



Grieving Family Finds Comfort and Support at Lory's Place

The Schlaack family shares their heartfelt story of how the donations made to Lory's Place have a tremendous impact on the lives of grieving families in southwest Michigan. (Page 5)

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The Grace of a Community

Every year around this time, as the seasons change and we find ourselves at the end of another beautiful Michigan summer, I am once again astounded by the grace of this community. Summer is an event-filled time for Hospice at Home and Lory's Place. Every year we hope that the weather will be kind, that our old friends will come to our events, and that we will make new friends along the way. And every year you fill our hearts by outdoing yourselves. You run, walk, rock, bid, taste, bake, volunteer and donate to make sure your neighbors get the care they need. Thank you, thank you, for joining us in this mission.

Because of your support, we are able to continue to grow our services and offer even more to the community. Lory's Place just started school groups in the Benton Harbor district, marking the 41st school group (per month!) we are able to provide. These school groups ensure that children who can't always make it to the grief center are able to receive much-needed support after the death of a parent or close friend.

Because of your support, Hospice at Home is helping to initiate a community-wide effort aimed at helping people to have important conversations and fill out their advance directives, so families can feel confident that they are making choices that reflect those of their loved one. Additionally, because of your support, we are now offering frequent caregiver classes and caregiver support groups in South Haven, Niles and St. Joseph, so people can feel they're not in it alone.

This is all happening because of people like YOU, who choose to be involved in the community and make it a better place. We couldn't be more grateful. Please consider sharing the stories you read in this publication with others. Encourage them to reach out to us if they would like to learn more about our programs, or would like to be involved with our mission.

Proudly your neighbor,



Melinda Graham-Gruber
President and CEO,
Hospice at Home,
a Lakeland Health Affiliate

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Special Thanks

Curious Kids Museum
KC, Juli, and Sonny Gast
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The St. Joseph Carousel Society

Toasting Hospice at Home, Wine and Beer Tasting Benefit

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Special Thanks

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Toasting Hospice Committee
Village Market

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The Gift of Hope

Nancy's story is a perfect example of how this community takes care of each other in hard times. Nancy received a frightening diagnosis from her doctors, and was given the choice to remain in the hospital or return home to spend what little time was left – two weeks - with her family. Because of the high level of care Nancy required, she weighed the best option for her family. Nancy shared that she felt a sense of helplessness and despair as well as fear.

Nancy chose the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center, where a caring team was able to get her pain and symptoms under control. Her appetite returned, she began to sleep better, and then the rest of her health slowly started to improve. The light of hope was lit for Nancy and her family as they began to think she would have more time than was expected.

Nancy was able to see her daughter Melissa, a senior at Lakeshore High School, before she attended her last prom. As Nancy's strength increased she shared her hope to live to see Melissa in the Blossomtime Festival Parade as first runner up to Miss Baroda.

She believed that she would most likely be too ill to attend, but was hopeful she could see it on video. Nancy's care team talked and all agreed that if she was well enough to physically go to the parade, they would find a way to make it happen for her.

Parade day arrived and the weather was another gift – sunny and warm. Nancy's friend brought a wheelchair-accessible van. A nurse's husband is a Michigan State Police Officer and was in charge of the security for the parade. The officer set up a route for

the van to take, mapping out the best place for Nancy and her family to sit.

Nancy and her family were given a police escort and all went smoothly as she settled into her reserved spot to wait for her daughter's float to pass by. The shine of the trumpets and the big boom of bass drums could be heard as the Lakeshore Lancer Marching Band came into full view.



Over the summer, with the support of her Hospice at Home team, she was able to enjoy the Krasl Art Fair, Berrien County Youth Fair, Antiques on the Bluff, celebrating her daughters' birthdays, spending precious time with her family, and even moving her

As a band parent, her anticipation welled up inside. Many of the band members recognized and knew Nancy. At a blow of the drum major's whistle they came to a rest-in-step right in front of her. Rather than relax until they stepped off again, they performed their best – just for Nancy!

