

# Lines of HOPE



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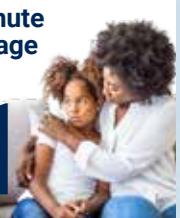
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## On the Cover

Commemorating 50 years of service in Southwest Michigan, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Iota Iota Omega Chapter celebrated with acts of service. "Service" and "Sisterhood" are their cornerstones and they embody that with various initiatives throughout the community.

As part of their celebration, the chapter donated 50 quilts to Caring Circle to be given to those in hospice care. The time and love put into these beautiful quilts will provide so much comfort and warmth to those in hospice care and serve as a lasting memory for their family members.

Caring Circle would like to thank the members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority for their generous donation and all of the work they do in our community.

## Helping Others Through Volunteering

Liz Karlowicz, a retired special education teacher, has spent the last 10 years volunteering with Caring Circle.

"My entire career path was focused on helping others. I feel that is my life's purpose. So subsequently, volunteering fits my journey," Liz shared.

Liz and her shih tzu, Chloe, provided pet therapy to hospice patients in local nursing homes. After Chloe's passing, Liz now focuses her time on "friendly visits" with hospice patients, talking about their favorite memories.

Caring Circle is always seeking compassionate people to volunteer and help make a difference in the lives of clients and their families. No medical knowledge is required, and all necessary training is provided by Caring Circle.

Volunteer opportunities include friendly visits, pet therapy, meal preparation, advance care planning facilitators and many other roles that match your interests and talents.

Hospice took such wonderful care of both of my parents and guided our family through such a peaceful goodbye. I wanted to help others through this journey by volunteering.

*Liz Karlowicz*

For more information call 269.429.7100 or visit [caring-circle.org/volunteer](http://caring-circle.org/volunteer)



# Lory's Place Events Raise Awareness for Grief Healing

In Southwest Michigan, the spring and summer months are a busy time of year for locals and those visiting our beautiful lakeshores. It is also during these seasons that Lory's Place invites participants and community members to attend and participate in two annual events that are important to supporting grief healing and education in our community.

The Lory's Place Run, Walk, Rock 5K took place on what started as a rainy morning in May and ended with sunshine and warmer weather. This year's event welcomed 750 runners and walkers through stunning views alongside the marina on the river, past the shoreline of Lake Michigan, and down the historical brick streets of Ridgeway in St. Joseph, Michigan. Local businesses were able to show their support through sponsorships and in-kind donations.

The Lory's Place Reflections Dinner and Auction welcomed guests at the Black River Barn in South Haven, Michigan. The evening hosted a night of friendship and fundraising along with educating those in attendance on the significant impact of the services and support Lory's Place provides in our communities. Along with the 238 community members in attendance, area businesses and vendors sponsored and donated items to make this year's event successful.



*Reflections Dinner and Auction*



Without the wonderful support of those throughout the community, local businesses, and organizations—the success of these events and the profound impact they have on people's lives would not be possible.

# Celebrating a Decade of Fundraising in South Haven

At Caring Circle, our hospice care team has been serving our neighbors in the South Haven and surrounding community for over 40 years. We believe in doing all that we can to ensure people have the best quality of life possible with the utmost care and compassion—regardless of their ability to pay for services.

On Saturday, August 6, over 300 people gathered on the lawn of Dan and Mary Nulty's home on the South Beach Bluff in South Haven to raise money for local hospice services. The annual Hospice Benefit Wine and Beer tasting has been held at the Nulty's property for 10 years. This event showcased local food, wine, beer, and entertainment while providing awareness about end-of-life services and the importance of community support and donations.

When Dan and Mary Nulty were initially approached about the use of their property for hospice fundraising, they never imagined the success it would be or that it would turn into an annual gathering. Our 2022 party marked the final year at the Nulty's beautiful Lake Michigan home.

Caring Circle is grateful for Dan and Mary's involvement with our organization and their generosity over the years. Not only did they allow Caring Circle use of their private property, the couple's contributions helping to plan and execute this memorable evening will be forever appreciated. Dan and Mary worked with Caring Circle team members to ensure that each year event-goers experienced a beautiful night full of friendship, fundraising, and community support.

For more information about the services Caring Circle provides or to learn how you can contribute to support benevolent care for those in hospice, visit [caring-circle.org](http://caring-circle.org)



# Welcome New Providers

**Sabina Bett, DNP** joins the Caring Circle HouseCalls team with over 10 years of clinical experience. She earned her Doctorate in Nursing Practice from Andrews University. Most recently, Sabina worked as a registered nurse floating between all Spectrum Health Lakeland hospitals and serves as adjunct nursing professor at Andrews University in Berrien Springs. Her expertise includes clinical research, patient safety, and oncology.



