

SPRING 2025

M 40 ANGELA HOSPICE YEARS OF LOVING CARE 1985 - 2025 MONARCH



We'll take you under our wing.®



NURSE EMMA RIMATZKI LOOKS ON AS PATIENT JACKIE'S WISH COMES TRUE: HAVING A HORSE COME VISIT HER AT THE ANGELA HOSPICE CARE CENTER.

NEIGHBORHOOD *watch*

They say love is what makes a house a home. Vito Fantino and his love, his wife, Jane, moved into their Lincoln Park home in 1953, after Vito began working for the Lincoln Park police.

"She's been gone about five years now, and I'm still here," Vito said.

Vito signed on to home hospice care from Angela Hospice, so he could stay in the home he'd built with Jane, surrounded by the memories of their 70 years together.

"We were just kids when we got married, and she was really top notch," Vito said. "I can't really explain it, except to say that she was, to me, the best person that a person could have."

Perched on his living room recliner, Vito enjoyed watching out the front window of his home.

"I sit here, look out the window, and see everything that is going on," he said.

There used to be a tennis court across the street, and he would watch people play, even in the evenings under the lights. Years later, when the courts fell into disrepair, he'd watch kids trying to climb the block wall behind it—and once a kid fell off and broke his arm. Vito made it his mission to have the wall taken down. He went and spoke with the mayor.

"I told her... 'Somebody's going to fall, and if they fall on this side, it's possible they could get killed.' I says, 'That wall should come down.'"

Vito spoke about it at the city council meeting, and as luck would have it, there was a contractor in attendance who was moved by Vito's argument. The contractor agreed to remove the wall at no cost to the city.

"Then it was a couple years later, they put the little what I call 'tot park' there," Vito explained. "So I sit here and I'm nosy. I watch. Once a cop, always a cop—your eyes are always going. And I'd see these ladies come with their kids, and the kids would play on the thing, and they'd sit on the ground or stand, and I'd sit there, and I says, 'You know, they need a bench there.'"

And that became Vito's next mission. He called the recreation director and requested a bench for the mothers bringing their kids to the park. When the director cited the expense, Vito said he'd pay for it himself.

"But I want it installed between the three trees that I grew and planted," Vito said. He marked exactly where he wanted the bench installed and sent a check to the city. And last fall, they installed the bench where Vito indicated, where he could see it from his window. Engraved on the back of the bench is a dedication in honor of his wife, Jane.

"You know, when you get old, what money you have, you know you're not going to spend it all," Vito said. "I did something that when I'm gone, will still be here. Other people will be able to use that."

Vito's tribute to his wife will benefit his community for years to come. To learn about tribute opportunities at Angela Hospice, including our popular bronze butterflies and engraved bricks, visit angelahospice.org/commemorative-giving



VITO REMEMBERED HIS FATHER'S ADVICE TO HIM WHEN HE BECAME A POLICE OFFICER: "YOU BE GOOD TO PEOPLE, AND IT'LL WORK OUT BETTER FOR YOU."

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JANE
08/28/1832 - 06/09/2021
DONATED BY
VITO FANTINO



Dear Angela Hospice Staff,

Thank you is not enough for all the wonderful care you gave our mom, Rita, and all our family. Your kindness, compassion and expertise made it possible for us to keep Mom at home for as long as we did, and you never missed a beat when she moved to assisted living. When I was too tired to think, you knew what to do.

I appreciate our nurses, **Amanda & Abby & Bob**, and those who answered the phone when I called. Thank you to **Talar** for your help and guidance when things got tough. Thank you to our shower helper, **Amaniye**. I appreciated your patience and perseverance when Mom became a handful...and your courage! Her dementia and her agitation & combativeness really put you in the trenches!

A special thanks to **Tess**! You were my rock and main support. Bless you for listening & encouraging me when things were hard. You are amazing! Bless you for your compassion, wisdom and strength when mine were failing. You reminded me why I have loved Hospice for so many years.

Love & blessings,
Bobbi Byrd & Family



Bobbi Byrd with her mother, Rita.

