

SUMMER 2020

MONARCH

MISSION STRONG

during COVID - 19



Team members Denise Pike-Lehrke, Jennifer Sage, Lynn Leach, and Carie Fultz show strength as they model PPE gowns and masks sewn by Angela Hospice volunteers when supplies were scarce at the start of the pandemic.


Angela
Hospice

We'll take you under our wing.

AVA: Connecting Through COVID

Angela's Virtual Assist

Marjorie Hough was just shy of 90 years old when she tested positive for COVID-19. Needless to say, her family was very concerned.

"I did not know if I was ever going to be able to see her in person, or give her a hug or give her a kiss, or hold her hand," said Marjorie's granddaughter, Courtney Hough. Not knowing what to expect, Courtney was grateful when social worker Kelly Kovach-Collicott set up an Angela's Virtual Assist (AVA) tablet in Marjorie's room so she could connect with her family on a video chat.



MARJORIE AND FAMILY:

Marjorie with her son Terone, daughter-in-law Annette, and granddaughter Courtney.

Born in Huntsville, Alabama, the second of eight children, Marjorie has always been passionate about her family. A retired social worker, she is a faithful Jehovah's Witness who loves blues music – especially Bobby "Blue" Bland. Marjorie has been a widow since 1989 at the passing of her husband, Solomon, pictured at right. She has one son, Terone; and one granddaughter, Courtney.

"The nurse in the room kept saying, 'Look, it's your granddaughter!'" Kelly recalled. "It took her a minute to realize it was her people on the tablet, but it was so cute when she did."

Marjorie's siblings, nieces, and nephews live all across the country, but with the AVA device, Marjorie was able to connect with eight of her loved ones at once.

"It put me and my family at ease knowing that she is doing well," Courtney said. "She's looking good and she's more at peace... That really was a blessing for our family."

Courtney felt an even greater sense of relief when a few weeks later, Marjorie's test for COVID-19 came back negative. For the first time in over a month, Courtney would be able to see her grandmother face to face.

"She really lets us know that you all have been taking great care of her," Courtney said. "Your staff has been wonderful."

In fact, Courtney even brought nail polish to the Care Center so the staff could do her grandmother's nails.

"Your staff was able to paint her nails while she was positive," Courtney said. "Now that she's negative, I'm coming up there this weekend to do her second coat."



AVA CONNECTIONS

A daughter was able to see her father via a video chat with the AVA device. He had had a significant stroke and was in assisted living, where for weeks she was unable to visit, due to facility restrictions. "If it wasn't for the AVA



call they wouldn't been able to see each other before he died."
• Lindsey Wiggins
BSN, RN

One of our patients was recovering from COVID-19 in the Care Center, while his wife was receiving rehab care at another facility. With AVA, the patient was able to have several video calls with his wife. "She would talk to him in Polish. I'm sure



it was nice to be able to speak in his native tongue."
• Kelly Kovach-Collicott,
LMSW, ACSW

A patient who had divorced when his daughter was young, had lost touch with her for many, many years. She lives in Oregon, but had recently been back in touch through video chats. They were able to connect via AVA while he was in the Care Center. His social worker said when the daughter logged on to the call, "The patient lit up with joy when he saw her and became



very excited. It was a very sweet moment."
• Kaitlyn
Bednarowski,
LLMSW

CONQUERING COVID



Pictured: Nanette Davis, RN

You might imagine this to be the toughest time to be a nurse. But for Nanette Davis, who has been a nurse for three years, even surviving COVID-19 early on in the pandemic hasn't dimmed her passion for the profession.

"I am so grateful to actually be a nurse during this time," Nanette said. "I can be a source of comfort to my patients, and it keeps me busy. I'm just very grateful that I have that kind of a job where I can go in and concentrate on other people."

Nanette said that for her, patients are like family. So when she started to experience allergy-like symptoms back in March, she was eager to get tested for COVID, so she could get the all clear to go back to work.

She remembers she was outside cleaning her car

when she got her results. She was shocked to learn she had tested positive.

"I showed my husband and we both sat down and looked at each other like, now what?" she said. "I was more worried about him because he has a liver disorder. Any virus could be really detrimental to him."

It was a few days later when Nanette really started to feel sick. She would spend the next two weeks on the couch. There were a couple days where she felt really bad, but her son Noah, age 19, had it worse.

"We took him to the emergency room," Nanette explained. "They said, 'No you're not bad enough.' They said to him, 'It doesn't look like you're dying, so you can go home.'"

