

Winter 2019

# LINES OF HOPE



## What's Inside:

- BATTLING GRIEF AS A CHILD
- A FOCUS ON GIVING: Q&A WITH LORY'S PLACE BOARD CHAIRPERSON
- A FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY AT 90
- TIPS FOR FALL PREVENTION



[www.caring-circle.org](http://www.caring-circle.org)

Transitions | HouseCalls | Palliative Care | Hospice at Home  
Hanson Hospice Center | Bereavement Care | Lory's Place



# Inside this Issue



3



4



5



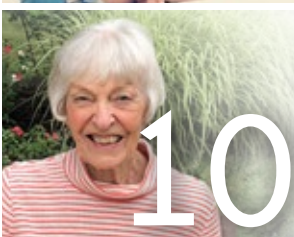
6



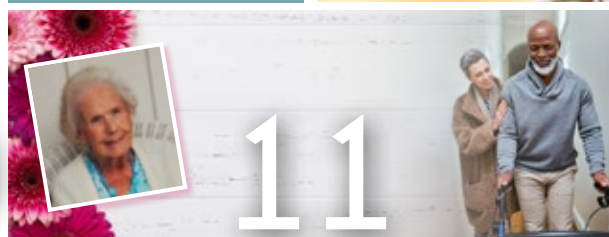
## COVER STORY

Our Family's  
Journey Through  
Caring Circle Programs

8



10



11



SPRING & SUMMER  
EVENTS RECAP

12

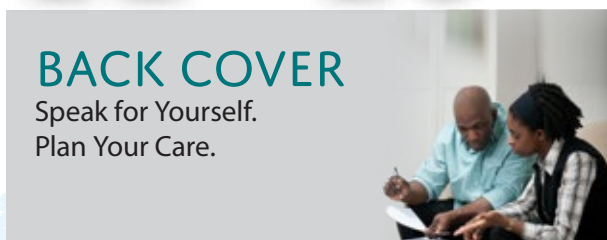


13



WINTER  
COMMUNITY  
CALENDAR

14



## BACK COVER

Speak for Yourself.  
Plan Your Care.

## Special thanks to...

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# Hanson Hospice Center Celebrates Five Years

The Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center marks its fifth year of service since opening in December 2013. This beautiful center provides a comfortable, homelike atmosphere where more than 1,650 individuals and their loved ones have created lasting and meaningful memories during a peaceful transition. This facility was a gift from the community, for the community, as a home-away-from-home for people in a variety of situations.

## Who We Serve

We are honored to serve community members and their families during a serious illness. Many residents have specialized needs and care requirements, may have a frail caregiver or no caregiver at all, prefer to have their family together at a place other than home, have symptoms that have become difficult to manage in the family home, or may need additional support in the final weeks of life.

## Specialty Accommodations

When the center was opened in 2013, it was crafted with special details to provide comfort and peaceful living. Our guests and families enjoy:

- Private and spacious suites with tranquil views of nature
- Unlimited visitation by family and friends, including pets
- Accommodations for family to stay overnight, including laundry and shower facilities
- Private spa-like tub room and massage therapy services
- Large gathering and relaxation rooms

## About Merlin and Carolyn Hanson

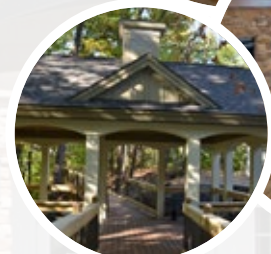
Merlin and Carolyn Hanson are longtime community, civic, and business leaders in southwest Michigan. As a child, Merlin became a vital link to the world for his deaf parents. He had to assume responsibility at a very young age helping his parents navigate the world. Those experiences helped him become the leader he is today.

His father inspired him to take care of friends, neighbors, and team members, summed up by a key phrase in his father's high school valedictorian address – "For the good of all."

With a keen sense of responsibility, and a desire to honor and leave a legacy of caring for their family, Hanson Group employees, and the community, Merlin and Carolyn graciously chose to support this hospice residence.

*"May all who enter here feel the infinite blessings of support of family, friends, and care providers. In turn, may those whose lives are touched here be inspired to give back in their own way, 'For the good of all!'"*

*– Merlin and Carolyn Hanson*





## SEVEN THINGS GRIEVING CHILDREN WANT YOU TO KNOW

A child who is experiencing grief may often feel overwhelmed and alone. We share seven tips to help ease communication with a child after the death of a loved one.