To read a poem Bobbi wrote about dementia, check out our blog at angelahospice.org/angela-blog

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AMANDA



ABBY



BOB



TALAR



AMANIYE



TESS

WRESTLING

Joy



SARAH AND HER FATHER, KEITH.

Sarah Elizabeth Ann McDonald was born a fighter. As a preemie, she survived her first open heart surgery when she was less than one month old. At 18 months, she survived her second. Perhaps this fighting spirit is what inspired her love of watching wrestling.

Since childhood, she followed the career of Crazy Steve, a professional wrestler best known for his tenures in Total Nonstop Action Wrestling (TNA). Sarah always wanted to go to one of his wrestling matches, but they were never close enough for her father, Keith, to take her.

But while Sarah was on Angela Hospice's home hospice care, her social worker, Dominique, learned of Sarah's fandom for Crazy Steve, and helped her father to get in touch with him.

"I explained to him, 'Sarah followed you. You've been her favorite wrestler for as far back as 25 years,'" Keith said. He told him that Sarah had ALS, and he asked Crazy Steve if he could fly him out to visit Sarah as her dying wish.

"He said, 'You sure you got the right wrestler?'" Keith recalled. But Keith reassured him, and Crazy Steve said yes.

On the day of his visit, Crazy Steve slipped into the house and put his face paint on, then came into the kitchen, slamming cabinet doors and making a ruckus. Then he came to end of the counter and asked, "Do you know who I am?"

Sarah answered, absolutely delighted, "You're Crazy Steve!"

"She was so surprised and so excited," said Dominique, who was there for the visit.

He brought T-shirts, a wrestler doll, autographed photos, and a TNA backpack.

He also brought a huge card that read: *Sarah, from all your fans.* It was signed by all the wrestlers on the roster.

The meeting meant a lot to Sarah, but it meant a lot to Crazy Steve too.

"It's single-handedly the most important thing I've ever done and easily the crowning achievement in this ongoing 22-year journey into professional wrestling," he said.

Besides the wrestling connection, Steve said he and Sarah had a lot in common, including their love of horror movies and music.

Sarah had asked about his wrestling entrance theme music, where she could see the lyrics. He texted them to her dad the next week, and the text was a bright spot on an otherwise tough day.

"I was kind of bummed," Keith said. "Sarah didn't eat with us that night, and when they lose their appetite, it's getting close. The next morning, she said, 'Daddy, I just want my meds and my yogurt, my pop, and to go back to bed.' I said, 'Well, maybe I got something that could make you feel better.'"

Keith played her the music Crazy Steve sent, and Sarah listened to it six times. Then she asked for breakfast.

A few weeks later, Keith was with Sarah as she took her last breaths.

"She made me promise to be there for her at the end. I held her hand, brushed her hair, told her I loved her." He could hear her heartbeat fading, and the color drained from her skin.



SARAH SHOWING OFF SOME OF THE MERCH THAT CRAZY STEVE BROUGHT FOR HER!

"I said, 'Sarah, Jesus is here, honey.'"

After Sarah's passing, Keith reached out to Steve to let him know—he had been planning to visit again. Steve told Keith he had his song and music video in post-production, and he asked "Can we dedicate this to your daughter?"

Now Sarah's memory lives on, not only in the hearts of all who loved her, but in the music project of someone she admired so much.

"Sarah McDonald is an incredible soul, and being gifted the opportunity to develop a relationship with her and her family is not only humbling, but has forever changed my life for the better," Steve said.

Angela Hospice offers specialized care for individuals with ALS. This is one of the many caring programs made possible through the support of caring donors.

To make a gift to help patients like Sarah, visit angelahospice.org/monarch



DOMINIQUE LOOKS ON AS CRAZY STEVE PRESENTS THE AUTOGRAPHED CARD TO SARAH.

Photos of Crazy Steve & Sarah courtesy of: Lindsey V. Photography



Check out our blog to hear Crazy Steve's song and see more photos.