Together, Nanette and Noah got through it. Her husband, Jeff, never showed any symptoms. And Nanette's patients and families who were tested, all tested negative.

Having gone through COVID, "Take the precautions" is Nanette's advice. But for those who do contract the virus, "I would definitely follow through at the end of it and go to the Red Cross and donate your plasma," she said.

Nanette said it only took 45 minutes to donate her plasma. "That was kind of an awesome thing. They communicate whether you have the antibodies or not, and whether your plasma is able to help somebody."

Nanette received an email saying her plasma went to St. Louis and was going to help someone there.

Now that she is healthy and back at work, it's a bit different with all the new precautions in place. But Nanette knows working in hospice is her calling. It was fellow nurse Jenna Heady that recommended Nanette come to Angela Hospice two years ago.

"We didn't talk about hospice in nursing school where I went," Nanette explained. "I didn't know if I would like it, but I interviewed, and I can't ever imagine doing anything else. I love it."



Angela Hospice was only a part of our lives for a few short weeks, but what a huge difference you all have made in our family's history! You gave us our brother back and we are so grateful. Mark came to you from St. Joe's with no will to live any more and your gentle care and attention quietly and steadily brought him back.

MIRACLE BROTHER

When Mark Kress was seven years old, he was out riding his bicycle one beautiful, sunny morning, when the unthinkable happened: he was struck by a car. His doctors weren't sure he would make it. But Mark is a survivor. After six weeks in a coma and undergoing surgery on his skull, Mark pulled through.

"He's my baby brother," Marge Hamilton said affectionately of her now 70-year-old brother. "Mark, to me, is a miracle person."

Earlier this year, Mark would narrowly escape death for the second time, as he battled COVID-19. In March, he went to the hospital with a 103-degree fever and tested positive for the virus. It was touch and go as his condition fluctuated.

"At one point he actually coded and they brought him back," Marge explained. But the ordeal left Mark exhausted.

"He was done," Marge said. "He wanted no oxygen, he kept ripping it out. He was refusing to eat."

It was then that Mark was transferred to the Angela Hospice Care Center's COVID-19 wing.

"You were so kind when you admitted him," Marge said. She recalled how the nurse explained to Mark that they would bring him meals, and he could decide if he wanted to eat, but they would not force him. "I think he responded to the gentleness," Marge said.

Very soon, Mark's miraculous nature would begin to shine through.

"Within three days he was eating, he was beginning to talk again...It was just an amazing turnaround," Marge said.

She and her other brother Mike were able to speak to Mark on the phone while he was in the Care Center,



THEN AND NOW:
Mike, Marge & Mark

and they received twice daily updates from the hospice staff. What they witnessed, was a transformed Mark.

Marge said by the end of Mark's stay at Angela Hospice, "It was really cute because he was sending his compliments to the chef..."

After his second COVID test came back negative, Mark was happy to be able to go back home to Gilbert Residence where he has lived for the past 10 years.

Marge and Mike went to visit him at his window there.

"He smiled the whole time, he was talkative," Marge said. "I mean, he was just thrilled to be alive."

Mark has never been a big talker, but since beating COVID-19, he's been more expressive. Marge said Mark recently spent ten minutes on the phone with his niece, and "in the space of that ten minutes, he told her he loved her three times."

Just days after Mark's return to Gilbert Residence, one of his caregivers told Marge, "He's a completely different person than he was before."

"He's just been our miracle brother," Marge said. "The fact that he made it through this and came out..."

"We were delighted that we found Angela Hospice," Marge said. "You really did help bring him back."



Made for the Mission

Robert Boyce transitioned to full time at the Angela Hospice Care Center just as the C-Wing was converted to a COVID positive wing. Was he intimidated that he would be working with COVID patients? Not at all.

"I was thrilled for it," he said. "I think it goes right along with our mission and I was excited for it."

Robert has been a nurse for two years, but he has known that's what he wanted to do ever since he was a kid. Whether COVID or any other diagnosis, Robert is ready and willing to help his patients.

"Whether it's in the hospital, in the Care Center, or a pedestrian on the street, it's part of my duty to care for someone without bias," Robert said. With so much

unknown about the virus, he said the staff had to work to gain the trust of patients who came to the Care Center while battling the virus.

"When they came to us they were fearful, they were tired – rightfully so. Then they see multiple people come in and all you can see is the staff's eyes exposed because of the PPE being worn."

"I can't even imagine what they were going through," Robert continued. "I tell the families, *before I put on my nursing badge, I am a son*. I couldn't imagine not being able to be with my mom, especially on hospice."

