

Shared Journeys

Ron Bagnall, Foundation Director

Leslie Johnson, Development Associate

From the mailbag

"You helped my family with both my dad and mom. Not sure what we would have done without your help. God bless." – Kathy

"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you! The care provided not only to Dad, but to me was tremendous. I will always be grateful to you. You were a pillar of strength for me, and I will never forget the compassion and support you provided." – Andrée

"I will be forever grateful that my son was able to spend his last days at the Wedum Hospice. The staff and facility were both phenomenal. It is horribly painful to lose a child in the prime of his life, but I have sweet memories of our time together at Wedum. I will treasure that time in my heart." – Laurie

Calling All Veterans

In 2014, Allina Health Hospice achieved the highest level of recognition (level 4 partner) in the **We Honor Veterans** program. Allina Health is the first Minnesota hospice program to receive this honor.

To better serve veterans, we need more veterans to serve as hospice volunteers for our Vet-to-Vet program. Phil Burfeind, an Allina Health Hospice nurse, and a veteran himself, knows the value of veteran volunteers.

"In the military, you're away from family and home, and fellow veterans become your new family," said Burfeind. "Many veterans experience combat duty and later harbor anxiety and guilt. Sometimes those feelings are locked inside for decades, but at the end of life they begin to surface. Having a volunteer who is a veteran and speaks the same language can be extremely helpful. We need more veterans who can serve their brothers and sisters at the end of life."

If you would like to learn more about becoming a hospice volunteer or know a veteran who needs hospice care, please call Allina Health Hospice at 651-635-9173 or 800-261-0879.



WE HONOR VETERANS

Get your tickets for Blizzard Blast 2015

Join us on Friday, Jan. 30, 2015 at 6 p.m. for the ninth annual Blizzard Blast at Glencoe City Center.

Enjoy a wonderful evening packed with smiling faces, delicious food from Chef Craig's Catering and the opportunity to bid on a variety of wonderful live and silent auction items. John Berseng, DO, will serve as our emcee for the evening.

All proceeds from the 2015 Blizzard Blast will remain in Glencoe, Hutchinson and surrounding communities to benefit Allina Health Hospice patients and their families.

For ticket information, call Allina Health Home Care Services in Glencoe/Hutchinson at **320-234-5031**.

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Shared Journeys

Living through loss



Resources to provide emotional, psychosocial and spiritual support to patients, family members and loved ones

It is universal and at the same time highly personal and individual. At some point, we will all face it—or help someone else through it. There is no right or wrong way to work through it.

It is grief.

Along with a commitment to treating the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the patient and providing the highest quality of life possible, Allina Health Hospice also cares for family members, caregivers and loved ones through its grief counseling services.

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One client's experience with Allina Health Hospice Grief Resources

"All of the Allina Health Hospice team members were wonderful, caring people who guided us through the process. It was difficult to see death coming. There was a sense of denial and then it happened so quickly. It was never a burden to call or ask a question. They were just there for us in a calm, supportive way. Six months from his death, I continue to meet with a grief counselor one-on-one. These are remarkable people who have such a level of understanding. For me, the grief comes in waves. The grief counselors do a special job that most people couldn't do. It's important for people to know that there are trained professionals there to help. You can't do it by yourself—this has been a crucial element to help me work through the process of loss."

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Living through loss (continued)

Grief counseling services, which are available for 13 months following a patient's death, include bereavement assessment, individual counseling sessions and grief support groups. Grief counselors are also available before a patient's death. Donor support is key to providing and expanding services for individual grief counseling, as the counseling sessions are not billable or reimbursed by private insurance or other payers such as Medicare.

"Grief counseling is one of the quiet treasures of our Hospice," said Steve Robertson, supervisor of spiritual care and bereavement, Allina Health Hospice. "Many of our families may not even realize that these services are available until we reach out to them. Grief counseling is available to any family member or loved one who desires or needs it including grandchildren, spouses, siblings and extended family members."

Nine grief counselors work with Allina Health Hospice providing bereavement support with a phone call to each patient family acknowledging their loss, expressing sympathy, and conducting a grief assessment for further counseling or other appropriate support services by six weeks after the death of their loved one. Ongoing grief counseling is available, and supportive mailings are sent out throughout the year offering encouragement and comfort.



"Grief is so individual and so personal," said Robertson. "It's critical to touch base with clients along the way to make sure their needs are being met. What we want to do is to normalize their grief—to let them know that grieving is normal. Grief counseling and support groups help our clients realize that they are not alone."

