



Reflections



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Visiting Nurse
provides compassionate care
to alleviate suffering
and ensure quality of life
for those affected
by serious illness.



Finding friendship through their grief

Out of the sadness of losing their wives, three area men have formed a lifelong friendship.

Ron Amundson, Gary Brown and Mike Scott received counseling at The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center, a service of Visiting Nurse, following the deaths of their wives.

(In Ron's case, his wife Sandra's unexpected death in September 2014 became a "double whammy" as he had lost his son Mark just a few weeks earlier.)

Visiting Nurse's Grief Counselor Bonnie Davis admitted she was playing matchmaker when

she thought of putting the three men together. She thought they had a lot in common in terms of their grief, though each came from a different background and careers, so about a year ago, she put them together in a room to share their experiences.

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Pictured Left to Right: Mike Scott, Ron Amundson, pet Isabella and Gary Brown.



Dear friends,

As I sit to write this letter to you, it is a 55-degree day in January. Already, around the grounds of Visiting Nurse, spring flowering bulbs are beginning to peek through the dirt. I'm sure we will see more snow and ice, but these hints of green show me that spring is on its way.

Those green shoots emerging from the cold, hard ground remind me of how we begin to rebuild our lives after the death of a loved one. Though grief and loss are a natural part of life, so too is learning to live with the loss of a loved one. A transition takes place from the winter of unfathomable sadness to the spring of learning to live and love again.

The grieving process is helped along by sharing your sadness with those who know how you feel. That's what has happened to those who receive individual counseling or attend our grief support programs at The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center and in groups throughout the community. In this issue of the newsletter, you'll read about a bond that developed between three men from very different walks of life who have forged a close friendship after the loss of their beloved wives.

Since 1888, Visiting Nurse has provided a continuum of care for our patients and their families. Through the dedicated work of our medical team, we take care of people facing life-limiting illnesses. Our trained social workers help guide families through the complex world of health care and insurance. Our chaplains provide spiritual support to the patients and pray with families. Our grief counselors help families come to terms with their loss and help guide them into their "new normal." And our volunteers sit at bedsides, provide comforting conversations, and they plant those very bulbs I see peeking through the dirt in our Seasons of Life Garden.

We encircle our patients and their families with strength, knowledge and comfort. I'm so proud of the work we do here every day at Visiting Nurse. I especially appreciate those families who support us with donations to the Visiting Nurse Foundation, which helps us provide care for anyone, regardless of their ability to pay. Thank you for your support. May your spring be filled with blooms.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Hermann, CEO

Phyllis Hermann, CEO

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven ... a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance."

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4



Finding friendship through their grief

Continued from front cover

They hit it off at once, despite their differences. Each man was grieving his wife – an experience that the others knew at their core.

Ron is a consultant who advises the Wolverine Tube company about the copper metal markets, Gary is a retired mill operator and Mike is retired from marketing, but the three men sound like brothers when they get together. (Mike and Gary in particular like to josh each other.) The grief they have experienced because of the loss of their wives became the uniting factor in their friendship.

"I thought they sounded like they were going through similar things," Bonnie said. "All three of these guys were still so deeply in love with their wives. Their stories were similar. It's all about connecting people."

Bonnie said she has put other pairs and trios of grieving people together before, connecting people who have experienced similar types of losses. Building new connections is important for people who are grieving because grief can be isolating.

Gary's wife Rose Ramey received hospice care at Visiting Nurse prior to her passing in August 2015, and though he was encouraged ("pushed," he says) to consider grief counseling, "I felt like it wasn't something I needed."

Still, he stopped by the grief center, where he was greeted by Jody Taylor's bright smile, and he decided that maybe a little grief counseling might be in order. He and Rose had been married for 17 years, and he still sometimes finds himself picking out groceries she would have liked while shopping, something that reduces him to tears.

Mike's wife Julie also received hospice care at Visiting Nurse prior to her

November 2015 death. The couple had been married for 25 years, and Mike said that the day after Julie died, he called one of Visiting Nurse's chaplains. "I knew I wouldn't be able to do this alone," Mike said. He started individual grief counseling with Bonnie, and attended the men's grief group as well as some of the general grief groups. Then Bonnie suggested he meet with Ron and Gary outside of the formal groups.