*"HouseCalls allows me to see patients in their homes and gives me the privilege of fulfilling a holistic care approach. It is humbling and rewarding when a patient and family express their gratitude for our services, which would have been difficult or impossible to access without our visit."*

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**Ollie Lee, NP** previously served as start of care registered nurse with Caring Circle and has more than 10 years of clinical experience. She earned her Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner degree from Walden University in Minneapolis and has now stepped into an advanced provider role on the team.



*"I love my role as a hospice provider. It's my pleasure to provide support and comfort to patients and families. Providing the best care possible and caring for terminally ill patients allows me to extend comfort, emotional support and compassionate care."*

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**Ruth McDowell, PA** joins Caring Circle with over 25 years of experience in clinical medicine. She previously worked as a physician assistant in family medicine, providing care to the South Haven community, and now joins the HouseCalls team. Ruth earned her Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant studies from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo Michigan.



*"Working for Caring Circle is the high point of a long career in primary care. I am humbled to be invited into patients' homes to spend time with them. Meeting their families, hardworking caregivers, and furry friends helps me understand them and provide better care. I have found my home at Caring Circle HouseCalls."*

Learn more about our providers and care team members at [caring-circle.org](http://caring-circle.org)

# At the Heart of What We Do

## Connecting with people and building relationships

Medical director of continued care services, **Jordan Sall, DO**, recently shared about the care he and the Caring Circle team provide, and the value he places on making personal connections to deliver better care.

*The most important thing we do is offer something to those with a serious illness that is truly valuable. I'm there to make their lives easier and better. I take a lot of pride in the team that we have because they care, and at the end of the day, that's what we need—more love, more compassion, and a little more understanding.*

### When should someone call Caring Circle?

*Caring Circle provides a continuum of care for those with a serious illness. I think that when someone feels like they can't identify where in their medical journey they are, Caring Circle is a good place to call.*

- *If you're leaving the hospital and trying to get linked back into your primary care physician, and it's difficult to safely make it to the doctor's office—Caring Circle has services to help.*
- *If you or a loved one is diagnosed with a terminal disease or struggling with unmanaged pain from a serious illness—Caring Circle is there to help.*

*We provide services and connections that people don't always think of, whether it's with us directly or with another community program.*

### What are the benefits of starting care sooner, rather than later?

*It's important to get away from the stigma that hospice and palliative care are for the last hours and days of one's life. It really is meant to be a part of someone's overall continuum of care. Making the transition into hospice care can provide improved quality of life and enhance the quantity of life when it is done well.*

### How can families start the hospice conversation?

*Caring Circle has experience with helping people at all stages of a serious illness. And we understand that each stage comes with a range of emotions. Some people understand where they are at, some people just want to talk to someone, and some need more information on what their options are. Our entire team has different levels of expertise that can help with making decisions and choices that are right for each person.*

### What advice would you give someone who has anxiety about inquiring about services?

*Our goal is to make each person's experience easy and affordable while instilling humanity in our delivery of care, and make it as stress-free as possible. What drives me day in, and day out, is to provide compassionate care and to bring smiles to people's faces during difficult times as well as good times. People with serious illness have good days too, and to be able to see someone go to a graduation or enjoy a birthday party, when they weren't expecting to—there is nothing that brings me more joy.*





## Honoring a Wish to Be at Home

Despite the cold, dark night of January 30, 2021, everything was warm and bright within the New Buffalo home of Mike and Pam Feeney. They shared an intimate dinner to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary and spent hours marveling at their years spent together.

But just weeks after that night, 72-year-old Pam was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Throughout her life, Pam had endured health problems and surgeries, but this diagnosis was much different.

As the doctor began to discuss chemotherapy, Pam stopped him.

"She reached over, grabbed my hand, and looked at the doctor," said Mike. "She told him that we were going home and I would take care of her. Our lives changed in that moment."

Pam made it clear that she wanted to be with Mike at home for her final days.

"With her history of health issues, more chemotherapy and surgery were not in the cards for her," said Mike. "That's why we made a choice to go home. She trusted me to care for her and it scared the living daylights out of me. But I've always known her instincts to be right."

Pam's primary care physician, **John Gosling, MD**, immediately connected the Feeneys with Caring Circle. A hospice nurse came to their home and activated care services the next day.

"Asking for help can be awkward, but when someone is deathly ill, you need it," said Mike. "You never feel more alone than when you're in a room with someone

who needs your help and you're not really sure how to do that. With hospice, you get a whole team who knows how to do what you don't."

