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Walking to honor mom

For those who participate in Angela Hospice’s annual Walk of Remembrance, those 2.3 miles are about so much more than just getting some exercise.

“My mom is the main reason why we’re walking,” said Redford resident Wendy Martin.

Last year was the first time Wendy decided to take part in the Walk of Remembrance, which she did with her two children. It had been a little over a year since her mom, Suzanne, received Angela Hospice care. Suzanne was in the Angela Hospice Care Center for three months before passing in March 2013.

“I’m not going to lie, it was really emotional,” Wendy said. “I don’t know if it’s Angela [Hospice], or the community, or whatever it was, but I felt like, what a blessing this place is.” While the walk proved to be an emotional day for Wendy and her kids she also said it was really nice. Her kids loved it so much that when they began discussing participating again they were very excited to do it, saying the walk was a special thing to do for grandma.

This year Wendy is forming a walk team and is expecting at least 15 people to be members. She said they haven’t completely decided on a name yet but they are leaning towards Suzanne’s Angels, in honor of her mom.

“I wanted to get the rest of my family involved,” she said. “I felt like it would be a nice way to honor my mom, and a way to give back to Angela Hospice because they were amazing to us and my mom. ”

Before placing her in Angela Hospice, Wendy and her siblings were all taking turns having Suzanne live with them. Wendy said that went on for about nine months before getting to the point where it was just too hard because Suzanne needed more care than they could provide. Suzanne learned she had cancer in March 2012, then had surgery and chemo, before entering the Care Center in December.

“We didn’t really know how we were going to take care of her,” Wendy said. “None of us could really stay home and leave our jobs because we all have young families and we kind of need both paychecks.”

Suzanne’s doctors told them that hospice was the only thing they would be able to do for her so the search began. They wanted to find a place that was close enough so someone could be with Suzanne every day or every other day.

Wendy and her siblings all grew up in Livonia so they knew about Angela Hospice. Plus, her grandparents both received Angela Hospice care while at St. Mary Mercy Livonia. She also had some friends that had used Angela Hospice for their loved ones.

“My mom was pretty young, so my brother, sister, and I all thought, ‘Oh, 20 years from now we’ll be dealing with mom passing away,’” Wendy said. “We never thought in our late 30s and early 40s that we’d be dealing with that.”

Wendy said the nurses and staff went out of their way to see how they were handling it all, and were more than willing to sit and answer all of their questions about Suzanne’s health.

“Even though it’s such a hard decision to make...it just kind of met all of our needs,” Wendy said. “It was a huge blessing.”

An unexpected blessing

In today’s digital age, hand-delivering a letter to someone is a rarity. But that’s exactly what Patty Ralko did when she brought her thank-you note to Angela Hospice.

After dropping it off, Patty said she got in her car, picked up her phone, and saw a photo pop up. It was a picture she had taken outside of her dad’s room at Independence Village in Plymouth, where he had been living the last few years with his wife, Mary.

“I thought, ‘Well Dad, guess you’re talking to me,’” Patty laughed.

Patty’s dad, John Hoffman, had received Angela Hospice care for about two weeks at his assisted living facility before passing in May 2015. John had vascular dementia, which can be caused after a stroke blocks an artery in the brain, and then developed aspirated pneumonia.

“We didn’t expect him to go quite that quickly, but it was really a blessing because you don’t want to see your loved one suffering like that,” she said. “It was just too hard.”

Three people, including John’s doctor, had recommended that they put John on hospice. Two of them specifically recommended Angela Hospice; so Patty made the call. She was immediately impressed with how quickly they were able to get John on hospice.

Patty said she had made an appointment with a social worker to come on Sunday, but had called the day before with a question. She was put on hold and then told a social worker would be at Independence Village in an hour.

“It was like bam, bam, bam,” she said. “So that very same day Dad was approved and under hospice care.”

Patty Ralko holds a photo of her mom, Mary, and dad, John, on their wedding day. The couple were married for 68 years before John’s passing last May.

“If you love your loved one, then call Angela Hospice.”

- Patty Ralko

Walk of Remembrance

Saturday, September 19
Registration 9 a.m., Opening Ceremony 10 a.m.
Beginning at Madonna University.
$35 for adults; $15 for ages 6-12; free for 5 & under
Register at AskForAngela.com or call (734) 464-7810

Outreach for a loved one, in hopes that the image will change.
With fall just around the corner, Angela Hospice is already preparing for some of its meaningful fall and holiday events.

First is the 28th annual Light Up a Life Gala on Friday, October 23. The elegant fall event is the longest-running and most prestigious of Angela Hospice’s annual events, and this year will have dueling pianos as the evening’s entertainment. Guests will also enjoy live and silent auctions, raffles, delicious food, and great company.

For more information on sponsorships, event tickets, program ads, and other ways you can support Angela Hospice’s charitable programs through this event, contact Events Coordinator Helen Balmforth at (734) 953-6045 or visit AskForAngela.com.

Next up, our bereavement team will present a series of events for those processing a loss during the holiday season. On Sunday, November 8, the team will hold a free presentation titled Getting Through the Holidays, from 2:30-4 p.m. at Angela Hospice. This lecture will provide helpful ideas on how to make the holidays easier when dealing with a loss.

