



# Journey

A PUBLICATION FROM HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

FALL 2021

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## OUR MISSION

Hospice of the Western Reserve provides palliative and end-of-life care, caregiver support, and bereavement services throughout Northern Ohio.

In celebration of the individual worth of each life, we strive to relieve suffering, enhance comfort, promote quality of life, foster choice in end-of-life care, and support effective grieving.

## A Game to Remember

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Photo courtesy of Joe Noga and Cleveland.com



## Dear Friends,

As we approach Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, on behalf of all of us at Hospice of the Western Reserve, thank you for your ongoing support of our mission.

We are honored to walk with your families and support your loved ones. We work hard to deliver unique programs that go beyond the expected to improve quality of life, make special wishes possible and allow families to spend meaningful time with loved ones. As partners in our mission, it is your philanthropic support that makes these services possible.




Innovation that is less visible but nonetheless vital to our long-range success are two recent advances to our operational and technological infrastructure.

Our new \$3.25 million Care Solutions Center is poised to dramatically expand access to hospice and palliative care throughout our service area. The new center is funded through a leadership gift of \$2 million from the James and Angela Hambrick Foundation along with matching grants from the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation, the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation and the Lozick Family Foundation.

The advanced technology built into this system allows us to maximize efficiency and innovate how we respond to inquiries and deploy caregivers. Our families benefit from immediate access to knowledgeable hospice experts and timely visits during one of the most stressful times in their lives.

Another way we are innovating is by forming valuable alliances with other not-for-profit agencies in Ohio. Through our parent company, Western Reserve Care Solutions, we have formed the Care Solutions Network. Our focus is on improving access to high quality hospice, palliative care and bereavement services in the communities we serve. The network allows us to benefit from enhanced insurance contracting, group purchasing opportunities and standardized best practices. The efficiencies we achieve allow us to invest more of our resources back into programs benefiting our communities.

Your support is appreciated more than ever in these challenging times. We pledge to continue to innovate and grow to serve our community's needs for the next 40 years and beyond. We wish you a safe, warm and fulfilling holiday season.



**Bill Finn**

*President and Chief Executive Officer*

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# A Game to Remember

When a patient's time is limited, part of our mission is to make sure they are able to make the very most of the time they have left. Our care teams are always looking for ways to provide meaning and joy at a time when many would think that's impossible.

This fall, we were honored to fulfill a very special "bucket list" request for 96-year-old Vernice and her family through our Moments to Remember program. Vernice, who has dementia, is supported by our Western Reserve Navigator palliative care program. She lives with her daughter Charlotte, who cares for her full-time in her Amherst home.

Vernice and her husband Mike were married in 1948. The couple raised their family in Lakewood before Mike died in 1997. They would watch Indians games all the time, so Vernice remained a big fan and felt a deep connection to the team. When she mentioned her desire to catch one final game before the team changed its name to the Cleveland Guardians, her WRN care team worked with the agency's volunteer service managers to make it happen.

Not only were they able to obtain tickets, but through donations from several anonymous donors, they secured a luxury suite right behind home plate for Charlotte, Vernice and several of Vernice's eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.



Vernice waves to Slider

Photo courtesy of Joe Noga and Cleveland.com

Charlotte laughed when she remembered the day she heard the news. "Well, I'm not going to lie. I thought they were joking," she related. "But they said: 'No, this is it.'"

The family arrived at Progressive Field early. Vernice's excitement grew as game time approached. "They're winning today! I know it," she shouted. "My feet are getting hot!"

Her joy was palpable throughout the game. She cheered excitedly when Jose Ramirez smacked a two-run home run in the first inning. "He's my favorite," she said. "He blew me a kiss from the TV once." She and her family were able to take in a thrilling 6-0 win against the White Sox followed by a fireworks display.

Charlotte said she has been trying to create memories and celebrate her mother while she can. The family had a very difficult year. Charlotte had heart surgery and her son was battling cancer, so she was really happy to have her family together to enjoy the special memory.

After the game, Vernice was all smiles and tears, too, as the whole family gathered around her to watch the fireworks together. "I want all my family to be here," she said. "I'm happy. It might be the last time."

"This is a blessing," Charlotte added. "It's fantastic."

*Our award-winning Western Reserve Navigator program provides at-home symptom management, and makes Moments to Remember possible for patients like Vernice, who are living with a serious advanced illness. It's one of many unique programs we offer that are not fully reimbursed by Medicare and commercial insurance. If you believe that continuing to live life to the fullest is important, please consider a gift to ensure the program can continue for future generations. Donations may be made online at [hospicewr.org/donate](https://hospicewr.org/donate), or by using the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your kindness.*



# Mr. Flagg, Meet Merlin

When Emanuel Flagg began receiving care from our Lakewood home care team, he told the social worker he still had two things on his bucket list. One: Go bowling with his family. Two: Ride a horse.

