ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIVING FOR THOSE FACING THE LAST PHASES OF LIFE AND SUPPORTING THOSE WHO LOVE THEM.
Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg

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The board of directors is responsible for governance of Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg. The board has one employee, the executive director, who oversees operations of the organization.

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Hospice House & Support Care Belief Statement

We believe that human beings have a right to live and die with dignity.
We believe that people should not have to die alone nor be alone in their grief.
We believe that all individuals deserve comfort.
We believe that being with the dying and their loved ones is a gift unlike any other.
We believe that we are all called to be agents of peace and comfort.
We believe that there is a need for quality, compassionate hospice care in our area, and we believe that our mission is to fulfill that need.
We believe that we are to give back to and care for our community because of what we have so graciously received from this place and the people in it.
We believe that we have a unique vision for the future of hospice care to share with our community, and ultimately the world.

Hospice House Mission Statement

...to enhance the quality of living for those facing the final phases of life and to support those who love them.

Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg Core Values

• Service to patients and those who love them
• Service tailored to each family’s needs
• Respect for individuals, diversity, faith & lifestyle
• Community-based
• Cooperative relationships with other providers
By Audrey B. Smith, Executive Director

While there are new faces at Hospice House; thanks to the hard work and commitment of those who came before us, we continue to provide compassionate care to our community – including families whose loved ones helped build the house, a new partnership with one of the best hospitals in the country, more home patients than we have served in more than a year, new grant opportunities and a plethora of new ideas to increase our reach to serve families who need us.

With Jackie LeClair’s retirement last fall, we had the opportunity to hire Diane Schwarz who comes to us after a successful career at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation managing volunteers and program staff. As the director of volunteers I have asked Diane to support our many dedicated volunteers, including our Guild. Diane also will serve as our facilities director with a mandate to engage our volunteers in the support of our facility.

With Janet Reid’s departure, I have redefined that role slightly to encompass development, fundraising and communications. We welcomed Kerry Mellette as our Advancement Director in January. As many of you know, Kerry brings years of commitment to this mission as well as fundraising, nonprofit management, grant writing, major gifts and planned giving experience to this new role.

Finally, we have slightly expanded a very part-time administrative role to bring Kim Owens on board as a part-time development associate to support our donor database, donor stewardship and backstop for events as needed. Kim will report directly to Kerry.

In the meantime, our very own Stacy Keating continues to do an excellent job as our finance director managing the business office for Hospice House; Debra Maviglia Podish is doing very meaningful work as our programs director responsible primarily for supporting Patient Volunteers in the Home Patient Program and the new Vigil Program while Hannah Creager is serving our community beautifully in her role as chaplain, including overseeing bereavement programs and of course Brenda continues to brilliantly oversee our clinical program and staff at the house with support from Julie Baxter.

I believe change presents us with wonderful opportunities to open us up to learning new ways of delivering our mission while simultaneously reinforcing our trust in those things we are doing well and do not need to change. Either way, we are a stronger organization for it.

Finally, I want to thank our board of directors and our volunteers for tirelessly supporting every member of our staff every day. Quoting Helen Keller, “alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Patient Volunteer Spotlight

By Deb Leonard, Volunteer

In 1984 in western Massachusetts, my father was dying from colon cancer. Being one of the caretakers for a terminally ill family member was overwhelming and exhausting. After days of precious little sleep, we finally called the local hospice to assist us, but no one answered the phone. For the next 30 years I vowed that when I had the opportunity and free time I’d be a hospice volunteer.

I’ve been privileged to participate in both the Vigil Program with Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center and as a guest volunteer at the Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg. Being present with a person on his or her final journey means many things to me. It can be quietly holding their hand, reading to them in a comforting manner, listening to family members as they pay tribute to their loved one, and often it’s simply offering warm and loving hugs while sharing their tears. I feel I’ve received a gift when I’m included in these private moments of someone’s passing.

