

Fall/Winter 2020

LINES OF

Hope



## What's Inside:

- Adult grief support expanded
- Where words fail, music speaks
- The difference your donation makes
- Calming dementia symptoms





# Inside this Issue

## COVER PHOTO

Where words fail,  
music speaks



Support for  
grieving adults

3



Small  
things  
make a  
big  
difference



5

Fund  
established  
for families



The difference your  
donation makes

6



The best  
program  
to fit your  
needs

8



9

Get to know your  
care team



What calms  
dementia symptoms?

10



Through a  
child's eyes

11



Caring Circle has a new office  
in Niles!

BACK COVER



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# Local support for grieving adults expands

Lory's Place began 15 years ago in response to the death of a beloved community member, Lory Schults, DPM. Since opening its doors, roughly 40,000 grieving adults and children have been helped by professionally trained staff, support groups, educational resources, and community outreach.

## **To provide hope and strength for every grieving person, it is time to expand!**

Construction on the adjacent storefront next to Lory's Place in St. Joseph has begun and will soon provide a dedicated venue for adult programs. This will create a one-of-a-kind atmosphere to assist grieving community members, as they reenter life without their loved one.

## **A calming social space**

The new meeting space will have a relaxed and open feel, like a coffee house where people can drop by anytime or meet individually with a staff member or volunteer. A kitchen area will be available for preparing and serving refreshments, or for individuals learning to cook. Figuring out how to handle routine home or vehicle maintenance, managing finances, or adjusting to meals alone, can be uncharted territory. If there is a need, the staff and volunteers at Lory's Place will find a way to help with these personal moments.

