A final journey home

Billy Meade had a request.

Meade, a 58-year-old patient of Bluegrass Hospice Care in Covington, Kentucky told social worker Morgan Abbatiello that he wanted to make one final visit to his parents’ gravesite in the Hazard area, a nearly 200-mile trip. What happened next is a heartwarming story of generous, caring volunteers working together.

Kimberly Heestand, community engagement coordinator in Northern Kentucky, put out the call to her volunteers, and prayed for a response. “Asking volunteers for 6 to 8 hours of their day to drive the distance for this request was a lot,” said Heestand.

Before long, Tana Casper, a retired vice president of UC Health, stepped up and offered to take Billy to Hazard.

“One thing I’m loving about being retired is that it provides you with the time for meaningful volunteer work and the ability to do things for others. I know what a trip like this would have meant to me if the situation was reversed and it was worth every minute in the car to be able to make it happen for someone else,” said Casper, who has been a pet therapy volunteer with her dog “Toby” for more than a year.

Meanwhile, Heestand’s counterpart in Hazard, Kelli Callihan, was busy looking for someone to take Billy to the graveside once he arrived. Amos and Deborah Hamblin were happy to help – even picking up white roses for Billy to leave at his parents’ final resting place.

Hazard nurse supervisor Donna Smith coordinated with nurse Megan Sullivan in Northern Kentucky to arrange for Billy to spend the night at the Greg and Noreen Wells Hospice Care Center.

Another volunteer, Angela Crawford, an assistant professor at Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, offered to drive Billy back home to Covington.

Billy had gotten his wish, thanks to what Heestand called “a beautiful collaboration” between the Northern Kentucky and Hazard sites.

“I am always amazed by the kindness, compassion and generosity of our volunteers. They truly are wonderful gifts to our patients, families, agency and staff. This trip speaks volumes to the lengths Bluegrass Care Navigators will go to when serving our patients,” said Heestand.

Crawford believes her trip with Billy back to Northern Kentucky was part of her mission in life.

“As a hospice volunteer I have a wonderful opportunity to serve people who are experiencing their final journey here on earth. I just don’t think patients realize how much they also serve us as volunteers,” said Crawford, who has been an 11th Hour Volunteer for more than three years. 11th Hour volunteers sit with actively dying patients who have no loved ones nearby.

“During the car ride back I learned about Billy and his life. We talked for hours, having a real conversation. Think about how often we don’t even have real conversations with the people closest to us in our lives. Each of us shared parts of our stories with one another. We talked about what we find meaningful in life. It felt like fate had brought us together. We decided during our drive that we were meant to be in that car and have this conversation,” she said.

Thanks to the generosity and compassion of volunteers, Billy’s simple request – one final visit, white roses in hand – touched so many other lives. If you’d like to become a volunteer and help make moments like this possible for our patients, call us today at 855.492.0812.
Welcome New Board Members

Bluegrass Care Navigators has added two new members to its board of directors. Amanda Henson, vice president of Oncology at Baptist Health Lexington, is responsible for the administrative oversight, financial management and overall program development for the cancer program. Richard Hopgood, an attorney with Frost Brown Todd LLC, represents clients in a wide variety of commercial transactions with a focus on commercial real estate development.

The two began their service in January and were appointed to three-year terms.

Gathering of Former Board Chairs

Former board chairs gathered for the first time in March to share memories, anecdotes and accomplishments during a 40th anniversary reception and dinner. Each individual played a vital role in taking the agency from its inception in 1978 to an organization serving over 12,000 patients and families last year.

Bluegrass Care Navigators Day at the Lexington Legends:

Join us at the ballpark to celebrate our 40th anniversary! We’re celebrating as the Legends take on the West Virginia Power, and would love to have you join us for a day of fun. Kids under 12 get in free. Order your discounted tickets online at: goo.gl/vFtE71

Adult Day Health Care Opens!

We recently opened the Bluegrass Adult Day Health Care center in Frankfort, for adults who have physical or mental conditions resulting from age or illness. In addition to snacks and meals, it offers activities such as crafts, yoga, music and movies.

Take a video tour of the facility at: www.bgcarenav.org/our-care-services/adult-day-health

Join us for the first annual TRI-COUNTY CRAFT BEER FEST — HOMETOWN SHOWDOWN at Cynthiana Country Club on August 4 to benefit Bluegrass Hospice Care.