Volunteer service managers Lori Scotese and Lisa Waryck went to work to make both wishes a reality through Moments to Remember, which enhances our patients' quality of life by fulfilling their special wishes. A gift card was provided so Mr. Flagg could treat his family to a bowling party... and he got to ride a horse!

"Mr. Flagg was all ready to go in his cowboy attire," said HWR social worker Julia Wasilewski. "I joined him at Valley Riding, located at Rocky River Stables in the Cleveland Metroparks. The instructor was named Marty, and the handsome horse was Merlin. Marty showed Mr. Flagg how to brush Merlin and allowed him to assist. He was a natural! He got to ride around the arena many times and gave commands to Merlin. Merlin proved to be a great listener.

"I asked Mr. Flagg what motivated him to do this. He said: 'I raised five children on my own and didn't have the time to experience things like this.' He said he loves to watch Westerns and has always wanted to ride a horse. I'm so excited we were able to make this happen for him," Julia said. "We were finally able to make his dream come true."



Emanuel Flagg told our social worker he always wanted to ride a horse. Our Moments to Remember program made his dream a reality.

## Hospice Inpatient Units Fill Very Special Needs

Our three Hospice Inpatient Care Units fill a special need in our community, providing complex care and symptom control 24/7. The intensive symptom management provided at David Simpson Hospice House in Cleveland, Ames Family Hospice House in Westlake, and our recently re-opened Medina Hospice Inpatient Unit prevent unnecessary ER visits and hospital readmissions, reduce hospital lengths of stay, ease transitions between care settings and provide a true safety net for home caregivers or long-term care facilities for complicated conditions. Respite care is also available to provide family caregivers with much-needed breaks. Take a virtual tour at [hospicewr.org/Ames](https://hospicewr.org/Ames), [hospicewr.org/DSHH](https://hospicewr.org/DSHH) and [hospicewr.org/HMC](https://hospicewr.org/HMC)



# Christmas Treasures

## OPEN FOR HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Christmas Treasures, one of Medina's most eagerly anticipated annual holiday traditions, is delighting shoppers again with holiday bargains galore. Open through Dec. 22, the "shop within a shop" has everything needed to add an extra dose of festivity to any home.

Store hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed on Sundays). The Christmas shopping wonderland is located right inside Life's Treasures, 317 S. Court St., offering convenient one-stop shopping. The popular re-sale shop is operated by volunteers from HMC Hospice of Medina County. All revenues benefit patients and families in Medina County.

Christmas Treasures is a visual delight with all the like-new items anyone would need to convert a home into "holiday central" at a fraction of the full retail price. The store's managers – along with talented volunteers – have spent hundreds of hours unpacking and artfully arranging the donated Christmas items.

Browse through rows of lifelike trees and wreaths, ornaments, collectibles and much more to complement virtually any style of decor.



## Warehouse Sale

**Saturday, December 4**

**8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, December 5**

**12:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Furniture • Housewares • Domestic  
Collectibles • Framed Artwork  
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### LORAIN COUNTY OFFICE

2173 N. Ridge Road E., Suite H  
Lorain, OH 44055-3400  
440.787.2080

### HMC HOSPICE OF MEDINA COUNTY

5075 Windfall Road  
Medina, OH 44256  
330.722.4771

### THE ROBERTSON BEREAVEMENT CENTER

5075 Windfall Road  
Medina, OH 44256  
330.725.1900

### WEST CAMPUS

22730 Fairview Center Drive  
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*Journey* is produced by the Marketing Communications team at Hospice of the Western Reserve. To contact the team, or request the digital edition, please send an email to [communication@hospicewr.org](mailto:communication@hospicewr.org).

For previous issues of *Journey*, visit [hospicewr.org/journey](http://hospicewr.org/journey).

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The Hurds (with daughter Brynn) display a nightlight and picture frame their toddlers created to express their memories of Bennett.

## 24/7 Access to Pediatric Team Provides Lifeline for Hurd Family

When a child is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, Hospice of the Western Reserve's Pediatric Palliative Care team gives families the resources they need to maintain a sense of normalcy during an unimaginably difficult time.

Many people are impacted by a child's serious illness, but especially the parents and siblings. Providing comprehensive support for every member of the family is a key aspect of the team's care. Having access 24 hours a day, seven days a week provides families with a crucial lifeline. They know they are never alone when coping with the medical and emotional challenges of their child's disease while maintaining day-to-day family life.

When Emily Hurd was just 13 weeks into her pregnancy, she and her husband Chris received the heartbreaking news that Bennett, one of the twin daughters Emily was carrying, had a fatal birth defect and was not expected to survive long beyond her birth. Miraculously, Bennett survived 17 days.

More than anything, Emily and Chris wanted to bring Bennett home, along with her twin, Brynn, so their two toddlers, Ryker and Landrie, would have a chance to meet her, hold her and know she was real. They were able to do that with the support provided by the team. Pediatric nurses Jennifer and Krista helped the family with medication, changing dressings, feeding and other issues, and were available 24/7 to respond to any medical issues that required an immediate response.

