage and other hands-on therapies, and long talks next to a bedside are all common and encouraged practices.

Then, one day in March, very suddenly, our Volunteers were told they could no longer visit in person with patients and families or serve alongside our care teams in the inpatient care centers or partner facilities. Not only for the safety of the patients, but also for our care teams and the Volunteers themselves.

Our leadership scrambled to find a way to put an eager corps of generous souls to work in a way that can help our patients and families while keeping everyone safe. That is how our Caring Callers team evolved.

Cari Mackes, who has been volunteering for our organization since 2010, said that like her, many of the Caring Callers started out on the Tuck In Team prior to COVID-19. "As Tuck In callers, we met every Thursday morning with the goal of reaching all our patients and families to make sure they had enough medicine and supplies to get through the weekend," Mackes said. "Now, as Caring Callers, our goal is to let the patients and caregivers know that we are thinking of them and this is one way we can keep in touch when we can't visit in the home."

Joan Blum, who has worn many different hats in her 27-plus years of volunteering with our organization, put on a new hat when the Tuck-In Calls could no longer take place at Mandrin due to the pandemic and became a Caring Caller from home. She said she appreciates being able to call the same list of families each week. "They anticipate our calls and with several we are on first-name basis. I look forward to being able to go back to the regular home visits but will miss many of my regular calls."

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Cari Mackes, left, and Joan Blum, right, were part of the Tuck In Team that was honored in 2016 with the Spirit of Hospice Award at our annual Volunteer banquet. Both have continued their work as Caring Callers.



Gloria Kinsley has found her new role as a Companionship Caller rewarding

Mackes also serves as a Patient Care Volunteer since 2010 and a Vigil Volunteer since 2011, said that her client has changed. “As a Patient Care Volunteer, my patient was my client and the family was secondary. As a Caring Caller, most of the people I talk with are the caregivers. It’s the caregiver who’s stressed out, the caregiver who is upset, my client has changed,” she said. “They burst out crying – these are the people who you stay on the phone with, to provide a caring presence and a compassionate ear.”

Cheryl Michi, the volunteer coordinator who supports the Caring Callers, is proud of the Volunteers who have found a way to make calls from their own homes to help patients and the family caregiver. Since they started the Caring Caller program, they have made more than 5,000 calls to patients and their families. From these calls, another type of Volunteer was created: Companionship Callers, who are assigned when a patient or caregiver tells a Caring Caller they would appreciate having one Volunteer assigned to make regular calls. As of the end of September, around 90 patients have signed up for Companionship Calls.

Gloria Kinsley is one such Volunteer. As a Patient Care Volunteer since 2007, she misses being able to visit in person, but she said this new role is rewarding. “It is very different. It took me a couple of times to get used to just calling and chit chatting,” she said. The woman she talks with once or twice a week is a caregiver who has been taking care of her husband since 2014. “These people can’t go anywhere. She is alone. Those people really need support.”

Teri Jacobson, a Patient Care, Comfort Touch and Aromatherapy Volunteer, heard about Companionship Calls while in a Zoom Volunteer meeting and knew immediately she would get involved. “It’s a great way to stay involved and offer an ear to those patients and families needing to be heard. During these times, these loved ones and those at end of life are more isolated than ever. A call makes a difference. It is a connection and a way to say, ‘we see you.’”

Veterans Corner:

A DIFFERENT KIND OF FISH STORY

Averie Mortimer, 12, was in the car with her mother, Tracy Mortimer, headed out to purchase a pet fish and supplies with her allowance when they got a call from her older sister, Lauren Scharch. The director of activities at Genesis Healthcare in Annapolis, Scharch called to tell them that she learned that Hospice of the Chesapeake was in great need of patriotic blankets to give to our Veterans during their Honor Salutes.

“Mom, we can do it right now!” Averie said. She didn’t need to buy the fish. Instead, she wanted to spend the money on the fabric to make blankets.

The proud mom happily changed course for the fabric store where they discovered that the no-sew blanket kits Averie had in mind were on sale and she was able to purchase four with her fish money. Tracy also purchased some kits, and the duo delivered the blankets in September, with plans to make more.

