

You Make Meaningful Moments *Possible*



SUMMER 2017

A Legacy of Service

Why I give

Blooming with love

Get to know:

MARY WILLEMS-AKERS



visiting Nurse

Visiting Nurse provides compassionate care to alleviate suffering and ensure quality of life for those affected by serious illness. We care for those who go on living as well. Our grief services are available at no charge for any adult who has experienced the loss of a loved one. We proudly serve these Indiana counties: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Noble, Wabash, Wells and Whitley.

HOSPICE HOME HOSPICE CARE PALLIATIVE CARE GRIEF SUPPORT

www.VNFW.org



A Legacy of Service

Retiring CEO Reflects on Years of Service

After almost 27 years serving Visiting Nurse, CEO Phyllis Hermann is retiring on July 7. Her tenure as CEO saw a near-tripling in growth of the agency and the expansion of the Visiting Nurse campus to include the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center, the only such dedicated facility in the region.



“I’ve just been blessed to be in this role,” she said. The Port Huron, Michigan, native began her nursing career in Fort Wayne at Lutheran Hospital in the mid-1970s as a nursing assistant. Her interest in hospice care began

earlier, and during her nursing school days at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, she was asked to give a speech on a healthcare topic. She chose hospice, and said learning more about the then-new field of hospice inspired her to shadow a Visiting Nurse hospice nurse as part of her studies. She joined Visiting Nurse as a hospice nurse in 1989 and in 1991 was promoted to director of hospice care. That position expanded to director of hospice and regional services three years later, as Hermann helped Visiting Nurse expand to an eight-county area of northeast Indiana. In 1995, Hermann and Visiting Nurse established the region’s first facility-based hospice inpatient unit: Hospice Home. She was instrumental in developing the policies and procedures for the facility to meet local, state and federal regulations, and she served as the facility’s first patient care coordinator.

After a short break from the agency, Hermann returned as Quality Management Consultant in 2000. Quality improvement has always been a passion for her, she said.

During this time, the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) took effect, and Hermann developed new policies and procedures to train Visiting Nurse’s staff in the privacy law. In 2007, she was promoted to Vice President of Clinical Services for the agency, and in November, 2009, was named the Visiting Nurse CEO.

In the years since becoming CEO, Hermann led the renovation of the Hospice Home kitchen and family room, hired the agency’s first full-time medical director, signed an agreement with Lutheran Hospital to implement an inpatient palliative consult service in 2011, and hired the agency’s first nurse practitioner to visit patients in nursing facilities.

Even bigger changes came in 2012 with the beginning of the development of what would become the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center. Hermann led the agency in its efforts to have land purchased and rezoned adjacent to the Homestead Road campus of Visiting Nurse, and in June 2015, the grief center opened. In 2013, Hermann led the agency’s celebration of its 125-year anniversary, with a new logo and new name: Visiting Nurse. That year also saw the creation of the Visiting Nurse Foundation, which helps underwrite some of the costs of the grief center, programming, services and care for patients without other means to pay.

The agency’s growth over Hermann’s tenure is something Hermann is pleased with. In 2009, when

(continued on page 2)



Dear friends,

As you read this letter, I am wrapping up the final few weeks of my career at Visiting Nurse. I have been affiliated with this wonderful agency for nearly 27 years - years I am very proud of and years that have filled me with great personal and professional joy. I am leaving at a time of growth in our agency that is due in no small part to the hard work and compassion of our wonderful and committed team and the generous support of people like you. Without your support, our agency couldn't help bring peace to those people in our community experiencing serious illnesses. I will always cherish the relationships I have had with our volunteers, supporters, Board members and my co-workers at Visiting Nurse.

I leave at a time of great change in the hospice industry. Medicare rules and regulations are continually being updated. I have always stressed the importance of compliance with federal and state laws and continuous quality improvement has been my passion. Reimbursements from Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance have also changed over the past few years, which has also been a challenge. I'm pleased that the team at Visiting Nurse has continued to go above and beyond for our patients and their families in spite of these changes.