Nancy reached for the next milestone in her daughter's life and held onto hope that she would live long enough to see her high school graduation. As a mother, Nancy worried that her daughter's special moments would forever be shadowed by her death. A hospice patient is used to hearing about what they can't do, at the Hanson Hospice Center, our focus is on what you CAN do.

As summer began, Nancy herself was able heal enough to return home. She was able to finish-up preparations for her daughter's graduation party.

youngest daughter into her first college dorm.

"Coming to the Hanson Hospice Center gave me back my spark of hope and the very special, life-affirming gift of time," shared Nancy.

You help people, like Nancy, and their families, find hope and healing by overcoming suffering and confusion, doubt and fear. Your donations are so important. Nancy's story is just one example of the lives impacted by your donations to Hospice at Home and the Hanson Hospice Center. Please, give what is meaningful to you and fill out the reply card, or go online to www.hansonhospicecenter.org



Hear more about Nancy's story and watch an interview with her at www.hansonhospicecenter.org



You were warm and caring, you listened, and you were thorough. It was a pleasure knowing you.

'Someone Else'

Children, adults and families are helped through their grief by the caring and compassionate support of people like you.

The story below, by Angela Schlaack, reflects the tremendous impact you can make by supporting Lory's Place.

"Like most people who live in southwest Michigan, I was familiar with Lory's Place. I knew how it began, had a basic idea of what it was for, and was glad it was there for 'someone else.'

My husband Michael was a longtime Whirlpool employee and I was a going to college for fun. Our adult son, William, was graduating with his master's degree, had joined the Peace Corps, and was moving to Mongolia. Our young daughter, Emma, was thriving in her last years at Roosevelt Elementary.

"On November 15, 2013 my husband was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). Mike had been feeling perfectly healthy four days earlier and this was a shock that we never saw coming. In a matter of hours he was in the ICU at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Because his exact type of AML had a terrible prognosis, my grieving began on the date he was diagnosed. As months went by and the only treatments available had not helped him into remission, I sought out Lory's Place for anticipatory grief support for our daughter. Part of me knew what was going to happen, while another part of me was in complete denial.

"On September 29, 2014, ten and half months after his diagnosis, Mike died at age 45. I became a 'someone else' who just a year earlier I had never imagined I would be.

"I quickly turned to Lory's Place again, for my now 11-year-old daughter. I had mistakenly assumed Lory's Place was mainly for children, but found out there was also a group for me. I went to the first meeting with a reluctant attitude. When I walked in for our first group meeting, I was greeted with smiles and happy faces. I had grown so accustomed to pity looks and sadness when people approached me, that I was caught off guard. We introduced ourselves and each told one piece of good news. The notion that I could still have something good to share was curious to me.

"As the weeks went on, Emma was flourishing and excited to attend our biweekly sessions. I was still feeling somewhat resistant. I still did not want to accept that I was in fact that 'someone else' who belonged here. We always begin the adult group with saying our loved one's name, how, and when they died.

Though I was barely able to speak those words the first time, I did gradually notice it was becoming easier to say. Then one night something clicked. We were discussing the physical issues of grief that seem to come around on the date of our loved one's death each and every month. I had been experiencing that along with most others in the group. It was that moment when I realized that all of us in our own grief journeys do understand

each other, have ways to comfort each other, learn from each other, cry with each other and inspire each other. That moment allowed me to open up and truly accept my new reality and that I wasn't going to wake up from a bad dream. All along the facilitators told us that

grief is something you have to go through and you can't just go around it.

"As we continued to attend, I found myself growing in confidence that I was going to be okay. Of course I still was experiencing deep lows, but each week I found courage and strength that I never imagined I could muster. Emma has adjusted so well to our new life, and is now a very happy tween. I now have far more good days than bad and am rediscovering who I am. I have a new appreciation for life and what I can become. I understand that grief and new happiness are not mutually exclusive. Without the support I received at Lory's Place, I'm not sure that I could be doing any of that.

