

SPRING 2020

# MONARCH

## MAMA BOSS

TELLS IT  
LIKE IT IS



We'll take you under our wing.





# MAMA BOSS

## TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

Carmen Munoz Crites isn't afraid to go after what she wants.

As a girl, Carmen's mother said to her, "I don't know about you. I try so hard to make you into a lady." But Carmen replied, "Mom, give it up. It's never gonna happen. I'm sorry, I can't do it."

Carmen's mom understood this about her daughter. "I know, I know," she said, "If anybody tells you you can't, you're gonna say, 'Watch me while I do it.'" And that has pretty much been the story of her life.

Just out of high school, Carmen got a job as a bookkeeper in a machine shop.

"I lied through my teeth, 'Oh yeah, I know all about bookkeeping,'" she said. She immediately enrolled in business school, and would eventually convince her boss to let her take over for a retiring salesman.

"Oh, he thought that was funny," Carmen said, "because at that time General Motors and the auto industry had been very chauvinistic." So Carmen told him, "If I don't sell, you don't pay me because it's on commission. If I don't sell for you, you lost nothing."

He laughed and told her, "Go ahead."

Carmen drove up to Buick Flint every day for two weeks straight, and would wait in the lobby each day trying to get an appointment. Finally, the receptionist helped her out.

"She says, 'Carmen, you're not going anywhere are you?' I said, 'Gloria, I'm not going anywhere.' She said, 'I'll tell you what – someone's gonna see you tomorrow.'"

And that was the beginning of Carmen's success in sales. But after years working for the machine shop, when the owner's son saw Carmen's paycheck he told her, "There isn't any woman that should make that kind of money, much less a Mexican – unless she's playing baseball." Twenty minutes and a few choice words later, Carmen had cleaned out her office. She signed the lease on her own building the following Monday.

Carmen opened Munoz Machine Products in 1984. "Over the years I had earned a reputation. I got an award from General Motors as worldwide supplier of the

year about six or seven times in a row," she said.

Carmen traveled throughout Europe and Japan, and even met President Clinton at the White House as a small business owner. But one of her most important projects was her work with troubled teens. They were former gang members, and Carmen gave them the opportunity to learn a trade at her shop. What's more than that, she provided the tough love and guidance they needed.

"What, you were born in the ghetto? So was I. So what?" Carmen would say. "I don't take well to excuses. I just don't."

She encouraged them to get their GEDs, tried to keep them out of trouble, and helped them realize they controlled their own destiny.

She didn't know it at the time, but they began calling her "Mama Boss." And the trust and rapport that she built with them lasts to this day. When they heard Carmen had started hospice care, about 15 of them came to town to visit her.

"It's good to see that they've done something with their lives," she said. But she also told them: "I wish you all stopped telling people I saved your life. I didn't, you did. You saved your own. All I did was push the door open."

But Carmen acknowledges the impact the program had, both on the young people she worked with and on the community.



**The Observer Newspapers**

**Business**

classifieds inside

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**Book talk: reading that made its mark**

Business leaders lean toward non-fiction

**Rick Matthews**, president of Incentive Computer Centers, says: "I always go back to the Napoleonic Hill books. I give me more determination to go on."

**John Ashraf**, president of Ashraf Hotel Co., owner of the Bradford Inn, and past president of the Birmingham Chapter of the National Association of Business: "I search of Excellence' always on my mind and what's going on today. One Minute Manager makes you work hard and work smart."

**Gerry Gaudin**, owner and founder of Wells Freight & Cargo Co.: "Library courses were my bible. I began researching my 12-year-old business 18 years ago. Back then...

**Carmen Munoz**, Munoz Machine Products

"It stopped a lot of violence in Southwest Detroit," she said. It's something she can look back on and know that she made a difference.

It's hard for her now that she has terminal cancer and is losing her sight. She wants to be productive, but her physical limitations are a challenge. "I get very frustrated since I can't drive," she said, but she still has the same fiery spirit that has propelled her all her life.

"I'm as bossy and as mouthy as I've always been," Carmen said.

So when her doctor told her he could tell her more or less how much time she had, she said, "Hold on, young man. I don't see any water on that floor you're walking on. You don't walk on water. I don't need you to tell me anything. When my time comes, my time comes."

Right now she's receiving home hospice at her daughter Mary's house. Carmen is familiar with the program because she volunteered at Angela Hospice back in 2010 until her husband got sick. He also had home hospice care from Angela Hospice in 2016.

"It's been a busy life," said Carmen, mother of three and grandmother to five. "Tell me where I haven't been."

"My dad used to say, 'You start to die the day you're born.' So what do you want me to do – sit here and worry about it?"