I'm proud of the work of the Visiting Nurse Board of Directors and Visiting Nurse Foundation Board of Directors in developing an endowment fund. The endowment fund, which was created through the generosity of donors and supporters like you, provides earnings that underwrite some of the costs of one of my proudest achievements while serving as CEO: The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center, completed in 2015 through the hard work and dedication of the Board of Directors, Capital Campaign Committee, staff and the generous support of many benefactors like you in the community, including the Murphy and Huber family. Thanks to your support, our grief support services are available at no charge to any adult in the community who has suffered a loss due to death. I'm grateful to all who worked so hard to bring this unique service to our region.

As I look forward to retirement, I can leave with the knowledge I am leaving Visiting Nurse in good hands. Our Board of Directors has done an excellent job in its search for our next CEO, and I'm certain that Eric Klimes will carry on Visiting Nurse's traditions of caring, compassion and commitment in the years to come. As for myself, I look forward to spending more time with my family, doing some gardening, and enjoying every moment. One of the many lessons I have learned while working for Visiting Nurse is that every day is a gift, not a promise, and I look forward to cherishing each one with my friends and family. May you all be as blessed as I have been.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Hermann, CEO

Phyllis Hermann, CEO

You

can make a difference in the lives of those who receive hospice care and do not have the ability to pay by making a donation today with the enclosed envelope and selecting the **Phyllis Hermann Endowed Hospice Fund!** As Phyllis began her career as a hospice nurse at Visiting Nurse, establishing this fund is a fitting tribute to her legacy of caring and supporting those in need!

A Legacy of Service

(continued from inside front cover)

she became CEO, total assets were \$7.5 million. In 2016, those assets had increased to more than \$20 million, thanks to donations from Visiting Nurse's family of supporters like you.

"I have not met anyone with a bigger caring heart for all who touch Visiting Nurse from the board, employees, volunteers, patients and families of Visiting Nurse services," said outgoing Board of Directors Chairman Brian Fehlhaber. "The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center was totally Phyllis's dream and

she made it a reality and there is nothing like it in the country. Phyllis brought the agency through very difficult financial times and made it a very viable agency."

Hermann said her retirement plans include spending more time with her family, including her six grandchildren, and working in her garden. She also looks forward to having more time to volunteer in her church and community. Visiting Nurse celebrated her retirement with a staff appreciation event and a reception in June. We wish her nothing but joy in her retirement.



Why I give: *Ann Zobrosky*

"I give to Visiting Nurse because it means so much to our family that our mother, Georgia Zobrosky, could spend her last week in such a peaceful, beautiful environment. The hospice care provided gave her a peaceful ending to her life. My sister and I especially appreciate the caring individuals who work and volunteer there and their knowledge of the process. For the first time in over a year, we did not need to worry about any decisions, but just had the chance to say goodbye. That was invaluable."

WITH
Your Help

we can care for the
seriously ill and their families.

Donate today!



To ensure that no one goes without the services they need, simply fill out and return the attached donation envelope. You can also donate with a credit card online: www.vnfw.org/donate



OUR NEW CEO

Eric Klimes

Visiting Nurse is pleased to announce that Eric Klimes has been selected as the agency's next chief executive officer. Eric replaces Phyllis Hermann, who has retired after serving as CEO since 2009. His first day is July 17.

Eric will be responsible for driving Visiting Nurse to the next level, building upon the solid foundation and momentum achieved by the Visiting Nurse team under Phyllis' leadership. With more than 13 years in hospice experience, Eric most recently served as the CEO of Hospice of Washington County, Inc., in Hagerstown, Maryland. His background includes managed care contracting, financial operations and compliance. Eric has extensive experience in increasing the number of patients served and improving employee engagement while also enhancing financial stability. He recently spearheaded the development of an inpatient hospice unit and the development of an endowment to provide hospice care to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

Eric earned a master's degree in Business Administration from Washington Adventist University and holds a bachelor's degree in organizational management and healthcare administration. He is a former U.S. Army Reservist, serving for 13 years as an automated logistical specialist.

Please join us in welcoming Eric to Visiting Nurse. While we will miss Phyllis' commitment and steady leadership, we are delighted to have Eric join Visiting Nurse to enhance its longstanding mission to provide excellent care to patients with serious illnesses and their families.



