



MOMENTS MATTER

2023 SPRING UPDATE

A PATIENT STORY: NINA CRIST & JOHN CRIST

Written by Nina Crist

John and I met in 2010 and married in February 2016. Our common bond in Public Safety, the Fighting Irish (John was a South Bend, IN, native), love of Jeeps, live-life-in-a-simple-manner, and the love of random road trips helped us to build a wonderful foundation. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) brought John to the area where he served President Reagan and President Bush at Camp David. Soon after being discharged from the USMC, he returned to Hagerstown and started employment with the Hagerstown Fire Department in 1994.

We were involved in an auto accident in May 2022 which resulted in John being transported to Shock Trauma in Baltimore. John was hospitalized in Baltimore until his discharge to Doey's House on August 12, 2022.

I was by John's side when he passed away on August 23. Even though I was surrounded by many people, I felt so alone. I lost my best friend, my better half, my soulmate...my person. I was,

and still am, in limbo. Prior to passing, John told me to "live life and be happy." It would be very easy for me to shut the door and not venture outside again, but I promised him to not do that. As a result, I attended a Hospice of Washington County Hearts of Hope meeting less than

two weeks after losing John. Walking back into Doey's House was one of the most difficult things I ever had to do, but I would not disappoint John. I forced myself to take those steps—and I still do. As time goes on, I have realized I look forward to and need the Hearts of Hope meetings. Being with others who can relate has been a Godsend.

I am still trying to find my way without my best friend. I am in a place where I neither expected



Nina Crist
& John Crist

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nor wanted to be. To help with my grief and give me some purpose, I have begun to piece together some quilts made from John's T-shirts and began working on fire department/law enforcement patch quilts from our collection. I plan on gifting a quilt to each of our grandchildren so they will always have a part of their "Papa John" with them.

There will be parts of this journey where I know I will have to go it alone, but I also know there are others on whom I can lean. I'm told that this will get easier to bear. When? I have no idea. I lean on Hospice of Washington County bereavement support and the advice of a friend who lost her husband in 2009. She said, "Participate. Just participate." I keep going.

While remembering John during a conversation with a friend of ours, they said, "YOU guys went and lived. YOU two went out and did things I and others have put off until retirement." I look back on that statement and I agree. We DID live, babe... we did. I will love you forever and always.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ONGOING EVERY MONTH

- 1st & 3rd Monday

Hearts of Hope (MORNINGS)
10:30 am–12:00 pm
At Doey's House, 11370 Caring Pathway Lane
- 2nd & 4th Thursday

Hearts of Hope (EVENINGS)
5:30 pm–7:00 pm
At Doey's House, 11370 Caring Pathway Lane
- 2nd Tuesday

Adult Social Brunch
11:00 am–12:30 pm
At Bob Evans, 1721 Dual Highway

MARCH

- 15 MAR

Bereaved Parents Workshop
At Washington County Free Library, 100 S Potomac St

APRIL

- 01 APR

Kass Scholarship Application Deadline
- 19 APR

Cherished Memories
Helping Children & Families Cope with the Death of a Loved One
- 16-23 APR

National Volunteer Appreciation Week
- 29 APR

Have a Heart for Hospice Radio-Thon—WJEJ Radio
At Middletown Valley Bank Operations Center, 480 N Potomac St
- TBD APR

Hospice of Washington County/Franklin Hospice Volunteer Appreciation Thank You

LOOKING AHEAD

- 10 JUN

Shred Event
At Hospice of Washington County Parking Lot, 1710 Underpass Way
- 7 SEPT

Food Truck Event for Celebrity Waiter
At Leitersburg Pike Warehouse Cinemas, 20145 Leitersburg Pike
- 23 SEPT

DoveTales
At Claud E. Kitchens Outdoor School at Fairview, 12808 Draper R
- 13 OCT

Celebrity Waiter Gala
At Cortland Mansion, 19411 Cortland Dr
- 4 NOV

Veterans Breakfast
At Morris Frock American Legion Post 42, 405 Northern Ave
- 3 DEC

Lights for Love
At Doey's House, 11370 Caring Path Way



CEO CORNER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO, ERNESTO LOPEZ

As we quickly move through the first couple of months of the new year, Hospice of Washington County has been reflecting on both the challenges we saw over the past year and all the wonderful opportunities we see for us in the year ahead. This year we will celebrate 43 years of mission fulfillment in Washington County and the 6th anniversary of Doey's House! It feels like just yesterday that we were cutting the ribbon at Doey's House after a tumultuous journey that included a catastrophic fire that forced us to rebuild the structure from the ground up. Since that celebratory ribbon cutting, Doey's House has accomplished everything it was envisioned to do—by ensuring high-touch, complex end-of-life care to patients in a warm and inviting home-like setting that also offers a support system that provides for the emotional support of patients and families during these challenging moments.