**FOR MORE OF THE WIT AND WISDOM OF CARMEN MUNOZ CRITES, VISIT OUR BLOG AT [ASKFORANGELA.COM](http://ASKFORANGELA.COM)**

## DOING WHAT'S RIGHT.

Whether it was through her work with former gang members, advocating on behalf of her 108-year-old neighbor, or volunteering at Angela Hospice, Carmen used her skills and resources to help improve the lives of people around her.

For more about how you can impact others in our community through volunteering and charitable gifts, visit our website at [AskForAngela.com](http://AskForAngela.com)

## MAINTAINING THE MISSION

As this issue of The Monarch was going to press, Angela Hospice became aware, like everyone across the world, of matters concerning the pandemic known as coronavirus (COVID-19).

Every day seems to bring new revelations and, for us, new strategies to protect our fragile patients and our passionate caregiving staff. For both patients and staff, we are continuing to use our best efforts to care well for them – and to keep them from harm.

News of the virus advancing to Michigan arrived the day before one of our major events, Laughter Lifts You Up. This annual gathering of 900 women for an evening of comedy and joyful fundraising would typically raise tens of thousands of dollars to fund the charitable bereavement programs of Angela Hospice. But to protect our supporters (even before "social distancing" or the suspension of public gatherings became key strategies in the fight against this dangerous virus), we chose to cancel the event at the very moment our volunteers were arriving at Laurel Manor to set up decorations, auctions, and raffles. Our responsibility toward the health and wellbeing of our supporters and friends far outweighed the costs and financial losses we would incur by suspending the event only hours before it was to begin. Our men's comedy fundraiser, Burgers Brews and Bros, and our Arbor Day celebration would also be canceled or postponed.

Many in the community have asked how they might help patients and families in Angela Hospice care during these particularly challenging days. Our answer, first and foremost, is to pray for those in our care and for those giving care; that we may be strong and capable in our mission to comfort. Secondly, please consider giving a generous gift to support the charitable work we continue to do every day. **With the loss of support from these key fundraising events, this gift may be one of the most important you've made yet.** On behalf of the families in our care, thank you.



# FAITH TO GET THROUGH

When Chris Morgan got to the Angela Hospice Care Center, he felt a sense of relief. But his journey to get there was not an easy one.

After suffering a heart attack, Chris had been hospitalized. "They tore me up and told me that I had a heart problem," Chris said. He was prescribed medication and sent on his way. But after a series of subsequent hospitalizations, Chris was frustrated and angry. Still, he didn't realize just how serious his illness was.

"Until that rude doctor blurted it out," he explained. "Because I was raising a function. I was cutting up.... But he blurted it out, 'Well, you only have six months to a year to live.' Huh, wait? That's something hard to swallow."

Chris was overwhelmed. He felt caught off guard, and wished he could have known the truth about his condition earlier.

"I feel like they mishandled me," he said. "Because they were aware that my heart was going to get worse."

Suddenly, Chris was feeling like it was too late, like there was nothing that could be done. And because he needed around the clock care, he couldn't go home. But then he found out about Angela Hospice. At first Chris rejected the idea, thinking it would be too expensive, but then the hospital social worker gave him some good news.

"I found out my insurance would cover all of it, pay my rent, pay my board. I went for it. I dived straight to it," Chris said. There was one room open and Chris was determined it was his.

"Prayer changes a lot," he said. "I prayed and asked God, 'It's in your hands. You show me where you want me to go.' But after the door started opening, I jumped."

Chris said he was happy with his decision to come to Angela Hospice, especially when his family was able to visit from out of state.

"It put a smile on my face when I got here," he said. "Everybody in here loves me, all my nurses, my cook. They send so much love in this room, it's just overflowing. I'm just bursting with it."

Chris still has his struggles. But he relies on faith and hope to get him through the tough times.

"I got some more to do before I let this world go," he said. "I want everybody to be in place."

Chris hopes to see his son CJ graduate college, and would love to walk his daughter Christina down the aisle. But he also wants the chance to tell his story, in hopes that it will help someone else who is going through something similar.

"I just want to encourage people, keep strong in your faith," Chris said. "Faith will get you through."

**Chris was blessed to have his stay at the Care Center covered by insurance. But many insurers, including Medicare, do not cover hospice room and board for extended stays.**

**For those who find themselves without coverage, and without the financial resources to pay, Angela Hospice's Good Samaritan Fund can be a godsend.**

**Donations to the Good Samaritan Fund enable comprehensive, compassionate hospice care to be provided at a reduced cost, or at no cost to the patient, based on the individual's need.**

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS FUND, VISIT  
[ASKFORANGELA.COM](http://ASKFORANGELA.COM).



L TO R: CJ, CHRIS, CHRISTINA, & KAREN MORGAN.