For teens and children there are two holiday workshops that provide a special way to remember a loved one during the holidays. The kids will create personalized wreaths with personal meaning to them as a tribute to a loved one they’ve lost. Lunch is also provided, and both workshops will take place at Angela Hospice.

“Making the wreaths is a fun way to create a project and is another way for children to work through those uncomfortable feelings related to grief,” said Sally Loughrin, Angela Hospice Bereavement Social Worker.

The Teen Holiday Workshop is for ages 12-18, and will be held Sunday, November 22, from 2-3 p.m. The Children’s Holiday Workshop is for ages 5-12, and will take place Sunday, December 13, from 2-4 p.m. Call Sally at (734) 464-2683 to reserve a space.

Rounding out the year is our annual Tree of Life, which has become a holiday tradition for many. The Tree of Life offers a unique way to remember special people during the holidays. Guests can write a loved one’s name or a personal message on an angel ornament, and place it on the display. Carol Burnison (at right) puts an angel up for her sister Jackie Jensen, who passed away two years ago.

“I think it’s a very nice thing,” Carol said. “It’s emotional.” “The people that are putting the angels on the tree – they just want to talk about their loved one that they lost,” she continued. “It keeps them alive in their heart and in their mind so they’re not forgotten.”

The Tree of Life display will be at Laurel Park Place near Carson’s, and at Westland Mall near JCPenney, throughout the holiday season. Invitations will be mailed in October.

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Financial Statement

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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends,

This October, Angela Hospice will celebrate 30 years of compassionate care to families in our community. The vision, determination, and commitment to caring for the needs of the dying by our foundress Sister Mary Giovanni inspires us all, and we are privileged to be the caretakers of this legacy.

Angela Hospice has provided our special brand of hospice care to thousands of people over these 30 years, and our continued growth will enable us to help even more families at a most difficult and critical time in their lives.

Our dedicated volunteers and professional staff are driven by the Felician core values. We commit every day to treat each individual we serve with dignity and respect, and to provide comfort and peace of mind to their families.

Your continued support allows Angela Hospice to have a profound impact on our community and for that we THANK YOU: for your support, your prayers, your donations, your referrals, and your kind words on our behalf.

Blessed Mary Angela, foundress of the Felician Sisters said: “A community spirit does not just happen of itself. It flows from people who share a common tradition and strive for a common goal outside themselves.”

Thank you for being part of the Angela Hospice community!

Barbara Hendrickson Board Chair
Margot Parr President & CEO

**Financial Statement**

**Summary of Activities**

- Net Patient Revenue: $17,172
- Direct Care & Administrative Expenses: $17,412
- Operating Loss prior to Contributions & Fundraising: $(240)
- Net Unrestricted Contributions & Fundraising: $978
- Net Income: $738
- Investment Income & Other: $24
- Increase in Net Assets: $762

**Unrestricted Revenue**

- Patient Care 82.7%
- General/Management 16.3%
- Fundraising 1%

**Grants**

- Memorials & Donations 3.4%
- Grants 0.8%
Individuals Served
During our 2015 fiscal year, Angela Hospice was privileged to serve 1,747 patients and families through the following care programs:

- Hospice Home Care: 1,530
- Angela Hospice Care Center: 483
- My Nest is Best Pediatric Program: 21

**TOTAL Patients Served**: 1,747

*Patients who transferred between programs were counted in the totals for both programs. The total of 1,747 patients served reflects each patient counted only once.

Length of Stay

**Home Care**
- Average length of stay: 52 days
- Median length of stay: 14 days

**Care Center**
- Average length of stay: 41 days
- Median length of stay: 13 days

**My Nest is Best**
- Average length of stay: 153 days
- Median length of stay: 31 days

Age

- 24 years and under: 1.2%
- 25-64 years: 11.0%
- 65 years and older: 87.8%

Primary Hospice Diagnosis

- Cancer: 39%
- Cardiovascular Disorders: 19%
- Neurological/Sense Organ Disorders: 13%
- Other: 29%

90% of families said they would definitely use Angela Hospice again.

2,185 one-on-one grief counseling sessions provided.

168,882 miles driven by volunteers.

80,834 total service days.

35,934 volunteer hours logged last year.

61,377 home care visits made.

443 active volunteers.

22% of patients are veterans.

443 active volunteers.

2,185 one-on-one grief counseling sessions provided.

168,882 miles driven by volunteers.

80,834 total service days.

35,934 volunteer hours logged last year.

61,377 home care visits made.

443 active volunteers.

2,185 one-on-one grief counseling sessions provided.

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80,834 total service days.

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443 active volunteers.
What is important to Bart is what he can do for patients and their families, and the kind of man Angela Hospice has helped him become. “Before volunteering I would never take five minutes. I was always at work,” he said. “I would work day and night. I would never even consider getting off work before midnight.”

At first Bart started out small. Then he became more and more passionate about Angela Hospice, and because he was allowed to acquire the skills and confidence to do so, he became better with patients. Now he’s constantly working with patients in home care and the Care Center, among the many other things he does.

