Remembering Greg Wells

This summer, the Bluegrass Care Navigators family and our Eastern Kentucky communities lost a dear friend - former board member, philanthropist and businessman Mr. Greg Wells.

Greg was deeply committed to his community and often supported local charities and needs anonymously. Bluegrass Care Navigators was fortunate to be one of those charities.

In 2011, Greg and his wife, Noreen, made a lead gift to establish the Greg and Noreen Wells Bluegrass Hospice Care Center in Hazard, Kentucky. The Center was created to provide end-of-life and respite care for patients who are struggling to manage symptoms at home. It was specifically designed to be a calming, homelike setting to comfort both the patient and their loved ones.

In addition to his generous financial support of our mission, Greg was also an active board member for Bluegrass Care Navigators. His time on the board represented only a fraction of the visionary service that he engaged in with us and our region that he loved so dearly.

“We join the Wells family and our numerous Kentucky communities in mourning this tremendous loss,” says Monica Couch, AVP of Eastern Kentucky Operations for Bluegrass Care Navigators.

Greg was a respected leader in Perry County and across Eastern Kentucky. At the age of 21, he founded Leslie Resources which became one of the most successful coal mining companies in the region. He continued to expand his business operations to include residential and commercial land development as well as banking.

“Each of us is reflecting on the impact Greg made for our patients and families,” Monica says. “His compassionate spirit and commitment to hospice care will be honored with a tribute at the Greg and Noreen Wells Bluegrass Hospice Care Center.”

Greg’s Legacy Continues

Thanks to the incredibly generous support of Greg and Noreen Wells, more than 3,500 patients from counties across Kentucky and several other states have benefitted from the Hospice Care Center since it opened. We wish to also thank the many kind friends of the Wells family who have made contributions in loving memory of Greg to ensure that his legacy continues long into the future.

Read more about Greg Wells and his work with Bluegrass Care Navigators: bgcarenav.org/more-about-us/blog/remembering-greg-wells
Joe and Grace

Joe was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in June 2019. When his condition worsened, Joe and his doctors decided that it was time for him to enter hospice care at home. Kathy, his daughter and primary caregiver, turned to us to help make this transition.

“We could not have made a better decision,” says Kathy. “For Dad and for everyone in the family. It was a real blessing for us.”

When Joe began experiencing complications earlier this year, our team recommended that he transfer to the Greg and Noreen Wells Bluegrass Hospice Care Center in Hazard for full-time care. Kathy was nervous about the move, and unsure what to expect.

But right after Joe and Kathy arrived, they felt at home. Kathy broke down to one of the members of our care team. She was exhausted and overcome by what was happening.

“As a primary caregiver, there is so much to do and think about,” says Kathy. “I was trying to be strong for Dad, but I needed a minute to meltdown. I felt so much stress lifted off of me. Instead of worrying about what medication to give him next, I could just focus on spending time with him.”

As a trusted hospice provider for more than 40 years, Bluegrass Care Navigators has provided expert and compassionate support for thousands of adults and children with serious illnesses like cancer, heart disease, lung disease, dementia, and Alzheimer’s. Every day, our care team connects more than 1,000 people across Kentucky with medical, social and spiritual care.

Over the past year, we have expanded our care to include special programs that help boost the spirits of our patients. Our animal-assisted therapy program was especially meaningful to Joe and his family.

“My dad was 75 years old when he passed away. He never retired from his job at the power company. He was such a hard worker, and he loved planting and tending to his garden. He was married to my mom for 54 years. He was a really good dad.”

—Kathy, Joe’s daughter
The CARES Act and Your Gifts

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was created to assist individuals, businesses and not-for-profit organizations facing economic hardship related to the coronavirus pandemic. The Act includes some additional tax incentives to encourage charitable giving, which may affect you and your charitable goals for this year. Here are a few key provisions to keep in mind:

- For those individuals who choose to itemize your charitable deductions, you may deduct cash donations to most charities, including Bluegrass Care Navigators, to offset as much as 100% of your income. This provision is for the 2020 tax year only. Typically, the income tax charitable deduction for cash gifts is limited to 60% of your income. This year’s 100% limit allows especially generous donors to reduce their 2020 federal income tax to zero. And if your donations exceed your adjusted gross income, you can carry forward unused cash contribution deductions for up to five years.

- The CARES Act also relaxed the limitations on charitable deductions for corporations, increasing the corporate deduction limitation to 25% of taxable income in 2020 (normally limited to 10%).

- If you don’t itemize your deductions, you may still reduce your taxable income by $300 for your charitable contributions in 2020. The CARES ACT is adding a new “above the line” adjustment for up to $300 in cash contributions to charities this calendar year. This is in addition to the standard deduction!

- Most required minimum distributions from retirement plans have been eliminated for 2020.