*"I go to church and enjoy myself. Like they say, take it to the Lord in prayer.  
I go. I take it to Him. I drop it. I get His Holy Word and healing, and  
I'm ecstatic for the rest of the week."*

~ Chris Morgan



# EMPOWERING

## THE FAITHFUL

For many people, their place of worship is where they go for a sense of community, guidance, and help in times of trouble. It provides a trusted resource for coping with life's challenges.

Angela Hospice created the African American Church Empowerment Project in 2016, partnering with local faith communities to equip congregations with information and insight about end-of-life care. As the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization reports, hospice is typically underutilized by minorities, including African Americans, Asians, and Latinos.

"African Americans don't generally have much information about hospice, palliative care, end-of-life care in general, and that can be said for a lot of people," said Diane Smith, who heads up the Empowerment Project at Angela Hospice. She explained that lack of information, combined with a historic mistrust of the medical community, has led to hospice being overlooked by many in the African American community.

By sharing information, Angela Hospice hopes to remove some of the barriers to quality care, empower people to advocate for the care they want, and address some healthcare disparities in the process.

In the training sessions she's led at different churches, Diane has seen that as participants engage with the information, share experiences, and even role play having tough conversations about the end of life, they gain a deeper understanding that they can use to help their own family and community members.

"That is our intent: to provide the education," Diane said. "Whether they take advantage of Angela Hospice or not, that's not the issue. The issue for us is that they know enough to help themselves access the care that they need."

"Empowerment" seems to be the perfect word to describe the project, which has branched out to include additional minority groups as well. Diane, who is Director of Ministry Engagement for Angela Hospice, and social worker Reem Saleh are passionate about this

project and the positive impact they know it can have on families throughout the community.

"There are miraculous things that continue to happen after a patient has been deemed terminally ill, and hospice helps to make doing those things possible," Diane said.



Reem Saleh & Diane Smith bring information about end-of-life care and support to faith communities throughout southeast Michigan.

To inquire about a presentation for your place of worship contact Diane at [dsmith@angelahospice.us](mailto:dsmith@angelahospice.us) or 734.742.1130.



## FAMILY VALUES

Michael George was celebrated last fall at Angela Hospice's annual Light Up a Life Gala. As a benefactor and former board member, he has made significant contributions to Angela Hospice's programs. But it was his parents who first experienced Angela Hospice's mission.

"I have never forgotten the compassionate care my mother received as an ALS patient," Michael said. His mother, Jane, was cared for by Angela Hospice before her passing in May 1997. The experience had a lasting impact on Michael as well as his father, William "Bill" George, who in 1999 became an Angela Hospice volunteer.

"My father was so impressed with the level of care she received..." Michael said. "When I spoke with him he would always speak enthusiastically about his work there. Angela Hospice was very meaningful in his life and he approached it as a great place of compassion and sympathy at a very difficult time."

Bill George was a treasured volunteer until the time of his death in February 2006. That spring, Michael traveled from his home in New York to attend the Angela Hospice Arbor Day Ceremony, where his father was being remembered. In honor of both his beloved parents, Michael made a generous gift on that occasion toward the work of Angela Hospice in the community.

"Supporting the mission of Angela Hospice is a priority in my life," Michael explained. In addition to his financial gifts, Michael has lent his support to Angela Hospice in other significant ways. After retiring from Credit Agricole Securities, Inc., Michael was invited by

Sister Mary Giovanni to join the Angela Hospice Board of Directors in 2010. Michael offered his guidance, especially in financial matters, as he humbly led and served on the board until 2016.

"From my previous work on the board I learned firsthand the tremendous amount of attention that was given to ensuring that compassionate care shone through in all patient interactions," Michael said. "It is this level of attention to all of those approaching the end of life's journey that stands out as being extremely meritorious of continued support."

Among his priorities as an Angela Hospice donor, Michael has placed a strong emphasis on his support for educational programs. In fact, he began a tuition fund for Angela Hospice team members. He also values the outreach efforts of the Empowerment Project for its ability to enable undeserved community members to learn and understand resources available to them and "to embrace how end-of-life care can provide compassion to the individual and relief to the family and friends."

Michael knows firsthand how precious this support can be for families – not only in the moment, but long beyond. Three years ago, on the twentieth anniversary of his mother's passing, Michael wrote, "Not a day goes by that I do not think of the wonderful care she received at Angela."



**Michael George (left)**  
began supporting  
Angela Hospice to  
honor the legacy of  
his parents, Bill and  
Jane George.





# THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

When Lori Olenski lost her son, it was unexpected. She knew he had cancer, and he was receiving hospice care in her home, but she thought – and she hoped – that he had more time.

“He was young and he was really a big, strong guy,” she said. Just a week before her son Jesse died, he was up and walking around with a cane, Lori explained. “I guess he was fighting because he was young and strong. And then all of sudden, everything just went downhill really fast.”