With Caring Circle supporting the Feeneys, Mike learned how to care for Pam and when to ask for help.

"It gave us comfort, wisdom to do it right, and relief that someone knowledgeable was looking over our shoulder," said Mike. "It was a comfort to know that they could anticipate what would lie ahead."

As summer progressed, so did Pam's condition.

"It was so obvious things weren't going well," said Mike. "We all knew how it would end. I even had to call a few times in the evening and Caring Circle talked me through questions."

Pam is described by loved ones as a wife, educator, mother, grandmother, sibling, daughter, friend, singer, author, storyteller, and dancing machine. She died at home with family October 2021.

But with that great loss, Mike also acknowledged something the family had gained.

*If Caring Circle had not been available, we would have missed our last best opportunity to have Pam with us. If she were here, she would say thank you, thank you, thank you.*

*Mike Feeney*

# Making a Difference in the Community

Local pastor, **Jamie Cervantes**, from First Church in Benton Harbor shared about his first experience with Lory's Place and the grief work they provide to our communities.



*"A couple months back, a child in our community was murdered. It happened a day or two before our youth group met. I knew that I needed Lory's Place to come in, and that was the first time I saw them in action. They sent a male and a female counselor. We had about 16 kids, and I was beyond impressed by how they facilitated the talk. That night I learned more about those children than I had in several months of hanging out with them. It was really effective because they opened up a lot about how they felt and the way they see themselves and their neighborhood, and where this tragic event fit in, whereas a lot of times, they just kind of shut down, but they all spoke. Kids that hardly ever talk, talked."*

## Donations Help Make More Moments and Healing Possible

We at Caring Circle and Lory's Place want to express how honored we are to be a part of this community. It is a privilege like no other to serve the families who entrust their care journey with us.

We are thankful to be able to give our love to so many, regardless of their ability to pay. Your financial support is essential. It allows us to keep going and bring local services like ours to neighbors and friends in need.

Visit [caring-circle.org/help](http://caring-circle.org/help) or [lorysplace.org/help](http://lorysplace.org/help) to learn more and to make a donation today.



## 106

DAYS of hospice care for uninsured community members



## 1,200+

CONVERSATIONS for advance care planning



## 3,171

COMMUNITY MEMBERS received grief support at Lory's Place



## 1,768

STUDENTS

used peer support by Lory's Place groups at area schools



## \$112K

in BENEVOLENT CARE given at the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center



# Hospice 101

When facing a life-limiting illness, comfort and quality of life are often the most important goals. The mission of hospice care is to provide aggressive symptom management and comfort care to ensure the best quality of life possible.

When someone signs up for hospice services, they are surrounded by care from multiple disciplines, for both them and their families.

## Multi-discipline team approach

- Hospice providers are skilled in symptom management to ensure comfort.
- Nurses provide 24-hour support to manage symptoms that may arise anytime during the day or at night. This care helps to prevent trips to the emergency room by bringing in the same level of care to the home.
- Social workers provide routine visits to provide emotional support to both those in hospice care and their families as well as assist with securing resources to improve care and address caregiver fatigue.
- Spiritual care coordinators provide routine spiritual care and assist with engaging faith communities in care.
- Home health aids provide help in the home with bathing and personal care.
- Bereavement care coordinators provide grief counseling to families for 13 months following the death of their loved one. This care and attention is provided through letters, phone calls, and individual or group meetings based on personal needs.
- Volunteers are specially trained to provide companionship and assistance to those with serious illness.

## Understanding hospice care and support

- **Medication delivery and management:** medications are delivered to the home and nurses assist with educating family caregivers on administering drugs.
- **Durable medical equipment (DME):** equipment available to increase quality of life, which can be delivered to the home for use, including a hospital bed, bedside table, bedside commode, oxygen concentrators, wheelchairs, and walkers.
- **Pet Peace of Mind:** this program helps those in hospice care ensure that their four-legged loved ones get the care they need. This program also assists with planning for rehoming pets after their person dies.
- **Veteran support:** Caring Circle is a Level 5 Partner in the *We Honor Veterans* program, which pays tribute to veterans in hospice care. This designation means we are skilled in care related to military service conditions. We assist with securing Veterans Affairs benefits to improve support for our veteran patients and their families.
- **Inpatient hospice residence:** the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center provides a 16-bed facility specifically designed to care for those approaching the end of life. Routine placement, respite care for caregivers, or hospital level care support due to the need for aggressive symptom management are all available.

In most cases, all support listed is covered 100 percent by the Medicare hospice benefit, Medicaid, or private insurance. Referrals for hospice services can be made by medical providers, family, or the person with serious illness themselves. For more information on hospice care, call **269.429.7100**.