Another grief resource available to the community is the Allina Health Grief Resource Line. "The non-crisis line is staffed by grief counselors to connect them with community resources, one-on-one support and referral for services to help them deal with loss," explained Gloria Cade, director of hospice and palliative care.

Grief counselor Carri Sullivan views her work as rewarding and gratifying. "This could be any of us facing the loss of a loved one," she said. "There is an element of humanness that comes out in our hospice work. Perhaps more than any other areas of health care, entering the world and exiting the world are two life-changing events for everyone involved."

To meet a growing demand, Allina Health Hospice will expand to offer three grief retreats and 13 support groups in 2015 including a family grief retreat and grief support groups for Mother Loss for Adult Daughters, Spouse/Partner Loss and more. "We offer support groups not readily offered elsewhere in the community," said Sullivan. Although a small fee is charged for some groups and for retreats, philanthropic support is critical to growing and enhancing the services offered.

"In general, our society does not do the best job at supporting loss," said Sullivan. "We recognize how difficult it is. There is great comfort in having people there to support you who understand death and the grieving process."

To learn more about Allina Health Hospice Grief Resources, visit allinahealth.org/griefresources.

AT A GLANCE:

Allina Health Hospice Bereavement Department

- Grief counselors are assigned to Allina Health Hospice teams covering communities throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin
- Bereavement support is provided pre-death and post-death
- More than 500 calls are fielded each year for the Allina Health Grief Resource Line
- Special projects include children's grief journals, comfort boxes (more than 90 have been delivered to young children and teens who have had a parent or sibling die in the program), books, guided imagery and more
- Philanthropic support is critical to providing and expanding services

To make a donation to support grief counseling or to purchase one comfort box at \$70, see picture above, please use the enclosed envelope and indicate how you wish for your gift to be used. For more information, contact Ron Bagnall at ron.bagnall@allina.com or 651-241-5419.

We're welcoming Bob Walters



Robert (Bob) Walters has joined Allina Health Home Care Services as its president. He replaces Michael Bartz who passed away on Feb. 12, 2014 in hospice care.

At Allina Health, Walters will have responsibility for core Allina Health Home Care services: Home Oxygen & Medical Equipment, Home Health, Hospice, Palliative

Care, Advance Care Planning, Care Navigation and Triage, and SeniorCare Transitions.

Walters comes to Allina Health from ProHealth Home and Hospice Care in Waukesha, Wis., where he served as executive director. Earlier, Walters was responsible for similar community-based service lines at OhioHealth and Aurora Health Care. He has extensive experience in growing hospice services, including the oversight for three inpatient hospice facilities— AngelsGrace Hospice in Oconomowoc, Wis., Kobacker Hospice in Columbus, Ohio and Zibler Hospice in Milwaukee.

“It takes an entire community effort to provide excellent hospice care,” said Walters. “Community support—from donors, volunteers and the interdisciplinary care team—is critical. We need to nurture the time, talents and resources within the community, and educate the public on the importance of excellent hospice care.”

Walters experience with hospice care is both personal and professional. “My mother passed away in a hospice residence and I don’t know what we would have done without the care provided to her,” he said. “It gave my mother, and our family, peace of mind during a difficult time.”

A native of Milwaukee and father of four, Walters enjoys the outdoors, golf, rollerblading and is looking forward to enjoying Minnesota’s four seasons.



Happy Thanksgiving

This is the perfect time of the year to send our sincere thanks for your support of our hospice patients and their families. Your gifts have provided peace, dignity, and comfort when needed most. Here are some ways that you have been a blessing to others:

- **Enabled a wife** to spend her final days at the J.A. Wedum Residential Hospice when her husband was unable to care for her at home and pay the room and board costs. The Wedum Compassion Fund and Honoring Veterans Fund help those who cannot afford Wedum’s room and board expenses. Medicare and private insurance do not cover these costs.
- **Provided TLC money** for groceries to a couple who needed assistance while the husband fought terminal cancer and mounting financial bills. TLC grants provide funds for food, medicine, and heating bills to hospice families facing extreme financial pressure.
- **Comforted a mother** with hymns and songs as friends and family gathered around her bed. When the music therapist played “Dona Nobis Pacem” (let us have peace), the mother briefly opened her eyes as each daughter held her hand and shared their goodbyes. Music, massage, and pet therapy bring comfort to the mind, body, and soul, but are not covered by Medicare or private insurance.

If you would like to remember a loved one this Thanksgiving and be a blessing to a hospice patient and their loved ones, please return your gift in the attached envelope. Your gift will make a difference! Thank you.