Since the 2017 inauguration of Doey's House, more than 1,800 patients and their families have benefited from this unique care setting. When the pain or other symptoms of our home and skilled nursing patients spike, the team at Doey's House effectively manages the patient's care, often enabling the patient to return home.

We are proud to work so collaboratively with Meritus Medical Center to provide timely care and support to terminally ill patients with high acuity in a manner that allows for a seamless transition of patients from the hospital to Doey's House located across the street.

Upgrades planned for Doey's House this year will allow Hospice of Washington County to further expand our capabilities by supporting and caring for patients who require high oxygen needs and/or respiratory isolation. As the needs for our patients evolve over time, Doey's House will continue to evolve with them, identifying opportunities to improve the infrastructure of Doey's House and finding care methods and new technology that will support our mission and purpose.

Hospice of Washington County recognizes the awesome responsibility of having the only standalone hospice inpatient facility in the region. We are proud of what we've accomplished in our first six years and, with the continued support of our friends and supporters in the community, we are committed to continuing to develop different ways to better serve our patients and families.

WJEJ RADIO-THON SLATED FOR APRIL 29 TO ASSIST DOEY'S HOUSE

29
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Tune in to WJEJ Radio 1240 AM and 104.3 FM on Saturday, April 29, 2023, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm for the 11th Annual "Have A Heart for Hospice" Radio-Thon. The proceeds will support Hospice of Washington County's (HWC) Doey's House, the only hospice inpatient unit in Washington County. Our host will be Lou Scally. The event will be held at Middletown Valley Bank Operations Center at 480 North Potomac St. in Hagerstown. The number to call is (301) 791-6927.

"We are so very honored that WJEJ and Lou Scally will be continuing this event to assist Doey's House," stated Karen Giffin, HWC's Associate Vice President of Mission Advancement. "Mr. Scally had the idea of taking the Radio-Thon on the road, and Middletown Valley Bank was so generous to allow us to use their operations center. WJEJ is a cornerstone of community support in Washington County and we are so appreciative that they were a big part of building Doey's House and now assisting to support our hospice inpatient unit as we care for patients."

Giffin went on to say that Lou Scally has been a big supporter of HWC and its mission. "Because of his passion for quality end-of-life care for everyone in the community, WJEJ's commitment and the commitment of their listeners has grown each year."

"Many people have been touched by the services and programs of hospice in our community," Mr. Scally said. "Doey's House is a great extension of the hospice program. With funds from our Radio-Thon, HWC will be able to ensure that the services provided at Doey's House will continue for area patients and their families. During the Radio-Thon, individuals can challenge their friends and make a difference while enjoying food, fun, prizes, and more."

In addition to helping spread the word about what services Hospice of Washington County offers and providing updates on Doey's House, WJEJ is hoping listeners across the community will offer financial support during the four-hour Radio-Thon and assist in helping Doey's House.

"We invite individuals to be part of this event by calling (301) 791-6927 or by stopping by Middletown Valley Bank Operations Center on April 29 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm," Ms. Giffin said. "We will also have information available on our many services and programs."

KASS SCHOLARSHIP FUND TAKING APPLICATIONS



Applications for the 2023 Frederic H. Kass, III, M.D., Endowed Scholarship Fund are now available. Dr. Kass is one of the founders of Hospice of Washington County, Inc. (HWC), which began in 1980 and has cared for our community for more than 40 years.

To honor Dr. Kass's tireless efforts, HWC's Board of Directors established the Frederic H. Kass, III, M.D., Endowed Scholarship Fund. This fund is designed to support students in Washington County pursuing an education in a healthcare field. The fund is made possible by individuals and organizations who have generously donated to encourage local scholars.

"I am very proud that the funds from the scholarship assist those pursuing careers in healthcare," stated Dr. Kass. "I am so proud that we are able to help deserving recipients. Because of the generosity of our community, we have not only continued this tradition but have been able to expand it to four scholarships."