"Michelle, our social worker, has been an extra layer of support for our toddlers," Emily said. "There have been some days I have not known how to respond to their questions or their emotions. She is always quick to respond with a tip, a book or an activity. I feel like she's a part of our family now. She does weekly crafts with our kids, and they look forward to seeing her. They're always waiting on



The Hurd family celebrated Bennett's life at Walk to Remember. With the family are Pediatric team leader Jennifer Palmer RN (left) and social worker Michelle Miller.

the front porch when she is supposed to come."

The art sessions have a healing effect, providing an emotional release for the children. By creating projects that honor Bennett, they are able to open up, talk about their memories and share their feelings in a way that feels safe and natural for them.

"I hoped and prayed we would be able to bring Bennett home, but everyone told us we probably would not be able to. To have her for 17 days was just a miracle from God," Emily said.

# HWR Foundation Secures Growth and Innovation for Future Generations

One lesson underscored for all of us during the COVID-19 pandemic is just how much we need we need nurturing and support at the end of life. We continue to be here for our community, providing comfort and compassion when they're needed most.

Services like pediatric hospice make it possible for parents to nurture their terminally ill child in their own home. Music therapy replaces spiritual suffering with peace and joy. Our community grief support programs have never been more needed as we cope with unprecedented loss and challenges to our normal grieving process.

These are just a few of the signature programs HWR offers that provide connection and hope when so much has been taken away. It's vital that they continue. As we look toward the future, we are thrilled to announce the launch of The Hospice of the Western Reserve Foundation, a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity.

"The new foundation is funded through donations from friends of HWR, a structure that allows us to engage with community leaders who share our commitment to providing the highest quality end-of-life care," said President and CEO Bill Finn. At the helm of the new endeavor is veteran fundraiser and lifelong Cleveland

Laura Rayburn. New board members include Alfred F. Connors, Jr., MD, Mary S. Foti, HWR Board Chair William A. Herzberger, Cynthia Ames Huffman, Kathy Jadallah, Joe Kovalcheck, Margaret (Peggi) S. Mizen and Christopher Waite.

"We are honored to have such distinguished members of the community join our board," Rayburn said. "Their dedication and passion for our mission ensures we can continue to provide the same exceptional range of compassionate care in our community for generations to come."

## Meet a Few of Our Foundation Board Members



**Margaret (Peggi) Seelbach Mizen, RN**

Peggi is giving back to the community as a hands-on care volunteer at Ames Family Hospice House after retiring from a 30-year nursing career. She makes it a point to stop in each room to address any special needs. "One of my favorite things to do is offer a warm blanket or fluff up the rollaway bedding when a family member is spending the night," she said. "People have choices when there's a difficult medical situation," she said. "Hospice care is not only better for the patient, but also for the family. It's so important that people are aware they have a choice in their end-of-life decisions."



**Cynthia (Cindy) Ames Huffman**

Cindy is the daughter of B. Charles "Chuck" Ames, and Joyce "Jay" Eichhorn Ames. Her parents' family foundation laid the groundwork for Ames Family Hospice house to be built. Cindy is building on their legacy. "HWR has been there for me and my family during the most difficult of times. I appreciate the opportunity to be an advocate and to help raise the funds needed so their mission can continue to grow and be a presence in our community," she said.



**Joseph (Joe) Kovalcheck, Jr.**

Joe is the Chief Operating Officer and an Account Manager at M+N Advisory Services. "My mother and my wife's aunt both passed away recently, and I had an opportunity – my first – to interact with the wonderful hospice nurses who cared for them during their final days. The nurses not only assisted in easing their pain but were very comforting to me and my family as well," he said. "My personal experiences motivate me to help this fine organization in any way I can, whether financially or as a volunteer."

*Editor's Note: Additional Foundation board members will be introduced in the Spring 2022 issue of Journey.*





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## ***Passion for Golfing Inspires Annual 100 for Hospice Fundraiser***

While most people celebrate their 65th birthday with a big party or a dinner out, Medina business owner Pat Spoerndle spent the milestone occasion on the golf course raising more than \$60,000 for local hospice patients and their families. On Aug. 30, Pat once again took to the links at Fox Meadow Country Club to support HMC Hospice of Medina County with his 13th annual 100 for Hospice fundraising event.

Pat's event is not the typical golf fundraiser. He created the grassroots event, which requires that he shoot 100 consecutive holes of golf in a single day. Community businesses and friends donate to show their support. One hundred percent of the money Pat raises each year benefits patients and their families served by HMC. Joining Pat for the marathon session again this year was Mark Dorman, who raised \$10,000.

Funds raised support the Volunteer Services Program Endowment Fund at HMC benefiting Medina hospice families. Pat's dedication – along with generous support from Fox Meadow Country Club and the community – have raised more than \$400,000 over 13 years. Happy birthday, Pat, and thank you for your ongoing dedication to supporting our mission in Medina.