But Robert was surprised to see how many of the hospice patients on the COVID wing recovered from the virus. He chalks it up to truly being able to rest.

"COVID is a very unique virus," he explained. "It's almost like it picks and chooses who is it going to get bad for, when is it going to get bad.... There's nothing that you can do but rest."

Since visitors weren't able to come to the COVID wing, the team made sure to check in with families twice a day, and he said that even by phone, they were able to build relationships.

As COVID-19 cases decreased in Michigan, the Care Center no longer has a dedicated COVID wing, but for Robert, the experience showed him what he and his colleagues could accomplish together.

"We all – everyone – had to be creative," he said. "We all had to adapt.... No one ever plans for a pandemic, but seeing how well everything came together so quickly, I know that I'm exactly where I need to be."

◀ **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED:** During the height of the pandemic's surge, Robert was among the nurses to work in the COVID-19 wing. Now that wing has returned to regular operations, serving non-COVID patients like Han Hozeska. Pictured here with her daughter Ann Solgot, Han can't help but smile at Robert's silly face mask.



A NOTE FROM OUR CEO...



MARTI COPLAI
PRESIDENT & CEO

Marti Coplai

We don't have to tell you that 2020 has been difficult. Since March, we've been coping with the changes demanded of us in the midst of a pandemic. We've all heard the phrase "We're in this together" countless times, while making sure that, technically, we're at least six feet apart.

And yet through all the hardship, disappointments, anxieties and frustration, we realize that it really is when we work together that we can accomplish the things we hope to see.

These difficult times have challenged us all. But they've also shown us how we can support one another, even from afar, and shown us how sometimes a simple act can make a difference.

We hope you'll take the opportunity to make a difference today, by supporting our hospice patients and those who are struggling with grief during these extraordinary times.

So much has been taken from us in 2020, but it is what we give that will define us.



The SILVER Lining

When Michigan's lockdown began, it was devastating to have to cancel grief support groups. But our bereavement team did not give up.

"There are so many silver linings," said Bereavement Manager Debbie Vallandingham. "We've completely changed how we do everything."

Debbie and her team transitioned to offering virtual services: grief support groups via web conferencing and telecounseling services for one-on-one support. They knew it wouldn't be the same as in-person support, but they would give it a try.

"I thought you would totally miss out on the connection, and you don't," Debbie revealed. "Being able to fully see someone's face and emotional expression, it does transfer across the screen."

And with so many people experiencing losses – including traumatic loss through COVID-19 – Angela Hospice's grief support programs are more in demand than ever. Debbie said she expects to see even more people reach out for support this fall.

"When emotions are that vividly raw, sometimes people just try to shut it down for a while before they deal with it, because they feel like they can't be productive," Debbie said. She explained this is what many people who have experienced a loss due to COVID-19 are feeling. "They're angry about the system, and what happened. They're tortured by the logistics of how that person died, and they can't seem to get past that at first. That takes a lot of reconciliation, and it's really hard to be able to let go of that when you were wronged. And that's how they feel – that they were wronged by this. It's a horrible situation."

As supporters, your donations to Angela Hospice make compassionate grief support available to patients' families, as well as community members. These programs, provided by licensed social workers, are not reimbursed by insurance, but are funded solely through your generous contributions.



Debbie Vallandingham



Nancy Carrara



Mary Ann Joganic



Sara Waters



Margaret Levine

SERVICES AVAILABLE:

- Counseling via video chat
- Counseling by phone
- Virtual Peer Support Groups:
 - Beginning the Journey
 - Living With Grief
 - Loss of Spouse Grief Support
 - Nobody Grieves Alone: Covid-19 Loss
 - Left Behind: Survivors of Loss from Suicide or Overdose
- Children's video counseling
- Outdoor in-person counseling for kids
- Virtual Music Therapy Group for Kids

FOR DETAILS, CALL 734.779.6690 OR VISIT ASKFORANGELA.COM

The bereavement team plans to continue offering telecounseling even when the state is fully opened up.

"I think it's wonderful, especially for some of my clients who aren't able to get to the hospice due to limitations of transportation," said social worker Sara Waters.

Others family members have been able to join the group virtually even when they were traveling. One client enlisted her son's technology expertise to help her log in to the group when she was visiting him out of state. He found it so helpful, he ended up staying for the entire meeting and came back the next week too.

"It's really opened up something we had never thought about," Debbie said. "We have a lot of family members that are out of state and didn't have access to our counseling, but now they do."