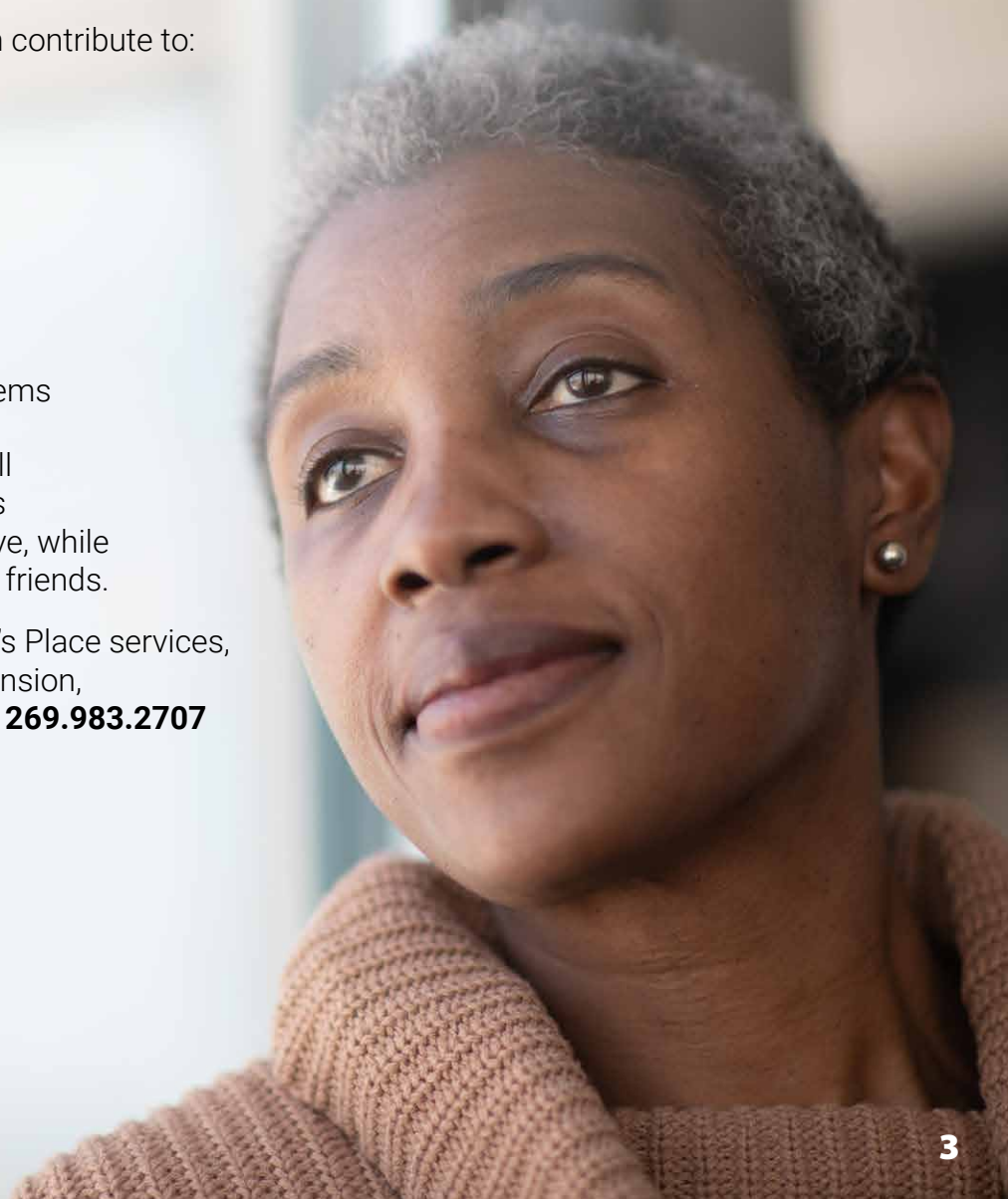
## **The burden of unresolved grief**

Statistics show that ignoring grief can contribute to:

- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Decreased productivity
- Divorce
- Financial instability
- Increased medical costs
- Lost time from work
- Physical and mental health problems

The Lory's Place expansion project will create a safe haven for grieving adults to engage in life with a new perspective, while they learn new coping skills and meet friends.

To learn more about this project, Lory's Place services, or how you can help support the expansion, visit **[lorysplace.org/expansion](https://lorysplace.org/expansion)** or call **269.983.2707**





# A grand donation

Thanks to a generous donation from Alan Lewis, a beautiful baby grand piano sits in the great room of the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center. The piano was owned by his mother, Linda Banyon Lewis. In memory of her, people who play the piano now create pleasing music and bring joy to families and their loved ones who are near the end of life's journey.

## Where words fail, music speaks

**Brandon Pierce, MSW**

Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center

I will never forget the day that I walked into the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center to interview for a social work position. I remember being in awe of its beauty and the peacefulness of the space. As I walked through the front doors my eyes quickly focused on the gorgeous grand piano. Some of my fondest memories have been made playing that same piano.

I started learning music at the age of eight. Using music to help lower someone's pain or anxiety, or witnessing their emotions lift, is an honor and a privilege. Music has been found to help slow and deepen breath and decrease agitation. I have seen patients with dementia or Alzheimer's not know who they are or who they are with, sing every word from a hymn played just for them. Those moments give me chills and make me certain that I was where I needed to be at that time.

One of my fondest memories at the Hanson Hospice Center was during Christmas. I had just been introduced to a new patient and his wife. One morning as I played the piano for them both, it was apparent they really enjoyed the music and the time together listening. The patient's wife told me afterward that this was the most

peace she had felt in a long time. She later asked if I would play a few Christmas songs the following week for some of their visiting family. I presumed maybe five to 10 people would be there.

