

# 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.

## The Power of Connection

Hospice of the Calumet Area Bereavement Facilitator Sarah Ticich had mixed feelings about technology months ago. During the COVID-19 pandemic, her mind quickly changed as she learned to embrace its impact on her work.

Ticich and Krystle Kerkow created Healing Hearts virtual support groups three months ago as a way to connect with families.

“Traditionally, the one-on-one interactions were helpful in building relationships, but innovation like technology has had a tremendous impact on grief,” said Ticich. “The bottom line is that having a strong presence, even virtually, in society is crucial. People are still suffering, perhaps even more now than ever.”

Ticich feels the pandemic has enabled professionals to rethink social work.

“Many families are facing a lack of closure when their loved ones die,” said Ticich. “Any loss is painful, but not being able to have family and friends around you during times of need can have a significant impact on how people deal with loss.”

Ticich points to the fact that technology has enabled her program to have the opportunity to connect with family members across the country who would not have that option otherwise. Their department also participates in virtual memorial services that celebrate the lives of patients that have passed. The last virtual service can currently be viewed on the HCA website and Facebook page.

“The grieving process is so important and having some type of closure is very important,” said Ticich.

HCA Bereavement counselor Krystle Kerkow feels technology “surprisingly” has been more inviting for clients since “some have a difficult time expressing themselves in a more formal group setting.”



HCA Bereavement Facilitator Sarah Ticich participates in an online support group while Krystle Kerkow takes notes.

“There’s no cookie cutter method to helping someone through grief because everybody has a unique relationship with their loved ones,” said Kerkow. “We often tell others that we know how they feel but the truth is we don’t. It’s best to empathize with them but be mindful and respectful of their own personal grief journey.”

Kerkow highlights a recent support group in which men were sharing ideas to celebrate their loved one’s legacies through discussions about creating music playlists and journaling stories that brought them comfort.

“Sometimes, especially with men, it takes longer to process their feelings before they begin to share, but virtually they’ve been more open,” said Kerkow. “We’ve also seen their enthusiasm in encouraging other family members to participate. It’s really our honor to offer our families the compassionate and professional support they need.”



## Inside this Edition

CEO’s Message  
Sesame Street Partnership  
Community Corner  
Donations from Oct.-Dec. 2020



## Message from CEO Adrienne May



A history of caring and innovation marks Hospice of the Calumet Area's 40 years of providing excellence in the care of individuals and families facing life-limiting illness. Anniversaries are a time of celebration and

remembrance. Just as it is for couples, Hospice of the Calumet Area will be celebrating this prestigious milestone in our history throughout 2021.

Since our first year, when we cared for two patients, Hospice of the Calumet Area has grown tremendously and now cares for over 1,000 individuals each year. Our professional and caring HCA and palliative Transitions™ teams have helped over 23,000 of your family, friends and neighbors over the past 40 years while remaining true to our mission of improving the quality of life through compassionate care for individuals and families facing life-limiting illness. Cherishing Life is at the core of everything we do.

This was our commitment when we became the first hospice in Northwest IN back in 1981, and we have remained dedicated to it, along with the pledge to care for individuals regardless of their ability to pay. These values and our vision to bring care, compassion and comfort for all facing a life-limiting illness guide our decisions. You may not be aware that Hospice of the Calumet Area has

provided Hospice care for the bordering Illinois communities since 1989. Our William J. Riley Memorial Residence was the area's first free-standing hospice house and our free, palliative Transitions program was the first of its kind in the Region providing assistance for those not yet ready for hospice. The expansion of our Healing Hearts grief support program to Healing Hearts for Kids and Healing Hearts for Teens reflects our commitment to care for all age groups. Caring Canines, massage and music therapy are innovative therapies that enhance the effectiveness of traditional medicine.

Innovation has remained our hallmark during 2020 and beyond. We have launched virtual memorial services and grief support groups for those coping with a loss, utilized tele-health to keep families connected and raised dollars for our mission with virtual fundraising events. Our Hospice Artisans have even launched a new on-line store at [hospiceartisans.org](http://hospiceartisans.org) to continue raising awareness and funds to support our programs.

I am humbled to be part of Hospice of the Calumet Area. Our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, supporters, Hospice patients and Transitions clients, past and present, are all woven into the fabric of Hospice of the Calumet Area. The legacy of our founding members lives on today because of these inspiring individuals with the shared goal of making a difference by Cherishing Life.



## We can Tell You How to Get to Sesame Street

Hospice of the Calumet Area offers Healing Hearts support groups for children, teens and adults. Participants are encouraged to connect with the Hospice of the Calumet Area office and do not have to have had someone in hospice care to take advantage of our grief support program.