### 1) They want to be told the truth

Answer questions as honestly as you can while keeping in mind age, maturity level, and circumstances surrounding the death.

### 2) They want to know that someone will always be there

They may worry that another person in their life might die and need reassurance that there will always be someone in their life who will care for them.

### 3) They may want to share their story and talk about the person who died

Offering an outlet to tell the story and share memories can help the healing process.

### 4) They mourn, play, repeat

Children use play to cope with their grief and to pause before returning to grief.

### 5) They may act out during intense feelings of grief

Grieving children frequently feel sad, angry, confused, or scared and might not know how to express all of these emotions, which leads to acting out.

### 6) Their grief is long lasting

They will miss the person who died for as long as they live and will re-process their grief as they move throughout developmental stages.

### 7) They want you to know every child grieves differently

Every child has their own grief journey and their own way of grieving, meaning some children might be more expressive with their grief and some may keep it all in.

### Additional tips you can use to help grieving children:

- Actively listen
- Validate their feelings
- Answer their questions
- Move at their pace
- Seek out additional resources



## WHAT CHILDREN HAVE SHARED FROM LORY'S PLACE

*"When I first moved here, my grief started to get a little bit out of control. I just couldn't handle it and knew I needed help, and that's when I came to Lory's Place. I think it's helpful to have other people around me that have experienced grief. In a situation where I'm sad, they've told me what to do and they're by my side all the time. We're all friends with each other and it's kind of like a family."*

~ Lilly Salziger, 11 years old

### We're here to help

Lory's Place, a grief-healing and education center, provides regularly scheduled support group sessions that allow children and adults to interact with peers who have suffered similar loss. We also offer community outreach programs, with staff education and support, as well as peer grief support in elementary, middle, and high school. All services are free of charge and open to all members of the community.

If you're not sure what a grieving child wants, just ask them! Ask how you can help and remember to check in frequently – do they want to talk about the person who died? Perhaps they would prefer not to discuss it.

To learn more about how you can support someone in their grief journey, visit [www.lorysplace.org](http://www.lorysplace.org) or call (269) 983-2707



### HOW IT ALL BEGAN: LOOKING BACK 15 YEARS

A remarkable story of a father's journey toward creating a new normal and honoring his wife's memory - Ron Schults shares his story following the death of his wife, Dr. Lory Schults.

"My family was the first of more than 33,500 individuals who have been cared for by Lory's Place after the death of a loved one," said Ron. "Our loss was my wife, Lory."

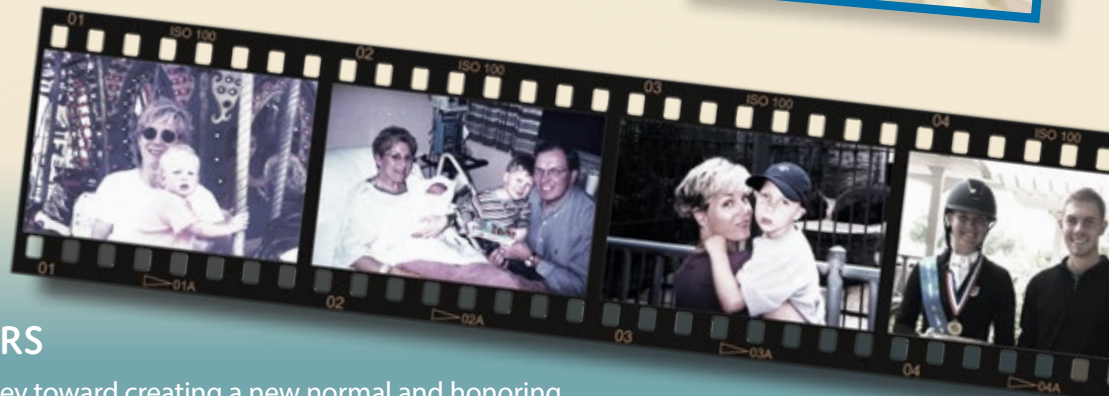
On a snowy January morning in 2004 Lory suffered fatal injuries in a car accident.