"I am proof that it's not just 'someone else' that needs Lory's Place. It's people like me, like you, your family, your friends or neighbors."

The death of a loved one often leaves a family financially devastated and full of uncertainty. Donating to Lory's Place helps to ensure that those who grieve can find a safe place for grief healing and education. Lory's Place does not charge for services, and does not receive federal funding or insurance reimbursements. Your donation provides the gift of encouragement and hope to those who need it.

Please return the enclosed reply card, or go online at www.lorysplace.org today.

Double your philanthropy and impact – please ask your Human Resources department about their Matching Gifts Program. Many employers, including Whirlpool and AEP, will match your gift.

Hear more about Angela's journey and watch an interview with her at www.lorysplace.org



New Look for Hospice at Home Website

Hospice at Home has launched a newly designed website, located at www.hospiceathomecares.org. With more than 100 pages of helpful information, the website covers the programs, services, locations, and educational opportunities available through Hospice at Home.

The improvements include multiple features to increase the ease of navigation around the site, making it simpler than ever to find the information you are looking for. The site is now responsive, which allows it to automatically resize to any device — a mobile phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer — making it easier to view.

Providing access to information on hospice and palliative care, volunteering, bereavement resources, caregiving, and grief healing education for an even broader array of people, the new website can be translated to another language with the click of a button. In addition, the site's new search tool displays content based on how applicable it is to a visitor's request, rather than alphabetically.

Upcoming classes, groups, and programs are easier to find and search with the new events section. You are able to look for events by date or keyword, improving access to the resources that Hospice at Home provides.



Check out the new and improved website at www.hospiceathomecares.org

Thankful for All that You Do

Hospice at Home and Lory's Place are blessed to have such great community support year after year. Your family, group or company can help make our services available to anyone in the community who needs them, and have a great time raising the funds in the process!

Car washes, rummage sales, lemonade stands, spaghetti dinners, golf outings - these are some of the many ways that people, groups and organizations in our community help us care for everyone who needs us. Proceeds from these events help us provide programs and complimentary services at no charge.

Over the past year, the following have helped raise funds for Hospice at Home and Lory's Place:

- Concours d'Elegance
- Culinary Cook-off – A Benefit for the Hanson Hospice Center
- Fashion with Compassion; Kids Helping Kids
- Fit for Fall 5k
- "Jeans Day" fundraisers at local schools and businesses
- Tour de Mitt



This is my safe place. No one else knows what I'm going through, but you do!

We are happy to offer assistance to any organization or individual conducting a fundraiser to benefit our program services. If you are considering organizing a fundraising event, please contact us at (269) 429-7100 or (800) 717-3811.



Charley Racine, Bob Burch, and State Senator John Proos, pose for a picture at the Culinary Cook-off to benefit the Hanson Hospice Center

Advance Care Planning

Tips for Starting the Conversation

End-of-life care isn't usually a top-of-mind subject. Sometimes people think that talking about what you want at end-of-life is only for when you're sick or older. Starting an advance care planning conversation can be difficult, and many times, our loved ones feel uneasy talking about the subject.

Advance care planning has two main goals:

1. To make sure your healthcare wishes are expressed and honored
2. To give the gift of self-assurance to your family and loved ones when it comes to making decisions on your behalf

If you haven't yet talked with those closest to you about what is important should you become seriously ill or be at the end of life, we encourage you to talk about it now. Navigating through chronic and serious illness, as well as through end of life and bereavement journeys is considerably easier and more meaningful when we are able to have open discussions about healthcare choices.

