



hospice of the  
chesapeake  
*Foundation*

CARING FOR  
*Life*

[hospicechesapeake.org](http://hospicechesapeake.org)

# Letter from our President

Dear Friends,

I was hoping that by the time I sat down to write the letter for this edition of *Caring for Life*, we'd be seeing COVID-19 in our rearview mirror. We had hoped to be talking about our upcoming gala. We were looking forward to returning to large and joyful holiday gatherings in warm, crowded rooms.

Then, the Delta variant happened. We aren't missing out on the irony that delta means "change." And so, we must change plans. Again. We are postponing, rescheduling, and rethinking — back to virtual we go with most of our events. The reassuring smiles of our clinical teams remain, for now, covered by face masks to protect everyone's health.

I don't want to dwell on the impact of the pandemic, but it does provide testimony to the resilience, expertise and commitment of everyone connected to Hospice of the Chesapeake. Despite the challenges of the last 20 months, we continue to excel. In the pages that follow, you'll learn about our enthusiastic participation in a nationwide quality improvement program with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. You'll read about how Chesapeake Supportive Care has gone to the next level of telehealth with an interactive app that allows our patients to have more control in their healthcare plans. You'll see how we strive to provide equal access to anyone who needs hospice, supportive or bereavement care, regardless of inability to pay.

We are proud to be your go-to community nonprofit, your hometown hospice providing the most advanced care, the most responsive service, the most desired expertise to patients and families in every part of the counties we have served and developed over the last 42 years.

Knowing that we have your support means that you have chosen this nonprofit as an important part of your contribution to your community. I don't know what the future holds but I can promise you that your hometown hospice will not be daunted by whatever conditions we must face. We are made for these times.

With gratitude,



Michael J. Brady  
President and CEO



## Strategic approach to giving to Hospice of the Chesapeake

Married for more than 30 years, Karen and Steve Kratzer prove the adage that opposites attract. "I'm the talker," Karen, a retired accountant, said. "He's the nodder," she said of Steve, who worked in computer science. One topic both are quick to discuss, however, is philanthropy.

The Annapolis couple use their donor-advised fund to support favorite causes. "Hospice of the Chesapeake provides dignity and helps people have the best quality of life," she said. "We've had friends and family in hospice and want hospice available for all who need it."

A hospice volunteer prior to COVID-19, Steve pointed out, "Organizations we support with our time, we also support financially."

A donor-advised fund can be a great way to give and realize tax breaks, agrees Margo Cook, Partner and Director of Financial Planning at One North Wealth Services. "It's like a charitable savings account that can earn interest and investment return." Opening a donor-advised fund at an organization, such as a community foundation or a commercial gift fund, begins with a tax-deductible, irrevocable donation of cash, stocks, or non-publicly traded assets. Funds can be opened with a few thousand dollars and grow tax-free.

"On your timeline, you make grant recommendations on where to distribute the money," Cook said. Donors may "bunch" fund contributions in one year for increased tax savings; eliminate capital gains taxes by funding with highly appreciated stock, real estate, and similar assets; and enhance estate planning.

For the Kratzers, their fund provides a sensible, organized way to be thoughtful about giving. "We can focus more on the charity and less on the mechanics of making a donation," Karen said. "It's important to help hospice patients and families at their time of need."



**Learn about using a donor-advised fund for your favorite causes, including helping patients and families at Hospice of the Chesapeake.**

**Watch: <https://bit.ly/4WaysDAF>**

**Read: [hospicechesapeake.planmygift.org](https://hospicechesapeake.planmygift.org)**

**Contact: [foundation@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:foundation@hospicechesapeake.org) or 443-837-3385**

We are committed to ongoing quality improvement and have begun our journey with the

## NHPCO QUALITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM.

Education    Application    Measurement    Innovation

NHPCO Quality Connections

# We're quality focused : Why it matters to patients and families

By Lisa Griffiee, Director of Quality Improvement, Hospice of the Chesapeake

Have you ever wondered what the difference is between hospices? Do some provide better care than others? How would you choose a hospice if you or your loved one needed it?

These questions and many more are faced by patients and families every day in our communities. Knowing when to choose hospice care can be a daunting task and overwhelmed families often don't know where to turn.

As the Director of Quality Improvement, it is my job to guide our organization's teams in constantly looking at how we design or redesign our systems and processes to best meet the needs of our patients and families. We know that any focus on quality improvement will only strengthen the care we provide to our patients and our community.

That is why in January, it was an easy decision for Hospice of the Chesapeake to join hundreds of hospice and palliative care organizations and providers nationwide in a program to establish and exceed quality expectations. By enrolling in the new Quality Connections program with other members of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, we declared our commitment to sharing our achievements and to demonstrate how we got there. In turn, we will learn from others, grow with them and ultimately find each next step of excellence in our mission of caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss.