- If you are 70 and a half or older, qualified charitable distributions are still a great way to make contributions. A qualified charitable distribution (“QCD” or “IRA charitable rollover”) allows you to make a tax-free gift of up to $100,000 to Bluegrass Care Navigators from your IRA.

We are incredibly grateful for your continued, generous support during this challenging time. As you consider your charitable giving for 2020, we encourage you to talk to your financial advisor regarding how the CARES Act might help you realize your charitable goals for the year. If you have questions about how your gift can help further the important work of Bluegrass Care Navigators, please contact Laura Klumb, Vice President of Philanthropy, at 859.296.6865 or lklumb@bgcarenav.org.

Just before he entered hospice, Joe’s beloved dog of 13 years passed away. So, when Grace the therapy dog walked into Joe’s room, a smile spread across his face.

Right away, Joe reached out to pet Grace, and the friendly dog nuzzled into him. It was a much-welcomed reprieve from what he and his family had been going through.

From then on, Joe’s specialized care included regular visits from Grace. “Grace was very comforting,” says Kathy. “We didn’t know this service was offered until we met her. It was therapeutic for us all to see a smile on Dad’s face during such a difficult time.”

Often, it’s the small moments of comfort that we remember most. The photo of Joe and Grace is one of those moments.

You Make These Moments Possible.

By supporting Bluegrass Care Navigators, you make a difference in so many ways. As a nonprofit, our work depends on the generous contributions from those in our community, and it is crucial to the Integrative Medicine program. Animal-assisted therapy, art and music therapy, massage and other aspects of the program bring soothing comfort, relaxation and happiness to hospice patients, yet these services are not typically covered by insurance. We never turn a patient away for the inability to pay, and that is in large part because of the support of friends like you. Thank you.
Bluegrass Care Navigators now offers a unique way to provide volunteer support to patients during the pandemic. The organization’s Compassion from a Distance program allows volunteers to safely support patients and families through a variety of socially-distanced or virtual activities developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospice volunteers are a valuable part of the patient care team at Bluegrass Care Navigators. Volunteers offer companionship, emotional support and assistance with daily activities to both patients and their families.

“Our goal is to support patients while keeping both the volunteer and the patient safe,” says Shellie Brown, Bluegrass Care Navigators Volunteer Services Manager. “The volunteer, together with their Community Engagement Coordinator, determine which activities are the most appropriate depending on the volunteer’s personal interests, and the needs of Bluegrass Hospice Care.”

Some examples of how volunteers continue to safely support hospice patients and families include:

- **Care calls.** Volunteers work at their own home, making weekly calls to patients and families to check on their needs, in support of our clinical team.

- **Grief calls.** Volunteers work at their own home, making companionship calls to bereaved family members in support of our counseling program.

- **Porch deliveries.** Volunteers drop off supplies, gifts and cards for special occasions, and other items to support patients and families without in-person contact.

- **Telecare.** Volunteers use Bluegrass Care Navigator’s HIPAA-compliant Zoom program to provide virtual companionship.

- **Flower program.** Volunteers are provided flowers and vases to create bouquets at home for no-contact delivery to patients and families.

- **Window painting.** Volunteers create cheerful window displays with partner long-term care facilities.

“Our volunteer, operations and clinical leadership teams have been very innovative in developing safe processes and alternative ways to continue our volunteer program,” says Liz Fowler, CEO of Bluegrass Care Navigators. “Volunteers are a formal part of hospice care; in fact, we are required to have five percent of our patient care needs completed by volunteers. But most importantly, we know that the holistic needs of our patients do not stop because of a pandemic, and I am proud of what we are doing to continue our volunteer activities.”

Additionally, Bluegrass Care Navigators has adapted the volunteer training program with virtual onboarding and education. There is no cost to apply or be trained to volunteer with the organization.

As Bluegrass Care Navigators continues to serve more patients throughout Kentucky, we need more volunteers! For more information on this program or how to volunteer for Bluegrass Care Navigators, please call 855.492.0812 or visit bgcarenav.org.
Thomson-Hood Window Painting

Volunteers and team members in our Lexington office spent an afternoon painting rainbows and other pictures on the windows at the Thomson-Hood Veterans Center in Wilmore, Kentucky, to brighten the day for veterans there. Thanks to everyone who helped with this project to let our veteran patients know we are all thinking of them!

Tell Us Your Story!

Please take a quick moment to tell us how our staff, our services or our support has made a difference in your life or the life of someone you love, at:

bgcarenav.org/mystory
Grant Supports Care for Veterans

The Military Officers Association of America, Bluegrass Chapter (MOAA) recently awarded Bluegrass Care Navigators a $2,000 grant to help us serve veterans in central Kentucky.

