



HOSPICE &  
PALLIATIVE CARE  
BUFFALO

*journeys.*  
VOLUME 2, 2020







Dr. Christopher Kerr, CEO, CMO

## A Letter from the CEO

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, this organization has remained steady in service and is currently caring for over 1,100 patients each day. Although these times are filled with uncertainty, from the pandemic to social unrest and economic fears, there are better and more hopeful stories of remarkable people who have remained purposeful and humane despite their fears and risk to well-being. The pandemic has isolated us from one another, a particular challenge to hospice care, which is based on an interdisciplinary approach. Yet despite periods of separation, we have remained united and connected with our patients and families. This achievement is a testament to our administrative colleagues, who continually adapt and innovate in support of our clinical cause. We must also recognize that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted people of color and those from lower socioeconomic groups. We must not be indifferent to these inequities. As a healthcare provider and an organization built on advocacy, we will strive to be a force for positive change in our care of our patients and each other.

I thank you for staying connected to our organization. Our community of supporters and volunteers is a vital part of who we are and enables us to continue doing our good work. As we approach the fall season, I wish you a time of peace, safety and good health.

With heartfelt gratitude,

**Christopher Kerr, MD, PhD**  
Chief Executive Officer, Chief Medical Officer





**Jenine M. Trzewieczynski,**  
Hospice Foundation  
Director of  
Development

## Welcome Jenine

Jenine M. Trzewieczynski has joined the Hospice Foundation as Director of Development. Jenine brings more than 15 years of experience fundraising in Western New York, including for the SPCA Serving Erie County and most recently, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. She is passionate about fulfilling the philanthropic wishes of donors and is endlessly humbled by the great generosity within our community. Born and raised in Buffalo, Jenine holds a B.A. in Public Communications from the State University of New York College at Buffalo.

## Mail / Email Update

- To receive  Journeys newsletter electronically, email [info@palliativecare.org](mailto:info@palliativecare.org)
- To receive community and event updates, email [info@palliativecare.org](mailto:info@palliativecare.org)
- For volunteer opportunities, email  [volunteer@palliativecare.org](mailto:volunteer@palliativecare.org) or call (716) 989-2014
- To be removed from the mailing list, email [info@palliativecare.org](mailto:info@palliativecare.org) or call (716) 686-8090

## We're Still *Committed to Caring*

BY MEGAN O'SHEA FARRELL, MD

Hospice care is unique —  
comprehensive, multidisciplinary  
and arguably the richest model  
of care that exists in our society.

But more than that, it is a mindset and attitude of approach to caring for the seriously ill and their loved ones. When fully expressed and practiced, hospice care addresses all patient needs related to their illness, including symptom management for physical needs, spiritual care and psychosocial essentials.

The COVID-19 progressive and unrelenting pandemic has put extraordinary strain on our effort to deliver the best care possible to the most vulnerable among us. But I have been encouraged by the remarkable resolve of our dedicated staff. When faced with the reality of overwhelming uncertainty and the possibility of scales of suffering seldom experienced, our staff found and created ways to serve with compassion and a true sense of purpose.

So much of what we do at Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo involves personal engagement and human connection. I've long felt that relationships are best measured not by their length, but by their depth. The deep personal bonds we form with our patients and their families are often forged in compressed time frames and under the most trying circumstances. At times, recognition of someone's limited prognosis comes far too late, and we are called when the patient's condition is quickly deteriorating. This work has its own inherent challenges, and all of us who strive to do it well are keenly aware of obstacles to access. We are always grateful when the call comes and we have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the life of a patient and their loved ones.

The scope and reach of this pandemic have profoundly affected the way hospice and palliative care is practiced. The nature of our work and our model of care is contrary to the barriers and isolation necessary to control a virus that disproportionately burdens the medically frail and compromised. One of the most distressing aspects of this crisis is not only



Dr. Megan O'Shea Farrell

the devastating debilities and death that it has left in its wake, but the lasting harm it has on the dying experience itself. The definition of a good death is innately personal but is often described as one where distressing symptoms are well managed, and the patient is surrounded by loved ones. Throughout this pandemic, I have wondered and worried about how patients ravaged by this virus are dying. Are their symptoms being controlled? How is the isolation impacting their death? How will those left behind deal with the trauma of not being present for their passing?