Lisa Griffiee

Hospice of the Chesapeake has always had a focus on quality care but with this new program, we seek to achieve continuous quality improvement by enhancing our knowledge base, skills and competency in a broader way. It standardizes benchmarks so we have a way to learn and grow and ultimately share our success stories.

Hospice organizations have limited ways to compare themselves to one another. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services gathers data that it shares through its Care Compare website but unfortunately, its scope is limited to comparing a small portion of our care, primarily when the patient is admitted. As you can imagine, there are so many facets of care that we need to always seek to improve, adjust, and enhance. An example of this is preventing patient falls.

Patient falls are one of our greatest concerns because as illness progresses nearing end of life, patients may lose their stability or medications may contribute to a lack of balance. The hospice industry has not agreed on how to define a fall, so while we have our historical data to review, we have not had the ability to compare to a nationally accepted benchmark. If we know how others are doing when it comes to preventing falls, we can learn from them. If we are achieving better outcomes than other hospices, we can in turn teach them what we have learned to do differently. A focus on quality care improves outcomes for patients and families.

Quality Connections seeks to compare care in a far more reaching way in how we care for patients and families. It also asks how do we care for veterans? What programs do we have in place for grievors? How can we improve in creating a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organization? Just like hospice is a team approach to caring for a patient's body, mind and spirit, this new program is a team approach to improving the body, mind and spirit of hospice organizations.

**To support our quality improvement programs, please contact 443-837-3385 or [foundation@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:foundation@hospicechesapeake.org).**

What is most remarkable about this program is that it is something we all want. Not just we, the hospice care professionals, but we, the community. Patients and families deserve to know which organizations exceed care goals based on a framework of benchmarks developed by colleagues, researchers and industry experts. They need to

know if there is a Veteran-to-Veteran volunteer program established, if bereavement services include one-on-one consultations, if there are team members who can provide Spanish language skills. We know people have choices. By participating in this program, Hospice of the Chesapeake is demonstrating that we are committed and invested in making sure we are providing the kind of quality care and services that set us apart and provide the care patients and families want and need.

We are committed to continuous improvement, always taking a fresh look at care as well as our processes. Especially in healthcare, we should always be asking ourselves what can we learn, how do we improve, what can we do better? We should always be growing and, most importantly, listening to our patients and their families about the care we provide.



# Old friends meet new friends in the *Charles County Community*

Exciting things have been happening at your hometown hospice! This month marks a year since the merging of two like-minded community nonprofits, Hospice of Charles County and Hospice of the Chesapeake. We started off running, working with community partners and some old and new patrons to expand and enhance services for those living with illness and loss in Charles County. Our now combined leadership was encouraged by the overwhelming support, moving swiftly to implement a plan to make significant investments including technology infrastructure, staffing, physical and decorative updates.

In June, we finally got to turn off the video camera on our laptops and celebrate in person by hosting a ribbon-cutting on our Waldorf campus. A beautiful day, social distancing and vaccinations afforded us the opportunity to gather with members of the Charles County community that included healthcare, civic, legislative and business leaders as well as our own team members, volunteers and longtime friends.

After an hour of networking over breakfast, the ceremony began with our President and CEO Mike Brady thanking the community and sharing the two organizations' plans for bringing more hospice, supportive and bereavement care to the people of Charles County. "Nothing is more important to us — and when I say us, I mean everyone at Hospice of Charles County and Hospice of the Chesapeake — than knowing everyone who needs hospice and supportive care has access to those services and understands how we can support their family," Brady said.

District 28 Delegate Edith J. Patterson and Senator Arthur Ellis each presented proclamations on behalf of the state honoring the ribbon-cutting event. It was with their support as well as that of other Maryland state legislators representing Charles County that the hospice was able to secure a \$200,000 bond. That bond and donations from the community have helped fund upgrades to infrastructure and renovations in progress on every floor of the three-level building on Davis Road.



Delegate Edith Patterson stands with her family after the ceremony.



Charles County Volunteers Victor and Sharon Kline and Ann Ringenberg pose for a pre-ceremony photo.

Last to speak was Noel Cervino, President and CEO of the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center and a member of the hospice's board of directors. He spoke of the center's long history of collaboration with Hospice of Charles County and the more recent formal partnership between Hospice of the Chesapeake and the medical center and what that means for the community. "When the time comes for families facing advanced illness or end of life, I am secure in knowing that our ongoing partnership will provide the highest quality and seamless care available to the Charles County community," Cervino said.

**To support hospice care in  
Charles County,  
please contact 301-861-5315 or  
giving@hospiceofcharlescounty.org.**



Pictured in the front row from left are Hospice of the Chesapeake board members Joyce Phillip, Tricia Lehmann, Brian Gibbons, President and CEO Mike Brady, Delegate Edith Patterson, Senator Arthur Ellis, board member Jim Humphrey and University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center President and CEO Noel Cervino.



