

SPRING 2022

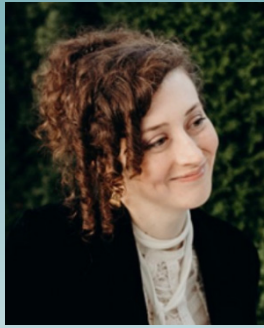
MONARCH

ONE LOVE,
always



GLORIA SHARES
A PHOTO OF HER
WEDDING DAY
WITH HER BELOVED,
MYRON.


Angela Hospice®
We'll take you under our wing.®



STORY WRITTEN BY:
LISA NORTON,
COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

AFFIRMING *Dignity*

As a little girl, I loved when my grandma would come visit from New York. I'd wake up on those summer mornings to the sound of my grandmother's voice; her Long Island accent easily carrying up the stairs as she chatted with my mother. I'd lay in bed listening, enjoying its cadence for a while before heading down to breakfast.

I think that's how I'll remember Grandma: loud and colorful, and always ready to bake.

In all my years working at Angela Hospice, I've never had a relative in the program until now. For 20 years, I've helped to tell the stories of other families, of the devoted volunteers, and dedicated team members. But now, my family has experienced what I've heard about all these years: the warmth, compassion, and thoughtfulness of the hospice team; and the peacefulness that permeates our Care Center. I experienced it as soon as I crossed the threshold from my "workplace" to my grandmother's room.

Grandma faced many health challenges over the years: crippling arthritis, breast cancer, then it seemed dementia was starting to set in. But after she took a



spill down a department store escalator, we knew she needed to move to Michigan. For the next 14 years, my mom and Aunt Christine looked after her and coordinated her care. This fall, she began receiving Angela Hospice care.

When we learned she would be able to be admitted to the Care Center as a Medicaid patient just a week before Christmas, my mom called it a "miracle."

I know that our Care Center exists in thanks to the crucial support of our donors. I also know how rare and important this facility is. But more than ever before, I began to see firsthand what a blessing this place is – not only to my grandmother and our family, but to all those who need a place to go, a place where they can receive the kind of love and care that beautifully honors their humanity.

My grandmother had not always been treated with such dignity. Following the birth of my mother and each of my aunts, she experienced what today we would call recurrent postpartum depression. In the 1950s,



MY GRANDMOTHER,
DOLORES LAPOINTE,
CIRCA 1951

night in her confusion of Alzheimer's, "My doctor said I'm having a nervous breakdown, but I don't think that's right...They're trying to take my girls," she'd repeat, stuck in a loop of painful memories.

It was heartbreaking to hear her recite these tragic episodes from her past, but it was also a privilege to hear her express how much love she had for my mother and my aunts. I felt grateful to be able to share these moments with her, even though she could no longer remember who I was.

I wanted to share my grandma's story because my family is so very grateful for the care she received – care made possible by the support of the generosity of Angela Hospice's supporters. But I know there are countless other families who will find themselves in a similar situation, managing care for someone in such a vulnerable state – someone who is precious and deserves to be treated with respect and love. I am deeply grateful that Angela Hospice was able to be there for my grandma. And I pray you will continue to support this mission, so Angela Hospice can be there for other families in their time of need as well.

this meant she would be sent to a hospital psychiatric unit where electroshock therapy was administered to help her "snap out of it." When that didn't work, her depression lingering on for years, my grandfather divorced her. He took custody of their three oldest daughters while the youngest stayed with my grandmother. Her parents brought her back to New York so they could look after her.

The separation was a trauma that stuck with my grandmother up until her final days. She told me one

TO GIVE TODAY AND SUPPORT FAMILIES,
VISIT [ANGELAHOSPICE.ORG/DONATE](https://angelahospice.org/donate)

YOUR STORY *is my passion*

It was Mother Teresa who said,

**"IT'S NOT HOW MUCH WE
GIVE BUT HOW MUCH LOVE
WE PUT INTO GIVING."**

I use this quote often as an inspiration in the profession that I love: non-profit management.

For more than 25 years I have been a non-profit professional focusing my passion on community, fund and business development, as well as public relations and communications. I am thrilled now to take what I have learned throughout the years and apply it as the new Director of Development at Angela Hospice, a position I started last fall.

