

SUMMER 2019

# MONARCH



## GROWING THROUGH LOSS

Pictured L to R: Emilia, Justin & Jude Chambers

  
*Angela*  
Hospice

We'll take you under our wing.

# GROWING THROUGH LOSS

In February 2018, life for the Chambers family was turned upside down. Vanessa Laco Chambers learned her cancer was terminal, and a few weeks later, just days after her 39th birthday, she succumbed to the disease while in Angela Hospice's home care program.

"Everybody took such good care of her when she was in her final stages. It was amazing. I'd never experienced anything like that before, so I think we were very lucky in that context," said Vanessa's husband, Justin Chambers.

He was grateful for the help of Angela Hospice, especially for the guidance of their social worker, so he said it was a natural progression to reach out to Angela Hospice for grief support for himself and his children: 6-year-old Emilia; 8-year-old Jude; and 14-year-old Luke, Vanessa's son from her previous marriage. The transformation that has come about since has been a huge help to their family.

"It's wonderful, it's amazing to see," Justin said, nodding toward his daughter Emilia. "When someone like this has a pillar taken out from underneath them, you can't even imagine what they go through. But to see that for the most part they are pretty healthy, happy, running around like crazy,

jumping off all the couches in the whole entire house over and over, just being kids...it's beautiful."

It's been about a year now since Emilia and Jude started seeing Debbie Vallandingham, a social worker in Angela Hospice's bereavement department. Luke has since switched to a male counselor, but for the younger kids, their visits every other week with Debbie are something they can count on.

"Everything else that they counted on before is all of a sudden gone," Justin said. "But now this is a new kind of normal for them."

Debbie has helped Justin tremendously too. She's helped him understand that all three kids will process grief in a different way because they are at different stages developmentally. She's also helped him to recognize their patterns.

"With Debbie's help I've been able to see a lot of the triggers that are going on," Justin said, "to be mindful that the reason that Jude's super upset right now because the crayon is the wrong the color, isn't really the crayon. It's something much, much different and a lot deeper."

Grief is an ongoing journey, and the Chambers clan is managing it as a family. Justin is grateful that Debbie is there help when things get tough, like when Jude started acting out.

"It was a really hard time for him and he started getting aggressive, and he was hitting and stuff like that, and I didn't know where to go with it," Justin said. But Debbie created an "anger menu" to help Jude express himself. "Now Jude's back to being Jude. It's awesome because it could have turned sideways really fast on me," Justin continued.



"They always come out happier than they went in," Justin said of Emilia and Jude, about their visits with Angela Hospice's children's grief counselor Debbie Vallandingham and therapy dog, Piper.

Angela Hospice's grief support programs, including one-on-one counseling like the Chambers kids receive, as well as support groups and workshops, are all made possible through the generosity of Angela Hospice donors. With your support, we can continue to extend this outreach to more families throughout the community, coming beside them as they cope with some of life's biggest challenges.

"We're so happy that we discovered Angela Hospice, and that there was already a path set for us so that way we could just kind of climb aboard and then go," Justin said. "Because I don't know that I would have been able to get us on that path by myself."



DEBBIE VALLANDINGHAM & PIPER

# A HEARTFELT POST

TYESE DOBY, WHOSE GRANDMOTHER ERNESTINE WAS A RESIDENT IN OUR CARE CENTER, DEMONSTRATES HOW **"ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD FOR THOSE WHO LOVE GOD..." (ROMANS 8:28)**



Tyese & her grandmother Ernestine

THIS NOTE WAS PUBLISHED BY TYESE WITH THE FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER SHE CREATED FOR ANGELA HOSPICE.

What many do not know is that over the past few months, as I have been fighting my battle with breast cancer, I was witnessing my GRANDmother losing her battle with breast cancer. As devastating as these two concurrent events have been, other than the birth of my children, I don't remember feeling more blessed in my life.

Because I had cancer and was on medical leave, I was able to be by her bedside in hospice, basically around the clock. We were able to strengthen our bond as we supported, encouraged and loved each other through it all. We prayed together almost daily. I am so grateful that she was still here with us when I was able to deliver the news that I am officially in remission! Her last words spoken were her telling me that she loved me!

We don't always understand why bad things happen, but when you trust in God, He will find a way to turn messes into messages, tests into testimonies and heartache moments into heartfelt moments.

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# CARING FOR ONE & ALL

You might say someone would have to really love cooking to agree to host a weekly dinner party for an unknown number of guests – or they'd have to have a pretty big heart.

Both are true of the volunteers who organize the caregiver suppers, which take place each Wednesday in the Care Center's Family Kitchen. Volunteers prepare salads, main courses, and desserts to feed maybe 10, maybe 20, or maybe 30 plus visitors at the Care Center each week.



DOROTHY KENNEY

"We never know how many people we're going to feed," said volunteer Dorothy Kenney, who helps coordinate who will cook, set up, and serve each week. But what she can certainly count on, is how grateful all those who stop in to eat will be.

"Some say, 'Gosh, this is the first hot meal I've had for a few days,'" Dorothy said. Many of the guests are coming straight from work to visit their loved one at the Care Center. "And like I tell them, 'You know, you have to take care of yourself to take care of your loved one. So we're here to help you take care of you.'"

With donor support, Angela Hospice hosts holiday meals at the Care Center as well. This year's Mother's Day Brunch saw 100 attendees coming together to celebrate the special ladies in their life. Contributions to our Care Center fund can help support these initiatives, which offer special ways for families to bond and create beautiful new memories together.



Volunteers, Peggy Sund (above) and Terise Okasinski prepare pasta dishes for Angela Hospice's weekly caregiver supper.



FOR MORE ABOUT ANGELA HOSPICE'S GRIEF SUPPORT PROGRAMS, AVAILABLE FREE TO THE COMMUNITY, CALL 734.779.6690 OR VISIT ASKFORANGELA.COM



# walk

## OF REMEMBRANCE



*Largest Team*  
**CRAZY BOB'S CREW**

**Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019 • Madonna University**

9 a.m. Registration • 10 a.m. Start

\$25 Adults (before August 17) • \$15 ages 6 -12 • Free 5 & Under

Families and individuals of all ages are invited to join us at our annual Walk of Remembrance. We'll traverse a scenic 2.2-mile route, weaving throughout the property of the Felician Sisters, then celebrate with breakfast and a rock painting activity at Angela Hospice.

"The walk is a very meaningful day to anyone who has loved and lost," said Helen Balmforth, events manager for Angela Hospice. "Each step brings joy, tears, love, happiness, and overall validation that pain and loss are real, but we can reminisce about our loss with a smile too."

"I too have personally walked the route as a daughter, family member, and friend, walking in honor of my mom,

cousins, uncles, and friends," Helen continued. "It is a day that reminds you how exceptional those personalities were in your own life, and the occasion to remember them during this walk is significant and worthy."

Over the past 12 years, this event has continued to grow, with several families and businesses even choosing to participate as teams that raise money to support Angela Hospice's charitable programs. For more about the walk, or to learn how you can honor your loved one by forming a team in their memory, visit [angelahospice.org/events](http://angelahospice.org/events) or call 734.953.6045.



*Participates Every Year*  
*(among others)*

**MALCOLM ALESTRA**

### *Top Fundraisers*



**TEAM EVELYN**



### *Youngest Participant*



**THE CHAMBERS FAMILY**  
*(see front cover)*

*You Might Recognize...*



**MIKE, TRENTON & LORI LOOS**

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