In 2023, four scholarships for \$2,000 each will be awarded. Applicants must be either a resident of Washington County, Maryland, a graduating high school senior with a minimum GPA of 3.0, and accepted into an accredited college majoring in a healthcare field; or a resident of Washington County, Maryland, who is a current student at an accredited college majoring in a healthcare field with a minimum GPA of 3.0; or an employee of HWC, or an immediate family member of an HWC employee who either is a current student, or has been accepted to an accredited college majoring in a healthcare field, with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Applications for the scholarship must be completed by April 1, 2023. Individuals who are interested in applying for the scholarship can apply on Hospice of Washington County's website at www.hospiceofwc.org.

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER WEEK



The week of April 16 to April 23 will be a special one for Hospice of Washington County. We will be celebrating one of our most treasured gifts—our VOLUNTEERS—during National Volunteer Appreciation Week. The celebration was established in 1974 as a week to inspire, encourage, and recognize those individuals who give so generously of themselves to their communities. HWC is extremely fortunate to have the support, dedication, and commitment from more than 100 community members who donate their time, talent, and compassion by serving as volunteers. It is due in large part to our volunteers that HWC has been able to provide caring, quality, end-of-life care to Washington County for more than 40 years.

During the challenges of the last two years, our volunteers were critical in helping us manage and adapt to serving our patients and patient families safely. Volunteers served by making bereavement calls, writing note cards, conducting virtual Veteran Pinning Ceremonies, assisting with fundraising,

and acting as receptionists at Doey's House. They continued providing much-needed support while navigating a new environment. Now that we are better able to manage COVID issues, HWC is excited to return our volunteers to full active service as home and facility companions, 11th Hour companions, Pet Program volunteers, and other important roles.

This National Volunteer Week, we recognize and celebrate our volunteers for all that they do and have done to support the vitally important mission of HWC. We are filled with gratitude that they honor us with their service.

"I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks; and ever thanks... – William Shakespeare." THANK YOU HWC Volunteers!

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer, please call us at (301) 791-6360 or email volunteer@hospiceofwc.org.





VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW

CLIFF SCHRAMM

Cliff Schramm is the director of a food and clothing bank in Hagerstown. On Fridays, he helps his community in another way, by serving as a companion volunteer at Doey's House, a supportive inpatient unit for Hospice of Washington County.

During his volunteer time, he visits with patients and helps provide what they need to feel comfortable and heard. Cliff also serves on the Veterans Committee at Doey's House.

This notion of service is important to Cliff, but he also brings a deeply personal connection to his volunteer work.

Cliff's wife died in July 2016, and he thought of her when he stumbled across an ad in the newspaper a few months later seeking hospice volunteers. He'd taken care of her for 14 months before she died. He knew how meaningful companionship care could be, so he signed up.

Early in his volunteering, Cliff had the opportunity to conduct a pinning ceremony for a terminally ill veteran. It was a powerful experience for them both.

"Looking at him, it was bringing back memories of my wife, but not sad memories," he recalls. "I told his grandson about what a wonderful grandfather

he had, and I said he was really a hero."

This set the tone for Cliff's volunteer work in the six years since. He's been proud to be a soothing, uplifting presence for many patients. As he sees it, he benefited from loving companionship in his own life, from his wife.

Linda's cancer was a shock to the family. She passed away just a few days after her birthday.

"We got to celebrate even though it was hard," Cliff says. "That's why I share my experience, the ways of being able to deal with everything. It's healthy, tremendously. I still feel the emotions go by. I still have my moments."

Cliff has three grown children and loves to spend time with them. For fun, Cliff bowls in senior duckpin leagues. He also enjoys running, including the many half-marathon, marathon, Iron Man, and relay events he's run over the years. Back at home, he likes to read and study the Bible, and he is active in his church.

THE INTANGIBLES OF HOSPICE CARE:

Many of us can recite the wonderful provision of the hospice benefit as provided to Medicare beneficiaries—the professional team of nursing, personal care, social counseling and spiritual care, the volunteers, the medical supplies, equipment, and the medications that bring relief. As beneficial as each of these components is, Hospice care provides immeasurable intangibles for a patient and family walking through this most difficult journey.

The dictionary defines an intangible benefit as "not constituting or represented by a physical object and of a value not precisely measurable." Hospice care is as individualized as the number of patients it has served, and each unit of care is customized to meet the needs of the patient or family member within the moment it is given.