After my mom passed while in hospice care, I knew I wanted to give back to the hospice community in some way outside of a memorial donation, and thankfully, I found that with the team at Angela Hospice.

Helping a donor – be it a corporate event sponsor or an individual writing a personal check – is one of the greatest joys in my profession. Listening to the stories and the reasoning behind the donation, no matter what the amount, is what makes my career most rewarding. Understanding the why behind the commitment lets me into the donors' hearts and minds, and paints a beautiful picture of where their commitment comes from. [*See page 4 for one such story.]

I want to thank you for your commitment to give, your faith in the work we do, and the trust you share with us. I look forward to hearing your stories.



**Why do you choose to give to Angela Hospice and what makes you keep giving?
Tell me your story!
Contact me at
jdale@angelahospice.us
or 734.953.6009.**



CREATING A *beautiful* PLACE

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: KRIS BEERS



For Kris Beers, his connection to Angela Hospice started with a phone call from Rory Moning, Angela Hospice Building Manager.

"Rory called me out of the blue, and I happened to answer the phone," said Kris, who had recently moved to Livonia when Rory called.

The upcoming Arbor Day Ceremony was a week away and the company who had been hired to plant the trees had

backed out. Learning that, Kris was happy to take a look, and he ended up planting all 10 trees before the ceremony. He believes getting that done on time was what got his foot in the door at Angela Hospice, a place he had never even heard of before Rory called.

"I really didn't even know what hospice was," Kris said. "And then, once I got there, I asked questions, and I met Sister Giovanni. She told me her story about what she wanted, what her vision was... I became interested in it and I became compassionate about it."

As Angela Hospice has grown, so has Kris's work around the campus. Over the last 26 years, Kris and his company, ABL Landscaping, have completed the water fountain by the Care Center, the new pavilion where

the Tree of Life took place last year, and practically everything else on the outside grounds.

For Kris, part of what's driven him for all these years to produce his best work is the reaction he gets from families coming to see a loved one in the Care Center.

"They constantly come out, when they see me working, and say, 'You know, the grounds look beautiful, you're helping make our experience better because it is so beautiful,'" he said.

There have been multiple moments with families that have brought Kris a lot of pride in his work, one sticking out immediately.

When Kris was working on the fountain located outside the Care Center – a project that took about three weeks – there was a gentleman he became close with who would chat with Kris every day. The man's son was in the Care Center, around Kris's age, and had ALS, a disease Kris was very familiar with because at the time, he had a good friend who also had ALS.

Then one day when Kris came in, Rory told him the man's son had died. Kris was working when the man came and told him about his son. Then he hugged Kris.

"I couldn't believe that this man was hugging me and apologizing for the fact that his son had passed," Kris said. "He just wanted to thank me for being that listening ear. I'll never forget that."

It isn't only the patients and their families at Angela Hospice who have had a major effect on Kris's life, the staff has as well.

"I've seen so many people that do so many good things there, it touches my heart to see how dedicated everybody is that does what they do there," Kris said. "It's just a beautiful place, filled with a bunch of beautiful people."

ARBOR DAY: *an annual tradition*

At Angela Hospice, Arbor Day is about more than planting trees. It is about celebrating special people in our lives, and honoring them through personalized, commemorative memorials.

TREES WITH ENGRAVED PLAQUES: These powerful tributes not only add beauty to our grounds – they also demonstrate how our love for those dear to us continues to live on, even after their passing.

MEMORIAL WALK BRICKS: These long-lasting markers symbolize the foundation our loved ones have set for us.

PLAQUES: Engraved in copper, brass, bronze, or glass, these lasting memorials represent the strength of our memories and love.



MEMORIAL WALK
BRICKS

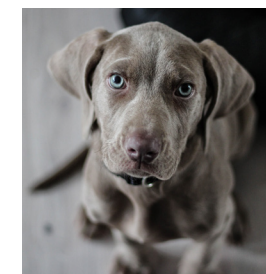


BRASS WALL
PLAQUE

OUR ARBOR DAY CEREMONY IS HELD EACH APRIL AT ANGELA HOSPICE. TO DEDICATE A MEMORIAL AND BE INCLUDED IN NEXT YEAR'S CELEBRATION, VISIT [ANGELAHOSPICE.ORG/COMMEMORATIVE-GIVING](https://angelahospice.org/commemorative-giving)

2022 *grief support groups*

NEWEST OFFERING:



PET LOSS

A virtual support group that provides support for anyone that has experienced the death of a beloved pet.