In Williamsburg we are so very fortunate to have the Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg and companion staff who so lovingly care for our family members at the end of their lives. Because of them, we can surrender the caretaker responsibilities and assume our final and most important role—saying goodbye and then grieving appropriately.
Vigil Program: The Gift of Presence

By Debra Maviglia Podish, Programs Director

A small figure lies in the bed in room 417 at the end of a hallway on Four South. The stillness of the room is punctuated only by the steady rhythm of her shallow breaths which mark the hours, minutes and seconds as the hands of the clock on the wall keep time. Beyond the doorway of 417, nurses and other hospital staff move from room to room offering care and comfort, reassurance and hope. But in room 417, a quietness pervades. Comfort, healing and hope are defined and measured differently as the end of a journey draws near. Another woman sits beside the sleeping patient. She is a Hospice House Final Gifts vigil volunteer and she came to Four South in the late hours of the night to sit beside the small figure in the bed, to watch and wait… listening for each breath, gently holding her hand, offering the simple yet profound gift of her presence. She will sit vigil in room 417 for the next few hours until another volunteer arrives to sit and wait… or until the shallow breaths slowly fade away.

A Shared Experience

For many centuries and throughout many cultures, death vigils have been a shared community experience as family, friends and clergy would gather in the presence of a dying person to offer their support and comfort to the patient, and to one another. Central to this experience was the acceptance that death is a part of life and that the sadness which comes with saying goodbye is intertwined with the celebrating of a life that has been woven into the fabric of that community. Through these vigils, dying was recognized to be a natural and communal event. In more recent times however, and with the advancement of modern science and medicine, death is often regarded as a failure of treatment — an unwanted and undesirable outcome. Furthermore, because we live now in a highly mobile culture, the once strong ties of community have become weakened and frayed as long distances separate family members and busy lifestyles foster a sense of anonymity among neighbors. It has increasingly become the norm for death to occur in the sterile confines of hospital rooms and nursing facilities instead of among family and friends in bedrooms and homes.

For many years, Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg has led the hospice movement in Greater Williamsburg and beyond, responding to the needs of individuals and families who are facing an end of life journey and modeling through our services and programs, our deeply held belief that both life and death are a shared community experience. This communal focus is the essence of our organization’s unique social hospice model and it is what motivates the 350+ volunteers who carry out our mission throughout Williamsburg. From the patient volunteer support and respite services provided to terminally ill patients and caregivers in their homes, to the compassionate care received by our Hospice House guests and their loved ones, and through the extensive bereavement services and network of support that is offered to all in our community who are walking through grief and loss, Hospice House continues to affirm our deeply held belief that no one in our community should have to be alone in their journey through illness, death, loss and grief.

The Final Gifts Vigil Volunteer Program is a new initiative that continues our mission to holistically support those in our community who are in the final phases of a life limiting illness. Recognizing that in today’s changing world, many individuals will spend their final days and hours in hospitals and nursing homes, the Final Gifts program offers trained Hospice House volunteers who provide around-the-clock bedside vigil to dying patients who may otherwise be alone. In partnership with Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, we launched the pilot for Final Gifts in January, 2017 and our team of 35 trained vigil volunteers have become an integral part of the care that is now offered to end of life patients on the Four South unit of Sentara Hospital. They arrive at the bedside of individuals who are near death, and stay for four hour shifts, often holding a hand, sometimes singing softly or reading to them, and much of the time sharing the silence, bearing witness and honoring the life of another with the simple act of being present. In the simplicity and stillness of these vigils, we are reminded with each passing breath that all of us share a common humanity that moves us through this life and toward eventual death. We are also reminded that fear of the unknown is not easily dispelled by words, yet unspoken answers can be found in the companionship of others who simply choose to walk alongside us on the journey.

The Gift of Presence

Albert Einstein once remarked, “The most beautiful thing that we can experience is the mysterious”. We who choose to be present with others as they make the journey from life to death are familiar with the mystery and the intimate beauty of this final experience which ultimately binds all of us together in this life. The gift of presence is a beautiful final gift that is given by Hospice House vigil volunteers. Yet these special volunteers will often reflect that it is they who are in fact the recipients of final gifts which we receive from those with whom we silently sit and watch and wait, as one of life’s great mysteries unfold.

Warmth from the setting sun streams through the window and across the bed where the small figure lies in room 417. Standing beside the bed still holding her hand, the vigil volunteer softly speaks to her, describing the setting sun and the dancing rays that reach through the window in ribbons of light. Dusk is settling into the evening sky and a final breath is exhaled with a sigh. The vigil volunteer stands nearby, her presence affirming a life, while quietly also bearing witness to a death. Comfort, healing and hope are defined and measured differently in this room at the end of the hallway on Four South, as a journey ends and the Final Gifts vigil volunteer holding her hand silently says goodbye.
HHSCW’s New Online Library Project: Becoming Good Stewards of our Resources

By Hannah Creager, Chaplain

Before I came to Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg (HHSCW), I was working as a chaplain for a medical hospice agency in Danville, Indiana. On a monthly basis, I was asked to provide spiritual education opportunities to my hospice team. What I didn’t have, and what really could have made putting these in-services together easier, was access to resources. I remember looking through my small local library and finding only a handful of hospice materials.