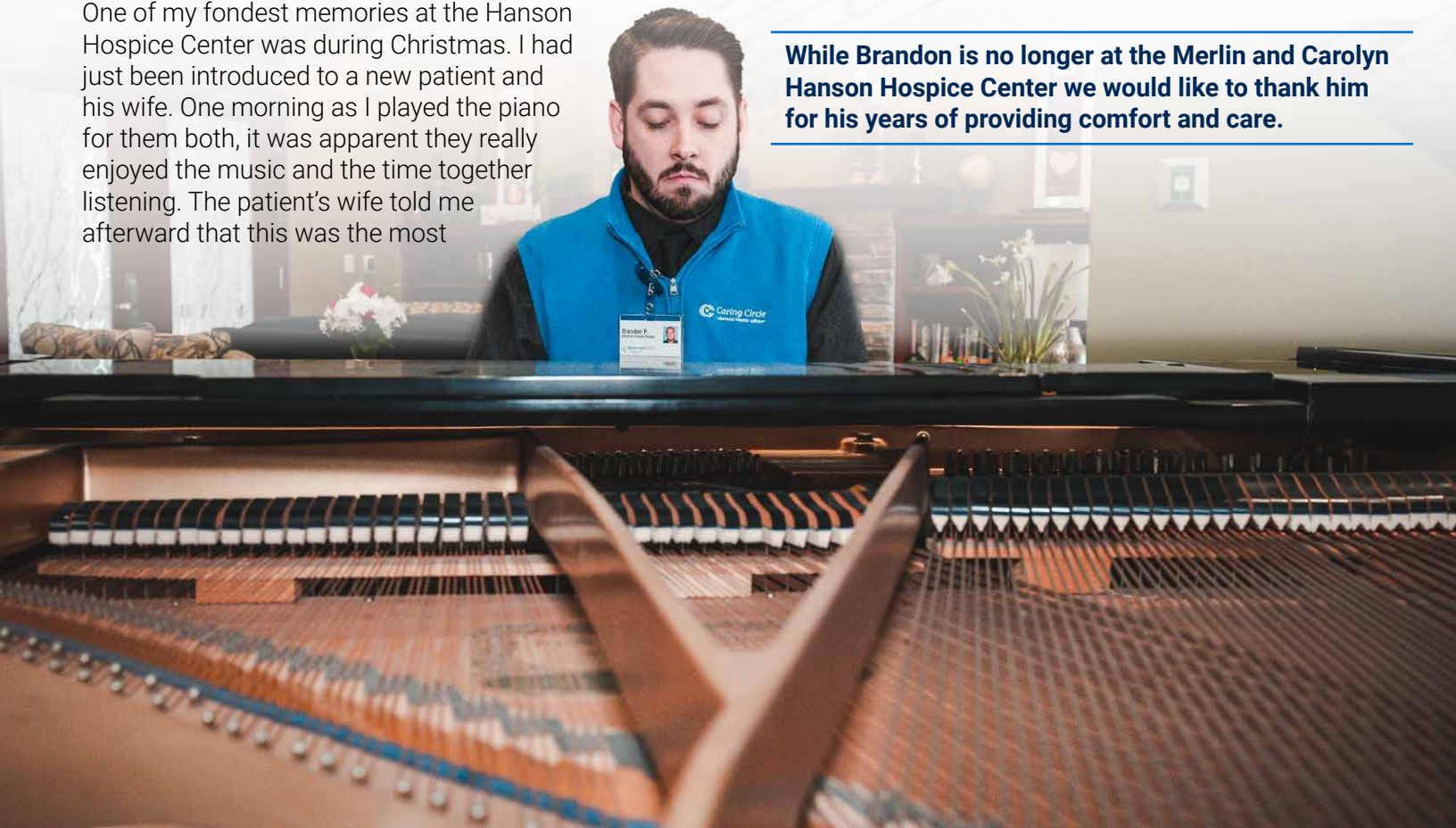
To my surprise, 34 individuals from all over the country came to have a sing-along in the place where their loved one was spending his final days. I cannot even begin to express how full my heart was that day, and how grateful I was to be a part of their experience. When I looked around the room, and saw everyone singing together, I knew it was a memory I would hold onto forever.

The end of someone's life can be filled with conflicting emotions. Providing comfort and support through music therapy can help connect people through a shared experience. These moments had a profound impact on my life as well.

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**While Brandon is no longer at the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center we would like to thank him for his years of providing comfort and care.**

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# The small things in life can make a big difference

Over 20 years ago, **Marion Stiles**, Berrien Springs business owner and book publisher, decided to become a volunteer at Caring Circle. Her volunteer coordinator said, "Marion stands out in my mind because she was ready for her first assignment, and the only one I had to give to this elegant, scholarly woman, was a visit with a very down-home truck driver." She continued, "one would have thought they would have nothing in common, but I was wrong!"

Marion began visiting with the gentleman she was assigned too, and quickly started bonding and finding similar interests. To brighten the gentleman's week, Marion would bring small mementos to each visit. Sometimes she brought him fruit he liked, other times she would bring him magazines that he had mentioned. At every visit she discovered more about him, such as that he loved liver and onion sandwiches, so she began to make him one every few weeks.