Ron and his wife Sandra had been married for 50 years prior to her sudden death, which came in September 2014 just a few weeks after his son Mark passed away in July 2014. His physician suggested he

is to find the purpose," after a spouse dies, Mike said. "My job was to provide for my wife and that purpose was gone. Even when Julie was sick, I was her caregiver."

Meeting other men who understood what he was experiencing has made a tremendous difference, he said.

"There is a lot of common ground," Mike said. "It's very enlightening to hear other people's stories."

The three men get together at least once a week, though Ron has had some health challenges that put him in the hospital at the end of 2016. That didn't stop the get-

*We understand each other's laughter,
and we understand each other's pain*

contact Visiting Nurse's grief counseling program, which is open to any adult grieving a loss due to death. And though Ron has family members nearby (and a spoiled little bichon dog named Isabelle) who are supporting him, the friendship he's developed with Gary and Mike is special.

Gary agreed. "I'm not afraid to talk to either one of these men," he said. "If I want to sit here and cry, I can." Unless someone's going through it, he said, they may not understand the intense grief a husband feels after his spouse dies.

Men have been conditioned not to show emotion, Mike said, and he said he was bottling up his feelings during Julie's illness and death. And after years of being the breadwinner, and caring for and protecting his wife, Mike felt left without a purpose after Julie died, something Gary and Ron felt as well.

"One of the biggest, most difficult things

together though – Gary and Mike went to visit him in the hospital, continuing the camaraderie the men share. While Ron was ill, Gary and Mike would get together at "one greasy spoon after another," Mike teased Gary, to share a meal and their emotions.

But their relationship goes beyond weekly breakfasts.

"It's nice to be able to pick the phone up and have somebody to call," Gary said.

"That's what I like about these guys," Mike said. "We understand each other's laughter, and we understand each other's pain. I thank God for Visiting Nurse and all the wonderful people here."



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. For information on any of these programs or individual grief support please contact (260) 435-3261 or visit our website: www.vnfw.org.

On-Going Support Groups

Grief Support for Women

After the death of a spouse or significant other

2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month
2 to 3:30 p.m.

Held at 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 to 7 p.m.

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

Grief Support for Newly Bereaved

For those who have lost a loved one within the last two years

2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month • 5:30 to 7 p.m.

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

Grief Support Group

For any loss due to death

Every Monday evening • 7 to 8:30 p.m.

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

Accepting the Journey

Support for those who have lost a spouse to suicide

4th Monday of each month • 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Held at Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center
5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46814
Sponsored by: Mental Health America



We the Living

Support for those who have lost a loved one to suicide

2nd Wednesday of each month • 7 to 9 p.m.

Held at 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 to 7 p.m.

Held at 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. to Noon
Children welcome.

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



Grief Support Team left to right:
Laura Guerrero, Bonnie Davis and Terrie English

Healing Through Music

The Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center is pleased to present a four-week program with Visiting Nurse's Music Therapist, Emily Paar.

Healing Through Music will explore the emotional and creative qualities of music as it relates to grief. A music background is not necessary.

The four week program will meet on Thursdays, March 2, March 9, March 16 and March 23 5:30-7:30 p.m.

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

Light refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP by calling (260) 435-3261
by Feb. 27, 2017.



Visiting Nurse announces 2016-2017 Board Members



The Visiting Nurse Board of Directors for 2016-2017 includes:

Brian Fehlhaber, Chair
Summit Reinsurance

Joseph Byers, Vice Chair
iAB Bank

James Brunnemer, Treasurer,
Physicians Health Plan

Vicki Bandor Braun, Secretary
Community Volunteer

Jerome Baer
Miller's Health Systems

Anne Cavanaugh, RN
Community Volunteer

Carmen DeBruce
Lutheran Hospital

Thad Gerardot
Lincoln Financial Group

Patti Hays
AWS Foundation

Doug Kline
TJ Nowak Supply Co., Inc.

Melissa Long
Community Volunteer

DaVita Mitchell
Southwest Allen County Schools

Kay Novotny
Community Volunteer

Laurisa Roper
Bishop Luers

Chris Schenkel, PE
Schenkel Construction Inc.