GROWING GRIEF SUPPORT

Our Grief Care team continues to provide innovative ways to support our community through a variety of grief care options. Offerings starting this spring include:



HEALING ROOTS

Embrace growth and nurture your grief when you join our counselors to cultivate a grief garden on the Angela Hospice campus. This group will meet under the portico at Angela Hospice in Livonia. Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday, May 13 through September 23, 10-11 a.m.

WALKING TOGETHER

Gather for fresh air and exercise as you walk the beautiful grounds of Angela Hospice. This peer-to-peer support group will meet under the portico at Angela Hospice in Livonia. Every Friday, May 2 through September 26, 10 a.m.

For more on these and other free grief support groups and workshops, visit angelahospice.org/grief-care



Angela Hospice Lead Grief Counselor Keely Rhiannon recently completed an introductory course in thanatology. Thanatology™ is the study of how people use plants to deal with death, dying, grief, loss, and bereavement.



CRAZY STEVE AND SARAH GET A PHOTO ONCE THEY FIRST MEET.





FEATURE:
DAVE CARAPELLOTTI

A DEDICATED PARTNER & FRIEND TO ANGELA HOSPICE

Every time Dave Carapellotti walks through the doors of Angela Hospice to make a delivery, he pauses and takes a moment to offer a prayer for the patients

and families in our care. He understands, from his own personal experience, that families are facing some of the most difficult times of their lives, and he hopes that his prayers bring them comfort.

Hospice care has always been meaningful to Dave. Growing up in Cleveland with a strong Catholic faith and a close-knit family, Dave's own family was impacted by hospice care. Both his mother and grandmother received hospice support before they lost their battles with cancer.

Dave speaks fondly of the care they received, saying, "It made a big difference when you can see their pain and discomfort turn into comfort and peace."

He considers their experience a blessing, and it's one that shaped his understanding of the importance of compassionate end-of-life care.

Angela Hospice is fortunate to have a long-standing partnership with Dave, President of Advanced Marketing Partners, who has been providing quality printing for us since 1990. What sets Dave apart is his commitment to our work. Additionally, Dave sponsors our annual golf outing hole sponsor signs every year, explaining that it "gives him the opportunity to give back" to a cause that is close to his heart.



His generosity, dedication, and heartfelt connection to our mission continue to have a profound impact on the families we serve, making him a valued member of our Angela Hospice family.

ON THE COURSE FOR A CAUSE

The Golf Fore Angela Golf Outing provides funding for Angela Hospice's charitable work, including pediatric care, grief care programs, and services for patients in our Care Center facilities. This event is also a way for the community to give back and show their support for hospice patients and families.

Monday, June 9, 2025
Fox Hills Golf & Banquet Center
Golden Fox Course
Plymouth, MI

Registration for this event is now open at angelahospice.org/golf



NOT A GOLFER?

You can still show your support by taking part in our raffle, sponsoring a hole sign, or donating an auction prize. Visit our website or call 734.464.3478 for more details.

PROTECTING YOUR *treasure*

Join us for this FREE event!

Wednesday, May 14, 5-6:30 p.m.
Angela Hospice, Livonia

REGISTER AT ANGELAHOSPICE.ORG/EVENTS OR CALL JENNIFER DALE AT 734.953.6009.

In this introduction to estate planning, learn how to protect your assets and your family's welfare. Through proper planning you can make sure to maintain control of your assets, and give control to those you trust most when the time is appropriate.

Hear from attorney at law, and Angela Hospice board member, Esther Acosta at this informational presentation.



smiles ALL AROUND

Sometimes a smile can make all the difference—that's part of the idea behind Little Horses Big Smiles. The group's founder, Ronica, brought mini horse Fred to visit patient Jackie in our Livonia Care Center and the result rang true to the name: the little horse brought big smiles.

It all started when Jackie's daughter, Vicki, was showing her mom some videos online of a horse going room to room visiting patients.

"It was just adorable," Vicki said, and her mother agreed.

"She said, 'Oh I would love to see a horse, you need to get me a horse,'" Vicki relayed. "There was never an option. I just had to find it."

With the help of an Angela Hospice nurse, they found Little Horses Big Smiles, a pet therapy group in Fremont, Michigan. When Vicki called and explained it was her mother's final wish, Ronica called right back and agreed to make the three-hour drive with Fred.