Nine months later, Lory's Place was created in her honor and continues to carry her legacy. While helping Lory's family with their loss, their neighbor and friend, Lisa Bartoszek (Director of Lory's Place 2004 – 2017) shared her desire to create a local resource to help others in their grief journey. With Ron's support and the overwhelming response by the community, the new program was created in St. Joseph, Michigan.

"It is humbling to know that when we lost Lory, our community gained a champion," said Ron.

Since its opening in 2004, Lory's Place has helped thousands of children, adults, and families find their way through grief to their "new normal."

Hear more about Ron's story at [www.lorysplace.org/ron](http://www.lorysplace.org/ron)







# Q & A **A Focus on Giving**

Lory's Place Advisory Board Chair, **Irene Fiskars**, has been a devoted supporter and member of the southwest Michigan community for over 39 years

## **How long have you been a supporter and member of the southwest Michigan community?**

I moved to Saint Joseph in June 1979. I spent five years working for Michigan Building Constructors (now Fiskars, Inc.) where I became involved in the Newcomer's Club, which was mostly social activities but also provided opportunities for community services. I volunteered as a PediPainter. I would paint windows in the pediatrics wards of the hospital with cartoon characters and scenes. I've also been very active in many other programs such as United Way campaigns, the H.O.S.T.S reading program in the Benton Harbor school system, and volunteering at the Mendel Center at Lake Michigan College.

## **How did you get involved with Lory's Place?**

Our neighbor, Bill Marohn, who was involved in the launch of Lory's Place, asked my husband and I to join him at a Crew meeting. I was so impressed by the atmosphere, the facility, and hearing about the work being done for our community by such caring, capable people. After leaving that meeting, I knew I wanted to volunteer.

## **What is your role with Lory's Place?**

As a member of the Lory's Place Crew, I have chaired committees and held various board positions including president. I was asked to join the Lory's Place Advisory Board five years ago, serving as secretary for two years, then vice-chair for two years. I currently serve as the chair of the board.

## **Why do you think giving back is so important to our community?**

I believe it's vital to give back to your community. We all want our community to be a welcoming, thriving place. I want a wholesome and creative place for my children and grandchildren to grow-up where they can develop and learn about giving back through local acts of charity.

## **How has the Lory's Place mission impacted you personally?**

As the years have passed I felt a strong responsibility to continue to help at Lory's Place and share their mission in the community. This became personal for me when one of my granddaughter's soccer teammates was killed in an ATV accident. The first call her coach made was to Lory's Place to ask for help and guidance for her teammates. That just reinforced what I already felt. The programs provided by Lory's Place are so necessary to our community. It is a wonderful resource available to all those in need.





## What has been the most impactful moment you've experienced while volunteering with Lory's Place?

It was when Carolyn Graves (current board member) spoke at a Reflections dinner about tragically losing her son. Her testimony was so touching and impactful. She shared how Lory's Place not only helped her and her family, but also helped shed light on a need within our community. Carolyn shared that many people in the community didn't know how to handle the death of a loved one or how to interact with someone who was grieving. Children were told to leave the room whenever a discussion about death or grief happened. By sharing her story, it exposed a need for Lory's Place to connect with more local community agencies. We have now partnered with three new agencies: The Readiness Center, Catholic Community Center, and the Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor. I'm extremely happy to see that we are striving forward in multiple local areas.

## What would you tell someone who is considering volunteering with Caring Circle?

If you want to contribute to the betterment of your community and to make a difference in your life and the lives of your neighbors and friends...VOLUNTEER! Caring Circle has many areas that need volunteers. I encourage you to ask questions, go online, talk to neighbors; you will be able to find an area of interest that you can help with and share your knowledge and compassion. We are extremely blessed to have such a caring, compassionate hometown.

Lory's Place Crew is a group of volunteers who support the center's mission and services through community awareness and fundraising activities. Interested in becoming involved in the Crew?

Contact Lory's Place at  
(269) 983-2707 or online at  
[www.lorysplace.org/volunteer](http://www.lorysplace.org/volunteer)





# OUR FAMILY'S JOURNEY THROUGH



Angela Schlaack and her husband Mike shared an amazing life for over two decades, with winding roads and the ups and downs of life which are the joys of every partnered life. But then came a situation like no other. Mike was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. Their journey was quickly filled with detours and uncertainty.