# One Minute of Courage

Waiting for the waves of grief to pass can feel like an eternity. We can become impatient with ourselves because we feel we are not grieving fast enough, or that we are not “over it” yet. It is easy to feel added pressures from the perception of what society expects. The reality is, no one wants to feel relief from the pain more than those that have experienced a loss. No amount of pressure from yourself or anyone will bring relief.

## How long will my grief last? How long will I feel this way?

These are questions often asked to grief professionals, whether grief is fresh and new, or someone has placed their grief on a shelf and realized it simply is not going away.

Time itself does not heal grief. It is what a person does in that time that helps them move from a place of intense pain to healing. Rebuilding a life without that person takes time, energy and patience.

Here are a few suggestions as you set your own pace toward a new normal.

- Your grief is unique to you, just as your relationship with that person was uniquely yours. Consider doing something you once enjoyed together. Take someone along if that feels better.
- Honor your person’s memory each day. It doesn’t need to be a grand gesture, keep it simple. Touch their picture, light a candle, or simply breathe in remembering their love and breathe out knowing they will always be a part of you.
- Allow joy and laughter when it comes. It can feel uncomfortable, especially at first, but it doesn’t mean you are forgetting. Joy and sadness can co-exist. It may be helpful to remember a joyful memory with your person.
- For some people, especially right after death, grief is ever-present. However, if you can, take a break. If possible, allow yourself to engage in something that takes your mind somewhere else: a movie, a book, a game, or listening to someone else’s story.

All these intentional moments of mourning are taking your grief from inside and expressing it outwardly. These are opportunities to release your grief in small, manageable bits at a time. It is difficult to take it all at once. Instead try to take it in minutes, then hours, days, and eventually weeks. It takes intention and courage to travel your grief journey, be kind to yourself.

If you are grieving a death and would like guidance and support, please call Lory's Place at **269.983.2707**.



# Monthly Resources

## Just Coffee

When you are grieving it can be tough getting out and socializing again. Those precious moments in the morning once shared with your person can be difficult to get through. Having a familiar, comfortable place to go can help ease the transition.

**Second Friday of every month**

**9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**Lory's Place**

**445 Upton Drive, St. Joseph**



## Coffee and Crafts

It can be therapeutic to get back to hobbies enjoyed before the death of your loved one or to discover new ones. Enjoy coffee while you create with fellow crafters—knitting, crocheting, quilting, scrap booking, making jewelry, or whatever you enjoy.

**Second Friday of every month**

**10 a.m. to Noon**

**Lory's Place**

**445 Upton Drive, St. Joseph**



## Grief Support Groups

Adults who have experienced the death of a loved one are invited to these adult grief groups that are open to the public and free of charge. Please call **269.983.2707** to RSVP if you plan to attend as space is limited.

**Second Wednesday of each month**

**Noon to 1 p.m.**

**Niles-Buchanan YMCA**

**905 North Front Street, Niles**

**Second Thursday of every month**

**1 p.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Senior Services of Van Buren County**

**8337 M-140, South Haven**

## Caregiver Support Group

This group gives caregivers the opportunity to meet and discuss their experiences of caring for a loved one, to problem solve caregiving needs, and to speak to others that are experiencing the same joys and challenges of the caregiver journey. For more information to register, email [stephanie.kostizen@spectrumhealth.org](mailto:stephanie.kostizen@spectrumhealth.org) or call 269.429.7100.

**Third Tuesday of every month**

**1 p.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Caring Circle**

**4025 Health Park Lane, St. Joseph**

\*Virtual meeting option available.

Support group sessions at Lory's Place are a safe harbor where children in preschool through high school, as well as adults, can work through their grief in age-appropriate peer groups.

The bereavement programs and services provided by Caring Circle and Lory's Place are made possible through the generosity of our donors and volunteers, and provided to all at no cost as a community service.

For a full list of bereavement, fundraising, and support events, visit [caring-circle.org/events](http://caring-circle.org/events)



## Changes Coming in the New Year!

Caring Circle of Spectrum Health Lakeland is excited to be able to deliver news, information about special services, and inspirational stories of care and support more frequently and to more people starting in 2023. The *HealthCurrents* magazine of Spectrum Health Lakeland will now include Caring Circle and Lory's Place focused content in each of the quarterly publications.

While you won't see a *Lines of Hope* magazine coming to your mailboxes anymore, you will still receive the same great *Lines of Hope* content you are used to seeing twice a year, now four times a year, embedded within the *HealthCurrents* magazine.