Marion listened to him reminisce through countless stories from his childhood onto adulthood. One story led to another, and Marion knew she wanted to capture these memories for the family to look back on and remember their father. Marion took down all the stories he told, asked for more and ended up working with relatives to add photos from different times in his life. Not only did Marion write, compile, and add photos, she went the extra step and put it together in a bound paperback book. She made copies for him and all his children, so they could celebrate his life—always.

Marion volunteered with Caring Circle until she became too ill to continue. She then began using hospice services herself until her death. Marion is remembered for the joy she found in volunteering and how she truly cherished the time spent with those she helped.

## Fund established to help families

St. Joseph natives **Bob and Judy Hall** turned their end-of-life experience into something that would provide greater access to hospice care for families in need. Judy had congestive heart failure, and after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in June, her condition caused a rapid decline in her health. She was retaining water that couldn't be controlled by in-home treatments, causing her frequent hospitalizations. While in the hospital, hospice care was discussed with Bob and one of his daughters.

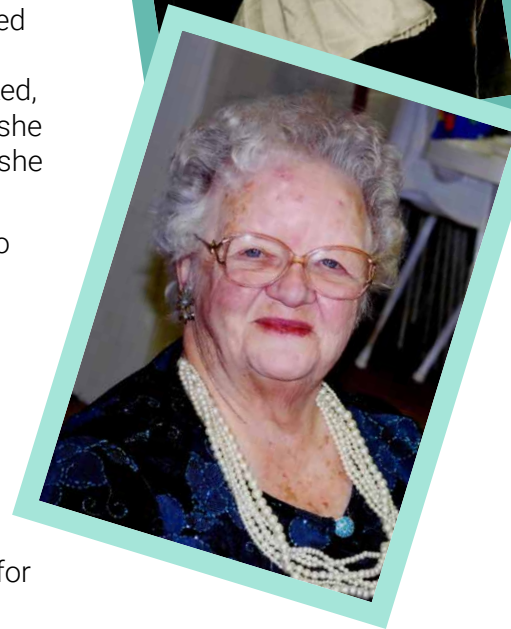
"After talking with the hospice care coordinator, I did the hardest thing I've had to do in my life, I talked to my wife about going on hospice services and she agreed it was the right thing to do," Bob said. Judy went to the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center at the end of July. Her pain and discomfort were eased, and she died peacefully four days into her stay.

Medicare pays for 100% of in-home hospice services. It does not always provide the same coverage for a patient who needs to be admitted to a hospital or other care facility. Bob and Judy's personal finances made it possible for them to afford the costs of inpatient health care. As they discussed their situation, they thought about others less fortunate.

Bob placed funds in an endowment with the goal of supporting families with children who need the services of the Hanson Hospice Center.

"It is our hope that more people have access to the inpatient services at the Hanson Hospice Center, should they need them. Dealing with the pending loss of a love one is difficult enough, and those last days can often be where the most help and support for a spouse and family are needed," Bob shared.

For more information on the Hanson Hospice Center visit [hansonhospicecenter.org](http://hansonhospicecenter.org)





# The **DIFFERENCE** your donation makes

Every year Caring Circle including Lory's Place, is fortunate to be invited into the lives and stories of our friends and neighbors throughout Southwest Michigan. Those we serve truly become part of our extended family and though we are at a unique time in our history, our love and care does not stop. This year, more than ever, we need your financial support to continue providing essential help and local services to our neighbors and friends in need.

## Innovation and collaboration

### Lory's Place Grief Journal

- Teen activity and keepsake developed for grief healing
- 65 pages of creative writing, drawing, and thought exercises

### 2020 Circle of Life Award

Nationally recognized award that celebrates innovation in palliative, end-of-life, and grief healing to honor programs that can be modeled by other health organizations working to embed similar services. Caring Circle, including Lory's Place, was one of two organizations recognized this year.