Molly Slocum
St. Vincent de Paul School

Joseph Svitek
Ash Brokerage

Jesica Thorson
Beers, Mallers, Backs & Salin



Palliative medicine with Nurse Practitioner Jamie Peppler

The days start early and end late for the medical team at Visiting Nurse.

For Nurse Practitioner Jamie Peppler, MSN, APN, FNP-C, ACHPN, who is also palliative medicine certified, the day starts and ends with “charting.” That’s the time-consuming process of filling in notes in patients’ electronic medical records that each nurse or other health practitioner at Visiting Nurse must do for each patient they see every day.

Then, depending on the day, it’s off to Lutheran Hospital campus, where Jamie sees seriously ill patients who receive palliative consultations as part of their care, either in the Palliative Clinic or at the bedside. During a palliative consultation, Visiting Nurse’s nurse practitioners and physicians meet with patients and their families to

discuss their goals of care. Whether that’s aggressive treatment to seek cures, or whether that’s allowing their disease process to run its expected course, the goals of palliative care are to support patients and families through difficult illnesses and bring comfort to patients. That usually involves symptom management, such as adding medications to control pain, nausea and anxiety. Then, when the family is in the room with the patient, if possible, Jamie must have the difficult conversation about goals and wishes.

“I feel I’ve learned to speak the language of palliative medicine,” she said. “I see it as a privilege to be allowed to walk alongside our patients and families and have these conversations every day.”

Jamie helps frame the conversations she has with families and patients by first talking about best possible outcomes: whether that

means a patient returns home or goes to a nursing home where he or she can receive physical therapy or other skilled nursing services. There are many factors to consider when discussing these options, such as out-of-pocket expenses for patients, appropriate levels of care and most importantly, providing care and services consistent with patients' wishes.

Then, she asks the patients and their families what the next steps should be, if the therapies don't improve the situation. Would the patient want to return to the hospital if their condition declines? Would the patient want to have further life-sustaining treatments such as being put on a ventilator if he or she stops being able to breathe on their own? What about CPR if their heart stops beating? Does the patient have a living will that spells out their end-of-life wishes?

"My job is to help people understand they have options" when it comes to dealing with life-limiting illnesses."

"It's a chance for them to learn about their illness and ask questions to gain a better understanding of what the way forward looks like. It gives them a voice and empowers them to make their wishes known."

These serious conversations are tough ones, but Jamie and Visiting Nurse's providers are skilled in gently guiding the conversations to reflect what the patient wants. Sometimes, the patient wants all lifesaving interventions. More often, the patients understand that their condition is terminal, and they are ready to live the remainder of their lives in as much comfort as possible.

"We work hard to determine goals and then plan accordingly," Jamie said.

Jamie has been a nurse practitioner for more than eight years, and although she started out in family practice, she accepted a position at Visiting Nurse because she saw how her grandmother was cared for in a hospice program, and because she had small children at the time and the schedule worked well for her to have time with her family.

"There are enough opportunities in nursing that I feel people can find their niche and the palliative and hospice world suits me well," she said.

When meeting a new patient, Jamie introduces herself and does a quick assessment of the patient. If the patient's family is there, she makes sure everyone has a place to sit for the discussion of what the options are. When the conversation turns to advance directives, she speaks directly to the patient, asking if he or she understands what it means to be a FULL CODE or a DNR. She gets the patient to articulate as much as possible his or her wishes.

"To have (the patient) say it, it's truly a gift" for the family, she said, because the family is there to witness what the patient wants at end of life.

"And honoring that wish is truly a gift to the patient from the family."

Visiting Nurse welcomes Dr. Mary Wilger, DO, FACEP Associate Medical Director

Visiting Nurse is pleased to announce that Dr. Mary Wilger, DO, FACEP, has joined the medical team of Visiting Nurse.

A Milwaukee, Wisconsin, native, Dr. Wilger has been hired as the associate medical director of the 129-year-old hospice. She joins the staff as the

agency's second full-time physician.



Dr. Wilger is an emergency medicine physician and has been practicing in Fort Wayne since 1999. She is a graduate of

Michigan State University's school of medicine and completed her residency in East Lansing, Mich., prior to moving to Fort Wayne. She joins Dr. Ann Moore, Chief Medical Officer, at Visiting Nurse, and will be providing medical care to hospice and palliative care patients.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Wilger to the staff," said Phyllis Hermann, CEO. "She has proven to be a tremendous asset to our continuum of care for our patients."