And then they found Caring Circle.

As Mike's health began to quickly decline the family connected with Caring Circle's palliative care services so the intense pain due to treatment could be better managed. The Caring Circle palliative care team improved Mike's quality of life, and although his medical team was widespread, they now had a local, caring community to help meet his needs.

Over the next ten months, Mike's health continued to worsen, and the family needed additional help with his day-to-day care. Caring Circle provided Mike's family with emotional support as well during this journey. Their care team helped begin important conversations to ensure that Mike's end-of-life wishes were met.

While discussing an advance care plan, the family toured the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center. It was there they encountered a truly home-like setting that could offer Mike peace of mind at the end of his life. Following months of treatment and clinical trials, and never achieving remission, Mike made the decision to stop treatment and seek hospice care. The tour confirmed Mike's desire to be moved to the Hanson Hospice Center.

Their time at the Hanson Hospice Center was brief, but such a comfort. Within a few hours of arriving for his final stay, Mike died, at 45 years young.

*Peace yet deep sadness fills me as I hold Mike. I feel the warmth and breath escaping his body. I realize that this moment will be our last on our journey together.*

*~ Angela Schlaack*





# CARING CIRCLE PROGRAMS

## A Precious Moment

*I carry a special moment with me from the time leading up to Mike's death. Our daughter was nearing her 11th birthday and due to Mike's declining health, we knew he would not survive to celebrate with her on that special day. Our care team recognized that Mike was having a few good days and suggested we have an early birthday party. We had a small dinner with family to celebrate our daughter. Two days later Mike was transferred to the Hanson Hospice Center where we would spend our time together during his last hours of life.*

*I am so grateful for this time. Not only did my daughter get one more birthday with her dad, Mike was able to see our daughter's happiness during that party one last time. In that moment I learned hospice is so much more than the medical aspect of dying. It's all about living well. It gave my daughter and I memories that we will carry forever.*

*Angela Schlaack*

## Providing Hope for Others

As Angela continues to heal in her own grief she is reminded of how Caring Circle helped their family every step of the way. They ensured her husband's life ended well and their family's life continue on.

The hope Angela gained from Caring Circle is something that she wishes to share with others. Now, working at Lory's Place, she is able to see first-hand how the work of Caring Circle is bringing hope and educating the community about dying and grief.

For Angela, working through her grief is a lifelong process that doesn't go away, but she is confident that everyone can find their way again. By working at Lory's Place and being part of Caring Circle family, Angela feels like Mike's life is not in vain.





## A VOLUNTEER SHARES HER STORY

When Kay Welch received a card from Caring Circle thanking her for 36 years of volunteer service, she thought it was a mistake. But after checking her first volunteer application she found it was dated 1982. Since then, Kay has been reflecting on what she has encountered over the years and how working with terminally ill patients and their families became a calling for her.

Kay lost her husband to cancer before hospice services were available in southwest Michigan. She always wished there would have been hospice support for her family during this difficult time. Following his death, she began working with Starks Funeral Home where she provided support to bereaved families. From her contacts there she became involved with a group who worked to raise funds for local hospice programs, now known as Hospice at Home.

As hospice services grew, Kay began volunteering with Lory's Place as a facilitator for grief support groups, and when the Hanson Hospice Center opened, she was one of the first volunteers to visit with residents. Kay has been amazed by the progress Caring Circle has made over the years, from the beginning stages to now serving countless patients and families. She has enjoyed making connections with patients and their grieving families, while offering her support.

As she looks at pictures of her late husband, she looks back with a smile. Kay knows grief doesn't end after a certain time period, healing takes time, and continued support is vital. Kay is thankful to be a part of programs in our community that provide this continual support.

### Are you ready to volunteer?

Caring Circle is seeking compassionate people to volunteer locally and help make a difference in the lives of those we serve and their families. No medical knowledge is required, and all necessary training will be provided.