### Physicians Residency Program *\*Starting in July 2020*

- Eight residents participated in 2020 rotation
- Focused on caring for hospice, palliative, and housecalls patients

### COVID-19 Care Community Collaboration

- **Situation**
  - Individual could no longer be cared for safely at home by caregiver
  - No skilled nursing facilities were admitting because of COVID-19 pandemic
- **Solution**
  - Caring Circle partnered with community agencies to provide the daily medical care needed to keep both the individual and their caregiver safe and comfortable
  - Caring Circle arranged extra nursing and certified nursing assistant visits and Area Agency on Aging provided three, two-hour visits daily to supplement what the caregiver was no longer able to sustain

## Navigating a new normal

*\*April through September 2020*

### Lory's Place virtual programming and support

- **Seven virtual support emails from Lory's Place**
  - 254 emails opened
- **161 virtual support landing page views**
- **442 Facebook posts**
  - 27,102 engagements on posts
  - 26,669 reactions (likes, loves, thumbs up, etc.)
  - 2,900 shares
- **Six virtual peer support groups**
  - 176 children and adults
  - Weekly communications and support resources to each participant

### Caring Circle virtual visits

- 325 visits done since the onset of COVID-19

## Looking Ahead at 2021

As you spend time with your loved ones this holiday season and reflect on all your wonderful family memories, we hope you will take a moment to discover how the work of Caring Circle supports our community and make lasting memories for those in our care.

**Please visit [caring-circle.org/appeal](https://caring-circle.org/appeal) or [lorysplace.org/appeal](https://lorysplace.org/appeal) to make your gift.**

## In 2020, your kindness and generosity provided:

**444**

DAYS of hospice care for uninsured community members



**145**

advance care planning CONVERSATIONS



**122**

Lory's Place GROUP DAYS for 4,700 community members



**994**

STUDENTS reached through 70 Lory's Place school groups



**925**

DAYS of BENEVOLENT CARE at the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center



**1,500**

SQUARE FEET added in Lory's Place Expansion



*My name is Ronnika Williams, I was born and raised in the city of Benton Harbor. I was introduced to Lory's Place through a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. Anyone that knows me, knows that I suffered the death of my father seven years ago. It was very hard for me to talk about what it was like losing him, so being in a circle with the teens and facilitators of Lory's Place, I became more comfortable sharing stories with my family and peers. I found comfort in telling others stories about my dad and listening to theirs.*

*Lory's Place is important for our community because it's not very easy to talk about grief, especially in the Black community—there is a stigma associated with mental health and the need to open up about feelings. Grief is universal and we need ways to express our deep sorrow. Lory's Place has done a great job reaching out to areas that have not felt comfortable reaching out on their own.*

*Lory's Place is here for us and there to walk with us during our journey.*

**Ronnika Williams**

*Lory's Place is a place where you talk about your feelings about the ones who died in your life, like our nana. You get to color and do crafts and it is a safe place. It is helpful for us because it helps us to talk about our feelings about our nana. It helps us to talk about stuff that we want to talk about in a safe place.*

*There's a saying that they have at Lory's Place, "what's said in there, stays."*

**Eva & Sadie Olson**



## Hospice provides peace in the midst of pain

In just one year, the Postelli family navigated the difficult waters of watching three beloved family members decline in health and die. But they didn't face it alone. Caring Circle was by their side, providing care and comfort in the times it mattered most.

Jeanie Postelli's mother Renee was declining rapidly due to a neurodegenerative disease that affected mobility and cognition. Even though Renee lived in an assisted living facility with her husband of 58 years, Jeanie knew they would benefit from hospice.

"Hospice care was a great support for my mom, my dad, and the assisted living staff," said Jeanie.

Under hospice, Renee's condition stabilized, prolonging the short time family had with her.

"We had a wonderful last weekend," said Jeanie. "We were even able to take Mom outside and sit in the sunshine with her. It was a beautiful time together."

Hospice care also provided support as grandparents Cleo and Frank—both more than 100 years old—declined in health. Cleo struggled with painful diabetic ulcers and cardiovascular issues, but refused more testing or treatment.

"She was in terrible pain. Hospice helped manage that, so she could pass peacefully," said Jeanie. "They also provided support to Frank through the whole process."

Soon after Cleo's death, Frank experienced his own medical issues. Family called on hospice once again. Jeanie shared that although Frank was aware of his situation, he was calmed by the care of hospice staff.

"The staff is just amazing," said Jeanie. "They understand the difficult times and are a great support for everyone."