Fred may be mini, but the impact he made on Jackie was huge.



PICTURED WITH JACKIE ARE (L TO R) HER DAUGHTERS MICHELLE AND VICKI, RONICA, JACKIE'S DAUGHTER-IN-LAW ALETA, AND OF COURSE FRED THE MINI HORSE.

"She actually tried to get out of the bed," Vicki said. "She couldn't get to the horse and he couldn't get to her fast enough. What Ronica does is absolutely amazing."

The Angela Hospice team was happy to be able to facilitate this special encounter for Jackie.

"The look on her face is pure joy!" said Joan Harold, Senior Director of Clinical Operations.

CHEERS TO 40 years!

October 10, 1985: Ronald Reagan was president, *The Cosby Show* was the top-rated TV show, and Ready For The World's "Oh Sheila" topped the Billboard charts. The world was still reeling from news of an Italian cruise ship hijacked at an Egyptian port. Strawberry Fields in Central Park had been dedicated as a memorial to John Lennon one day earlier. And...in a small office in the basement of Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan, Angela Hospice was

declared officially open.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of our organization. Reaching this milestone has us looking back over the last four decades, with gratitude for all those who have supported this important work, for the growth we've achieved, and for all those souls whose lives we've been honored to be a part of.

As we reflect on this anniversary over the coming months, we hope you will join us in celebrating those who have contributed to our mission and helped care for so many families in southeast Michigan—and that includes you!



FOUNDER, SISTER MARY GIOVANNI



- 1985:** Angela Hospice is established
- 1993:** Developed My Nest is Best pediatric program
- 1994:** Livonia Care Center opens, first freestanding inpatient hospice facility in Michigan
- 2000:** Prenatal Hospice Program established, the second in the U.S.
- 2010:** Expansion doubles capacity of Livonia Care Center
- 2017:** Telehospice services added
- 2019:** Angela Palliative Care launches
- 2024:** Waterford Care Center opens





Angela Hospice Home Care, Inc. is dedicated to provide comprehensive, compassionate, and Christ-like care to adults and children in the communities we serve.

Home Hospice Care
Hospice Care Centers
Pediatric & Prenatal Care
Grief Care
Palliative Care

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The Monarch
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waterford CARE CENTER

Angela Hospice's second Care Center, located in Waterford, Michigan, officially opened its doors in December to begin caring for hospice patients. With lakeside views, the newly renovated facility on the campus of Lourdes Senior Community provides a peaceful environment for the comfort of hospice patients and their families.

"I could not be more grateful for the time, hard work, and dedication that the Angela Hospice team put into the opening of the Waterford Care Center," said Jordan Richter, director of the Waterford Care Center.

The very first patient to stay at the facility was Gary Mitzner, who currently receives home care services from Angela Hospice. Gary came to the Waterford Care Center for a 5-day respite stay to give his family caregivers time to rest and recharge.

"It filled my heart to watch the team welcome Gary into our care," Jordan said. "It's truly an honor to provide quality hospice care to more of our community."

For his part, Gary reported that he enjoyed the company of the team as they doted on him, the beautiful view of Scott Lake, and the food during his stay.



LEFT TO RIGHT WITH GARY: ERIN KHAMENEH,
MARY BETH VAN OCHTEN, LUCY NOBLE,
SHERRI STATEN, PENNY WEEKS

For more about Angela Hospice's Waterford Care Center,
visit AskForAngela.com

EARTH DAY ART AUCTION

Environmental stewardship is a ministry priority of Angela Hospice's founders, the Felician Sisters of North America.

This year we are highlighting this commitment to protecting our planet with our Earth Day Art Auction taking place **April 1-April 22**. Donated by the artists, these framed works of art depicting the beauty of nature will be featured in our online auction, with all proceeds supporting Angela Hospice's work.

"We hope our supporters will treat themselves to a piece of art that catches their eye and celebrates nature, knowing that their purchase will also support programs for hospice patients and families," said Lisa Norton, Communications & Philanthropy Manager.



BID NOW AT ANGELAHOSPICE.ORG/EARTHDAY