Getting to Know the Grief Team:

Bonnie Davis

1. How long have you been with Visiting Nurse?

I will be here officially 12 years in the spring, although in 2001 I was here for a semester as an undergrad student and dreamed of working here someday.

2. Why did you choose to become a Grief Counselor?

Being a Grief Counselor was a goal I set for myself years ago when I worked as an office manager in a funeral home.

3. What support group meetings do you lead?

I facilitate a brand new group at the DeKalb County YMCA in Auburn. The group meets the last Tuesday every month at 6 pm.

4. Where did you work before coming to Visiting Nurse?

I worked at Aging and In-Home Services in the Family Caregiver Program and as a pre-admission screening assessor for nursing home placement.

5. Where did you receive your education?

Undergrad-University of Saint Francis
Grad school- IUPUI in Indianapolis

6. What are your hobbies?

Anything with the grandkids!

My husband and I also love hiking in the state parks as often as possible.

7. If you could go anywhere, where would it be, and why?

My great-grandparents were from Germany and Ireland. Since I've been to Germany, I guess Ireland would be a nice way to trace my roots.

8. Who did you first see live in concert?

Oh my goodness, so long ago...I think maybe Sonny and Cher.

9. What's your favorite flavor Jelly Belly?

Don't really have a favorite. I'm more of a chocolate gal.

10. What was the single most influential event in your lifetime?

When you get to my age there seems to be many. I guess starting my life over and attending college at the age of 42 was the most influential time. It not only opened up my world, but I also learned a lot about myself.

11. What do you like most about working at Visiting Nurse?

The people; working alongside incredibly dedicated people as coworkers and staff, but also having the opportunity to witness the amazing resilience of the individuals and families we serve. I can truly say I have learned something from most everyone with whom I've come in contact. I believe God created us to serve each other, and at Visiting Nurse, I feel He is using me for that intended purpose.

That folks, makes for a very gratifying life!



Attention Kroger shoppers

Kroger has a Community Awards Program in which a portion of your grocery bill can benefit Visiting Nurse. Please visit www.krogercommunityrewards.com and choose Visiting Nurse! Don't forget to re-enroll annually and select Visiting Nurse.

Shop at AmazonSmile

and Amazon will make a donation to Visiting Nurse. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> to register



Advance Care Planning Conversations

Although the holidays have come and gone, the opportunity to gather with loved ones allows us to reflect on what matters most to each of us. Spending time with your family provides an opportunity to have discussions many of us put off until it's too late: how we want to be cared for at the end of life.

Making healthcare plans for the future is an important step toward making sure you get the medical care you would want, even when doctors and family members are making the decisions for you

National Hospice and Palliative Care Month takes place each November when hospice and palliative care organizations across the country like Visiting Nurse encourage people to set aside some time to discuss their end-of-life wishes with those who would otherwise be tasked with making difficult decisions under very stressful circumstances.

Having these conversations at a quiet time ensures that everyone is on the same page regarding medical treatments when a person is incapacitated by illness or injury.

Knowing in advance how your parent wants to be cared for in times of medical crisis can help lessen the stress that inevitably occurs when that parent is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.

According to the National Institutes of Health, advance care planning is not just about old age. At any age, a medical crisis could leave someone too ill to make his or her own healthcare decisions. Even if you are not sick now, making healthcare plans for the future is an important step toward making sure you get the medical care you would want, even when doctors and family members are making the decisions for you.

More than 50 percent of adults have not had any conversations with loved ones about their wishes, though 90 percent of adults say such conversations are important. Just 23 percent of people have put their wishes into writing.

These aren't easy conversations to have, to be sure. But there are ways to start the conversation so that all concerned can be made comfortable. Questions can include:

- "What is important to you at the end of life?"
- "What are your concerns about medical treatment?"
- "What are your preferences about where you receive treatment, at home or in a medical facility?"
- "What are the three most important things you want me to know when making decisions about your medical care?"

Ensuring your wishes are carried out in times of medical crisis can be challenging, but today Indiana law recognizes several specific types of advance directives including: a living will or life-prolonging procedures declaration, an appointment of health care representative, a power of attorney directive, and the POST form — Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment.