Here are some tips to help you start the conversation:

- Allow your loved ones to share their own beliefs/choices/preferences and use them as a point of comparison or contrast to your own.
- Approach the topic wanting to share your wishes before you ask someone else to share theirs.
- Be prepared that the subject may cause an emotional reaction in the person you are speaking with.
- Be ready to have more than one conversation – this is a process. Some family and friends will need more time to be fully receptive.
- Begin by asking what the other person's thoughts are about a certain reference point, such as the death of another person, a news event, a book, an article, or a TV episode, and see if this can lead into a deeper discussion.
- Open the conversation by sharing your own thoughts, rather than putting the other person on the spot.
- Remember to listen as much as you talk.
- Understand that these decisions are not set in stone – you can update your wishes at any time.
- Understand that you don't have to be in agreement to be in this conversation.

Having this important exchange helps to provide you and your loved one with the essential information and confidence needed to make decisions in the future.

Hospice at Home has many tools and resources available to help with advance care planning as well as starting and having the conversation.

To download a free advance directive, for you or your loved one, please visit www.hospiceathomecares.org/advancedirective or call (269) 429-7100 for more information



The Results May Surprise You

Take a quiz to see how much you know visit:

www.hospiceathomecares.org/advancedirective



Without your help, training and inspiration I don't know that I could have cared for him at home. For all of this I am thankful that he was able to pass away with me by his side.



Overcoming Caregiver Challenges During the Holidays

Remember to Take Care of Yourself

The holidays create many extra to-dos and can be stressful without the added responsibilities of caring for a loved one. Seasonal stress, combined with providing care for a loved one, can overwhelm some caregivers. It is common for caregivers to experience feelings of loss for “the way things used to be,” or to have a sense of guilt about what they think they should do, or how they think they should feel.

If the stress of caregiving is left undealt with, it can take a toll on health, relationships, and state of mind—eventually leading to burnout. When you’re burned out, it’s tough to do anything, let alone look after someone else.

Some emotional and physical symptoms of caregiver stress to watch for are:

- Anxiety, depression, irritability
- Cutting back on leisure activities
- Difficulty sleeping
- Drinking, smoking, or eating more
- Feeling increasingly resentful
- Feeling tired and run down
- Neglecting responsibilities
- New or worsening health problems
- Overreacting to minor nuisances
- Trouble concentrating

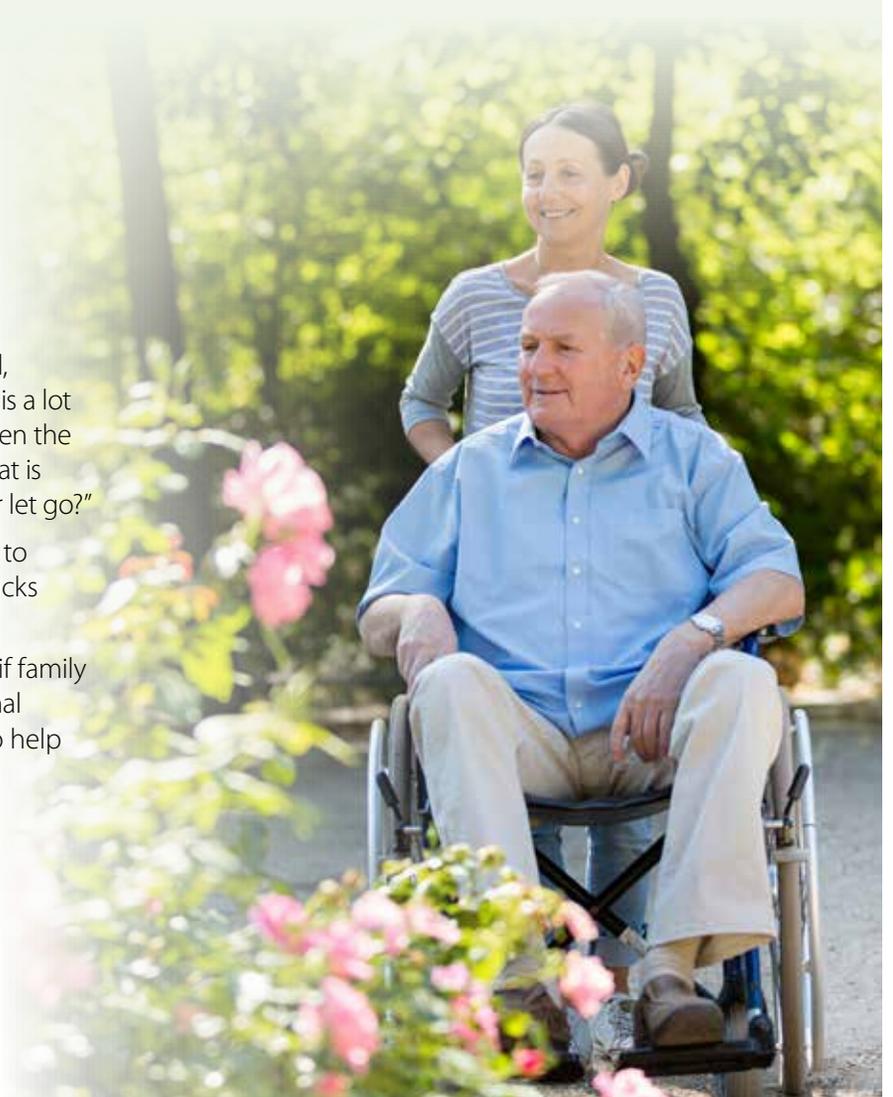
There are steps you can take to balance caregiver responsibilities with holiday planning and events:

- **Be flexible.** The holidays are steeped in personal, family and religious traditions. Maintaining those is a lot of responsibility for family caregivers, who are often the adult children of aging parents. Ask yourself, “What is important to continue and what can we adapt or let go?”
- **Take care of yourself.** Make a concerted effort to schedule time for exercise and keep healthy snacks handy to help avoid sugary holiday treats.
- **Communicate your needs.** Conflict may arise if family members can no longer continue their traditional holiday roles. Communicating is the best way to help smooth out problems and avert new ones.

- **Look for comic relief.** Nothing lifts the spirit like a good laugh – gather friends together for a game night or to watch a funny holiday movie.
- **Plan ahead.** Start making a list before the season arrives of who can do what so that no one has to take on the majority of the work alone.
- **Make time for traditions.** Don’t let favorite traditions go by the wayside during the busy holiday season. If time or circumstances make them difficult to maintain, adapt them as necessary.
- **Be resourceful.** If someone wants to help, say “yes.”

Caregiving can be challenging, but it is important to note that it also has its rewards. It can give you a feeling of giving back to a loved one. It can also make you feel needed and can lead to a stronger relationship with the person receiving care.

If you feel yourself beginning to experience signs or symptoms of caregiver stress call Hospice at Home at (269) 429-7100. We offer a variety of classes and resources to give family caregivers the tools to cope with stress.



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Thank you for making a hard situation much easier!

Lory's Place Summer Camp Helps Grieving Children

Over the summer, children ages five to twelve participated in a unique summer bereavement camp, the Camp Lifetimes Art Hop, in downtown St. Joseph, Michigan. This Lory's Place camp offered kids the opportunity to be creative while remembering the important people in their life who have died.

Many campers expressed that by writing out their grief during the journaling activity, it opened up a whole new world of ways to express their feelings. Once the journaling activity was complete, Splash Photography provided an avenue to be silly and carefree with a photo shoot where campers dressed up in costumes.

This part of the day was designed to help the children realize that we all need a break from the intensity of grief, and that laughter is needed in the healing process.

One of the most popular activities for the day took place at Krasl Art Center. Participants were able to get creative while making a memory pendant necklace. There were cutouts of words and phrases, as well as magazines offering a variety of pictures that might represent a memory or feeling. There were beads such as block letters, colorful rounds, and spacers to add a special touch to the necklaces. Everyone dove into the project excitedly, loving the idea of creating something unique for their story and special person.

The day ended back where it began, at the Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library. Wrapping up the day, everyone shared stories about their loved ones with the group. A generous grant from Coldwell Banker Charitable Foundation, in combination with your support, made this day possible for these children.