The Mortimers profess a true love for Veterans and the military. Averie said her grandfathers are both Veterans – one served in the Navy while the other served in the Army. And her brother-in-law serves in the Army. The Centerville Middle School seventh-grader is actually a veteran of serving Veterans and active-duty military. She has written Christmas cards for deployed troops and, as a member of American Heritage Girls, she would stand out by the side of the road for fallen military during their final ride from Dover Air Force base to their final resting place. She talked the powerful feeling of community she experienced, seeing the families riding in the funeral procession, looking out through their car windows at people holding flags and saluting their loved one. “That was gut-wrenching,” Averie said.

The need for quilts, blankets and afghans as well as children’s Thank You cards has never been greater. With a daily patient census nearing 600, we are caring for around 150 Veterans every day. Three quarters of the way through 2020, we had facilitated more than 200 Honor Salutes, most of them virtual. We have a dedicated corps of We Honor Veterans Volunteers who help to deliver the kits, but we need more, especially in Prince George’s County. Monetary gifts also are needed to pay for the framed certificates and American flag pins as well as for the totes in which they are delivered.

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Averie Mortimer holds up one of the no-sew patriotic blankets she created and then donated to our We Honor Veterans program.



Registered Nurse Case Manager Kelly Brennan plays a video of active-duty military Volunteers thanking Veterans for their service during Bert Behringer's virtual Honor Salute at Morningside House of Friendship. The patriotic quilt and handmade Thank You card that is a signature of the salute are on his lap.

Director of Advancement and Volunteer Services Chris Wilson said we have many stories about Volunteers who do amazing things for our Veteran patients, but Averie's story is exceptional because she is only 12 years old and already has such a deep passion for honoring men and women who have served in the military. "We hope that Averie's spirit can inspire others in our community to find ways to give," Wilson said. "If a middle-schooler can give up her chore money and time to create blankets that will be treasured by Veterans and their families, imagine what could be done if someone were to skip a couple of coffee runs to pay for 10 flag pins or worked on quilts while catching up on Netflix?"

Fortunately for us, Averie's passion for Veterans is contagious. When her neighbors learned about her patriotic blankets, they wanted to help out, too, and gave her enough money to make four to six more quilts. "I was almost in tears when my neighbor gave us the money," Averie said. "I love our Veterans and I wanted to help them."

She also learned about our need for the handmade Thank You cards that Veterans receive during the Honor Salute and is intent on helping out there, too. "I will go to my church and we'll make cards and notes for the Veterans."

Averie's mother understands why Averie has such commitment and dedication to caring for those who have served in the military. "It's a sense of belonging. You really know what you're doing when you thank a Veteran," Tracy said. "This is a small thing, just to let them know, we don't know their name, who they are, what they did, but we love them."

To donate patriotic blankets or Thank You cards, contact Renate Little at rlittle@hospicechesapeake.org or 443-837-1512.

To donate funds, contact Megan Lawton at mlawton@hospicechesapeake.org or 443-837-1531.

Grief Support CORNER

The Chesapeake Life Center team is made up of professionals whose career mission includes helping people find supportive connections in their journeys of living with loss. For many of the adults, children and families we serve, our Volunteers are often one of those connections.

The CLC team has worked hard to stay connected and offer services despite limits on face-to-face gatherings and the fact we are unable to include most Volunteers. We are trying to find a balance of on-line and in-person programs to meet the needs of those who are grieving while adhering to strict guidelines to keep everyone safe.

We are offering new groups and workshops and have discontinued a few. Please download our program guide [HERE](#) and share with any grievers or caregivers who may find it helpful.

We want to thank the Volunteers who have worked with our pandemic restrictions as set by Dr. Eric Bush, our chief medical officer, to help our team provide the services to those who are living with loss need now more than ever. They include Bereavement Callers Kathy Green and Debra Jacobs; Administrative Volunteer Cindy Butz; Children's Support Volunteers Jay Beeler and John Newberger; and Co-Facilitators Carol Fritz and Terri Hussman.

