Dear Friend,

"I don't know how Olivia does her job, day after day, during this pandemic." The wife of one of our hospice patients called me after a nurse's visit to their Anne Arundel County home. Here's what she said next.

"Doing basic tasks while wearing protective gear can't be easy. But she never complains. When she's done, she goes out to her car and carefully takes off the gear. She always waves with a big, unmasked smile before driving away to do it all again with the next patient. I'm not just grateful to her, I'm in awe of her."

I called Olivia later to tell her about the call, and I asked her what kept her going. You might find her reply as inspiring as I did.

"Well, I just keep reminding myself it's what I signed up for – helping people when they're most vulnerable at the end of life. The upside is that I know that what I'm doing makes a difference. The downside is that I don't get to choose the conditions. That's just the way it is."

That's what commitment looks like here at Hospice of the Chesapeake. **Our hospice, supportive and bereavement care teams have all risen to the challenges of COVID-19. We've adapted in both high-tech and high-touch ways** — with telemedicine platforms and Zoom webinars, as well as with "window visits," honor salutes on porches, and old-fashioned telephone "caring calls" by volunteers.

When COVID infection rates decline in our area and more in-person contact is safe, we're agile. We shift back to more hybrid ways of providing care. **Some of the new technology is here to stay because it helps us help more people in more ways. That's our one and only bottom line as a non-profit hospice.**

Community support has allowed us to rise to the challenge. Your gift transcends COVID and makes a real difference to people in our community, as one recent note of gratitude expressed beautifully:

"In spite of how much more difficult COVID made everything, Hospice of the Chesapeake's team kept my father comfortable and helped me fulfill his end-of-life wishes. After he passed, the bereavement counselor was there for me. At first, I was skeptical about how well grief counseling would work through a computer screen, but she was so warm and at ease that in no time it felt like she was in the room with me. To not be alone in my sorrow is such a gift at a time when contact with my friends is limited."

I don't know what the future holds, but I can promise you that our team and volunteers will not be daunted by whatever conditions we must face. We are made for these times.

It's equally true that **we need your help to keep delivering the exemplary care that 600 patients and their families rely on us for each day.**

We face the continued cost of standing up to the COVID crisis, as well as the usual costs associated with our special programs and services. We are also committed to never turn away anyone due to inability to pay.

Your gift always helps people when they most need help. But at the end of a year in which two of our three big annual fund-raising events could not be held, it's even more essential.

Thank you so very much! I hope your holiday season is full of joy.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Brady
President and Chief Executive Officer

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