Patients and families have shared these intangible moments like these with us:

"I went into the weekend for the first time in many years knowing that I have professionals who can respond to any emergency without worrying if I will have to take my loved one to the emergency room once again." ❤️

"As a family, we developed a confidence of care knowing how to safely move my mom without the anxiety of fearing a fall after we were taught these skills by the hospice aide. Mom was more relaxed with our care of her." ❤️

"We learned to laugh again and found joy again in the presence each other. The talks with our spiritual care provider gave us a new acceptance of our reality and we remembered why we chose to live this life together. The unspoken fears of facing the end of life seemed to evaporate when we talked." ❤️

"I found that I was not alone in caregiving—my social worker was able to help me reconnect with my brother and understand how grateful he is that I have taken on the demands of taking care of mom. His appreciation and care for my health provided a healing in my soul that had become a bit bitter." ❤️

"Knowing what to expect and how to prepare for the next step made it more bearable. I put away my fear of knowing and found an unexpected strength in questioning and being assured with professional and caring responses. I became quietly confident that we can do this." ❤️

Hospice care provides many things that meet the physical needs of the moment, but the true value of hospice lies in the change it brings to the hearts and homes of those with whom it is shared. It lends itself to bring an unspeakable peace and, at times, even joy.

GROUP BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT FOR ADULTS

After the loss of a loved one, we may feel alone. You may wonder “does anyone understand how I truly feel?” Empathy and sympathy are often assumed to be similar concepts, but in fact they are very different approaches and experiences. Dr. Brené Brown, a noted authority on courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy, reminds us that “empathy fuels connection. Sympathy drives disconnection...Empathy is a skill that can bring people together and make people feel included, while sympathy creates an uneven power dynamic and can lead to more isolation and disconnection.”

An empathic response is a non-judgmental approach of “I’m feeling with you and I understand.” A sympathy response is often mixed with pity: “I’m feeling for you.”

Group bereavement support is an opportunity to connect with others also experiencing a grief journey. Group members offer empathy, validation, normalization, and a listening ear. The Hospice of Washington County Bereavement Department facilitates ongoing groups and opportunities to connect with others.

Hearts of Hope is an open grief support group specifically for adults who are grieving the death of a loved one. Hearts of Hope meets routinely 4 times every month on the 1st and 3rd Mondays (10:30 am-12:00pm), as well as the 2nd and 4th Thursdays (5:30 pm-7:00 pm). The Hearts of Hope group is facilitated by a HWC Bereavement Counselor and HWC Volunteer. Group sessions are offered in a hybrid style in which adults can attend in-person or join virtually via Zoom. The in-person group meetings are held in the Doey’s House conference room.

The Social Brunch program is an informal bereavement group also for adults. The Social Brunch group meets routinely on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 11:00 am at Bob Evans (Hagerstown). All attendees pay for their own meal and are invited to enjoy conversation with others who understand. The Social Brunch is facilitated by a HWC Volunteer.

HWC Volunteer Mary Diehl has a true passion and commitment for both of these programs. Mary has volunteered with HWC for 23 years

as a companion volunteer as well as 11th hour volunteer. She has also served as a volunteer co-facilitator for the Hearts of Hope group for more than six years! Mary also has coordinated the Social Brunch program since the re-introduction of it in Spring 2022.

Mary reflected, “I love assisting with the Hearts of Hope support group. Each person’s grief journey is unique, usually very painful, and intimidating to share in a group setting. It is gratifying to watch group members progress in their journey, however long it takes, and learn to live a fulfilling life without their loved ones.” Mary describes the Social Brunch as “an opportunity to enjoy a meal with others who are grieving. It is a time to interact on a social level, and get to know others in a different setting. Phone numbers are often exchanged, friendships are formed, and members support each other. I’m happy to facilitate this group.”

Hospice of Washington County Bereavement support services include a variety of group experiences for children, teens, and adults. All bereavement services are offered at no-cost to hospice family members, as well as community members. For more information about ongoing groups, as well as seasonal events, call the main HWC phone number at (301) 791-6360. For more information about bereavement programs at Hospice of Washington County, visit our website at: <https://hospiceofwc.org/grief-support/bereavement-services>. And to check out the dates of upcoming events go to: <https://hospiceofwc.org/events/calendar>.



CHERISHED MEMORIES

19
APR

A GRIEF SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AGES 9–12 YEARS OLD

The Hospice of Washington County Bereavement team values the importance of supporting children in their unique grief journey. Bereavement support services have been expanded to include the Cherished Memories Workshop Series, a grief support program for children ages 6–12 years old. Cherished Memories Workshop is hosted in partnership with the Children’s Department of the David E. Fletcher branch (Hagerstown) of the Washington County Free Library to offer a story and craft time for children and families.