Jesse tried to prepare Lori. He had been in the Angela Hospice Care Center for pain control for about two weeks. Then while he was back at home, on New Year’s Eve, he told Lori, “Mom, I have to go back. I don’t have that much longer to live.”

When he was being readmitted to the Care Center, Lori remembered Jesse telling the nurse, “My mom’s not going to take this well because she has a soft heart.” Lori teared up a bit at this remembrance, but she also remembered something else he told a nurse that brought her a measure of comfort: he said, “I’m not afraid to die.”

Lori saw a real transformation come over her son. “He really was peaceful about it,” she said. “It was amazing...because months before that, he was very different in the early stages of the cancer. But in the end, he was just very peaceful.”

She saw him making the most of his remaining time while at the Care Center too. “He talked to everyone, he loved it,” she said. “He had all these interactions and connections, which was really beautiful.”

He especially liked talking about music. Jesse was a musician, and he loved to hear the piano players that would come to the Care Center.

Jesse passed on January 9 at 12:30 a.m. He was 46 years old.

Lori knew she wanted to take advantage of the bereavement services Angela Hospice provides. She began attending grief support group meetings.

“It’s beneficial to be around people who have also had a loss,” she said, “because you always feel like no one understands. But people who have had a loss, they do understand. So you have that connection. Sitting in group is the one time I feel...” Lori exhaled before continuing, “people understand me.”

She’s been experiencing the full benefit of Angela Hospice’s donor-supported bereavement programming, meeting with social worker Debbie Vallandingham for one-on-one grief counseling as well.

“I had all this stuff in me I needed to get out, and some things were just too personal to talk about [in the group],” she explained. And while friends and family wanted to help, they really didn’t know what to say.



While Jesse was recovering from surgery, he and Lori would go to the mall and walk when it was rainy out. A passing shopper saw Lori taking Jesse’s photo and offered to take this picture of the two of them. “I said to him after, she’ll never know how much that meant to me,” Lori recalled.

“With someone who is trained in bereavement, they can give suggestions...Debbie knows what helps.”

One of Debbie’s suggestions that has worked for Lori is journaling her feelings every day. “It’s really helpful, because you can just get that out of you,” Lori said. “And you can start to understand what you’re feeling when you’re writing it down.”

Another of Debbie’s suggestions helped Lori find joy in two of her favorite hobbies again. She was having trouble focusing when she would try to read, and when she would go on walks, her thoughts would turn to the things that made her sad. So Debbie suggested she try listening to audio books while she went on her walks. It was a great solution for Lori.

Taking part in the grief support groups and counseling haven’t made Lori’s grief go away, but they have made it a bit easier to live with. She wants to one day become an Angela Hospice volunteer, to pay back what meant so much to her and Jesse at the end of his life. But for now, she hopes sharing her story might help someone too, by letting them know they’re not alone, and encouraging them to reach out if they need help.

“When you sit at home alone with your grief, you just feel like you’re alone in the world,” she said. “It’s not a good place to be. When you get in the group and with all these other people who are grieving too, it gives you hope and it makes you feel better. I think it’s so important to do that.”

**Even when circumstances make it difficult to gather together, embracing a sense of community is so important. Visit our website for information about Angela Hospice's grief support services, and remember that you are never alone.**

**ASKFORANGELA.COM**



Close your eyes.

Focus on your breath.

Now imagine a place where you can  
feel calm, peaceful, and happy.

# ART THERAPY

You might hear these words spoken by Angie Masinde, our intern from Wayne State University who is pursuing her Master of Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a concentration in art therapy. She likes to incorporate mindfulness into the drop-in art therapy sessions she's been holding for patients, staff, and family members at the Angela Hospice Care Center. It's a chance for participants to settle their mind, release some tension, and reduce stress.

Angie became involved with Angela Hospice last fall through a grant program with Ford Motor Company. "I've always had a heart for the hospice population," she said. "Toward the end of that [program] I realized I was really enjoying the experience."

She's seen that participants are enjoying the art therapy too, and feeling the benefits. One woman dropped in with her step-daughter and they both enjoyed spending a couple hours making art. The daughter made a card and also tried an abstract project using tea bags as paint brushes. The mother chose to work on inspirational coloring pages that Angie provided.

"It was a great distraction for her, to take her mind off what was going on," Angie reflected.

Angela Hospice hopes to continue to provide unique and enriching experiences for patients and caregivers using art and complementary services, including music therapy, pet therapy, massage, aromatherapy, and healing touch. Donor support helps to make these programs possible.  
**To contribute,  
visit [AskforAngela.com](http://AskforAngela.com).**



△ Angie Masinde (left) works with Angela team members on art therapy to promote stress reduction.

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