1st Wednesday
Each month • 6-7 p.m.

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS FOR KIDS

This interactive group offers music therapy and grief counseling to provide a creative way for kids to explore their loss in a supportive environment. This group meets in person at Angela Hospice.

1st & 3rd Tuesday • Each month • 5-6 p.m. [Ages 5 - 13]

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

A virtual education and support group for anyone experiencing a loss.

Every Wednesday • 2-3 p.m.
3rd Wednesday • Each month • 6-7 p.m.

LOSS OF A SPOUSE

This virtual group brings together those who have experienced the loss of a spouse.

1st & 3rd Thursday • Each month • 2-3 p.m.

LIVING WITH GRIEF

A virtual peer support group for anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one.

2nd & 4th Tuesday • Each month • 2-3 p.m.

LEFT BEHIND: SURVIVORS OF LOSS FROM SUICIDE OR OVERDOSE

This virtual support group provides healing to people coping with the shock, grief, and complex emotions that accompany the loss of a loved one by suicide or a substance overdose.

3rd Thursday • Each month • 6-7 p.m.

FOR MORE DETAILS & LOGIN INFORMATION:

Visit askforangela.com or call 734.779.6690 to schedule a one-on-one call or virtual session.

ONE LOVE, *always*

Even though he's no longer with her, Myron will always be the love of Gloria's life, just like he has been for the last six decades.

"He kept me on my toes," Gloria said, the smile evident in her voice. "He was just such a wonderful companion, and he was caring, and loving, and thoughtful. We just had a lot of fun..."

The two met on a blind date and then created a life together with their children in Livonia, in a house that was always filled with love and laughter, even when Myron signed on to Angela Hospice Home Care. He passed in November 2020 after a few months on the program.

While the first year without Myron has been incredibly hard for Gloria, she's found comfort through working with the grief care team at Angela Hospice and the memories she has from when Myron was in home care.

"He spent his last hours and took his last breath in the home that we built," Gloria said. "That was very meaningful to me and made a difficult situation more comforting..."

The house is still full of memories with him: photos, his model cars, the blanket he received from the Angela Hospice We Honor Veterans program. Gloria said she can walk from room to room and still feel his presence.

"I'm not changing a thing," Gloria said. "I'm comforted by all the things he loved, all the memories we created living in this house our whole married life."

Their home was also always filled with music, and that continued while Myron was in hospice care, not only through the stereo always playing, but when Heather Dean, Angela Hospice Music Therapist would stop by.

The first time Heather was there, Gloria stepped



out to run an errand and was shocked to hear that Myron had sung with her. Myron – who sang in high school, college, and with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra – sang with Heather, making it the first time in decades. Gloria told him she wanted to be there the next time he sang. Sadly, that never happened.

But during one of Myron's last days Heather came back. She sang their wedding song, Nat King Cole's "When I Fall in Love," while Gloria held Myron's hand.

"Myron was in the hospital bed in our living room, and I just sobbed... it just really was very heartfelt," Gloria said.

All of those little touches – from knowing she would be able to talk with anyone in the Patient Support Center, no matter the time; to how well the nurses treated her and Myron – like they were their own loved ones – made the entire experience a bit easier.

"It just makes me feel good that Myron was well taken care of, and now I'm being taken care of," Gloria said.

Shortly after Myron passed, Gloria received a card that said,

"Grief never ends, but it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, not a lack of faith, it is the price of love."

That card now sits on her kitchen table with a photo of her and Myron.

"That's my comfort," Gloria said. "Every time I sit down at the kitchen table, I think that that's such a wonderful phrase. Grief hurts... there's no way that you can be prepared for what it gives you. I keep hearing you get through it, but you don't get over it."

CALL ON AVA *anytime*



KAREN GUGALA,
TELEHEALTH MANAGER

Angela Hospice was blessed to launch its telehealth program, Angela's Virtual Assist (AVA), in 2017 through the generosity of the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. Now on the five year anniversary of this innovative program, we've expanded the service to make it even easier for patients and families to connect with our hospice team at the click of a button.

"Families tell us they love the AVA program, because it gives them peace of mind to know they can connect with a nurse face-to-face whenever they have a question or when a new symptom arises," said Karen Gugala, Telehealth Manager for Angela Hospice.

