Inside:

THE GIFT OF SERVICE

30 YEARS working in hospice
50 YEARS as a Felician Sister

Sister Mary Giovanni shares her thoughts and inspirations on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee
Angela Hospice congratulates team member Sister Pat Hergenroether who was awarded the 2013 Dream Team Award for outstanding service and commitment to hospice in her field, by the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of Michigan. Sister Hergenroether has been with the spiritual care department at Angela Hospice since 2010, and was a volunteer for three years before that.

“Sister Pat has a kind face and fathomless blue eyes that speak love, understanding, acceptance, and compassion,” said colleague Karen Cafeo, who wrote the nomination. “She exemplifies our mission: she is dedicated to providing comprehensive, compassionate, and Christlike care.”

Congratulations to Patrick T. Smith, Angela Hospice’s ethics coordinator, who was recently accepted for a Medical Ethics Fellowship at Harvard Medical School.

“I’m excited about this opportunity,” Smith said. “I think the curriculum development and projects I’ll be working on will really enhance the ethics department at Angela Hospice.”

The Division of Medical Ethics at Harvard Medical School supports research and teaching on ethical issues in medicine, health, healthcare policy and practice. Fellows are selected on the basis of their previous academic achievement and the contribution they are likely to make as researchers, clinicians, and teachers in medical ethics.

Smith has been with Angela Hospice since 2007.

Angela Hospice was awarded a grant of $1,000 through the generosity of the Livonia Community Foundation. The funds will be used to provide bereavement support and grief counseling to Livonia residents.

“We’re very grateful for their support,” said Social Work and Bereavement Manager Rebecca Margolis DeRaud. “Donations are crucial to our programs in that they allow us to provide these services to all residents free-of-charge, and not just those who have had a loved one in our care.”

For more on Angela Hospice’s bereavement services, call (734) 464-7810 or visit www.AskForAngela.com.

Work has begun on the donor wall commemorating pledges and donations of $2,500 and up to Angela Hospice’s Building for Life campaign. Located in the Care Center lobby, the wall will feature a tree of green glass “leaves” and smoky brown “foundation stones.” The complete artistic display will be finished in the coming weeks. For information on how to be a part of this permanent installation, contact Bob Alexander at (734) 953-6009.
If two’s company, three’s a crowd, and twelve’s... well, family. Sister Mary Giovanni grew up one of 12 children in the Monge household. And while she was still in high school, she began her affiliation with the Felician Sisters. That was 50 years ago. She says her vocation stemmed from the example her parents set.

“Both of them had the gift of giving to others,” said Sister Giovanni. “I didn’t realize it as a child, but even my mother, trying to raise all of us children, still found time to help others. Whenever neighbors were in need... whether it was mother cooking something for them, or my father building something for them, it was just something quietly done. I feel that was where I got my gift of service.”

As a registered nurse, Sister Giovanni attended a conference in 1974 that featured Dame Cicely Saunders, the leader of the hospice movement in England. It was there that she was inspired to serve others in a new way – by starting Angela Hospice.

Sister Giovanni spent 11 years researching pain control, alternative comfort measures, and the daily needs of dying patients and their families. She founded Angela Hospice in 1985 with the help of the Felician Sisters.

“It has been a beautiful experience,” said Sister Giovanni, “and God has been so kind to send not only wonderful volunteers who donate their time, but also very dedicated staff; people who always go that extra mile to take care of our patients, or just make things nice around the building, or whatever their field of expertise is – they just do a great job on it.”

Angela Hospice continues to grow in its outreach each year, and Sister Giovanni has become a leader in the Felician community as well. She has visited missions in Kenya and Brazil, and most recently has become involved with the Felician missions in Haiti.

“I feel strongly urged by God to do something for the people in Haiti,” Sister Giovanni explained.

During a visit to Haiti this year over Holy Week, Sister Giovanni spoke with the Bishop in Jacmel, and learned of the need for medical care to reach people in the mountains of Haiti. He expressed their pressing need for a mobile medical clinic that could reach those who are too sick or just unable to make the trek on difficult mountain roads.

“I was really intrigued with that, and through prayer, I really felt that this is something that Angela Hospice can support,” Sister Giovanni said. “And so we will establish the Blessed Angela Mobile Clinic.”

Sister Giovanni has already begun soliciting donations to fund the mobile clinic, and plans to visit Haiti throughout the year to check on the progress, and see what the needs of the people are. Never one to shy away from hard work – or the opportunity to help others in need – Sister Giovanni will maintain her duties at Angela Hospice as well, even as she dreams of more ways to help the people of Haiti.

For her, 50 years of service has meant 50 years of blessings.