Now more than ever, healthcare workers are often the only ones left to fill that gaping void in a patient's final moments. Nurses, aides and physicians assume the role that loved ones cannot because of undue risk. We know we are an inadequate substitute for the devoted spouse of several decades, the sibling with whom you shared countless memories, the child who just virtually graduated, or the childhood friend who knows you better than you know yourself. We do our best — behind the masks, the shields, the gowns, the gloves — to provide a caring connection that will make their transition a little softer and their passing more bearable for those left behind, who will know that someone was by their loved one's side.

When our first COVID-19 patient arrived in the Inpatient Unit, there was a collective sense of purpose in providing the kind of care we strive for every day. The patient was a frail woman in her nineties who contracted the virus while in a nursing home. Her daughter had been unable to see her due to the restrictions on visitation. When she first arrived, her daughter visited briefly and took all the necessary precautions, but she limited her exposure to that single visit, as she was also caring for another compromised family member.

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At age 28 Eileen was diagnosed with Huntington’s disease, a rare neurological disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain.

Lyle and Phil found comfort in knowing their daughter Eileen was receiving weekly evaluations by professionals who could make modifications to her care and explain any disease progression that had taken place. Eileen was able to remain at home the 16 months that Hospice cared for her and her family.

“I know for a fact that our daughter lived longer and had a better life because of the care and concern of the Hospice folks who became part of our family.”

– Lyle

Visit [HospiceBuffalo.com](https://www.hospicebuffalo.com) to hear Lyle’s story.



Our staff did their best to spend time with the patient, and she was surprisingly alert and engaging despite her worsening condition. Over the ensuing days, her respiratory condition deteriorated, and medical efforts were directed at minimizing her respiratory distress and increased congestion. The daughter was updated frequently, and staff facilitated phone contact with her mom as often as possible. Cherished passages from her holy book of worship were read aloud by medical staff, and although slightly muffled by the snugly fitted medical mask, she heard the words and felt their impact, weakly acknowledging with a smile.

“*...I realized how much our care at Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo relies on empathy and the mutual longing for human connection between patient and physician.*”

During one of my visits, I sat by her bedside, lowering the side rail as would often be done to allow family members closer contact. At that point, the patient was struggling to maintain her wakefulness and engagement. I joked with her, telling her she did not need to entertain anyone. If she felt pulled to sleep, she should allow herself to close her eyes. During this moment, I realized how much our care at Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo relies on empathy and the mutual longing for human connection between patient and physician. I removed my gloves, held her hand, stroked her head and assured her as best I could. Reaffirming messages about her life and her legacy shared by her daughter were now relayed to her. These gestures may seem insignificant to some, and perhaps they are in the grand scheme of things, but they were all I had to offer under the circumstances.

Her final moments were not spent in isolation. The staff was determined that she would not die alone. Her nurse and aide were providing personal care and repositioning her when her passing appeared imminent. Her daughter was called from the bedside to share her mother’s final moments over the phone. For her final breaths, it was her daughter’s voice, not ours, she heard. Her daughter accompanied her from this life to the next, even if only virtually. My only hope for her daughter is that it was enough, given that it’s all this crisis would allow.

On behalf of all of us in the Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo organization, we thank you for the privilege of providing care to you and your loved ones when faced with serious illness. We are so grateful to our community for the ongoing support shown during these remarkable times. We hope you and those you hold close remain safe and well. ■

The pandemic has significantly impacted the Hospice Foundation and the events so many look forward to each year. To maintain our fundraising efforts while being unable to host our traditional events, we created the Angel Fund campaign, a request aimed specifically at raising dollars for the very important — and very special — Hospice Angel Fund. This campaign, while designed to fill our fundraising gap, was also created in hopes of meeting the increased needs of our patients and their families affected by COVID-19. Once again, you were there for us, and we are filled with gratitude. Because of your continued generosity, we raised more than \$300,000! Your thoughtful helping hand has had a profound impact on ensuring that none of our patients’ needs go unmet. Thank you for being someone’s angel.

together in *dignity.*

Thank you to those who have chosen to support Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo patient care through memorial and tribute gifts. This is such a meaningful way to sustain our mission while offering an expression of one’s sympathy and respect to family members and friends. To the loved ones of those remembered, we extend our sincerest condolences.

Listed below are gifts of \$100 or more we received from January 1 – June 30, 2020. Please know that with proper information provided at the time of your donation, notification of all gifts, regardless of amount, are sent to the family of those being remembered.