SINCE JANUARY, YOUR DONATIONS HELPED BRING

**116 AMERICAN FLAG
BLANKETS**

— *to our veteran patients* —



visiting Nurse

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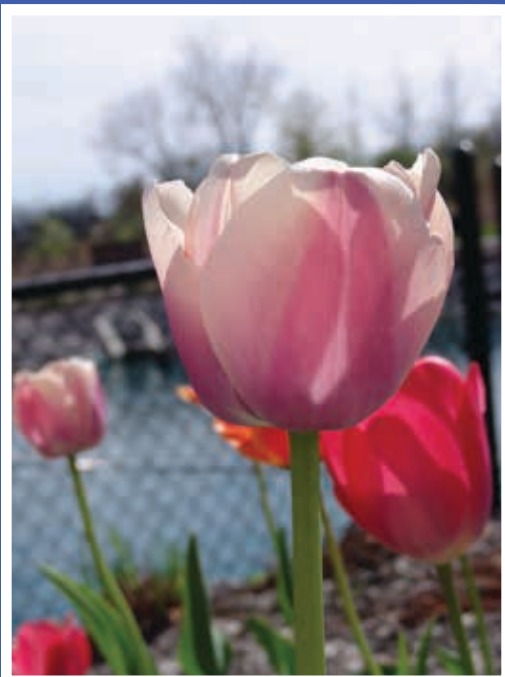
www.VNFW.org f

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With your help, our gardens are

Blooming with love

One thing visitors and patients who come to Visiting Nurse's campus on Homestead Road often remark on is the beautiful natural setting that surrounds our buildings. That's thanks to your generous support of our Volunteer Program and your donations in memory of your loved ones to make our campus so beautiful. This beauty is calming and comforting to our patients and their families who can take a break from the turbulent emotions that can surround the end of life by spending time walking through the gardens.



You can bring beauty to our gardens by calling (260) 435-3207.



The extensive gardens, plantings and restored prairie are maintained by our Garden Volunteers, now numbering nearly two dozen. Overseen by Volunteer Coordinator Ann Blue and longtime volunteers Holly Wiebke and Sally Lawson, the garden volunteers give of their time to bring natural beauty and peace to the whole campus all year long.

Spring-blooming bulbs like tulips, daffodils and grape hyacinths give way to hostas, irises, roses and peonies as the weather warms the ground, and our garden volunteers add annuals for additional splashes of color throughout the growing season.

Each garden volunteer is assigned a particular area of the landscaping, and Wiebke said each volunteer tends their individual garden spots throughout the year. Often they purchase plants out of their own pockets to help beautify Visiting Nurse's grounds. Additional plants are purchased through donations from people like you. Family members whose loved ones received Visiting Nurse's services can also make a donation in memory of their loved ones by selecting a planting or tree to be planted on our grounds. You can see their love blooming all year around. If you are interested in making a donation in memory of your loved ones, please contact Visiting Nurse's Foundation office at (260) 435-3207.

"The garden volunteers are happy and hardworking people that aren't afraid to get their hands dirty! Over the years they have coaxed loveliness out the neutral soil. We could never have had such charming grounds were it not for the time and ability these people give us throughout the growing season," said Blue. "Thank you, garden volunteers!"

After donations from people like you helped build the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center in 2015, the garden volunteers were given the task of deciding how to landscape the building so it would blend well with the other buildings on the Visiting Nurse campus. "That was a huge job," Wiebke recalled. "Sally (Lawson) said (we

should) plant flowers all around it. So we asked staff and the other volunteers (for donations) and we got so many different plants. We're still adding to it."

They planted lilies, roses, peonies and sweet pea vines from their own gardens around the pond and small shrubs and annuals, plus bulbs, by the front entrance. Garden volunteers also maintain the Mothers, Fathers and Veterans gardens that surround the grief center. The Veterans Garden is one Wiebke is particularly proud of, as its flowers bloom with colors of red, white and blue throughout the year.

Another big project was the restored prairie located on the west side of Hospice Home. Early plantings didn't take, but a much-needed and very generous donation of wildflower seeds from Rural King meant the next year the prairie was covered in black-eyed Susans, Queen Anne's lace, daisies, coreopsis, larkspur and more. Garden volunteers helped spread more than three pounds of wildflower seeds throughout the prairie, and are on hand to pull weeds and rake mulch as needed. Family members can often be seen strolling along the winding paths, a welcome respite from the stress of caregiving.