Thank you!



Hospice Volunteers Provide Comfort and Friendship

Hospice at Home volunteers provide important care to those facing life-limiting illness in our community. Whether it's companionship to the individual or support to family members and caregivers, the contributions of volunteers are essential to improving quality of life for people moving through the hospice journey.

Volunteer Coordinator, **Erika Morrison**, recently joined the Hospice at Home team in South Haven and shared why she is passionate about hospice care and volunteering.



"I love the mission of Hospice at Home and the commitment to the patient and their wishes. I love working with volunteers – people who so selflessly give their time, energy and resources to help others through the circumstances that they are experiencing. It's an amazing thing to watch!"

Volunteers that go out and visit people during this time show the best side of humanity. I am so humbled to be a part of that.

-Erika Morrison,
Volunteer Coordinator

Hospice at Home has a volunteer job for everyone – we want to find out what you love doing and channel that into helping others. No medical knowledge is required and all necessary training will be provided.

Call (800) 717-3811 or visit www.hospiceathomecares.org for more information.

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The other group members care about me and I care about them, even when they say things I don't like, but need to hear.

Upcoming Events, Community Classes and Programs

Grief Healing and Support

Walking Group

Lace up your walking shoes for this group which provides a time to walk and talk at a relaxed pace, combining informal support with exercise. This is an open group and participants are not required to preregister or attend all sessions. This is an adult-only group.

Tuesdays, Now to April 26

4:00 p.m.

South Haven High School

600 Elkenburg, South Haven

Please call Karen Riffer-Reinert at (269) 637-3825 for more information.

Wednesdays, January 13 to April 27

3:30 p.m.

F.C. Reed Middle School

10254 California Road, Bridgman

Please call Jaime Hoover at (269) 429-7100 or Mary Nell Rosenboom at (269) 695-1099 for more information.

Guys-n-Grief

This social support group is designed specifically for men. The group provides a safe place for men to share conversation and encouragement about their grief journey with one another. Please call Jim Wilson, Family Services Coordinator, at (269) 983-2707 prior to attending.

Second Monday of every month

Noon

Biggby Coffee

111 Main Street, St. Joseph

Good Grief

This support group covers topics such as how to cope with loss, guilt, and regret; why you feel the way you do; and finding a sense of peace. Each seven-week session meets for 1 ½ hours of meaningful information and sharing.

Mondays, January 4 to February 15

3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Hospice at Home

4025 Health Park Lane, St. Joseph

“

We learn that we need to remember all the good times we had with our person, all the good feelings inside, even though we miss them a lot.



Thursdays, January 7 to February 18

2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Hospice at Home

05055 Blue Star Highway, South Haven

Thursdays, January 7 to February 18

1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Hospice at Home

4017 Chamberlain Road, Buchanan

Shadow Steppers

Community members traveling through their grief journey are invited to take part in the healing process within this comforting and supportive environment. This 1 ½ hour group can be attended whenever the individual feels it is needed, has no attendance requirements, and does not have an official start and end date.

Second Monday of every month

3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Hospice at Home

05055 Blue Star Highway, South Haven

Second Tuesday of every month

2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Buchanan Senior Center

810 Rynearson Road, Buchanan

Third Wednesday of every month

3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Hospice at Home

4025 Health Park Lane, St. Joseph

Breakfast Group

Community members are invited to attend this grief support group which meets monthly over breakfast.

Third Monday of every month

10:30 a.m.

Country Kitchen

2487 South M 139, Benton Harbor

Hope and Healing Group

This group is open to any adult who is grieving a loss, whether newly bereaved or further along in their grief journey.

Second and Fourth Tuesday of every month

4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Lakeland Medical Center

Community Room

1243 Napier Avenue, St. Joseph

Caring for Your Loved One

This support group provides individuals who are caring for a loved one an opportunity to talk with others to develop new ways to cope with the demands of caregiving, to give and receive encouragement, and to be empowered and strengthened as a caregiver. Please contact Stephanie Kostizen at (269) 429-7100 to register or for more information.