The December 2022 Cherished Memories workshop focused on the theme “Coping with the Holidays.” Bereavement Counselor Stephanie Nalley facilitated this special event in collaboration with Children’s Librarian Jeff Ridgeway. The event included a special story time to read the book “Grief is Like a Snowflake.” Stephanie invited children and adults to create an ornament in memory of their loved one. The event hosted a total of 39 children and adults to memorialize their loved ones during the holiday season. The holidays are a difficult time for many people. The Cherished Memories Workshop allows children to enjoy a safe place to connect with other children who share a similar story, remember their loved ones, and practice healthy ways to cope with their grief.



The Cherished Memories Workshop series will continue to be available in 2023! Stephanie invites children and families to join her on April 19 for the next session. Children (ages 6–12) who have experienced the loss of a loved one or friend are welcome to attend. Adults are welcome to join their children during the story time. The April workshop will be held in the Children’s Department at the Washington County Free Library (Hagerstown Branch) at 100 S. Potomac Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740.

The April 19 Cherished Memories Workshop will be held from 3:30 pm-5:30 pm. The workshop will include a reading of the children’s book “The Rabbit Listened” as well as participating in a special seasonal craft.

The Hospice of Washington County Bereavement Team recognizes the importance of supporting families and providing children with resources to cope in healthy ways. Bereavement Counselors provide grief education and creative outlets for children to express their own grief. For more information about Bereavement care services, call the main HWC phone number (301) 791-6360, or go to the HWC online Calendar of Events: <https://hospiceofwc.org/events/calendar> to view registration information.

EDEN MILLER

PATIENT NAVIGATOR AT HOSPICE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

Eden Miller is a Patient Navigator at Hospice of Washington County, where she helps build relationships with healthcare providers and aids in the admission of newly referred patients and families. She works closely with patients at Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown.

She joined Hospice of Washington County in July 2022 after more than a decade working in marketing and sales for a health technology company. “I was looking for something to really call home, something where I could come home in the evening and feel good about what I’ve done, to make sure I’ve contributed to something better, and to help others as well,” she said. She and her family were grateful for the hospice care her grandmother received when she died. “We couldn’t have done without it. It was immensely important to us,” she said.

In her time at Hospice of Washington County, Eden has experienced many poignant and gratifying moments. “Being there for the patients or their families, holding their

hand, a hug, or just listening to their stories, means so much to me,” she said. Eden wishes more people knew about the role hospice plays in healthcare. “Hospice doesn’t mean it’s the end, it’s more about life and that quality time you are able to spend with your family, with your friends, or doing whatever you want to do. Hospice is about life and living the time left to the fullest.”

Eden grew up surrounded by aunts, uncles, and grandparents who played big roles in her upbringing. She has always loved animals. She grew up riding horses and now has cows in her backyard. She also has a black lab, who is the love of her life. Eden has traveled extensively, including working in the United Kingdom, and visiting Northern Ireland, Scotland, France, and London. She is a nature-loving person who enjoys reading and spending time outdoors.



MARIA REED

BEREAVEMENT CARE SUPERVISOR AT HOSPICE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

Maria Reed is the Bereavement Care Supervisor at Hospice of Washington County, where she has worked since 2018.

Maria coordinates counseling and educational services for hospice clients and families, as well as community members who have experienced the loss of a loved one. She facilitates a grief support group, called Hearts of Hope, and counsels people individually. She also coordinates remembrance services and special events, such as International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Maria worked as a Bereavement Counselor and then a Coordinator before becoming a Supervisor for Hospice of Washington County’s team of bereavement and spiritual care professionals.

My job is dynamic and gratifying on many levels,” Maria says. “I have deep empathy for those who are grieving.”

Maria came to hospice after experiencing her own grief and loss, and after spending time with young people who’d experienced similar turns in life. In her previous career, Maria worked for ten years as a high school counselor, frequently working with students who had experienced the

loss of a loved one. She has utilized that experience to enhance bereavement care services for youth, including the DoveTales Camp for Grieving Children and Families.

“It is heartwarming and profound to witness growth and healing during someone’s grief journey, particularly in the case of a child who is grieving the loss of a special person,” she says.

Maria grew up in Pennsylvania and moved to Washington County 13 years ago. She says she is grateful for her work at Hospice of Washington County and is inspired by the clinical and support team and the clients and families she works with every day.

“Many people express appreciation for our bereavement support, as it is often life changing and sometimes life-saving work. I simply am grateful to be a partner in their journey,” she says.



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