



NEWSLETTER

*For Donations, Public Speaking
& Fundraising Events:*

FRIENDS OF

LEWIS COUNTY HOSPICE, INC.
P.O. Box 266 • Lowville, NY 13367
www.friendsoflchospice.org

*For Referrals, Patient Care, Volunteer
& Bereavement Information:*

LEWIS COUNTY HOSPICE OFFICE
7785 N State Street • Lowville, NY 13367
315-376-5308 • Fax 315-376-5435

“Get your affairs in order! Perhaps, six months.”

By Tom Yousey

After two days of tests and six hours in the oncologist's office, those are the only words that reverberate through your mind as you make the long drive home from Syracuse to Lewis County. Your spouse, seated in the passenger's seat, has sensed that it's time for silence, even though she wants, . . . she needs to know what you are thinking and what you are feeling. How do you start the conversation that you have never had? Where do you go for help after the doctor has sent you away – six months!

Life to that day had been rich and fulfilling – a wonderful family, grown children with one grandchild and one on-the-way, a fulfilling career just reaching its peak, a circle of friends and acquaintances supporting a rich community life, looking forward to retirement and travel. What now?

“Affairs in order?” Well, we did prepare our will, even though we hadn't looked at it since the children were toddlers and we didn't own a house. Do we tell our children, our friends? Do we seek a second opinion? How do you go about doing that? I barely know my family doctor; I have never been sick much. What will the pain be like? I feel no pain now. This isn't fair; life is just getting to be all that I wanted it to be! I just feel numb – no anger, no sadness, no love. Is this what “giving up” feels like? I pray every day, Lord, but I left my church years ago. I pray: please send me an angel or, at least, a community to pray with me?

God answered that prayer over and over again through many angels: initially through a wife, son, and daughter that remained patiently there at my side, a supportive Marriage Enrichment Group, a team of medical professionals at a

national cancer center, leaders and colleagues at work, the American Cancer Society and Relay for Life network, and a faith community that welcomed me like I had always had a place with them.

And then after four years living with those words, “Get your affairs in order!”, my wife walked in the house and announced, “We are taking the Hospice volunteer training class”. Karen Seaver (now, Peterson), the skillful instructor, gently guided my wife and me through “that conversation that we still had not really had”. She reframed for me the last four years of a life waiting to die. I began to live, with joy and hope, each day of life. My wife and I discovered there is support for living a rich, full life even at the end of life, and that you can “get your affairs in order.”

If only on that drive home, we had shared our thoughts and feeling. If only on that drive home we had decided to phone Hospice and asked for a program explanation. I would have learned that I was qualified for their help. And in “one stop” the angels that I needed for medical, emotional, legal, interpersonal and spiritual guidance would have been sitting in my living room.

Before you or a loved one hear those words, “Get your affairs in order! Six months,” I urge you: call and sign-up for the 10-hour Hospice Volunteer Training class (volunteering is optional and secondary benefit after taking the class). Help Friends of Lewis County Hospice advocate for a high quality palliative care service that does not exist in Lewis County today.



Hospice Volunteers

ONE Person can make a difference!

Support for those Grieving at the Holidays

By: Crystal Collette, LMSW, Lewis County Hospice Social Worker and Bereavement Coordinator

As the holidays approach, many of us will gather with family and friends. More often than not, these gatherings will include sharing memories of loved ones recently, or long ago, lost. This emphasis on remembrance, so welcomed during joyful times, can be quite difficult for those coping with loss.

For family, friends and neighbors who are facing grief after the death of a loved one, the holidays can sometimes be a time filled with pain and sadness. And even for those for whom grief is not as fresh, the holidays may serve as an annual reminder of the loss—not only of that person, but of tradition and celebration.

Many people may not be aware of the support hospice professionals offer to members of our community who are struggling with grief during the holiday season. **Lewis County Hospice provides comprehensive bereavement services to hospice families to facilitate the process of mourning following the death of a patient.** All bereavement services are also available to the broader community and to anyone who is grieving.

If you or someone you know is struggling with issues related to loss, I encourage you to contact Lewis County Hospice for support. Call **315-376-5308** and ask to speak with Crystal Collette, Bereavement Coordinator for more information.

Friends of Lewis County Hospice Mission Statement

FOLCH advocates for quality palliative and end-of-life care and provides humanitarian and financial resources to the members of the Lewis County community facing the challenges that come with the end-of-life.



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I'm Back!!!!