#### Volunteer opportunities include:

- Providing companionship to clients at their home/nursing facility
- Sitting with clients while a spouse/caregiver is away
- Providing pet visits or music
- Hair and nail care
- Sewing projects
- Cooking, meal preparation, and baking
- Helping with light housekeeping and grocery shopping
- Maintenance/handy person
- Clerical aid (mailings, phone calls, etc.)
- Event volunteers
- "We Honor Vets" program
- Advance care planning facilitator



## LORY'S PLACE WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS



**CHRIS ROLAND**

Family Services Coordinator



**DENISE THOMAS**

Family Services Coordinator

## VOLUNTEER

If you are interested  
in becoming a volunteer  
for Caring Circle, please contact our  
volunteer coordinator  
at (269) 429-7100 or visit  
[www.caring-circle.org/volunteer](http://www.caring-circle.org/volunteer)





## REDUCING THE RISKS OF A FALL

Every year millions of older adults fall inside, or in the immediate vicinity of the home, leading to devastating injuries and emergency room visits. Many of these falls can be prevented by taking proper precautions at home.

Consider these simple fall prevention tips:

- **Keep rooms organized**  
Remove clutter around the floor and eliminate small rugs and items from walking areas that could be potentially hazardous.
- **Install grab bars and handrails**  
Mount handle bars next to toilets, bathtubs, showers, or steps and install nonslip mats in wet areas.
- **Provide good lighting**  
Shadows in rooms make it difficult to see or register a barrier that is in a darker space, so keep rooms well lit.
- **Store commonly used items within reach**  
Remove the need for a step stool or hard to reach areas by keeping commonly used items nearby.
- **Examine shoes for fit and traction**  
Whether your loved one wears slippers or walking shoes, be sure they fit comfortably and that the soles are not slippery.
- **Ask about mobility aids**  
Assistive devices such as a walker, cane or a gait belt can help with stability.

While falls cannot be predicted, it doesn't mean you cannot be prepared if one happens. There are many options for medical safety alert systems. Wearing a CallSafe help button or home help system can allow you to be prepared for an emergency yet remain independent.

For more information, visit [www.lakelandhealth.org/callsafe](http://www.lakelandhealth.org/callsafe) or call (269) 927-8635



## A LIFE IS PRECIOUS STORY

### A First Birthday Party At 90

For Caring Circle patient, Lolitta Walsh, her 90th birthday is one she won't forget.

When Lolitta shared the news of her upcoming birthday, her hospice care team wanted to make it an extra special time. Lolitta had always enjoyed family dinners on her birthday but never had an actual birthday party. Her caregiver, Yolanda, began planning a full-blown party to surprise Lolitta.

Her birthday celebration included the minister and friends from her local church, which she had been unable to attend in a year, as well as family and friends from across the country. They enjoyed a meal from Martin's Supermarket in Stevensville, a beautiful cake from Tosi's, and a wonderful time celebrating together.

"It's my first birthday party, so it's like starting all over again!" said Lolitta.

Some of her favorite gifts were a purple orchid, a handmade shawl, and a lap robe to keep warm. It seems that no matter what your age, whether it is your first party or your last, time spent with friends and family can create a momentary youthfulness. Lolitta and her guests enjoyed feeling young and fun again!

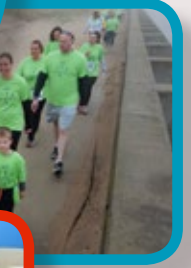




## RUN•WALK•ROCK

We had over 1,240 people registered in this year's event and raised over \$60,000, to support grief healing programs and education for adults, children, and families in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. Because of these donations we can continue to provide a safe and comforting place where healing can happen at no cost to our participants.

We hope you will join us again for next year's Run, Walk, Rock on May 18, 2019, to continue our vision of bringing hope and strength to every grieving person.



## CAMP LIFETIMES

This year's camp took place on Wednesday, June 20. Throughout the day, 24 campers participated in activities focused around the importance of life. Although every living creature has a beginning and end, it is the time in-between that matters the most. Camp Lifetimes is a one-day bereavement camp hosted by Lory's Place. This camp is provided at no cost and is available to children ages 5 to 14 years old (students who are entering kindergarten through eighth grade).



## REFLECTIONS

This year's Reflections Dinner and Auction was a wonderful success. On Friday, July 13, 271 guests came ready to raise money to ensure Lory's Place services continue well into the future.

Our combined efforts raised more than \$139,000. Proceeds from this event support meaningful grief healing and education programs. These vital services are available to our friends and neighbors at no cost because supporters offer hope and healing to our community.