Until we can welcome back our entire corps of Volunteers to the Center, we want to share with you how grateful our team is for all that you do. With so many of you not being able to work with us and our clients, it has really illuminated the critical role you play. Volunteers are truly at the heart of what we do at CLC. You help us to be so much more than we could be without your involvement. You extend our reach by making follow-up calls to bereaved families, supporting our work with children, co-facilitating groups and welcoming our clients and visitors into the center. Your care and compassion, warm hearts and commitment inspire us to be even better clinicians and make a huge difference in the lives of our clients. Volunteers are the hands and feet that carry the work to the people and places that matter: You make love visible. You impact our work daily by reminding us of the importance and benefit of selfless caring and human connection.

With gratitude, from your CLC team:

Susan Coale, Director
Amy Stapleton, Bereavement Services Manager
Roberta Rook, Bereavement Counselor
Casey Dressel, Bereavement Counselor
Candace Blase, Bereavement Counselor
Jen Caughron, Program Coordinator
Dianna Ayers, Administrative Assistant



Though she couldn't help at our annual Emily Schindler Memorial Lecture which had to be canceled due to the pandemic, Carol Fritz has been Volunteering virtually as a co-facilitator for the Child Loss Grief Support Group.



Jay Beeler masked-up and kept his distance (though he wasn't always in the trees) as co-facilitator at this year's Camp Phoenix, one of a very few in-person events that was allowed to happen thanks to careful planning, strict precautions and the fact that it was held outside at Terrapin Adventures.

"Nothing is as strong as the heart of a volunteer." – Jimmy Doolittle



Inside the box and out into the world

Susan Coale and Amy Stapleton have been all over the state this year. And they did not even have to leave their desks. They have become grief and loss education webinar rock stars.

Together, Coale, director of Chesapeake Life Center, and Stapleton, the center's bereavement services manager, presented "Creative Interventions: Supporting Children and Teens as they Grieve" to an audience of 305 Anne Arundel County Public School counselors in May. Word of their program reached the Howard County Public Schools who asked them to present to more than 100 counselors in September. In June, the duo presented the continuing education offering "Loss without Closure: Ambiguous Loss and Grief" to the Chesapeake Employee Assistance Professionals Association as well as to social workers employed by referral partners at hospitals and assisted and skilled nursing centers.

Other team members have also made virtual presentations to different groups during the pandemic. Patti McMillan, our director of medical practice management, presented on supportive care to a support group with our friends at the Wellness House in Annapolis. You can see a recording of that event by clicking [HERE](#).

Community outreach and education is alive and well thanks to a team of experts that adapted to provide webinars and educational videos and the generosity of the John & Cathy Belcher Institute to fund the technology to make that happen. Like everything we have done, the restrictions of the pandemic forced us to think "inside the box." We have not been able to schedule any of our outreach Volunteers for an educational event in a venue since March 11 when we spoke at a Kiwanis Club meeting. But we have been able to reach more people with each webinar and online video than we ever did at any in-person event. By tenfold, if not more.

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Loss without Closure: Ambiguous Loss and Grief Webinar



Susan M. Coale, LCSW-C
Director, Chesapeake Life Center
at Hospice of the Chesapeake



Amy R. Stapleton, MS, LCPC, NCC
Manager of Bereavement Services,
Chesapeake Life Center
at Hospice of the Chesapeake

Our educational videos produced for Facebook and shared on social media have played an important role in keeping our community informed and offering interventions dealing with the unknowns of 2020. Our “Coping with COVID” series debuted March 19 with Stapleton talking about the loss of control and feelings of isolation we were just beginning to feel. We have created more than 10 coping with COVID videos since, including a three-part series specifically for the Prince George’s County community. The videos offer strategies for self-care, staying connected, and helping family, friends, and community, and conclude with resources for getting help. That first video has been viewed about 5,500 times on Facebook. All our pandemic-related videos have been viewed more than 45,000 times. You can see all these educational videos by clicking [HERE](#).

