

Shared Journeys

We serve patients and families by raising funds for end-of-life care that provides peace, dignity and comfort.



Join us for a celebration benefiting Allina Health Hospice patients and their families!

Friday, April 28, 2017 at 6 p.m.
Radisson Blu Mall of America
2100 Killebrew Drive, Bloomington, MN 55425

The evening includes an hors d'oeuvres reception, gourmet dinner with wine, patient and family stories, silent and live auctions and entertainment. The emcee for this event is Cathy Wurzer, Morning Edition host at MPR News and co-host of Almanac on Twin Cities PBS.

All proceeds support services providing care to Allina Health Hospice patients and families.

Register today!

Visit allinahealth.org/hospicedragonflygala.

Sponsorships, individual tickets and tables of ten are available! Contact Leslie Johnson at 612-775-2512 or HospiceFoundation@allina.com.

Thank you to our 2017 Presenting Sponsor:



Shared Journeys

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALLINA HEALTH
HOSPICE FOUNDATION | SPRING 2017

Paws-itive impact of pet therapy

Written by: Deanna Morken, Allina Health Hospice supporter

Being in a care setting - as a patient or a caregiver - can make you crave the simple pleasures of a normal life: your own bed, a quiet day, your dog by your side. Imagine then, the luxury of a visit from a furry, four-legged friend who wants nothing more than to lean up against you and bring you a little joy in return for a scratch behind the ears. This is the kind of happiness Allina Health Hospice pet therapists can bring to patients and families.

Recently, there was a gentleman in hospice who was in a wheelchair. He enjoyed many visits from volunteer Connie Polly and her dog Lacy. Lacy would lean next to the man's wheelchair, so he could rub her ears and neck, making them both very happy.

A severe stroke left him bed-bound, so during her next visit, Connie asked if she could place Lacy up on the bed with him. Connie and the man's wife watched as he slowly lifted his unimpaired hand and placed it on Lacy's head. He rubbed her ears just as he always did.

With Lacy by his side, his face softened and relaxed. His wife could tell he was happy and had found some comfort.



Christina Pieper-Bigelow with her dog, Duchess.



Connie Polly with her dog, Lacy.

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Paws-itive impact of pet therapy (continued)

“It’s a huge honor working at hospice and helping someone journey to their next life,” Connie reports. “Lacy takes people to a joyful place. That makes it worth all my time and effort.”

The simple presence of a dog may bring back happy memories of a cherished pet from the past and bring a sense of normal life into a stressful situation.

Christina Pieper-Bigelow and her dog Duchess are also pet therapy volunteers. “Duchess and I bring a different sense of calm and comfort to patients and families - nothing has to be said - the patient can just enjoy the warmth, love and presence of a dog who loves people,” said Christina. “It has been very interesting to watch

how Duchess interacts with different patients and senses things that we cannot.”

Bringing peace to a stressful situation and joy to a person who is facing the last transition in life is a gift that benefits the patient, the family and the volunteer. Christina adds, “Hospice patients and families are so appreciative of the therapy dog teams that I would encourage anyone to pursue it.”

To learn more about becoming a pet therapy volunteer, call Judy Plucker at 612-262-7059 or visit allinahealth.org/hospicevolunteer. To donate, please visit online at allinahealth.org/hospicefoundationgivenow or call 612-775-2550.

Meet the foundation team



Laurie Hennen
Foundation Director

I have been fundraising for more than 11 years and came to Allina Health four years ago from the University of Minnesota. I have had a passion for hospice care since 2010, when a dear friend passed away while in the loving arms of hospice care.

I am excited to join my hospice colleagues in raising money to support the programs and services of Allina Health Hospice.

One of my favorite parts of my job is visiting with donors and hearing about their unique experiences that help guide their philanthropy. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, reading, practicing yoga and rooting for the Wisconsin Badgers.



Ron Bagnall
Senior Development Officer

I’ve been fundraising for 32 years and working with hospice for eight years. I love serving hospice patients and their families by raising funds that provide comfort and dignity. I will also be raising support for Courage Kenny, a leader in rehabilitation services for children and adults.

My wife and I have four adult children and three grandchildren who live in the Twin Cities, Michigan and California.

For me, every day is a new adventure. When you’re around people who have only weeks or days to live, you learn to value every day and cherish every relationship.



Leslie Johnson
Development Officer

I have had the privilege to serve hospice patients for the last five years. My involvement with fundraising started at the same time the J.A. Wedum Residential Hospice opened its doors in February 2012. Being part of the Hospice Foundation has been extremely rewarding, and I have learned a lot from the patients and families I have had the opportunity to meet and work with.

I enjoy all aspects of fundraising for hospice, but particularly enjoy opportunities to meet with patients and grateful families at Wedum.

Outside of fundraising, I enjoy boating, biking, hiking and tennis. I’m looking forward to summer and spending time with friends and family.

Tips for families facing end-of-life care

Written by: Aaron Beaudry, MSW, LICSW, Allina Health Hospice & Palliative Care

Talking about end-of-life decisions doesn’t have to be morbid and depressing. I have been a hospice social worker for the past 15 years, and after talking with people about end-of-life, they feel empowered and spiritually connected.

Here are a few things to think about in regard to end-of-life decisions:

Start the conversation early. Waiting until someone has been diagnosed with a terminal condition, or has been in a life-threatening accident, is too late. End-of-life decisions need to be a thoughtful, inclusive process that includes everything from what medical treatments your loved one—and you—want to decisions about life support. Unfortunately, someone will make decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself and that burden could be placed upon your loved ones if your wishes are unknown.

Get it in writing. It’s a true gift to your loved ones to let them know how to care for you when you are not able to speak for yourself. Less than two years after my father’s passing, my 60-year-old mother entered a coma from a rare brain disease. She had been an excellent hospice nurse and was prepared in case something like this were to happen.

My mother’s wishes involved limited interventions, and it was an exceedingly difficult time because none of us wanted to follow those wishes. Well before getting ill, she had made it clear what was important to her and what living meant to her.

Involve your primary care provider. Our task was especially challenging when the doctor questioned our decision to decline certain procedures. Involving your primary care provider early will allow them to understand your wishes and can help alleviate tension when treatment options are discussed.

By the way, my mom lived! In her lifetime, she has been struck by lightning, survived an Amtrak train crash and a rare brain disease. To say she is lucky is an understatement.

I encourage everyone to start an end-of-life conversation. I know it isn’t an easy discussion, but for those you love, it’s one of the kindest things you can do.

For more information or to register for a free advance care planning class, visit allinahealth.org/acp or call 612-262-2224.



Thank you to our donors

In 2016, more than \$775,000 was given by generous donors to support hospice programs, patients and their families. Thank you for helping to ensure our hospice patients receive end-of-life care that provides peace, dignity and comfort, regardless of their financial situation.