“It has been beautiful to be in the Felician community for these 50 years,” she said. “You meet so many wonderful, dedicated sisters who also are serving God. There is a strong bond when you’re working with them, and sharing community life with them, and praying with them every day. And that bond evolves around us all wanting to serve God in our own capacity.”
Dear Sister Mary Giovanni,

Please accept this letter as my heart-felt thank you to Angela Hospice, and their dedicated staff, for the services and care they provided to my brother, Anthony.

Anthony, or Tony, was a client of the Angela Hospice Care Center for his final 35 days of life. Your facilities were outstanding – offering every amenity necessary for our family to feel comfortable during long days, longer nights, and several overnight stays. Access to family lounges, laundry equipment, and a kitchen provided a home-like atmosphere during our final days with Tony.

The medical care Tony received was outstanding. Dr. Zmitrovic’s persistent efforts eventually resulted in a medical solution for a drain tube problem that had caused my brother tremendous stress since his hospitalization several months earlier – improving his final days. Her bedside manor was both professional and compassionate, and her dedication to protecting the dignity of her patients was obvious.

Perhaps most noted by my family and I was the exceptional, around-the-clock nursing care that Tony received while at Angela. Nurses Mary Jo, Kim, and Becky took care of my brother as though he were a member of their own family. They were always there for Tony when he needed assistance.

In addition, I wish to extend special thanks to Nurse Rainy for the compassion and concern she showed not only for Tony, but for his entire family. Her perspective on Tony’s death process was insightful and genuine. The encouragement she provided during a 3pm-7am, double-shift she covered during Tony’s last day helped my family transform his passing into a celebration of his life – focusing on the good times that we had all shared with him. Rainy is truly an asset to your organization, and an exceptional person. She belongs in palliative and hospice practice, she belongs at Angela Hospice.

I will always hold the staff, facilities and mission of Angela Hospice Care Center in the highest regard. I truly thank you for your service.

Respectfully,

Andrew Mac

Ann Patrice & Connie,

I want to thank you both from the bottom of my heart for your support and kindness during our time of caring for my beloved grandfather, Mr. Paul J. Cummings, Sr.

I was there on that Sunday morning when he passed away. I was holding his hand as he slipped into the eternal peace that he now resides in. It was beautiful, peaceful and life changing for me.

Angela Hospice prepared us every step of the way so that when those final moments arrived we knew it was that time. I never knew something so sad could be so beautiful, but now I know the two do co-exist.

From the nurses, the nurse-aids and the counselors, to the people who delivered the equipment for my grandfather, all did it with sincere consideration and respect for the situation that we faced.

Many thanks for you and the group of Angela Hospice that helped us. God bless each of you. You are a true example of the gifts that God gives us.

Sincerely,

Kimber Dorton
Most people would be pleased to be told they are too healthy to qualify for hospice. Not so with Marguerite (Sarah) Rehner.

“I don’t really fear death but I’m not anxious.” The 94-year-old, who has been with Angela Hospice since April, is really hoping that when her certification period is up, she won’t be told she is too stable to receive hospice care.

“I love it,” she says. “I’m so happy with how caring everyone is.”

Marguerite lives in the Village of Redford. She has enjoyed meeting a few different hospice employees, and says they have implemented simple things that have made her life easier.

For example, Marguerite has difficulty lifting herself out of her chair into a standing position when she needs to use the bathroom. A nurse ordered a lift chair for her from the medical equipment company, and now all Marguerite does is press a button and she is brought to a standing position.

“I just love this chair,” she says.

Prior to enrolling in hospice, Marguerite was all too familiar with the hospital. She has congestive heart failure, and frequently experienced shortness of breath requiring exhausting trips to the emergency room and days spent undergoing procedures. “I began to think I owned a room over there,” she jokes.

Dr. Banathal Nandish suggested hospice to her and her daughter, Kathy Blauet, so Marguerite could stop the frequent hospitalizations and tests.

Initially, “I said no,” Marguerite recalls. “I really didn’t know much about hospice. I thought it meant you were going to die soon.”

But once she learned what hospice entails, and Blauet reminded her that the hospital trips were so difficult, Marguerite changed her mind.

“Mom said, ‘I don’t want to keep going back to the hospital,’” Kathy remembers.

“That was the selling point for me,” Marguerite said.

Kathy called Angela Hospice, and her mother signed on the next day. The family was impressed with how quickly it occurred. Now hospice is called whenever Marguerite is experiencing any discomfort, such as the episodes of shortness of breath that she experiences. A nurse can come out to order medical equipment or give medication that will help.

Since the admission, Marguerite’s regular nurse Connie St. Laurent, and occasionally another nurse, make regular visits to Marguerite.