# Which program best fits your needs

## Hospice Care, Homecare, Palliative Care, or HouseCalls?

Needing care wherever you call home is a reality in many situations. Knowing where to turn to when you need that care is something that people can struggle with. Spectrum Health Lakeland has a variety of at home care options, whether you're recovering from a surgery, are home bound, or if you've received a terminal diagnosis. Often, for those who are suffering from an illness or disability, being home in familiar surroundings and close to family and friends is one of the best "medicines."

### Hospice Care

When you, or someone you care about, reach a point where you no longer desire or it is no longer possible to pursue curative treatment to prolong your life, then you may want to consider hospice care. This consideration does not mean you or your caregivers are giving up hope. Instead, it is a choice to help you make every day count and to live the best quality of life possible.

When you, or someone you care about, are in hospice care you can expect:

- Home visits to help minimize the need for you to make trips to the doctor's office or hospital emergency room
- Ongoing bereavement support for your family and friends. Care team members stay in touch with your family through monthly mailings and classes that help your loved ones cope with their grief.
- Professional pain management and relief for your physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering

### Homecare

Lakeland Homecare offers a wide range of services which can be provided for those who are recovering, disabled, or chronically ill and in need of medical, nursing, social, or therapeutic treatment as well as assistance with the necessary activities of daily living.

Skilled homecare professionals work closely with physicians, to ensure that patients receive exactly the care they need.

### Palliative Care

Palliative care focuses on the overall wellness of individuals with serious illness. It addresses the symptoms and stress of living with advancing illness. Early implementation of palliative care can increase quality of life and may be used in addition to curative care of an illness. Skilled palliative care providers visit patients wherever they call home.

### HouseCalls

HouseCalls may be an option for those who have serious or chronic conditions and who are unable to travel to a physician's office or clinic for care. Some examples include those recently released from the hospital or other inpatient facility, those with balance or mobility issues, and those who may have behavioral health conditions.

Skilled physicians and providers see patients in their own homes, adult foster homes, and assisted living facilities. HouseCalls does not require referrals from other physicians to begin medical care.

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**Improving quality of life for someone with an advanced disease can ease stress, anxiety, and depression for not only the person with the illness but for family caregivers as well.**

**For more information on what program fits your family's needs call 269.429.7100 or visit [caring-circle.org](http://caring-circle.org)**

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# Get to know your hospice care team

Hospice care encompasses the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a person's last days of life. Caregivers called to do this work at Caring Circle are part of an exceptional team. Everyone is driven to safely find ways for patients to continue spending quality time with loved ones and do the activities they enjoy.

Highlighted below are a couple of long-time hospice care team members—get to know them a little better!

## Lotonia Davis Broyles, CNA

*I have worked as a certified nurse assistant (CNA) for Caring Circle since 2002. What I enjoy most about my job is going into a client's home and making sure they are clean, comfortable, and pain free. I especially like serving clients that live in nursing facilities because they do not often receive a lot of visitors. It brightens my day to spend extra time with them. When family cannot be there in-person, we can be there for their loved one.*

*All caregivers count, I just want to do the best job that I can, and I always aim to please. I want people to be happy, that is what I feel I am called to do. When it's time for me to leave, I make sure to leave a smile on their face, and they almost always do the same for me.*

*A patient's death is still difficult; what gets me through is knowing that I contributed to making their last days a little better and that ultimately, they are at peace.*

*Working in hospice for many years has given me the knowledge to assist my friends, help them navigate healthcare options, and answer their questions specifically about hospice services—it feels good to give back!*



## Anjali Gaikwad, RN

*I graduated nursing school in 1983, which was a great personal accomplishment. Initially, I started working in pediatrics and then went into home care. In 2004 I started working for Caring Circle and it has been the most wonderful experience of my life.*

*What started as a part-time job with a lot of travel, turned into a passion. Hospice clients would thank me for coming, especially if their family or friends had not had the chance to visit in a while. These people became a part of my family, and I did everything I could to make them comfortable both physically and emotionally. It gives me much joy to see them smile. My experience with hospice care has given me the most enjoyment and purpose as a nurse, it brought me closer to my belief that I could make a difference.*

*Due to back problems and medical issues, I now have a part-time position with HouseCalls. I am blessed and cannot ask for anything more. It is my privilege to be able to do the work I do.*





# What helps calm dementia symptoms?

Dementia, a progressive loss of thinking and memory skills, affects 50 million people worldwide. Up to three-quarters have behavioral and psychological symptoms.