If there is an error or omission, we are sincerely sorry. Please contact the Hospice Foundation at (716) 686-8090 so we may address this.

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*“No words can express the thanks we feel toward Hospice. The care given to my wife and my family is beyond comprehension. This care continued through the professional compassionate grief counseling provided. Thank you.”*

— Marwin, Buffalo



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— Angela and William, Grand Island



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— Rose, Hamburg





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— Robert, Williamsville



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A caring way to express love and recognition for someone is to give a gift to Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo in their honor. Occasions and milestones such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and graduations are wonderful opportunities to fulfill a personal gesture of thoughtfulness while affording support for patients and their families.

To the generous and considerate donors who have chosen to make HPCB the recipient of their kindness, we are most appreciative.

Listed below are gifts of \$100 or more we received from January 1 – June 30, 2020. Please know that with proper information provided at the time of your donation, notification of all gifts, regardless of amount, are sent to the individual being honored.

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No matter what comes our way, *we must choose to thrive and not just survive.*

**Hope is the thing with feathers**  
By Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.

**We are here to help you cope.**

**Visit our website for additional support:**  
[hospicebuffalo.com/services/grief-support](https://hospicebuffalo.com/services/grief-support)

## Year-End Giving

Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo (HPCB) is so grateful for the incredible and continued support you — our community — provide the organization. Many of the programs and services we offer are only made possible because of you. As the end of 2020 approaches — a year that has been filled with unprecedented, history-making moments — we hope you will consider a gift to HPCB. We are certain that in return you will receive a full heart and the comfort of knowing you are helping to continue the compassionate care we offer. For more information on giving, please call the Hospice Foundation at (716) 686-8090 or give online at [hospicebuffalo.com/giving](https://hospicebuffalo.com/giving). As it is said, it is in giving we receive.



# Advance Care Planning — *It's Never Too Early*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have become acutely aware that a healthcare crisis can occur with little warning, and we may become critically ill regardless of our age or health history.

As a result, more people in our community may be motivated to have thoughtful conversations about their healthcare wishes.

No one wants to think about or prepare for a life-threatening illness or injury, yet most of us have strong opinions about the medical care we prefer. Advance care planning (ACP) involves making future healthcare decisions that include much more than specifying what care you would or would not receive. It starts with expressing care preferences, clarifying values and beliefs, and selecting an agent (healthcare proxy) to voice healthcare decisions if you are unable to do so. This planning relieves others of the need to guess if it is necessary to make decisions on your behalf during a medical crisis.

Be sure to speak with your physicians when you are formulating your plan. It is never too early to ask your primary care physician to provide clear and accurate information about your current health status as well as what your future may hold due to your health history, genetics and lifestyle. This allows you to make informed decisions. Remember, you have the right to change your plans at any time.



In addition to self-reflection, it's important to engage with your loved ones and share your plan. This discussion will assist you in selecting a healthcare proxy. Your proxy may be a family member, a loved one or a friend — the priority is to select someone you trust who will be capable of honoring your detailed wishes in the midst of a crisis. Upon doing so, complete the healthcare proxy document recognized by the state in which you live, and proceed to share this document with your doctor, your proxy and those you love. If, and only if, you are unable to direct your care, doctors will defer to your healthcare proxy.

Advance care planning is a gift. Having the conversation allows others to advocate for you.



*Lynn Riker,  
Director of Outreach at Hospice  
& Palliative Care Buffalo*  
*Learn more at*  
[bit.ly/Advance-Directives1](https://bit.ly/Advance-Directives1)

## NHPCO *Appointments*

Our organization has historically played a large role within the national hospice movement – former CEO Don Schumacher led the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) for many years. Given the ever-changing world of healthcare, we are proud to be at the forefront of the national effort to preserve and advance the cause of hospice.