VIRTUAL WALK OF REMEMBRANCE



A DAY IN THE (PANDEMIC) LIFE OF A HOME CARE NURSE

Nurse Jane Vass sees many patients in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, so when the coronavirus hit Michigan, "I just was very concerned for my patients," she said. But the impact on her has been difficult too. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed daily life for everyone in the caring professions.

"I've started giving air hugs where I go, 'Air hug!' and move my hands like I'm hugging them. So my patients and my families have started giving them back," Jane said.

The lack of physical contact has made interactions seem less warm, less personal than before, she said. Wearing masks, keeping distant whenever possible... it just doesn't feel the same as holding someone's hand and offering an encouraging smile. But beyond the new normal of layers of PPE, home care nurses face challenges that most people don't see.

"I was very lucky that on the days I was seeing my COVID patients the weather was always good," Jane said. That's because the hood of her car would become her makeshift sanitation station, where she would spread out her gear between patient visits, spray it down, and wait the three minutes for the disinfectant to work before rinsing and drying it all. Even bathroom breaks would have to be planned out ahead of time, with a stop at home or at the office, depending where she was on her route.

All of the extra precautions are time consuming, and the PPE can be hot and uncomfortable, but Jane says she won't let that affect the care she provides.

"I can't imagine being on the other end, someone coming into your home with a mask," she said, thinking how her patients and families must be feeling. "I try to make it a little fun. I try to make it a little lighter if I can. I wear silly shoes. I wear bright shirts – some of them are a little blingy." And her Wonder Woman ear saver headband helps too.

When she can, she tries to visit her patients in facilities more frequently, since they are shut down to visitors. She worries about them feeling isolated. She even brought dog treats to one patient who couldn't get out to the pet store.

"Her baby is her dog," Jane said. So while she was picking up supplies for her cats, she got treats for her patient's dog as well. "She told me what kind that he needed. He has a very sensitive tum tum."

Jane is used to putting her patients first, but she's learned to make self-care a priority too.

"Since this started, I've made a really concerted effort to do lunch," she said. She'll treat herself to Panera's Baja mac and cheese, what she calls her "comfort food."

But for all her hard work, she's been rewarded in seeing the way she's helped her patients.

"ALL OF MY PATIENTS RECOVERED FROM COVID - IN THEIR 90S. ALL OF THEM," JANE SAID. "IT'S NOT ALWAYS A SAD STORY..." sometimes it's helping people live with a higher quality of life and getting them through a rough spot. I think this is a perfect example of that."



"This is my favorite outfit," Jane said, sporting her purple Angela Hospice scrubs and Wonder Woman headband.

Celebrate those whose memory you hold dear in your heart as you walk in their honor at a location of your choice. We will be hosting a live virtual opening ceremony as we kick off our Walk of Remembrance weekend!

SATURDAY, September 19, 2020
10 A.M. LIVE STREAM OPENING CEREMONY

Your participation in this event helps to raise awareness and crucial funding for caring programs. So share your story and invite others to join you. You can even form a Walk of Remembrance team to further honor your loved one's memory by collecting donations for charitable hospice and grief support programs in their name. Learn more at AskForAngela.com or call 734.953.6045.



Fighting the GOOD FIGHT

When hospice aide Lisa Scott saw the way frontline workers were being saluted, she was inspired.

"I came in the parking lot one day and was about to cry because I saw all the signs thanking the first responders," she said. So she asked her supervisor to transfer her to the COVID wing because she wanted to help.

"It was almost like in combat, you know. You see your fellow man on the ground, you rush over there. I felt like I was in the trenches in the war, and I was doing good," Lisa said. "I was doing good like a Nightingale or something."

She wasn't so much worried that she would catch

the virus, but she was concerned for her patients and what they were going through, so she concentrated on helping them the best she could.

"It's serious. Your loved ones can't see you, you can't touch your family... That hurts hard when you see the family at the window and there's nothing you can do but pull the blinds up and let them communicate through the phone," Lisa said. "I was more emotional about them because of that. It makes you reflect back to your own family."

Lisa was touched by the way her sister told all her friends how proud she was of her. Even strangers would see her in her scrubs and come up to her in the grocery store to thank her for her work.

"That was touching too," Lisa reflected. "It made me feel good. This must be where I'm supposed to be. It must be."



◀ **HOSPICE AIDES LISA SCOTT AND LISA WIESMAN WERE AMONG THE TEAM MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEERED TO WORK IN THE CARE CENTER'S COVID WING DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC'S FIRST WAVE.**

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هاتف الصم و البكم (TTY: 711)

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