

# Cherishing Life



Hospice  
of the  
Calumet  
Area

A tri-annual publication celebrating the inspiring patients, families, staff, donors, volunteers, stories, events and initiatives of Hospice of the Calumet Area.

## Finding Inner Peace

The mere thought of jumping on a bicycle and trekking over 1,035 miles around Lake Michigan, with only the essentials and a tent for shelter, while battling the merciless Midwest winds and unpredictable temperatures, would terrify most people.

But not Eric Tonk, of Miller Beach. That is exactly what he set out to do last month during his "Circle Tour de Tonk," part of Hospice of the Calumet Area's Hospice Hustle fundraiser virtual cycling event. This year's ride marked Tonk's sixth Hustle event, and first virtual ride.

"My mind was my strongest obstacle," Tonk said. "I just went through a very tough breakup and almost thought about backing out. I am so glad I didn't because ultimately, the ride provided me with tremendous clarity and confidence."

Mental and physical fatigue played an exhausting role, as Tonk averaged 90 miles, eating 4,000 to 5,000 calories each day. Tonk picked up a friend in Chicago on day one who rode with him to Milwaukee, just to practice her riding.

"On day two, in Zionville, I kept thinking I have 88 miles in and 900 to go," Tonk said. "I would've called it quits if my friend didn't join me, but I just kept going."

After dropping his friend off on day two, Tonk started talking to his stuffed animal mascot puppy "Mr. Bucketlist." Tonk says he enjoyed visiting restaurants and bars and talking with locals about where to stay.

Tonk faced more hurdles on days four, five and six, as saddle sores became overwhelmingly painful, which forced him to treat with ointments and proper rest.

"I ate a lot of camping food that I just added water to for breakfast in the morning," Tonk said. "In the evenings I would eat everything I could get my hands on. I consumed a lot of burgers, pizza, doughnuts and chicken wings."



Hospice Hustle Cyclist Eric Tonk chronicled his 15-day "bucket list" voyage around Lake Michigan through social media, including our Hospice Hustle Facebook page.

Tonk relied heavily on his runner/cycling Strava app to track his route, sleeping mostly at campgrounds and public parks.

On day nine, while in northern Michigan, Tonk almost called it quits again after facing major headwinds and torrential weather ahead, amidst more "breakup thoughts" and confusion.

"I was really struggling with internal battles, and then on day 10, I got this unexplainable moment of clarity that I have to just let go," Tonk said. "After that, the rest of the days were unbelievably perfect."

"Every time I crossed a body of water, I would acknowledge something I was grateful for, which occurred 7-10 times a day," said Tonk. "And now, I write three things I am grateful for everyday, and I try not to have repeats. This has really helped me with clarity and perspective in my life."



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## Message from CEO Adrienne May



November and December have always been two of my favorite months of the year. Crisp fall days enveloped by the vibrant kaleidoscope of colors in our landscape are followed by the beauty of winter snowfalls. But more importantly, it is a time for family gatherings, even if

they are virtual, and reflecting on what we are grateful for in our lives.

While that may seem odd to some of you given the unimaginable challenges 2020 has presented in so many different aspects of our lives, there is still so much to be grateful for, especially on a day filled with sunshine like today.

I have been in awe of the resiliency of the human spirit demonstrated by our community. The depth of selfless care and compassion our staff and

volunteers continue to share with each other and those in need is inspiring. Equally inspiring is the strength and kindness of our patients and their families, who have had to live through a difficult time of life with the added burden of Covid restrictions. And the generosity of the community members who have supported our “don’t come” events is humbling.

Our Cherishing Life philosophy of care has remained our steadfast roadmap throughout 2020. It has allowed us to continue providing quality, innovative care for hospice patients and Transitions™ clients with the utmost courage, respect, and dignity for all involved.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude. I hope the spirit of the season brings each of you much comfort and peace.

Sincerely,

Adrienne May



## Celebrating and Honoring the Sacrifice of our Veterans

The Covid-19 Pandemic may have contributed to fewer Veterans Day parades and celebrations, but it surely did not impede the development of new and creative ways to honor those who served our country.

This Veterans Day, HCA humbly recognized and honored those that have sacrificed for our country's freedom with a video series, including a few of our We Honor Veterans ceremonies. Hospice of the Calumet Area's Bereavement Facilitator Sarah Ticich and QA Coordinator Laura Smitley, combined their ideas to construct A Soldier's Table at our William J. Riley Memorial Residence, to recognize all veterans.

“Today and everyday, we wanted to honor those that felt the need to protect our country with dignity,” said Sarah Ticich, Bereavement facilitator. “This table will stand as a symbol of our immense appreciation and deep respect for their sacrifice.”



Hospice of the Calumet Area's Bereavement Facilitator Sarah Ticich records a video message honoring veterans in front of the Soldier's Table.

# Community Corner

## Hospice Hustle 2020 takes a Virtual Spin

Despite social distancing, Hospice Hustle 2020 was a great success. This year's event began on Friday, Sept. 4 and concluded on Sunday, Sept. 13.

Event co-chairs, Bill Hasse and Gus Galante, encouraged cyclists to Explore the Community to Support the Community by choosing their own routes and sending in photos after their ride. Nearly 100 cyclists registered and 84 sponsors provided support; helping to raising more than \$47,000 for Hospice of the Calumet Area.

We are grateful for our Presenting and Participating sponsors including Community Healthcare System, Peoples Bank, Largus Graphix Solutions, First Merchants Bank, Strack & Van Til, The Times of NWI, Braman Insurance, Deen-Gross Eye Centers, Hasse Construction, Drs. Gustavo and Rebecca Galante, McMahon & Associates, Horizon Bank, CBC Surgery Center, Dyer Construction as well as many other local businesses and individuals who helped to make the event a great success.

To view photos visit, [hospicecalumet.smugmug.com](http://hospicecalumet.smugmug.com) or our Hospice Hustle Facebook page.



## We Get By With A Little Help from our Friends

Even though the Friends of Hospice have put their in-person fundraising events on hold, it hasn't stopped them from their commitment to creatively raise funds that benefit hospice patients and their families.

This year's Mum's the Word activities were a bit different with the execution of their "Don't Come Event." Supporters honored the Hospice of the Calumet Area staff through a donation or participation in a 50/50 raffle, which raised nearly \$20,000. The Friends thought that it would only be fitting to honor HCA Hospice Healthcare Heroes for their ongoing efforts to bring the best hospice care available to our community.

Additionally, Friends of Hospice member, Mary Anne LaHayne and her husband Elden displayed their ongoing support of the hospice mission by asking friends and family to consider a donation in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Not only did the couple choose three local non-profit organizations, Friends of Hospice, Hair for All Foundation and Meals on Wheels, to be the recipient of these gifts, but they also personally matched all donations received for each organization. What a thoughtful way to honor their love for each other and their amazing dedication to their community.





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## Stay Connected

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Shop with the Hospice Artisans anytime and anywhere! Visit the Hospice Artisans new online store to find an enticing array of quality artisan crafted merchandise. You'll find unique paper and soft goods, fine hand knits, kitchen goods, home and holiday décor, wood, pottery, crafting accessories and, of course, an incredible selection of artisan designed greeting cards. All proceeds to benefit hospice patients and their families. Now shop with the Artisans all-year-round at [www.hospiceartisans.org](http://www.hospiceartisans.org) or follow the Hospice Artisans on Facebook and Instagram.



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