We are pleased to announce our staff's NHPCO appointments:



**Cary Sisti**  
Chief Clinical Operations  
Officer, NHPCO Legislative  
Affairs Committee



**Kellyn LaLiberty**  
Essential Care for  
Children Manager,  
NHPCO Pediatric  
Advisory Council

## Community Partner *Staff Awards*



**Dr. Christopher Kerr**  
CEO, CMO, *Power 250 List*  
by *Buffalo Business First*



**Jeffrey Sturmer**  
Spiritual Care  
Counselor, *Excellence  
in Health Care Award*  
by *Buffalo Business First*



**Deborah Powers**  
Essential Care for Children  
Nurse, *WNY Nurse of  
Distinction Award* by  
*Professional Nurses  
Association*



**Pei Grant**  
Director of Research,  
*40 Under 40 Award* by  
*Buffalo Business First*



**Emily Carrier**  
Special Events Manager,  
*30 Under 30 Award* by  
*Buffalo Business First*



# Chiavetta's BBQ

DRIVE THRU

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

3-6pm at the Hospice Campus

\$10 Pre-Order or \$12 Drive-Up

Until September 15

Cash, check and credit card are accepted.

Pre-Order online at [HospiceBuffalo.com/Chiavetta](https://HospiceBuffalo.com/Chiavetta) or call 716-989-2010

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CHIAVETTA'S  
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## Harvest Fest

A Gathering of Support



Harvest Fest at Home

Friday Evening,  
October 16, 2020

### Absolute at Home Experience

Fall into this year's festivities featuring a delicious dinner with wine accompaniment, and online auction from the comfort of your own home or office as we celebrate what we've accomplished together as a community.

Corporate Sponsorships  
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2020 Hope, Care & Dignity Award Recipients  
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For more information, contact the  
Special Events Department (716) 989-2010  
or [events@palliativecare.org](mailto:events@palliativecare.org)

Cash Prize Raffle

\$5,000

Tickets: \$25 each or 3 for \$50

More event information and raffle tickets  
available at [HospiceHarvestFest.com](https://HospiceHarvestFest.com)

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## Hospice Buffalo & Angel Ornament Holiday Promotion\*

The Hospice Foundation is kicking off its annual Holiday Promotion with the Hospice Buffalo & Angel Ornament Sale. Back by popular demand, the Hospice Buffalo will be sold for \$10 each. Purchase a buffalo to give as a gift to a loved one, or you can donate your buffalo to an Essential Care patient. You can also purchase our angel ornament to decorate your tree or add to a gift wrapped package. This beautiful angel ornament will look heavenly amid any holiday décor. They will be sold for \$5 each.

Pre-order your angels and buffalos online at [hospicebuffalo.com/events](https://hospicebuffalo.com/events). Call the Special Events Department at (716) 989-2010, or email [events@palliativecare.org](mailto:events@palliativecare.org) to schedule your pickup now through December.

\*Limited quantity available



## Collect the Memories...

The Light-A-Life bell is a cherished community tradition for family and friends who have lost someone they love. With your gift of \$55 or more, you will receive this year's commemorative bell inscribed with the name of your loved one. A tag and bow with your loved one's name will be placed on the Light-A-Life trees at CTG, 800 Delaware Avenue.

Visit [HospiceLightALife.com](https://HospiceLightALife.com) to purchase your personalized bell today!



## Light-A-Life Memorial Tree Lighting Ceremony

Saturday, December 5, 2020

This outdoor tree lighting ceremony honors loved ones who have touched our lives in so many ways. For more event information email [events@palliativecare.org](mailto:events@palliativecare.org) or visit [HospiceLightALife.com](https://HospiceLightALife.com).



## Consider Hospice for Your Planned Giving

Consideration in your estate planning can serve as a timeless legacy for you and your family. Help sustain our future in the community by leaving a bequest to Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo in your will or living trust. Your philanthropic thoughtfulness will help us maintain our mission and quality care, ensuring our programs and services are available for generations to come. Proper estate planning will also allow you to achieve financial protection for your loved ones and may reduce gift and estate taxes.

Through your planned gift, you can contribute gifts of cash, stocks, bonds, real estate or other assets, and you will be recognized as a member of the Swift Legacy Circle. To become a member of the Swift Legacy Circle, we encourage you to work with our Foundation staff. Please contact us at (716) 686-8090 or reach us via email at [foundation@palliativecare.org](mailto:foundation@palliativecare.org).



## Remembering Our Loved Ones *with a Lasting Legacy*

Many have become accustomed to our late-spring tradition: visiting Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo's Mitchell Campus to honor the memory of their loved ones. This June, our campus was quiet. COVID-19 and orders prohibiting group gatherings may have left us absent of company — but the meaning of this event is always present in our hearts.