“I know in my life there won’t be anything more important than what I do here,” Bart said. While Bart is too humble to mention any specific stories about his time volunteering, Syndie, who has known Bart for 10 years, happily shared.

At the 2009 Angela Hospice Light Up a Life benefit he dressed up like a scarecrow to greet guests. When the Care Center was being built, Bart had his construction crew come in and help out, with all the labor being free-of-charge. During the 2003 blackout, they needed water in the Care Center, so Bart started slugging five gallon buckets of water up and down the stairs because the only working hose was in the basement.

“They’ve got lots of volunteers who give wonderful amounts of time and energy and effort, but Bart’s in another category all by himself,” Syndie said.

“If it’s in his ability to meet a families’ or a patients’ need, he will do it, and wild horses couldn’t keep him away from it,” she continued.

For every 500 hours accrued volunteers receive a pin. Needless to say Bart has quite a few, but you won’t find them on his Angela Hospice lanyard. He keeps them in a jar and wants them all pinned on his lapel at his funeral.

“So how long does Bart think he will be a volunteer?” Syndie asked.

“I see myself in a wheelchair with an oxygen tank still trying to lift patients,” he said. Looks like Bart is going to need a bigger jar.
James Aston, a friend indeed

James Aston has played a big part in the progress of Angela Hospice through the years, and it all started through a friend.

A priest with whom he had been friends for many years was diagnosed with cancer and signed on to Angela Hospice for care. It was through this process that Mr. Aston met Sister Mary Giovanni.

“She did the caregiving,” Jim said. “She was doing a very good job for Father. I would be there to handle all these other things for him.”

So began a friendship between Jim and Sister Giovanni – and heartfelt involvement with Angela Hospice’s mission – that lasts to this day.

“I started working with Sister Giovanni when she was trying to start up the hospice Care Center,” Jim said. “When sister needed things or had problems, she would call on me. And I would help her out financially, or in other ways, to try and get things straightened out.”

With a background in finance and commerce, Jim was able to provide both practical assistance and monetary support for Angela Hospice. During the construction of the original Care Center, he sponsored several rooms. Years later, when Angela Hospice expanded in 2010, it was Mr. Aston who funded the renovation of the main floor conference room.

“James D. Aston is an exceptional human being and has been a faithful friend to me – and to Angela Hospice – for over 25 years now,” Sister Giovanni said. “I have given thanks to God over and over again for Jim: for his friendship, his loyalty, and his generosity.”

The father, grandfather, former Army sergeant, and world traveler, continues to be a friend to Angela Hospice, and happily attends the annual events. His connection to Angela Hospice has even led others to seek his advice when it comes to end-of-life decisions.

“I’ve had a lot of people that have called me and said, ‘We have someone that needs to go into hospice and we don’t know that much about it...can you help us out?’” he said.

Mr. Aston makes sure to get them the answers they need. He was even thanked publicly during a funeral service once by a family who was so grateful to him for recommending Angela Hospice.

“He has referred numerous patients to us which is the ultimate compliment,” Sister Giovanni said.

“I’m just trying to help out,” he said. And surely, Jim Aston’s dedicated and formidable help has made a difference in the lives of many.

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“I’m just trying to help out,” he said. And surely, Jim Aston’s dedicated and formidable help has made a difference in the lives of many.
Planned Giving Society members may be featured on Angela Hospice’s donor wall, located inside the main entrance of the Care Center.

New Planned Giving Society honors those preparing for Angela Hospice’s future

Commemorating our 30th year, the Angela Hospice development department is announcing creation of the Angela Hospice Planned Giving Society. This is a new initiative designed not only to ensure that the mission and work begun by Sister Giovanni is well positioned to continue its unique kind of compassionate care for decades to come, but to recognize those who have already supported us in this impactful way.

“Planned giving is a way to support Angela Hospice and its critical mission even beyond our lifetime,” said Director of Development Bob Alexander. “It’s more simple than most people imagine, and is a way many have thoughtfully planned all the way through to their last gift for Angela Hospice.”

Whether through bequests, endowments, or more elegant financial vehicles, quite a number of supporters have already blessed Angela Hospice with accommodations for future or enduring support. Many of these gifts have been transformational for Angela Hospice, enabling us to create or support new programs of care for the community. The charitable programs of Angela Hospice, such as the My Nest Is Best prenatal program and the outstanding bereavement counseling program, are particularly impacted by these planned gifts.

“We felt it was time to acknowledge those who have done this for us, and to provide a way for others to join them as their hearts lead,” Alexander added.

To be part of the Angela Hospice Planned Giving Society merely requires that Angela Hospice be apprised of a donor’s plan or intent of supporting our work in the future, whether by bequest or other means. The Angela Hospice development department is happy to provide additional information to anyone interested in planned giving. More information can be obtained by contacting Bob Alexander at (734) 953-6009.

For a primer on planned gifts for people of all walks of life and resource levels, we are happy to recommend the website LeaveALegacy.org. We also recommend that anyone interested in planned giving speak with their own financial and legal advisor.