The signature event of the Belcher Institute is our annual Caring for the Continuum of Life healthcare symposium. What started in 2015 as Courageous Conversations, free opportunities to discuss end-of-life, advanced illness, and bereavement care philosophies, grew to include this one large event, completely free for attendees with offerings for both community members and healthcare professionals. Hundreds of people attended the first two, and we were excited about what 2020 would bring until the pandemic once again forced us to change tack. This year’s event is virtual, and as such, it allows us to reach even more people. The focus on addressing racial inequities in healthcare has been made even more relevant considering the social justice movement and how minority communities are disproportionately affected by the novel coronavirus. How inequity and faith-based culture factors into hospice and supportive care decisions will all be addressed on the morning of Oct. 24. It is free for anyone to attend, so share it with friends and family! To register, click [HERE](#).

We offer these videos and learning opportunities to you as a way to learn more about the mission you support as a Volunteer in the hopes that you share your knowledge to friends, family and those you meet in your daily life, whether online or through your mask at the grocery store. Yet we acknowledge there is another series of videos you could use not only to share with the patients and families you interact with, but also for yourself. These are our integrative arts videos. Thanks to some wonderful Volunteers who have recorded virtual sessions of yoga, meditation, therapeutic music and even a soothing Maryland Therapeutic Riding horse video, you can enjoy these videos when you need to soothe your soul from the troubles of the times. You can see these videos by clicking [HERE](#)

It seems that this global pandemic has helped us to expand our reach, making us more global. We are excited that our clinical leaders and gifted Volunteers are helping the community navigate the hairpin turns COVID-19 has added to our journey through illness and loss.



We are excited to have Dr. Karen Bullock, left, as our Caring for the Continuum of Life healthcare symposium keynote presenter for the second year. She will discuss “Racial Inequalities Exacerbated by COVID-19.” Dr. Gloria Thomas Anderson is our featured speaker. Her presentation is “A Community Conversation: The Impact of COVID-19 and Historical Mistrust on African-American Health and Decision-Making.”



Save **THE** Date

Caring for the
Continuum of
LIFE

**20
20**

A Virtual Healthcare Symposium

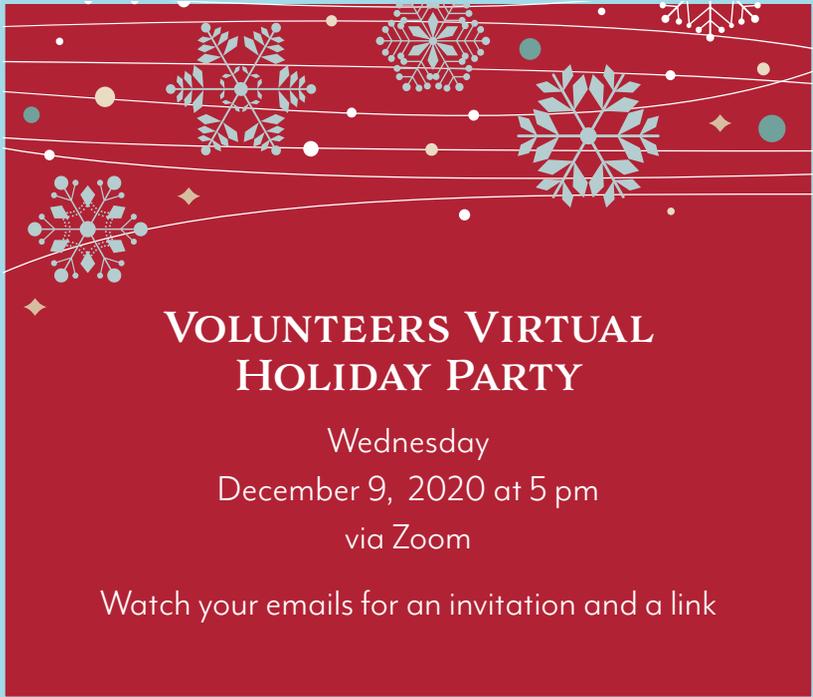
A **FREE** online event

Saturday • 10.24.2020

7:45 am — 12:45 pm

3 FREE CEUs available

CLICK **HERE** TO REGISTER



VOLUNTEERS VIRTUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Wednesday

December 9, 2020 at 5 pm

via Zoom

Watch your emails for an invitation and a link