One of the beautiful surprises about coming to work at HHSCW was the bookshelves full of hospice resources.

The community library housed at the Hospice House contains hundreds of titles specific to end-of-life and bereavement. Books range from grief memoirs and grief psychology to caregiver guides and children’s books. Book purchases have been supported by small grants from organizations and donations from individuals over the years, many of whom have found the resource they donate to be beneficial to them in their grief journey. Books are available on loan to anyone in the community without charge.

In December 2016, HHSCW was granted $5,000 by The Huston Foundation to create an online hospice library. An online library model will enhance our ability to provide quality end-of-life and bereavement resources to a wider, technologically-connected population. Those who may not have ever set foot in the doors of the Hospice House will be able to find resources to meet their needs. Professionals working for medical hospice agencies will be able to find resources to help train their staff on caring for the dying. Individuals working in human services organizations will be able to locate resources on organizing bereavement and caregiver support groups. Spiritual community leaders will be able to obtain sets of books for group discussion within their communities about end-of-life issues. And they will be able to do so at the click of a button.

Over the next several months, a select team of our Hospice House volunteers will be cataloging the hundreds of books on our shelves into our online library account. Our website technician will then integrate our online library onto our HHSCW website with a tentative launch date later this spring.

As we continue to invite our community to be good stewards and to give back to HHSCW’s mission, isn’t it exciting that we are discovering opportunities to be good stewards to our community? Isn’t it wonderful that we have generous entities such as The Huston Foundation willing to help us rediscover our capacities for sharing our resources and becoming the resource on end-of-life issues within our community?

The former medical hospice chaplain in me is dancing with gratitude and glee.

“It takes very special people like you to give comfort at a very difficult time for the patient and family.”

– Guest Family

Notes from Clinical Director by Brenda Stout, Clinical Director

As I prepare to write a word comes to mind, “grateful.”

Grateful to have the opportunity to serve as Clinical Director at Hospice House.

Grateful for such a wonderful mentor as Bell-Jo, who I now also call my friend.

Grateful for my on call RN support team Julie, Rachel, Lori, and Sam. I could not do it without them!

Grateful for the Companion staff who provide the compassionate care and amaze me everyday.

Grateful for the Administration and support staff who work tirelessly to keep us going.

Grateful for all the wonderful volunteers from the front desk, to the beautiful gardens, the Guild, the Patient volunteers, and all those in between.

Grateful for Debra and Hannah whose programs benefit so many in our Williamsburg Community, and for their continuous support to me and my staff.

Grateful for our sponsors and donors who makes it possible for us to do what we do.

And lastly, Grateful to our guests and their families who have taught me so much about living.
The heart of any organization is its people and never was that as true as in the case of the volunteers at Hospice House.

Today’s Hospice House Guild has 350 members who gave over 13,700 hours of volunteer service this past year. Each came to give of themselves in a unique manner, and once here their dedication continues to be ever evolving. Some of areas of interest include:

**Community Outreach** — coordinates two open houses each year, allowing neighbors and area residents to see Hospice House firsthand.

**Gardens & Green Grounds** — creates the design of the flower gardens with constant maintenance, including bird bath and feeder upkeep.

**Hospitality** — welcomes those attending our events with delicious baked goods, appetizers and ushering.

**Special Events** — coordinates Guild Spring Luncheon, Guild Fall Reception, Hike for Hospice, and Light up a Life, and memorial services. These combined events raised $111,417 in the past year, contributing this amount to the annual budget for Hospice House.

**Staff Support** — finds volunteers to man the front Reception Desk 365 days a year from 9-8, help with data entry, general house maintenance, give tours, and always offering a warm friendly smile.

**Patient/ Family Volunteers** — provides the extraordinary service of sitting by the bedside of those nearing the end of life, whether at home, hospital or Hospice House.