“I was thrilled from the start,” says Marguerite. “They were quick and caring. They just come in to see me and check on my health.” Marguerite likes the visits.

She knows she must show some decline in order to stay on hospice under Medicare guidelines, and hopes she can remain on the program. She says she is healthier because of hospice.

Hospice brought in oxygen that she now wears all night. “It’s much easier to get dressed in the morning,” she says. When the topic of an oxygen tank came up, and Marguerite agreed to try it, the tank was delivered almost right away. “They say they’ll do something and they do it,” she notes of her hospice team.

“They’re taking such good care of mom,” Kathy agrees.

Every two weeks, Marguerite’s social worker Jan Hendricks visits.

“She’s so bubbly,” Kathy says. Both Jan and Connie have endeared themselves to Marguerite’s family.

“They care,” Marguerite says. “It’s very good. They’re very pleasant people and they come regularly. The wonderful part is – it doesn’t cost anything!”
Join us for Walk of Remembrance

If you’ve never attended the Angela Hospice Walk of Remembrance, consider joining us on September 21, for our sixth annual event. This uplifting and meaningful event continues to grow, and many families and individuals participate year after year as a way to honor their loved ones.

“It’s really special to my heart,” said Stephanie Sitler, who has been coming to the walk with her family since 2009. “It brings back memories of my mom. I like to do it every year in remembrance of her, and I know she’d be proud of us.”

Some families have even formed teams, getting their walkers together and collecting donations to support Angela Hospice’s bereavement and grief support programs.

For more information on this year’s walk, or to learn how you can form a team, call Events Coordinator Larry Kralowski at (734) 953-6045.

Celebrating success at spring events

Angela Hospice’s outing at Fox Hill’s Golden Fox course lived up to its name. While temps were a bit on the low side for the annual Golf Outing, spirits were high as golfers took on 18 holes, plus a full day of games, raffles, an eclectic silent auction, and of course plenty of delicious food and an open bar.

“I’d like to give a big thank you to all of our generous sponsors and supporters who make the Golf Outing such a wonderful day, and raise money to help our hospice patients,” said Sister Mary Giovanni.

Congratulations are also in order to our top scoring team from the Plymouth Community United Way who scored 11 under par!

Bodies R Us held a Zumbathon to benefit Angela Hospice at Skateland West in May. In total they raised over $1,400 to support our hospice programs!

A beautiful and peaceful day provided a serene backdrop for guests at our annual Arbor Day ceremony. Meteorologist Paul Gross from WDIV Local 4 News was the guest speaker, and a catered luncheon followed. In total over 40 memorials were dedicated at the ceremony, including the limestone brick ordered in remembrance of Jack Cameron. His family is pictured above with the brick.
Spend a Night in Tuscany...

Angela Hospice’s volunteers are preparing an enchanting event for our fall Light Up a Life fundraiser. “A Night in Tuscany” is the theme, and guests will be treated to a delicious dinner and hors d’oeuvres, wine tasting and open bar, silent auction, live music and more – all benefiting Angela Hospice’s compassionate programs for patients and their families.

Tickets are $100 per person, and invitations will be mailed in late August. For sponsorship information, or to donate an auction prize, call Events Coordinator Larry Kralowski, (734) 953-6045.
New partnership to help more pediatric patients

When Hospice of Michigan decided to expand its Pediatric Early Care program to serve children in Southeast Michigan, they asked Angela Hospice to provide the hospice component of the program.

“Having a child with a chronic and potentially life-limiting illness is exhausting for families,” said Dottie Deremo, president and CEO of HOM. “Our PEC program is designed to provide families with the tools, resources and support they will need. We look forward to collaborating with Angela Hospice to offer the final program needed to complete pediatric care to Southeast Michigan.”

PEC is appropriate when a child is diagnosed or is living with a potentially life-limiting illness, continues to receive curative treatment, and is not yet eligible for hospice services. Services include:

- Maintaining the child’s comfort of body, mind and spirit.
- Compassionate support and education for the whole family.
- Emotional support for the patient and siblings, with interactive methods such as play therapy, art therapy, sand tray therapy, pet therapy, music therapy and other innovative options.
- Memory-making activities, photography, videography, and ‘legacy’ work.

HOM currently serves more than 70 children and families per day in West Michigan through its PEC program, which is the only one of its kind in the state. Thanks to donor JoElyn Nyman, the program will now be available to residents of Southeast Michigan as well.

“We are pleased to be partnering with Hospice of Michigan as they expand the breadth of their PEC program,” said Angela Hospice Executive Director Mary Beth Moning. “Together we’ll be able to help more children and families in our community.”

For information on the PEC program, call Hospice of Michigan at (888) 247-5701, or for pediatric hospice, call Angela Hospice at (888) 464-7810.