HCA recently partnered with Sesame Street and its online community resource center focusing on helping children face life's challenges, including grief and coping. Healing Hearts virtual bereavement support groups will begin in April and run through June. For more information about HCA's support programs, contact Krystle Kerkow at 219.922.2732 or email Sarah Ticich at [sticich@hospicecalumet.org](mailto:sticich@hospicecalumet.org).

# Community Corner

## Hospice Heroes Recognized by Community

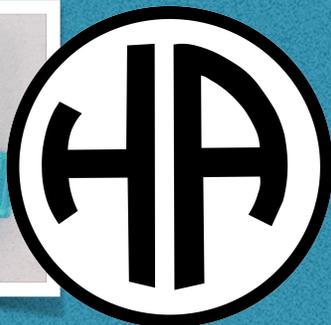
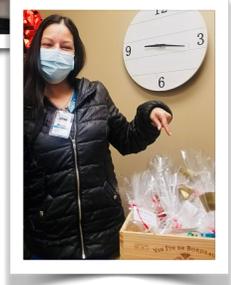
Hospice of the Calumet Area partners felt “blessed and appreciated” this holiday season. An amazing group of community members, several who had entrusted their loved ones into our care, coordinated a holiday surprise for our staff.

They decorated the lawn at the Munster office and the William J. Riley Memorial Residence, as well as provided bags full of holiday treats for each partner.

“What a beautiful surprise it was to arrive at work and see such an impressive display celebrating our partners,” said Paul Vaclavik, HCA receptionist. “It’s an honor to be thought of as heroes and to think they came out during the brutal cold to recognize us means the world.”

Throughout the year, HCA partners and volunteers receive touching notes from our families thanking our partners for the inspirational care they provide.

*Clock-wise at right, HCA Partners Paul Vaclavik, Maria Slayton, Kelli Aiello and Angela Williams-Whitelow receive their treat bags.*



## Hospice Artisans Now Offer Online Store

The pandemic has changed life for all of us.

During this time of refocus, our Hospice Artisans’ transformed their ability to merge innovation and inspiration and took their strategy to a new level.

On Dec. 1, with the creativity of prolific volunteer web designer Jeff Okamura, the Artisans successfully launched their HospiceArtisans.org online store. This labor of love provided the Artisans with an outlet to continue their work to raise funds for Hospice of the Calumet Area.

“We have so many lovely products, thanks to our dedicated artists that sustain their support and enthusiasm for the Hospice Artisans and the mission of Hospice of the Calumet Area,” said Lydia Dershewitz, Hospice Artisans coordinator. “A year ago, we would have never dreamt our work would be available online.”

In the first nine days, 227 items were sold. The Artisans also created a postcard mailing sent to over 4,000 households, reached out to more than 1,700 individuals through an e-blast enhancing their use of social media.

[HospiceArtisans.org](http://HospiceArtisans.org)



www.HospiceCalumet.org

HOSPICE HONORS elite 2019, 2020

Lake County Office

600 Superior Ave., Munster, IN 46321  
219.922.2732/708.895.8332

Porter County Office

1190 N. State Road 49, Porter, IN 46304

Illinois Office

3256 Ridge Rd, Ste. 207, Lansing, IL 60438

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Special Thanks...



For the past 39 years, the Friends of Hospice has helped Hospice of the Calumet Area by working hard to raise funds in support of our programs and services. Pictured from right, Friends of Hospice President Courtney Markovich and VP Candice Logue continued that tradition and presented a generous contribution to HCA CEO Adrienne May last month.

Stay connected...



Spring Virtual Memorial Service

If you missed the Spring Virtual Memorial Service in March, visit our website at [hospicecalumet.org](http://hospicecalumet.org) to view the celebration of life.



HCA's 40th Anniversary Virtual Event Celebration

On Thursday, June 3, join us and the Friends of Hospice in celebrating Hospice of the Calumet Area's 40th Anniversary. Experience inspiring interviews from our loyal supporters, volunteers, and staff. And you won't want to miss special performances and features by Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame and Rascals' Founder Felix Cavaliere, stand-up comedian, actor writer and producer Jim Gaffigan and Culinary Chef Extraordinaire Arthur Stark. A gourmet dinner will be prepared by Hartsfield Village Executive Chef Gabriel Rosado, available through curbside pick-up.



Guests will receive a special link to experience the event on our website. If you didn't receive your invitation in the mail, tickets can be purchased by calling 219.922.2732.