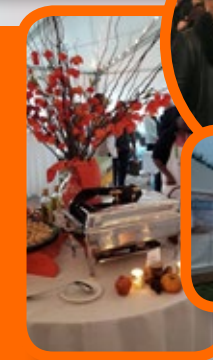
## EMBRACING HOSPICE AT HOME WINE AND BEER

On Saturday, August 4, guests enjoyed tastings by local wineries and breweries, music by John Rush, and the opportunity to sponsor a day of hospice care. This event raised \$90,000 for hospice and bereavement care programs provided to the community of South Haven and surrounding areas. This will provide 444 days of hospice care. Join us next year on Saturday, August 3, 2019.



## A TASTE SENSATION: CULINARY COOK-OFF

On Friday, October 5, more than 250 guests attended this year's A Taste Sensation, a culinary cook-off. With the largest combined overall score, team three participants, Todd Dockerty COO and Owner, Dockerty Health Care Services and Chef Abel Martinez of the Mason Jar were awarded this year's Champions of A Taste Sensation 2018 title. With outstanding combined efforts, the event raised more than \$161,400, which will support over 640 days of benevolent care at the Merlin and Carolyn Hanson Hospice Center.





## Beyond the Distance

Patricia and David Eby enjoyed a beautiful marriage filled with love. They both shared a passion for teaching; Patricia was an avid reader and reading teacher, while David enjoyed music and teaching music theory. As the years passed, both Patricia and David began experiencing health issues.

Patricia's health declined greatly, and she began treatment with Hospice at Home. She became bed bound but remained alert and oriented. With the support from family, David remained at home until his health required additional care, and he was transferred to a facility in Kalamazoo. While there, his condition progressed, and he had to be transferred to a geri-psychiatric unit in Indianapolis. During his treatment there he fell and suffered a fractured leg, causing him to be hospitalized. Unfortunately, he was unable to fully regain his strength and his dementia worsened. As his condition progressed it was clear that he could not return home and would need continuous specialized care. Still miles from his beloved wife, David was transferred to a nursing and rehabilitation center in South Haven.

During these four months Patricia was unable to visit with David due to her hospice diagnosis and her own specialized care needs. To help lift Patricia's spirits, her care team planned a trip to visit David.

Patricia's care team, along with the help of Van's Medical Equipment, and the South Haven Nursing and Rehabilitation Community, arranged a special visit for her to travel by stretcher to South Haven. She was able to lie comfortably in David's bed while he relaxed in a wheelchair and specialty recliner provided by Van's. Together, with their adult children, they enjoyed a three-hour visit with their family and reconnected and shared precious memories.



Three weeks after Patricia's visit with her husband, he was moved home to receive hospice care and to be with Patricia. He arrived home on a Monday and died that Friday. During this time, his family was comforted that he was able to have a special visit while he was at the nursing home and then return home for his final days.

After fifty-nine years of marriage, he preceded Patricia in death less than two months prior on July 20, 2018. Patricia died in her residence in the comfort of her family's presence on September 16, 2018.





## GROUPS

To register for a Caring Circle group or for more information, contact **(269) 429-7100** or visit **[www.caring-circle.org/events](http://www.caring-circle.org/events)**

### SHADOW STEPPERS

Facilitated by a Caring Circle Bereavement Coordinator, this group is open to any adults traveling through their grief journey. Take part in the healing process in a comforting, supportive environment. This is an open-ended group (you may start the group and end the group whenever you choose).

**Second Monday of every month**

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. - Caring Circle, South Haven

**Second Tuesday of every month**

2:30 to 4:00 p.m. - Buchanan Senior Center, 810 Rynearson Rd., Buchanan

**Fourth Tuesday of every month (Hope & Healing)**

4:30 to 6:00 p.m. - Caring Circle, St. Joseph

**Third Wednesday of every month**

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. - Caring Circle, St. Joseph

### CARING FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

This support group provides individuals who are caring a loved one the opportunity to talk with others who are experience the same challenges that many caregivers face.

**Third Tuesday of every month**

1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at Caring Circle, St. Joseph

**First Wednesday of every month**

1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at Buchanan Senior Center

### WALKING GROUPS

Lace up your walking shoes! Join Caring Circle staff and friends for an adult walking group. Participants are not required to pre-register or attend weekly.