Dealing with the agitation, anxiety and aggression that often come with dementia is one of the most challenging aspects of caring for someone with this brain disorder. New research suggests that massage and other non-drug treatments can be more effective than medications.

Non-drug interventions suggested to ease symptoms of dementia include changes in environment, outdoor activities, recreational therapy, exercise, massage, music therapy, and cognitive stimulation as well as caregiver support.

Researchers found that outdoor activities were the most effective for reducing agitation and aggression. Outdoor activities, massage and touch therapy rank highest for treating verbal aggression. Exercise and modifying daily activities seemed best for dealing with physical aggression, studies report.

Interventions can be simple. A music player with headphones to soothe. If someone is in a nursing home, their room can be decorated with photos and other objects that bring back pleasant memories.

When people have moderate to severe dementia, they have difficulty communicating. They may be feeling discomfort and can't communicate that they don't like a certain chair or that they're too hot. Then they may act out. So, sometimes, it's a matter of small things in the environment that can be changed.

Equally as important as helping ease symptoms of dementia in your loved one is making sure you as their caregiver are mentally and emotionally healthy as well. Realizing that caregiver burden and burnout are real, know that you don't have to do it alone.

Caring Circle of Lakeland has programs to help caregivers in all types of situations, for more information visit [caring-circle.org](http://caring-circle.org) or call 269.429.7100



## Tips For Family Caregivers

If you're looking for extra support or caregiver advice, sign up for the free enewsletter, "Tips for Family Caregivers."

To subscribe, email Caring Circle at [info@caring-circle.org](mailto:info@caring-circle.org)



# Through a child's eyes

As a parent, your first reaction to a death in the family may be to protect your child from the pain of loss. Be careful that your protective instincts don't make it more difficult for your child to grieve. Like adults, children may experience chaos and loneliness when someone they love dies. Children have a different understanding of the finality of death based on their age and developmental level.

Here are some tips to help them:

- Let them know that they aren't alone in what they are feeling. Be your child's role model for how to grieve. Sharing some of your own sorrow can help your child feel less isolated.
- Help them understand what it means for someone to die. This is the only way they can comprehend what has happened. You may tell them, "Grandma has gone to heaven," but they don't know what that means.
- Explain what happens to the body of the person who has died. You might tell your child, "Grandma's body has stopped working. Her body doesn't feel anything." You may also want to talk about your family's spiritual beliefs at this time.
- Reassure children that they will be OK. Children often fear for their own safety after a loved one dies. They may also fear that their parents may die. Remind children of all the people who love them and who are there to take care of them.

## On the path toward healing

The grieving process does not fit into a timetable.

Healing from a loss can take a long time.

Experts say that it may take years to adjust to the death of a loved one. Children may process grief in spurts over a period of years and grieve their loss at different developmental stages.

As time passes after a loved one dies, children may feel okay for only a few hours at a time. Eventually there will be good days, then weeks. Once the death of a loved one has been accepted, it does not mean that the person is forgotten. This is an important point to stress to children. Remembering this can help them and your family heal.

For more grief healing and education resources visit [lorysplace.org](http://lorysplace.org) or call 269.983.2707

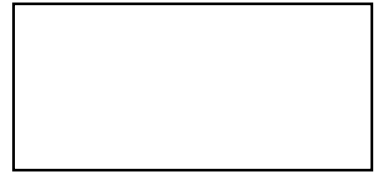




# **Caring Circle**

of Spectrum Health Lakeland

4025 Health Park Lane  
St. Joseph, MI 49085



## **Caring Circle has a new office in Niles!**

By relocating the Buchanan team to Niles, Caring Circle will share space with fellow associates of Spectrum Health Lakeland Homecare. The two often work together to provide ongoing quality of life care and support, which is vital to giving families peace of mind as their loved one ages.

The new Caring Circle office can be found across the street from Lakeland Hospital Niles at 60 North Saint Joseph Avenue, Suite 120 in Niles, Michigan. Our phone number remains unchanged at **269.695.1009**