Initially, the program was available through touchscreen tablet devices set up in patient homes – a format called AVA Home. But just this year, AVA Go was introduced, allowing families to download an app right

to their smartphone. Whether families use our tablet or their own device, with AVA they can reach our Patient Support Center for video calls, day or night; schedule video meetings with their hospice team and additional family members; receive check-ins and reminders; and access educational materials. With AVA Go, secure text messaging with the Patient Support Center is also an option.

"Our hope is that more families will be able to use our AVA technology to make their experience with hospice care more supportive, less stressful, and more personal," said Karen. "Many families have shared that having this option available to them helps them to feel more at ease."



LAST YEAR 99.4% OF AVA USERS
SAID THEY WOULD RECOMMEND
AVA TO OTHERS.

WHAT AVA USERS ARE SAYING:*

*Survey responses from patient families

"This is such a fabulous tool to have! 24/7 visual availability is such an emotional relief. If a problem arises, they have the ability to see what's going on. Way better than just a telephone and trying to describe what's going on. Thank you!"

"AVA gave great peace of mind to my daughter and me while we cared for my wife."

"It was nice knowing someone was available 24/7, face-to-face, especially during COVID when in-person wasn't always an option. Thank you for everything you did for our family!"

"We absolutely liked having the AVA in the house. The first time we used it, we had a bit of trouble (just because we were a bit flustered/panicked since mother had collapsed/fainted). Once we used it that first time, it was so simple. So glad to have had it on Thanksgiving so the nurse could see my mom and knew what we needed to do to provide her comfort with her breathing."



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR GRIEF CARE SERVICES, WHICH ARE FREE-OF-CHARGE TO ANYONE IN THE COMMUNITY THANKS TO YOUR KIND DONATIONS, PLEASE VISIT [ASKFORANGELA.COM](https://askforangela.com)

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AVA AND HOW IT WORKS, VISIT [ANGELAHOSPICE.ORG/TELEHOSPICE-AVA/](https://angelahospice.org/telehospice-ava/)



WE HONOR VETERANS ACHIEVES LEVEL 4 STATUS

For almost a decade the Angela Hospice We Honor Veterans program has achieved many milestones, all while continuing to demonstrate a commitment to veterans at the end of life. This past March they reached another achievement: Level 4 status.

"I got the email and it said in the subject line, 'Congratulations.' I think I screamed, I was so excited," said Teri Schmitchen, Director of Integrative Therapies and Volunteer Services, and chair of the We Honor Veterans program at Angela Hospice. "I couldn't be more proud of this team for achieving Level 4."

While there is a Level 5 – something they would like to achieve in the next year or so – their focus isn't on leveling up, it's on embracing veterans and improving their care the best they can, as it has been since the beginning.



Since its inception, the Angela Hospice We Honor Veterans program has served hundreds of veterans from all branches of the military. The program was spearheaded by John Stern and his late wife, Lucy, and Teri said if it hadn't been for them both, the launch of the program probably would've been delayed by several years.

"It's been a great honor to work with John," Teri said. "He has such a deep passion..."

During the application process, one question asked why Angela Hospice deserved to become Level 4. Teri said that was her favorite to answer, because to her, Angela Hospice has a culture that just embodies respect for veterans through all they do.

For Teri, the We Honor Veterans program also has a personal meaning. Her father was a very proud veteran who fought in the Korean War, so getting to watch the program grow has been a great honor.

"I have a deep place in my heart for veterans and the respect that they deserve for the sacrifices that they've made," she said.



**VOLUNTEER JOHN STERN
& TERI SCHMITCHEN WORK
TOGETHER ON BEHALF OF
VETERANS**

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ANGELA HOSPICE WE HONOR VETERANS PROGRAM OR TO DONATE IN
SUPPORT OF THIS OUTREACH, VISIT [ANGELAHOSPICE.ORG/VETERANS-CARE](https://angelahospice.org/veterans-care)**

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smile.amazon.com/ch/38-2755767

Through the Kroger Community Rewards Program, Kroger shoppers can link their Kroger Plus Card to the charity of their choice and earn donations just for buying groceries. If you'd like to help Angela Hospice earn rewards when you shop, visit **krogercommunityrewards.com** and log-in to select Angela Hospice as your charity.