Food trucks, craft beer, live music by JoJo Gun, Brothers Smith and more! A cash bar will be available.

100% of the proceeds go to benefit Bluegrass Care Navigators to further their mission in Central Kentucky! To purchase tickets, visit: bit.ly/2JZWXDL
40 Hours for 40 Years

To celebrate our 40th Anniversary in 2018, we asked each of our teams to donate 40 hours of service to a fellow nonprofit agency. Each team picked a cause close to its heart and they are enjoying the opportunity to thank other organizations for all they do.

The Lexington team volunteered for the Lexington Humane Society at Land Rover’s Kentucky Three Day Event at the Kentucky Horse Park, while the administrative team packed family-friendly sized bags of flour for God’s Pantry Food Bank. Our Hazard team prepared and donated 35 hot meals to the I CAN program in Letcher County. The program delivers food to people in need, including many of our patients.

Thank you to WTUK 105.1 in Harlan, which raised $4,815 this April during Radio Days. WQHY Q95’s Pikeville Radio Day raised $5,735 to benefit the patients and families we serve in Pike, Floyd and Magoffin counties and 19 employees and volunteers helped support the day’s efforts.

Radio Day in Hazard is August 21, to benefit the Greg and Noreen Wells Hospice Care Center. Tune in to WSGS 101.1 from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. to learn more about Bluegrass Hospice Care.

UK Inpatient Hospice Unit

Bluegrass Care Navigators opened a new inpatient hospice unit in early April at UK HealthCare, with 10 private rooms, a family room and a kitchen. The center, located on the third floor of UK’s Ben F. Roach Building, also features expanded visitation hours to allow the family more time with their loved one. “This new unit will provide our patients and families the chance to enjoy calm, relaxed surroundings along with our expert hospice care,” said Liz Fowler, President & CEO.

Take a video tour of the unit at: bit.ly/2L9sOID
JULY

22 Bluegrass Care Navigators Day at the Ballpark
2:05 p.m. Legends vs. West Virginia Power. Whitaker Bank Ballpark. Don’t forget, kids under 12 get in free. Order your tickets online at: goo.gl/vFtE71

AUGUST

4 Tri-County Craft Beer Festival
5–11 p.m. Hometown Showdown featuring Country Boy Brewery, Maiden City Brewery and Rooster Brew, plus three bands! Cynthiana Country Club. General admission is $10, $20 for reserved seating and $50 for VIP seating in the club. For tickets, visit: bit.ly/2JZWXDL

4–5 Camp Hope – Central Kentucky
A weekend overnight camp with outdoor therapeutic activities to help children ages 7–17 who have experienced the death of a loved one in the last two years. Life Adventure Center, 570 Milner Rd, Versailles, KY. For more information, contact Holly Bender (hbender@bgcarenav.org) or Kristen Hamilton (khamilton@bgcarenav.org), or at 859.277.2700.

SEPTEMBER

21 WSGS 101.1FM Radio Day – Hazard
8 a.m.–4 p.m. Tune in to WSGS 101.1 to learn more about Bluegrass Hospice Care.

9–15 National Assisted Living Week
Providing a unique opportunity for residents, their loved ones, staff, volunteers, and the surrounding communities to recognize the role of assisted living in caring for America’s seniors and individuals with disabilities. To learn more, visit: www.ahcancal.org/ncal/events/nalw/Pages/default.aspx

16–22 National Adult Day Services Week
Showcasing the services and programs provided to meet the needs and enhance the lives of participants through adult day services. To learn more, visit: www.nadsa.org/nationaladultdayservicesweek

21 9th Annual Fore! Kids Golf Outing
Registration starts at 10 a.m.; 11 a.m. shotgun start. Twin Oaks Golf and Plantation Club, Covington, KY. Light lunch and buffet dinner provided. The event benefits Pediatric & Palliative Care and the Grief Program. To register, visit: give.bgcarenav.org/nkygolf2018

29 Camp Hope – Eastern Kentucky
A free, one-day camp for children 6–12 and their parents/caregivers who have experienced a loss in the past two years. Four Star Village, Redfox, KY. For more information, contact Susan Houston or Pamela Dixon at 606.439.2111.

Learn more about our grief & loss support groups & other events:

www.bgcarenav.org  |  855.492.0812