Hospice Helps Make Family’s Wishes Come True

Most of us are busy now looking for the perfect gift! Have you ever wondered if your gifts to Bluegrass Hospice Care make an impact? Do they really make a difference?

Yes! Two daughters we heard from this year explain the care, comfort and dignity your gifts provided for their fathers and their entire family.

Sarah Guthrie’s father was young and his illness came on quickly. “If it were not for Hospice, I do not know how I could have dealt with this. The compassion Hospice showed for my father and me was nothing short of miraculous.”

In addition to comfort, the hospice team asked Sarah what else they could do to make this a special time for her and her father. Her first thought was to arrange some visits from her father’s dog, Maverick. “My dad lit up when he saw his dog.”

Sarah said having Maverick visit was great, but it didn’t come close to what the Hospice team did for them next. “I realized that whenever I get married he wouldn’t be there to walk me down the aisle. Once again, Hospice was there to assist. A few days before my father passed, the Hospice team arranged a private room at the hospital for me to have a ‘father–daughter dance’ with him. We got him dressed and I picked the perfect song. They even recorded it on video for me to keep. This is a moment I will never forget and I have Hospice to thank for it.”

Dena Sparkman, another daughter whose father was cared for by our staff, says her family’s only regret is that they didn’t call Hospice sooner. “The emotion that comes with acknowledging a parent’s final months isn’t easy, and my sister did an amazing job of caring for our dad at home,” said Dena. “After we did call Hospice to come and assist, we learned we could have benefitted earlier from the support of having the hospice team come in to help at home.

“When we could no longer care for Dad at home, we were able to get him moved quickly and efficiently to the Greg and Noreen Wells Hospice Care Center in Hazard. We will never forget the care he received. There was such love, compassion and support from the Hospice team, they made an impossible situation bearable for our family.

“My son was 14 when his Papaw passed away and he was right there holding his hand. He now has an interest in nursing. I work in healthcare so in some ways my son has been raised in a hospital, but I think he was particularly touched by the difference one person could make.”

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You made this possible for Sarah and Dena and their families. Your generous gifts provided expert and compassionate hospice care for their fathers and ensured there was a hospice team in place to make wishes come true.

If you haven’t had a chance to make your year-end gift, please do so today. Every penny of your gifts to Bluegrass Hospice Care is used to change lives. That makes you a life changer!

A Scary Good Time

The annual Howlin’ Halloween Bash was held on Saturday, October 27 at the First Federal Center in Hazard. Over 200 guests enjoyed dinner by Big Blue Smokehouse, music by Groove Addiction, a costume contest, online auction and more. The costumes were amazing and included everything from The Wizard of Oz to WrestleMania, the Sanderson Sisters, The Simpsons, Flo from Progressive Insurance, Mayhem and many more. Winners of the group costume contest were The Griswolds from National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation (pictured above). Thank you to our sponsors and guests for helping us raise more than $26,000 to benefit the patients and families being served at the Greg and Noreen Wells Hospice Care Center.

Back by popular demand! Please join us for the 4th annual BB&T Bundle Up with Bourbon and Blues on Friday, January 25, from 7–11 p.m. This year’s event will be held at Limestone Hall atop the historic old courthouse in downtown Lexington. Enjoy heavy hors d’oeuvres, exciting bourbon workshops conducted by master distillers, live music by the Jordan English Band, mystery boxes and more! 100% of the proceeds are used to care for hospice patients and their families. Register today at bundleuplex.eventbrite.com.

National Philanthropy Day

Bluegrass Care Navigators selected the Owen County Friends of Hospice as its Outstanding Community Honoree during the 32nd annual National Philanthropy Day celebration on November 2. National Philanthropy Day celebrates individuals and groups who have made a significant contribution of time and resources to nonprofit agencies and therefore richly enhance the quality of life in our communities.

The power of one is truly evident when describing the Owen County Friends of Hospice. Jenni Duncan’s vision to help the seriously ill in her county inspired other powerful women who wanted to make a difference. This motivated group of volunteers took an idea and made it a reality. The Friends of Hospice first hosted a tea for their friends and daughters. The event quickly grew and became a Derby Day Brunch, full of delicious food, fabulous hats and lots of fun. Since 2014, the Owen County Friends of Hospice Derby Day Luncheon has raised nearly $32,000. That means dozens of families in this rural community can receive the gift of expert and compassionate hospice care and the chance to make lasting memories with loved ones. Thank you to the Owen County Friends of Hospice for taking the initiative to provide care for the seriously ill in your community.
Thanks for Supporting Children in Need

A record number of golfers came out to support the 9th annual Fore! Kids Golf Outing on Friday, September 21 at the Twin Oaks Golf and Plantation Club. The weather was perfect for a round of golf. Golfers not only had the chance to hit the greens, they could also vie for a chance to win the split-the-pot raffle and bid on dozens of silent auction items. Proceeds from the event support Bluegrass Hospice Care’s palliative care program for children as well as our children’s grief care program. Longtime donor Alice Sparks created the event after her grandson Alex passed away from a rare form of cancer. Alice and her family were grateful for the care Alex and his family received during his illness. Alice continues to lead this great event and we thank her for the amazing support.

A Dedicated Employee Bids Farewell

Last month, Bluegrass Care Navigators said farewell to Susan Ware, Vice President of Philanthropy, after 26 years of dedicated service to the agency. Susan will be returning to Transylvania University in December as the Senior Director of Donor Engagement, a position that brings her career full circle as she began her professional accomplishments at her alma mater more than 30 years ago.

For many, Susan Ware’s name and face are strongly connected to our agency’s mission and great work, and for good reason. She has spent the last three decades working to build support for the nonprofit, heading six capital campaigns focused on expanding the agency’s services and reach. Her work with individual supporters and large grant-funding organizations alike has always given Susan energy, and Susan’s enthusiasm for the work of the agency has certainly energized both our team internally and the many people Susan has encountered.

“...[Susan’s] career has been dedicated to raising awareness and funds for end-of-life care with a strongly-held belief that every life matters and every dollar raised allows more opportunities for patient and families to receive compassionate, dignified care,” said Liz Fowler, President and CEO of the agency.

As Susan’s career takes her back “home” to Transylvania, we owe her a great deal of gratitude. Her work here has been truly transformational. Many of the programs and places we now call “home” are thanks in part to Susan’s dedication and commitment. Good luck and Godspeed, Susan.
This year some of our usual start dates for support groups coincide with the New Year’s Day holiday and will not take place. We apologize for the inconvenience. Please visit our website or call us to learn more about our upcoming grief and loss support groups and other events.

March is National Social Work Month, supporting a profession dedicated to enhancing the well-being of others and meeting the basic needs of all people, especially the most vulnerable in our society. Learn more: www.socialworkers.org

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