Our volunteers quietly come to the Hospice House with no expectation of recognition for their kindness, and continue to give back over and over on a daily basis. For this we will remain ever grateful!
Elegant Culinary Affaire 2017

260 guests attended this year’s event which raised more than $100,000 for Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg.

SAVE THE DATE: for the 28th ECA—January 28, 2018!
HOSPICE HOUSE “WISH LIST”

This is a list of items that Hospice House can always use should you wish to contribute:

- Tide High Efficiency Detergent “PODS”
- Clorox Bleach
- Bathroom Tissue
- Fabric Softener Sheets
- Facial Tissues
- Trash Bags: 39 gallon, 13 gallon, and 7-10 gallon
- Soft Drinks: Coke, Diet Coke, Ginger Ale, Sprite or Pepsi in cans
- Bottled Water
- Lysol Spray Disinfectant
- Air Freshener/Disinfectant Sprays
- Juices (single serving cans: apple, cranberry, prune and orange juice)
- Cake, Cookie, Brownie Mixes and Frosting
- Chicken Soups (small or single serving size)
- Paper Plates (small, microwaveable)
- 40 Watt (equivalent) Light Bulbs
- Copy Paper
- White Bath Towels
- White Wash Cloths
- Donations for bird seed to be made at Wild Birds Unlimited
Thank you to all sponsors and walkers who came out Saturday, April 22 for the 5th annual “Hike for Hospice: A Walk to Remember” at Governor’s Land Park East. The event was open to all residents of the Greater Williamsburg area who wished to walk in memory or honor of a loved one in a peaceful and joyous celebration of life. Participants walked individually and as part of teams.

**Why We Hike**

Laura Lawrence formed the Journey Hikers Team to honor all caregivers. First experiencing hospice support for her parents and more recently as a longtime Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg volunteer, she has witnessed first hand the hardships faced by loved ones coping with end-of-life issues. Hospice House responds with the kind of care, compassion and understanding that is desperately needed when our loved ones face a life-threatening illness.

Jo Ann McGrew lost her husband more than a year ago and hiked remembering the care her husband received during his final 9-day stay at Hospice House. “We are all at different stages of the grieving process, but we share a common bond: the loss of a loved one... as we travel on this journey, things do get better and the grief lessens. I believe this has been my biggest blessing, next to the support of those who walked with my husband and me.”

Jim Easton hikes nearly every year with other Hospice Council members. He participates in the Hike in memory of his Dad who died at Hospice House three years ago. For years, Jim has been a very active Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg volunteer, serving as a Board & Hospice Council member, photographer and Vigil Volunteer. He finds the Hike to be therapeutic in new ways, offering a special opportunity to connect with others who have been touched by Hospice. He is heartened by the sense of community at the event, by the number of souls impacted by our efforts and the incredibly impressive outpouring of support for this Williamsburg treasure.

**Thank you to these supporters:**

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**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

All skills welcomed: computer, gardening, house maintenance, reception, fundraising, administrative, and marketing

Contact: Diane Schwarz, Volunteer and Operations Director at 757. 253.1220

If you shop on amazon, register to support Hospice Support Care of Williamsburg here: http://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1289657. Amazon will give .5% of your purchase to Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg!
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BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

Walking Towards Hope
Every Tuesday, 7:30 a.m., Thursday, 7:30 a.m., Saturday, 11 a.m.
Contact Ann Oropeza 757.608.8482 or 757.206.1177
or bereavement@williamsburghospice.org

Bereavement Support Group Workshops
6 sessions, held tri-annually
Contact Chaplain Hannah Creager 757.253.1220
or bereavement@williamsburghospice.org

Compassionate Friends
2nd Monday of the Month, 7-8:30 p.m.
Support for bereaved parents (guardians), adult siblings,
or grandparents who are dealing with the death of a child.
Contact Charlotte Moyler 757.903.1641
or wmsburgcompassionatefriends@gmail.com

SOSL: Survivors of Suicide Loss
1st Thursday of the month from 7-8:30pm
Contact Charlotte Moyler at 757.903.1641
or williamsburgsurvivors@gmail.com

Individual Meeting with the Chaplain:
available upon request.
Contact 757.206.1177 or
bereavement@williamsburghospice.org

“\text{I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness for the wonderful care that was given to my friend. It was a very peaceful and serene environment which made her transition to heaven much easier.}”

– Friend of a Hospice House Guest