Information regarding these advance care planning documents can be found on the Indiana State Department of Health website, <https://www.in.gov/isdh/files/advanceddirectives.pdf>.

Reviewing and completing the appropriate documents and making sure your loved ones and your healthcare providers know about your wishes will help guide your care as you wish it to be. And you will be reassured that your loved ones know what your wishes are.

More than
50%
of adults
have not had
any conversations
with loved ones
about their
wishes

90%
of adults say
conversations
about their
wishes are
important

Only
23%
of people
have put
their wishes
into writing

Service Promises

- Quick response to all referrals within one hour and admit same day
- A personalized schedule of visits from our team members developed around the patient and family's needs
- Customized teaching about end-of-life issues beginning with first contact
- Care and support around-the-clock to prevent a crisis in pain and symptom management and help the patient remain in their home
- Immediate response to any unmet needs or concerns
- Quality care, 24 hours a day, weekends and holidays
- Customized program for our hospice patients who reside in a nursing facility
- Hospice Home – the area's only freestanding hospice facility staffed exclusively by hospice caregivers
- 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



Your donations to the Visiting Nurse Foundation help us provide end-of-life care and grief support services to anyone in need. You can make a gift today by using the enclosed envelope or by visiting www.vnfw.org/donate.

Thank you for your support of Visiting Nurse.



Visiting Nurse is proud to welcome our newest volunteers



Fall Volunteers class: from left to right, front row: Mike Freygang, Laura Rosswurm, Joyce Kelly, Sandy Sullivan, Susan Wygant. From left to right, back row: Dawn Hammer, Karen Sandman, Sue Lambert, Carol Hilkey and Penny Miller.

Volunteers are spread throughout the agency, assisting with a multitude of essential duties including:

- Light meal preparation in Hospice Home
- Helping at the nursing station in Hospice Home
- Arranging and delivering flowers to patients in Hospice Home
- Helping in the gardens surrounding Hospice Home
- Answering the phone
- "We Honor Veterans" program – volunteers who are veterans are paired with patients who are veterans to reminisce, befriend and honor those who have served our country.
- Clerical and data entry
- "Watchful Passage" – sitting at the bedside, supporting a patient when death is near
- Visiting patients in their home or in a nursing facility for conversation, reading aloud or to relieve a family caregiver.
- Delivering supplies
- "Pet Peace of Mind" – assisting patients with basic pet care such as vet appointments, walking, and other tasks that help keep the patient together with his/her pet.



If you are interested in becoming a Visiting Nurse volunteer, please contact Ann Blue, Volunteer Coordinator at (260) 435-3222.

Save the Date

Visiting Nurse presents

2017 Festival of Wines

Friday, May 5, 2017,
5:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Fort Wayne Country Club
5221 Covington Road

Don't miss the
31st annual
Festival of Wines
on Friday, May 5
from 5:30-8:30 p.m.
at the Fort Wayne
Country Club.

Andy Lebamoff
from Cap n' Cork
will provide a
varied selection
of wines from the
United States and
beyond, along with
hors d'oeuvres and
desserts, plus live music.

Tickets are \$75*.
Please call Visiting Nurse
at (260) 435-3222
for tickets and
more information.

*Special ticket price available for LHSS members and Visiting Nurse employees

*Proceeds from the Festival of Wines benefit patient care
and medical equipment in Hospice Home.*



SAVE THE DATE Holiday Memorial Tree Service and Tree Lighting

Visiting Nurse will present the 32nd annual
Holiday Memorial Tree Service and Tree Lighting
at the Baker Street Train Station
Sunday, November 19, 2017 at 5 p.m.
For information, call Visiting Nurse
at (260) 435-3222

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendar for Visiting Nurse's
signature event

A Toast to Life

Specialty Beer & Food Pairing
Sunday, Sept. 17, 2017
from 3:30 - 7 p.m.



HOSPICE HOME HOSPICE CARE PALLIATIVE CARE GRIEF SUPPORT

5910 Homestead Road • Fort Wayne, IN 46814
260-435-3222 • 800-288-4111 (Indiana Only)
www.vnfw.org

Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our mailing list.
Call (260) 435-3207 or e-mail rosereplogle@vnfw.org

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WE HONOR VETERANS

Serving Northeast Indiana