Connie and Jordan Burick of the LaPlata Lions Club flank CEO Mike Brady at the breakfast hour preceding the ceremony.



Hospice of the Chesapeake board member Delegate Edith Patterson and Senator Arthur Ellis present proclamations on behalf of the state to CEO Mike Brady and Board Chairman Brian Gibbons.



Kathleen and William Cooke are two outstanding Charles County residents who are longtime supporters of Hospice of Charles County. President and CEO Mike Brady was honored to welcome them to the ceremony.



University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center Chief Financial Officer Albert Zanger talks with Mike Brady.

# When living with advanced illness, *there's no place like home.*

Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, New Jersey, was in one of the nation's epicenters in the beginning of the pandemic when it made a life-saving decision. Send their patients home.

While this was a frightening decision, they were able to care for many of them with VitalCare, a remote patient monitoring system that tracked their vitals and kept them connected with their care teams. By June 2020, the hospital had cared for 5,400 COVID-19 patients at home with more than 21,000 telehealth visits. In a case study, Glenn C. Hamilton, MD, Chief Medical Advisor, VitalTech Affiliates wrote, "One consistent message throughout this experience was by adding remote patient monitoring and its sense of 'connection' it decreased the anxiety and fears of the patients at home and their families. The statement, 'Holy Name really cares for and about us,' was echoed by many remotely monitored patients during this crisis."

When Dr. Eric Bush, our Chief Medical Officer, read about the results achieved by Holy Name using VitalCare he knew immediately our patients could benefit from such a program. Reducing emergency room visits as well as patient and caregiver anxiety were two driving factors behind Chesapeake Supportive Care's decision to implement the VitalCare program this fall. The kit patients receive includes a tablet which connects to a home's Wi-Fi along with a pulse/ox meter, thermometer and blood pressure cuff that transmit data to the tablet via Bluetooth. For patients who are at risk of falling, there is also a personal emergency response system device.

The clinical teams can set thresholds for certain vital signs. For example, if a patient's blood pressure begins elevating, the system will alert our team so we can respond and stabilize the patient before symptoms escalate and a trip to the emergency room is necessary. Medical information is confidential and can only be accessed with patients' permission.

We believe VitalCare will empower our patients, their families and the clinical teams by keeping them all connected and in line with the patient's goals of care. For the right patient, it is an extra layer of support in easing the anxiety that comes with troubling symptoms such as shortness of breath or pain. Knowledge is power. Seeing your vital signs and other statistics while talking in a video chat with your care team on how to manage those symptoms is what patient-centered medicine is all about.

*To support Chesapeake Supportive Care,  
please contact [foundation@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:foundation@hospicechesapeake.org)  
or 443-837-3385.*

# A little bit of this and that goes a long way with *Children's Summer Grief Programs*

During the last 20 months, we have watched schools change decades of "this is how we always do it" into a race to adapt so children could continue to learn while staying protected from the coronavirus. Millions upon millions of laptops went out to schoolchildren so they could attend classes from homes, private and smaller public schools established outdoor learning spaces, cohorts or pods of students and teachers were created to allow for in-person learning in limited numbers. At the start of this fall 2021 school year, schools are meeting in person, with adults, adolescents and teens able to be vaccinated and everyone is required to wear a face mask.

The Chesapeake Life Center took a similar path with its children and teen grief programs. First, groups were canceled, with youth meeting with counselors via telehealth. As we approached the summer of 2020, we went ahead with a summer program for teens that met outdoors and a program for children ages 6 to 11 that met online via Zoom for Healthcare.

Susan Coale, the center's director said the Zoom program was a bit of a struggle. "Part of what we learned last year is kids don't want to do stuff on screens with us," Coale said. "So, we really branched out this year to include more programs, so that we could have more youth participate."

This year the center offered programs at Terrapin Adventures in Savage — one for teens and one for younger children, a music-based program at Watkins Park in Prince George's County, and an art program in partnership with Artsy Partsy in Pasadena. The variety helped to introduce our family-centered bereavement services to more people in the community. Of the 31 children who participated, 17 had never used our center's grief services. Four have enrolled in our fall support groups for youth.

One new face came in unannounced to the art program. She wasn't registered, but when her parent walked in with her, the team welcomed her. She started out quiet and reserved, her head down, hair covering her face. By the end of the day, she had pulled her hair back in a ponytail and was taking part in activities, even laughing. Coale smiled as she shared this story and said, "If she was the only kid all summer long who benefited, I'm good with that."

***To support children's grief programs,  
please contact  
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or 443-837-3385.***



A Terrapin Adventures guide coaches a participant in the Adventures in Grieving program for teens, one of four Saturday grief programs offered this summer for children and teens living with loss.