The garden volunteers are also responsible for filling planters with seasonally appropriate plantings and with filling the bird feeders that are scattered around the campus. As the seasons change, the volunteers are there to clean up dried foliage, rake leaves and plant bulbs for the coming spring.

Every part of the landscaping at Visiting Nurse is designed to be beautiful and soothing. In the Seasons of Life Gardens, which wrap around the outside of Hospice Home, there are memorial benches, bird feeders and a fountain that burbles in the warm summer months. Families and staff alike enjoy walking through the gardens as a way to release the tensions of life. We are grateful for your donations that help our garden volunteers make Visiting Nurse a beautiful place all year around.



Departing board members reflect on sharing their time and talent with Visiting Nurse



DaVita Mitchell



Brian Fehlhaber



Anne Cavanaugh



Jerome Baer

As the year turns to summer, it's time for Visiting Nurse to say goodbye to four board members, whose terms expired June 30. Because we are a non-profit agency, we rely on the generosity of those who have dedicated their time, talent and treasure to ensuring our continued ability to help people in the most difficult times of their lives. These four people have served Visiting Nurse on our Board of Directors and we are so thankful for their service to our agency.

The terms of Jerome Baer, Anne Cavanaugh, Brian Fehlhaber and DaVita Mitchell added up to nearly 40 years of board service combined. The four have stepped away from Visiting Nurse's Board of Directors, but all say their support for our agency continues. Fehlhaber, who served as board chairman in his final term, spoke of the importance of the Visiting Nurse Foundation in ensuring Visiting Nurse's long-term financial stability, made possible by through the generosity of people just like you.

"You have to give back to the community," Fehlhaber said. "Fundraising is really important. That's the goal of the Foundation. It's so important for the funding to be available to offer services."

Fehlhaber, who works for Summit Reinsurance Services Inc., was recruited to Visiting Nurse's board by Anne Cavanaugh, who is also stepping down after 9 years on the board, and who is retired from Summit Reinsurance Services. Cavanaugh's advice for incoming board members is to never lose sight of Visiting Nurse's mission: taking care of patients and their families. Cavanaugh's mother was a patient with Visiting Nurse in the 1980s, and she has always felt positively about the experience she and her family had with the agency.

That was also the case for DaVita Mitchell, whose father was cared for by Visiting Nurse prior to her board service. "The care my father received was excellent," Mitchell said, adding that staff members helped explain the dying process to relieve the family's anxiety. Mitchell, a Student Support Specialist with Southwest Allen County Schools, knows that information helps ease stress.

"Telling the story and sharing your story," is so important, Mitchell said. "I speak very highly of (Visiting Nurse) because they are worthy to be spoken of."

Jerome Baer, a vice president at Miller's Health Systems, said he was recruited to the Visiting Nurse board of

(continued on page 9)

GET TO KNOW

Mary Willems-Akers

Visiting Nurse Social Worker

10 QUESTIONS



1 What's your favorite song?

There's a live version of "My Morning Jacket" covering Tyrone with Erykah Badu – I absolutely love Jim James and Erykah Badu, the two of them together is amazing.

2 What is your superpower?

I stink of patchouli, all day, every day, even when I don't wear it – the scent lingers.

3 What food will you absolutely NOT eat?

I cannot stand donuts!

4 Where did you grow up?

Huntington, Indiana

5 Who would play you in "The Mary Willems-Akers Story" on Lifetime?

Oh, geeze. I'd be more interested in hearing who others would cast in this role.

6 What are you reading these days?

The last book I read was "Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar" (Cheryl Strayed).

7 What's the best part about working at Visiting Nurse?

I love hearing the simple stories our patients share with us about their lives. They have so much wisdom to share.

8 How did you meet your husband?

When I first moved to Fort Wayne a girlfriend and I would go to the open mic night at Munchies every Thursday. My husband was playing the banjo there, a mutual friend of ours introduced us. (We plan to name our next dog after that friend, hehehe.)

9 What excites you?

Food and photography! I'm always cooking, eating and sharing food with others. I also enjoy photographing simple things in my day-to-day life.