By Joanne Dicob

They knew they couldn't keep me away! I went to a volunteer luncheon and some wondered if I would come back on the FOLCH Board as they had some vacancies. Tom Yousey had assumed the Presidency as a temporary position in hopes that someone would step up and relieve him of some of the responsibilities. If anybody knows Tom he will do anything for this community and has a vision for what we need. He has assumed new assignments within the Catholic Church, as a newly ordained Deacon and has many duties with that new position including Lewis County Friends of Hospice Chaplain.

Lewis County Friends of Hospice is the first board I joined in 2008 when I retired. It seemed like a good fit, as I had just gone through my journey with breast cancer and thought this is where I was supposed to be. I am looking forward to working with some of you that I had previously worked with as well as working with new faces.

An important goal of mine is moving the mission of the Lewis County Friends of Hospice forward and getting the word out that we are here to help the terminally ill with quality of care. If I can help or you have any questions don't hesitate to call me.

“Volunteers are love in Motion!”

Joanne previously served on the Friends of Lewis County Hospice Board from 2008-2014. At that time, she served on many committees as well as held many positions in office. Welcome, Joanne! FOLCH is so glad to have you back!

FOLCH Board Recognizes Departing Board Members

With a great appreciation for their years of service, Friends of Lewis County Hospice say a sad farewell to departing board members Frank Kogut and Tom Yousey. Both have worked endlessly for the benefit of the Hospice program.

Frank Kogut has served on the FOLCH Board for over 3 years. In that time, he was very active. He worked diligently on the Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and the Epicurean. In addition to that he was influential in organizing the purchase of new cars bought by FOLCH for the Hospice nurses to use as they travel from patient to patient. These cars, in most cases, were better equipped for travel in our North Country winters than the nurses' own automobiles. He also liked attending Marketing Seminars and brought great ideas back to the Board.

Tom Yousey was no stranger to FOLCH as he had been a member of the Board for many years prior to his return in January of 2016. As soon as Tom returned he took the office of Vice President until February of 2017, where he then held the office of President until October 1, 2017. FOLCH was very appreciative of Tom's return and expertise as the Board had lost many experienced, hardworking members that year.

With Tom at the helm, it was decided to take Friends of Lewis County Hospice in a new direction- "marketing the brand". After much discussion over the years the Board and our local Hospice realized that our community, as well as surrounding communities that had Lewis County Hospice at their disposal, were unaware of when and why they should use Hospice. There are many preconceived notions that FOLCH will try to change in the near future.

Tom resigned from the Friends of Lewis County Board of Directors as of October 1, 2017. He has assumed new assignments within the Catholic Church, as a newly ordained Deacon and has many duties with that new position. But alas, FOLCH has not seen the last of Tom Yousey as he will continue to be Lewis County Friends of Hospice Chaplain. Who knows? Maybe he'll come back on the Board again sometime in the future.

Both Tom and Frank had a passion for the Hospice program as demonstrated by the hours of volunteer time they gave to the organization. They will be greatly missed!



November 2017

NATIONAL HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH

It's about how you live.

Hospice Helps Patients and Families Focus on Quality of Life

Lewis County Hospice Makes More Meaningful Moments Possible - Tammy Suiter, RN Coordinator

(Lowville, NY) – November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month and hospices across the country are reaching out to raise awareness about the highest quality care for all people coping with life-limiting illness.

“Every year, nearly 1.6 million people living with a life-limiting illness receive care from hospice and palliative care providers in this country,” said J. Donald Schumacher, president and CEO of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. “These highly-trained professionals ensure that patients and families find dignity, respect, and love during life’s most difficult journey.”

Hospice is not a place. Lewis County Hospice provides pain management, symptom control, psychosocial support, and spiritual care to patients and their families when a cure is not possible.

Hospice care combines the highest level of quality medical care with the emotional and spiritual support that families need most when facing the end of life. Through this specialized quality care, we see many

patients and their families experience more meaningful moments together. Hospice helps them focus on living, despite a terminal diagnosis.

Many people tell me that they could never do my job. I reply to them by saying, “Life is a spiritual journey that I am honored to be a part of for people in their final journey. There are nurses who enjoy helping to bring babies into this world; our job is to help patient’s find their way through their final steps in their journey of life.” It is rewarding to help patients and families during this difficult time.

Throughout the month of November, Lewis County Hospice will be joining organizations across the nation offering activities that will help the community understand how important hospice and palliative care can be.

More information about hospice, palliative care, and advance care planning is available from Lewis County Hospice at 315-376-5308.

Stories showing the many ways hospice makes more special moments possible can be found at www.momentsoflife.org.