# Reaching people in need through the Community Investment Tax Credits



Community Investment Tax Credits have helped us to reach more programs for children and teens living with the loss of a loved one. Programs like our Preteen Monthly Grief Support Group who spent one summer afternoon expressing their grief with chalk art.

As a nonprofit caring for people regardless of their inability to pay, we are always seeking ways to raise money so that anyone who needs hospice, supportive or bereavement care has access to it. One of the most successful ways is with Community Investment Tax Credits, a program of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

Some might wonder how we might be connected to this particular state department. The key word to explain that is "community." The tax credits are an incentive for donors to give cash support to projects that support residents living in state-identified Priority Funding Areas who are particularly vulnerable due to lack of financial resources. Past Hospice of the Chesapeake projects approved to participate in the CITC program have been able to fund medical equipment and supplies; drug therapies and diagnostics; bereavement care and other services for those who are underinsured or impoverished.

The way the program works is businesses or individuals donating to a CITC project are eligible to receive a state tax credit that is equal to half the value of the donation. This is in addition to federal or state charitable tax deductions. The program has leveraged nearly \$27 million in charitable contributions to approximately 700 projects across the state.

The annual application process is very competitive for 501(c)(3) charities to have their projects qualify, so donors can feel confident their gift is serving a project with vital community purpose. Since 2013, we have received \$450,000 through the CITC program, resulting in \$225,000 in tax credits for our donors. This money has supported:

- At-risk families of pediatric hospice patients by providing medical and grief support services.
- At-risk families in Prince George's County and at-risk critically ill elderly residents of Anne Arundel and Prince George's County by providing free or reduced cost clinical services, increasing volunteer support for patients and caregivers as well as building community partnerships and education initiatives so more people are aware of our services.
- Grieving children and teens by increasing access to family-centered grief services to help families struggling with loss, including traumatic loss.

As your community nonprofit, we are incredibly grateful for the tremendous opportunity this state-sponsored program offers as an incentive for donors. We are proud to provide services that Maryland considers important enough to include in this community-building program.

# Help our Chesapeake Kids pediatric hospice families *Celebrate the Holidays*



We all know how stressful holiday shopping can be and even worse while dealing with COVID-19. Imagine what it must be like for families with a child living with an advanced illness. Since 2016, our team, volunteers and community members have raised money to support families by providing and delivering holiday gifts. This way, families could spend more time with each other and less time in stores or online, allowing them to stay safe, healthy and at home where they are most comfortable.

This year is once again significantly different since we have been unable to host our primary children's fundraising event, Fashion for a Cause, since 2019. Each year this event raises close to \$150,000 to support the overall program and specifically, the holiday sharing event.



**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** We have 10 families in need and your support will lighten their already heavy load through the upcoming holiday season. To support our holiday sharing program, please contact [foundation@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:foundation@hospicechesapeake.org) or 443-837-3385.

## *We are listening!*

As providers of supportive, hospice and grief support, we believe we are great listeners to those we serve. We hear so many times from families that having someone listen to them, listen to their fears and needs, was one of the most valuable elements of the care we provide. Using that feedback is a critical part of our process, but we also have more formally designed feedback by creating advisory committees for our underrepresented communities.

In 2018, we created the Prince George's County Advisory Council with members from different segments and communities to advise our Board of Directors and our leadership team on needs and issues unique to Prince George's County. We're grateful to advisory council members for sharing their purposeful contributions, intentional insight, and vast knowledge of the communities they serve and love. The council meets quarterly with leadership to discuss new outreach opportunities, design plans to address disparities and inform our teams on shifts or changes in their communities.

We couldn't do this work without you. We are absolutely listening! Thank you!

### Prince George's County Advisory Council

Carlesa Finney,  
Prince George's County Public Schools

Theresa K. Hussman, Hussman Foundation

Shelly Gross-Wade, President and CEO,  
Prince George's Financial Services Corporation

Sharon Moore Jackson, President and Strategist, S.M.  
Jackson Government Business Solutions, LLC

Edith Perry, Community Liaison,  
State Del. Joseline Peña-Melnyk

# THE GIFT OF HOME



*I was able to care for my husband at home. Hospice being there was such a comfort as you truly care for the patient and family.*

[hospicechesapeake.org](http://hospicechesapeake.org)

## *Support Our Hospice Heroes*

Give dignity and compassion for patients at end of life.

Offer comfort to loved ones who grieve.

Build a caring community.

Your care is needed now, more than ever, during COVID-19 and beyond.

Learn more about individual gifts, monthly giving, bequests, sponsorships, and other ways to make a difference in the lives of others.

Visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org/giving](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org/giving) or  
443-837-3385 to give by phone or to learn more.

Thanks to you, so much is possible for patients, families, and our community.