Third Tuesday of Every Month

3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Hospice at Home, Buchanan

Third Tuesday of Every Month

1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Hospice at Home, St. Joseph

Second and Fourth Thursday of Every Month

1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Hospice at Home, South Haven

Special Events

Baking Spirits Bright

Join Lory's Place for the third annual Crew Cookie Walk. Choose your favorite festive cookies, dessert bars, and other delicious baked goods, fill up a box or two, and help raise money to support the services provided by Lory's Place.

Friday, December 4

5:00 to 9:00 p.m. during the 4th Annual Live Mannequins Splash Photography Storefront
403 State Street, St. Joseph

Save the Date in 2016

Run, Walk, Rock

Saturday, May 21

More than 1,000 children and adults help raise money for Lory's Place in the annual 5k Run, 5k Walk, and Rocking Chair marathon!

Tour de Mitt

July 9 to July 16

Bicycle your way down the Lake Michigan coast to raise funds and awareness for hospice services.

Lory's Place Reflections Dinner and Auction

Friday, July 15

This event provides many opportunities for the community to support Lory's Place.

Holiday Wreaths Now on Sale!

Beautiful 24-inch Douglas fir wreaths, decorated with red velvet bows and pinecones, are now available for purchase. These wreaths are a great way to decorate your home or office for the holidays while supporting your local hospice.

Gravesite easels for remembering a loved one during the holidays are available as well as wreath delivery upon request.

The wreaths are available for pick up on weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., from any Hospice at Home location.

(See back of Newsletter for locations)

Orders may be made over the phone, (269) 429-7100, or online at

www.hospiceathomecares.org

Wreaths are \$25 each or five for \$100



Tips for Family Caregivers

If you're looking for extra support or extra caregiver advice, sign up for the free eNewsletter, "Tips for Family Caregivers." Here's a small sampling of the kind of information you'll find every month:

Is Dad taking his meds "as directed?"

A recent national survey suggests that every year nearly half of adults taking prescription medications for a chronic condition make errors in taking their meds.

The most common problem areas:

- Memory: Forgetting to take a medication
- Organization: Failing to order a refill in time and running out of a drug
- Convenience: Being away from home and missing dose(s)
- Side effects: Experiencing unpleasant reactions
- Cost: Affording the drug

To subscribe for "Tips for Family Caregivers," email Lenee Svorec, Communications Specialist, at lsvorec@lakelandhealth.org



We have extraordinary memories from our months at the Hanson Hospice Center. It was indeed a blessing to have such a beautiful home for mom.





Hospice at Home

Lakeland Health Affiliate

4025 Health Park Lane
St. Joseph, MI 49085

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Serving our community from the following locations:

St. Joseph

4025 Health Park Lane
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 429-7100
(800) 717-3811

South Haven

05055 Blue Star Highway
South Haven, MI 49090
(269) 637-3825
(800) 637-3820

Buchanan

4017 Chamberlain Road
Buchanan, MI 49107
(269) 695-1099
(800) 599-5758

Hanson Hospice Center

4382 Cleveland Avenue
Stevensville, MI 49127
(269) 429-7100
(800) 717-3811

Lory's Place

445 Upton Drive
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 983-2707
(800) 717-3812

www.hospiceathomecares.org
www.lakelandhealth.org
www.lorysplace.org



Hospice at Home

Lakeland Health Affiliate

Our purpose:

Serve our patients, families and communities with dedication and compassion. Deliver the best end of life care to help people experience peaceful, pain-free and sacred deaths within the context of their own lives. Guide our youth, adults and families through the grief process with timely and consistent availability.



Lory's Place

A Grief Healing and Education Center
of Hospice at Home,
a Lakeland Health Affiliate

Our purpose:

To provide grief support services for grieving children, adults, and families.