**Be on the lookout for the next issue of *HealthCurrents* coming to your mailbox in 2023!**



# Preparing to be a Family Caregiver

Every November, in honor of National Family Caregiver Month, it is important to show our appreciation for individuals who have taken on the task of caregiving. They give their time and attention to improve the quality of life for their loved ones who due to physical/cognitive decline or illness require extra support.

Caregivers play an essential role in the care of those with serious illness. The support they provide is vital to ensuring that their loved one's needs are met. Although caregiving can be rewarding, when starting on the caregiver journey, new caregivers can become overwhelmed by the needs of their loved ones and may need direction on how to best support them.

There are many resources in our community that can provide help but knowing where to start can sometimes be a daunting task.

1. **Create a team** - A caregiving team can include help from family members, friends, or neighbors, and support from church groups or other organizations your loved one may be affiliated with.
2. **Accept help** - Many caregivers have people who offer to help, but, in that moment, are often unable to think of what support would be helpful. When you have a quiet moment, make a list of tasks that may be helpful like having someone sit with your loved one during mealtime, picking up a few groceries, or just checking in on them when you aren't able to be there.
3. **Take care of yourself** - The demands of caregiving can result in caregivers putting their needs last. It is important to make your health, social, and emotional needs a priority. You cannot take care of your loved one if you don't take care of yourself.
4. **Create an open dialogue** - Sometimes the loss of independence that your loved one may be experiencing can result in emotional turmoil or even disagreements. Validating your loved one's feelings can help them feel heard and understood. Sharing that helping them gives you peace of mind and that your intentions come from a place of love can help diffuse conflict and strengthen your relationship.
5. **Seek out emotional support** - Stress, feelings of loneliness, role reversals or changes in the dynamic of your relationship with your loved one, grief, and depression can all be emotions experienced by caregivers. Seeking out support from a support group or mental health provider can help you process these emotions.
6. **Make memories** - Caring for a loved one can lead to many moments of joy, humor, love, and connection that will create lasting, treasured memories. Take the time to recognize moments of joy and triumph when reflecting on your day and be kind and gracious to yourself on days that may be more difficult.

For more information on caregiving support, services at Caring Circle that can help, or general assistance with getting started on care, please call **269.429.7100**.





# It's Never Too Late to Thank a Veteran, Even at the End of Life

Americans across the country celebrate Veterans Day on November 11, a special day to salute the men and women who have bravely served our country in the military.

These fellow Americans have made sacrifices in defense of freedom, and they deserve our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Honoring our nation's Veterans includes supporting them throughout their entire lives, especially at the end.

Caring Circle is committed to meeting the unique needs of Veteran patients, paying tribute to those who have served, and advocating for the needs of our local Veterans. One of the ways we're making this happen is through our active involvement with We Honor Veterans, an innovative program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) that was created in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

## What can you do to make a difference?

A simple, heartfelt, "thank you" can go a long way, especially to our Veteran population. Ask your friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others in your community whether they have served in the military (you may be surprised how many have)—and thank those who have served for their sacrifice.

It may come as a surprise to learn that every day, 1,800 Veterans die. That's more than 680,000 Veterans every year—or 25 percent of all the people who die in this country annually.

If you know a Veteran who is in need of the special care hospice brings to people facing serious and life-limiting illness, please reach out and help them learn more about care options by visiting [caring-circle.org](http://caring-circle.org) or calling **269.429.7100**.

To all our nation's Veterans, thank you.

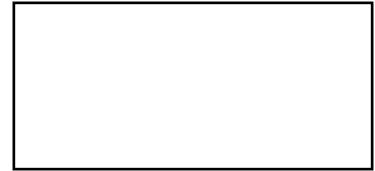


For the second year in a row, local Vietnam Veteran hospice patients were celebrated and recognized with a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans ceremony in March. Their families, Caring Circle hospice team members, volunteers and staff all gathered at their homes.



**Caring Circle**  
of Spectrum Health Lakeland

4025 Health Park Lane  
St. Joseph, MI 49085



# Understanding Advance Care Planning

If you were to suddenly become ill and couldn't make decisions for yourself, who would you trust to act on your behalf? Would they know what your wishes were?

Advance care planning is the process of deciding your future medical care and includes a series of legal documents that help to ensure that if you can't speak for yourself, your wishes can still be carried out. Advance care planning should be a part of routine healthcare for anyone age 18 and older.

## Not sure where to begin?

Caring Circle offers many tools and resources to help with advance care planning as well tips for starting and having this important conversation.

For more information, or to download a free advance directive, visit [caring-circle.org/  
planyourcare](http://caring-circle.org/planyourcare) or call 269.429.7100.