We are grateful to the MOAA for providing this grant funding and recognizing our commitment to care for and honor veterans in the last months of life. This gift will support our veteran pinning ceremonies, during which we recognize and honor the military service to our country and sacrifices made by the veteran and his/her family.

We rely on volunteers to help with activities such as this to help bring peace and comfort to patients in a way that is unique to each person. Our veteran volunteers enjoy giving back to their fellow veterans, and the pinning ceremony allows them to do just that.

Along with recognition of their service, veterans receive a pin, a framed certificate, a commemorative service coin and a comforting, fleece blanket personalized with their branch of service.

Watch a recent ceremony at wymt.com/2020/07/30/harlan-county-man-honored-in-hospice-veteran-pinning-ceremony

Bluegrass Care Navigators collaborates with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a top-tier partner in serving veterans.

Mission Moment

Celebrating From a Distance

One of our patients turned 88 years old recently. Her family couldn’t be with her due to COVID-19 restrictions, and she would be spending her birthday alone in her bed. Her Frankfort care team wanted to make her feel special and not so alone on her birthday. Members of her care team along with volunteers gathered outside her room and painted her windows with “Looking great at 88!” and other messages of birthday cheer. She watched from inside and was so excited to see the pictures come to life! She smiled, laughed, waved and blew kisses from inside her room. Later that day, her daughter told the care team that her mom said, “Angels came today and painted my windows.”

Thank you, Frankfort, for finding ways to make our patients feel better – even at a distance!

Bird Feeders Bring Fun to Seniors

Northern Kentucky volunteers made over 200 handmade bird feeders that were delivered to multiple skilled nursing facilities and senior assisted living organizations. Our community partners loved receiving these and it provided a fun new activity for our seniors... birdwatching!

Are you a Federal Employee?

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the official workplace giving campaign of the federal government, began on Sept. 21 and runs through Jan 15, 2021. During the campaign, federal employees and retirees can pledge monetary support and volunteer time to approved charities. At Bluegrass Care Navigators, we are grateful for the past support and we hope you will consider us as your charity of choice this year!

You can make your pledge and learn more at givecfc.org. Just search for “Bluegrass Care Navigators” or use our CFC number 29763.
Alzheimer’s Program Supports Patients

Bluegrass Care Navigators now offers a program to support Kentuckians living with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers.

The Bluegrass Transitional Care Dementia Program provides nursing support to people with Alzheimer’s who live alone, and those who have intellectual or developmental disabilities with Alzheimer’s disease. The program aims to reduce hospitalizations, emergency department visits and institutionalizations for those living with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

The program is home-based and lasts six months, with each family supported by a home coach for medical visits and volunteers who will give companionship and help with individual needs and interests. Additionally, the organization will provide training to help caregivers cope with the stress of caregiving responsibilities.

Bluegrass Care Navigators is starting the program in Fayette, Jessamine, Franklin, Scott, Perry, Letcher and Knott counties, with plans to expand to additional counties in early 2021. Caregivers or diagnosed individuals interested in the program can call 877.439.0262 or email Jennifer King at jking@bgcarenav.org.

“Our major goal is to support caregivers and help families avoid institutionalization of loved ones living with Alzheimer’s or dementia,” said Susan Swinford, Bluegrass Care Navigators Vice President of Administration. “With our team of physicians, nursing professionals, social workers and chaplains, and with our strong healthcare partners across the state, Bluegrass Care Navigators is uniquely positioned to address these special needs.”

The program is made possible by a $1 million grant from award from the federal Administration for Community Living/Administration on Aging, under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Bluegrass Care Navigators is one of 13 organizations in the nation awarded the grant and the only one in Kentucky.

Wishlists: 3 Ways

Our patients depend on the generous in-kind gifts we receive from our community. Please consider checking off one of the items on our Wishlists and help a patient in need. There are three easy ways to help:

1. AmazonSmile Charity Wishlist: amazon.com/gp/clpf (Search “Bluegrass Care Navigators”) Please email us at give@bgcarenav.org to let us know that you provided an item from the list so we can thank you!
2. Visit: give.bgcarenav.org/wishlists
3. Email Us: give@bgcarenav.org

Planned Giving

Have you considered including Bluegrass Care Navigators in your will or estate plans? It’s a simple way to make a powerful impact for patients and families. Contact us at give@bgcarenav.org or 859.276.5344 to learn more.

Make a Gift Online
give.bgcarenav.org/newsletter
Care That’s Right for You or Your Loved One.

Bluegrass Extra Care
Bluegrass Home Primary Care
Bluegrass Adult Day Health Care
Bluegrass Transitional Care
Bluegrass Palliative Care
Bluegrass Hospice Care
Bluegrass Grief Care

Expert care can’t wait.

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