10 What's your favorite memory?

I was a collegiate athlete (I threw the shot put, discus and hammer at BGSU). At my indoor conference championships, my senior year, I had a huge PR (Personal Record) in the shot put – I was not expected to do as well as I did, and the hug my coach gave me when I stepped out of the circle was absolutely priceless.



visiting nurse

ONGOING GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS

Grief Support Group

For any loss due to death

Every Monday evening

7-8:30 p.m.

Ivy Tech's Aviation Center at Smith Field
405 West Cook Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Grief Support for the Newly Bereaved

For those who have lost a loved one within a year

2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month

5:30-7 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Grief Support Group

For any loss due to death

2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month

5:30-7 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Grief Support for Women

After the death of a spouse or significant other

2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month

2-3:30 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Grief Support for Men

After the death of a spouse or significant other

1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month

5:30-7 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Anticipatory Grief Support Group

Support for those in anticipation of a death

2nd Monday of each month

5:30-7 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

We the Living

Support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide

2nd Wednesday of each month

7-9 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Pet Loss Grief Support

2nd Saturday of each month

10 a.m.-noon

Children welcome

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Auburn Grief Support Group

For any loss due to death

Last Tuesday of each month

6-7:30 p.m.

YMCA of DeKalb County
533 North St., Auburn, IN 46706

Woodburn Grief Support Group

For any loss due to death

First Monday of each month

6-7:30 p.m.

Westwood Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
4100 Becker Road, Woodburn, IN 46797

Compassionate Friends

For grieving parents, grandparents & siblings

1st Tuesday of each month

7 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, 300 W. Wayne St.,
Fort Wayne IN 46802

and the following Thursday each month

7 p.m.

Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center, 5920
Homestead Road, Fort Wayne IN 46814

Awareness that grief may affect every aspect of our life is the beginning of our healing process. These programs, focusing on grief and loss, are designed to provide any adult who has suffered the death of a loved one an opportunity to explore, learn and feel supported in a safe environment. Please contact the Grief Support Team at (260) 435-3261 for more information.

These community programs are available at no charge to any adult who has experienced the death of a loved one. Hospice involvement is not required. For information on any of these programs or individual grief support please call (260) 435-3261 or visit our website: www.vnfw.org.



**The Peggy F. Murphy
Community Grief Center**
For those who go on living

A service of Visiting Nurse



Take a tour: Call (260) 435-3222 to schedule your tour of Visiting Nurse and The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center.



Visiting Nurse

Departing board members reflect on sharing their time and talent with Visiting Nurse

(continued from page 6)

directors because of his knowledge and experience in the health care industry. He said he joined the board to help the agency be “agile” and tackle ever-changing governmental regulations. His advice to incoming board members is to remember that they are not beholden to shareholders, as they would be in a for-profit business, they are beholden to the patients we serve and their families, to our generous donors like you and to the future success of the agency.

“You have to care, and you have to be involved,” he said.



SAVE THE DATE
Sunday, November 19, 2017
 32ND ANNUAL
Holiday Memorial Tree Service and Tree Lighting
 Baker Street Train Station at 5:00 pm
 For more information, call Visiting Nurse 260-435-3222



SAVE THE DATE
 Mark Your Calendar for Visiting Nurse's Signature Event
Sunday, September 17, 2017
A Toast to Life
 SPECIALTY BEER & FOOD PAIRING
 3:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Sponsored By:

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 A unit of American Electric Power

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Customized program for our hospice patients who reside in a nursing facility



A personalized schedule of visits from our team members developed around the patient and family's needs



Immediate response to any unmet needs or concerns



Hospice Home – the area's only freestanding hospice facility staffed exclusively by hospice caregivers



Customized teaching about end-of-life issues beginning with first contact



Quality care, 24 hours a day, weekends and holidays



Visiting Nurse provides compassionate care to alleviate suffering and ensure quality of life for those affected by serious illness along with emotional and spiritual care for loved ones who go on living

Visiting Nurse's Service Promises



You Make Meaningful Moments *Possible*

SUMMER 2017

We provide compassionate care to all persons, regardless of race, age, creed, sexual orientation, disability or nationality. Translation services available. To make a difference in the lives of Visiting Nurse patients and families, consider making a gift to the Visiting Nurse Foundation. Please visit www.vnfw.org/donate or call (260) 435-3222.



Visiting Nurse

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Administrative Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our mailing list. Call 260-435-3222 or 800-288-4111

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