**WINTER/SPRING**

**Every Tuesday, now until April 30**

10:30 a.m. Bethel Baptist Church  
06701 Blue Star Hwy., South Haven

**Every Wednesday, January 9 to April 24**

3:30 p.m. F.C. Reed Middle School  
10254 California Rd., Bridgman

**SUMMER/FALL**

**Every Tuesday, April 30 to October 10**

10:30 a.m. Kids Corner Park  
563 Monroe Blvd., South Haven

**Every Thursday, May 2 to October 10**

9:30 a.m. Bridgman Public Library  
4460 Lake St., Bridgman

### GOOD GRIEF

This seven-week group series covers topics such as why you feel the way you do; how to cope with loss, guilt and regret; and finding a sense of peace.

**WINTER SESSION**

**Tuesdays, January 8 to February 19**

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Caring Circle, St. Joseph

**Thursdays, January 10 to February 21**

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Caring Circle, Niles/Buchanan

**Fridays, January 11 to February 22**

2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Caring Circle, South Haven

**SPRING SESSION**

**Tuesdays, May 7 to June 18**

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Caring Circle, St. Joseph

**Thursdays, May 2 to June 13**

3:30 to 5:00 p.m. Caring Circle, Niles/Buchanan

**Fridays, May 3 to June 14**

2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Caring Circle, South Haven



# EVENTS

## CELEBRATION OF LIFE SERVICES

Our services honor patient and families served by the organization, as well as community members who have died in the previous year. These non-denominational programs are open to the public, with a time of fellowship at a reception following the service.

### **Monday, April 15**

6:30 p.m. Summit Church, 1700 West River Rd., Niles

### **Thursday, April 18**

6:30 p.m. Community Room, Caring Circle, St. Joseph

### **Tuesday, April 30**

6:30 p.m. Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, 06321 Blue Star Hwy., South Haven

## RUN WALK ROCK

Join the fun! More than 1,400 children and adults, help raise money for Lory's Place in the annual 5K run, walk, and rocking chair marathon.

### **Saturday May 18**

Registration begins at 7:00 a.m., Lory's Place

## WRITE OUT OUR GRIEF

This is a writing opportunity for adults who are coping with a loss. It will take place in a non-judgmental, supportive environment. No experience is necessary, and you will be encouraged to share; however, all sharing is optional.

### **Wednesdays, June 5 to June 19**

2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Caring Circle, St. Joseph

## EMBRACING HOSPICE AT HOME

### **Saturday, August 3**

The home of Dan and Mary Nulty, along the South Beach bluff in South Haven

## You shop. Amazon gives to Caring Circle.

Did you know while shopping on Amazon a portion of your purchase can be donated back to Caring Circle? Amazon Smile is making it easy for you to shop online and help end-of-life care in southwest Michigan at the same time.

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*It always seems too early, until it's too late.*

## **Speak for Yourself. Plan Your Care.**

We encourage everyone, at any age, to identify a person who will advocate your healthcare wishes if you are unable to. If you are in an accident or have an unexpected illness that leaves you unable to talk about your wishes, who will speak for you?

### **Understanding Advance Care Planning**

You have the right to decide what type of medical care is best for you. By planning your care ahead of time, you allow others to honor your choices if you are unable to speak for yourself. Advance care planning is a process that helps you understand and talk through your healthcare choices with others who are important to you.

During planning you are encouraged to create an advance directive. This document allows you to give specific written instructions for your future medical treatment preferences and will outline what "living well" means to you. This also includes a section where you can designate a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, a person who will guide your care according to your wishes.

### **What is a Facilitator?**

Facilitators are trained to guide you through important topics such as what medical care is important to you, help you make decisions about your future healthcare wishes, and help you put your plan in writing. They are skilled to assist you as you clarify your personal values, beliefs, and preferences for end-of-life care. During a facilitated conversation, each meeting moves at your own pace, and there is no pressure to influence your treatment preferences.

Take control of your care!  
Schedule your facilitated conversation  
by emailing [acp@lakelandhealth.org](mailto:acp@lakelandhealth.org) or  
calling (269) 983-8166