When June 2021 arrives, we hope to be here. We will be waiting to share the memories you made that will live on forever with our annual Memory Garden and Brick Dedication Ceremony. As in years past, it will be an evening filled with compassion and great sentiment as we read aloud each name in memory with immense pride.

When the time comes, you too can leave a legacy by naming Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo as a Designated Memorial, directing friends and family to send tribute gifts in memory of your loved one. Names of individuals who receive tribute donations of \$2,000 or more are permanently memorialized on the pillars in the Hospice Memory Garden and recognized during the June ceremonies. All donations are directed toward patient care.

Or, you can choose to preserve the memory of your loved one with an engraved paver; by doing this, you are creating a lasting legacy to honor a special person in your life. In addition, your gift provides funds that ensure the Mitchell Campus will flourish and provide a beautiful, peaceful setting for future Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo patients and their families.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the many family members and friends for their kindness in designating Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo as the recipient of gifts in memory of their loved one. If you have any questions regarding memorial gifts or tribute programs, please call the Hospice Foundation office at (716) 686-8090 or email at [foundation@palliativecare.org](mailto:foundation@palliativecare.org).



## community events *update:*



Start your very own fundraiser and join our Hospice Helpers program!

Virtual fundraising has become easier than ever and provides a larger impact than you may know. Our Hospice Helpers program provides companies and individuals with the opportunity to organize and host fundraising events to benefit Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo. Events can be virtual or in-person — either way, we'd love to know what you're doing to support our cause.

Contact the Special Events Department to learn more about how to get started: (716) 989-2010 or [events@palliativecare.org](mailto:events@palliativecare.org).

We are so grateful for our Hospice Helpers, who continue to help us with our fundraising efforts.

<b>WNY Elvis Appreciation Society,</b> 12th Annual Birthday Party for the King.....	\$2,925
<b>Mr. Tim Hennessy,</b> Hennessy Bowling Tournament.....	\$1,425
<b>Mr. Bruce Scott,</b> Casey, Mary Kay, John & Jim Memorial Golf Outing .....	\$1,455
<b>Ms. Jennifer Fedus,</b> TV Raffle .....	\$1,240
<b>Potter and Career Technical Center Culinary Arts Students,</b> Bake Sale .....	\$1,500
<b>Mr. Joe Eckl,</b> EE/BB Golf Outing .....	\$1,250

## Grateful for Our Volunteers

In response to current times, volunteer activities have been suspended as of mid-March this year. The health and safety of our patients, families, employees and volunteers remains a top priority at our organization. Volunteers have regularly expressed how much they miss being on campus, with many asking, "What can I do to help?"

As the season changed from spring to summer, we recognized that our campus gardens were in need of some tender loving care. Typically, volunteers would already be tending to the gardens, but this year that activity was delayed. We were determined to freshen up our campus for the summer season, and we knew the task would be daunting for staff to take on alone. It was a perfect opportunity to have volunteers do what they do best: help.

Once it was safe to do so, we offered volunteers the opportunity to help with the campus gardens. As always, they did not disappoint. The response was overwhelming. Many volunteers were thrilled with the chance to come on campus (while following appropriate safety measures and social distancing) and contribute to our organization.

Working in heat and humidity, volunteers forged across our entire campus to weed, plant and mulch ALL of our garden areas. Our vegetable garden has been revitalized, and an herb garden has been added to our campus. Our dietary staff will use the items grown for patient and guest meals in the coming weeks and months.

The times may be different, but our volunteers continue to make things happen. To our volunteers, THANK YOU for all you do! Our organization would not be what it is without you.







**HOSPICE &  
PALLIATIVE CARE**  
**B U F F A L O**

225 Como Park Boulevard  
Buffalo, New York 14227-1480

[HospiceBuffalo.com](http://HospiceBuffalo.com)

POSTMASTER: DATED MATERIAL  
REQUESTED IN-HOME DELIVERY  
SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2020



## *Save the Date!*

### REMAINING 2020 EVENTS

Harvest Fest at Home ..... Friday, October 16  
Light-A-Life Memorial Tree Lighting ..... Saturday, December 5

### HOSPICE 2021 EVENTS

Spring Bouquet Sale ..... March 1-6  
Memorial Walk ..... Sunday, May 16  
Summer Affair ..... Thursday, July 22  
Harvest Fest ..... Friday, October 15  
Light-A-Life Memorial Tree Lighting ..... Saturday, December 4