FOLCH Golf Tournament

The *Fairways “Fore” Kids, Families and Life Golf Tournament* that was to be held August 26, 2017 was regrettably cancelled due to lack of registered teams. Friends of Lewis County Hospice is looking to partner with the *Lowville Academy Relay for Life Team* and the *Beaver River Central School Relay For Life Team* in 2018 to sponsor a golf tournament. Proceeds will benefit all three groups.

Golfers, look for more information in the Spring on how you can help support LEWIS COUNTY RELAY FOR LIFE and FRIENDS OF LEWIS COUNTY HOSPICE!

Lewis County Hospice Welcomes...

ROBIN VIRKLER



Robin Virkler has joined the Lewis County Hospice team in the role of *Volunteer Coordinator*. Robin holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, and is excited to bring her skill set to the Hospice program. Most recently Robin was employed as a Social Worker in Watertown, NY, where she gained experience and knowledge of the integral service Hospice provides to a patient and their family. Personally, Lewis County Hospice holds a special place in Robin’s heart as it provided such comfort and care during her father’s illness and passing. Robin is thrilled to return to her home community and serve Lewis County in this capacity. Robin is looking forward to working closer to home and being able to spend more time with her family. This past year Robin’s family celebrated the marriage of Robin’s son, Alex, to Lisa Porter. Alex and Lisa reside in Beaver Falls. Robin also celebrated her daughter Katey’s graduation from Le Moyne College. Katey resides in Lowville. Robin encourages anyone who would like to learn more about being a Hospice volunteer to stop by the office; she would love the opportunity to meet with you.

Friends of Lewis County Hospice Update

By Karen Rennie, President

In 2017, the Friends of Lewis County Hospice (FOLCH) board unanimously agreed on a new mission, or expanded role, to increase community awareness, understanding and utilization of hospice services. For many years, the primary focus for FOLCH has been largely on fundraising to ensure that all Lewis County Hospice patients receive the much-needed services and supplies not covered by payers such as Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance. While these core services will continue to be provided through FOLCH, the new mission focuses on ensuring that every person and family in the community facing end of life decisions has the knowledge necessary to help make an informed choice for them and their family.

The need for increased community and referral source (physician) awareness is evident in state and national hospice utilization data compiled in the most recent data presented in the 2016 State Hospice Report New York, prepared by Hospice Analytics, which

compares national, state, and county hospice utilization, or Medicare deaths while enrolled in hospice.

In the United States, New York ranks 48th out of 50 states having the lowest hospice utilization rates for Medicare beneficiaries. While New York averages 30.3% of Medicare deaths in hospice, the national average is 45.9% of Medicare deaths in hospice. When compared by county, Lewis County hospice rates are even lower than the State average of 30.3%, with Lewis County hospice utilization at 22.6%, or the 52nd lowest of the 64 New York counties.

While Lewis County lags significantly behind both the national and state hospice utilization figures, it presents both a challenge and an opportunity for FOLCH. While individuals or families may self-refer to hospice, physicians are generally the primary referral source to hospice. Given this, community awareness campaigns will focus on community and physician education, as well as

hospital and home health campaigns to encourage patients and families to initiate planning before end of life choices are imminent.

To increase awareness in the private and professional sectors, FOLCH's initial plans include revising educational and informational materials, educating local physicians on the multiple diagnoses and criteria appropriate for hospice admission, and when appropriate, subsequent follow-up with physicians, expanded advertising campaigns including television and radio, updating the website to make it more informational and interactive, and initiating an "Engage with Grace - The One Slide" campaign to increase dialog about end of life and awareness of our hospice services.

These are some of the future marketing and outreach initiatives currently planned. We will provide periodic updates and additional community awareness initiatives as we finalize our marketing plan in upcoming newsletters.



Lorna Weber, FOLCH Board member, joins LCGH CEO, Gerald Cayer, as he draws the winning tickets.

FOLCH Fundraiser

FOLCH sold raffle tickets from June through September to raise money for the **Hospice Bereavement Program**. Items being raffled were a Quilt made and donated by Clare Waligory in memory of her husband Bernard (Bo) Waligory; a Chainsaw Carved Bear donated by Daniel Rocker of Cabin Critters; a Gift Certificate for brunch for two donated by Tug Hill Winery; and a Solid 14kt Gold Labradorite Necklace donated anonymously. FOLCH sold 1000 tickets. The new CEO of Lewis County General Hospital, Gerald Cayer, drew the names of the winners on October 2, 2017. *The winners were:*

Quilt -Gina Mallette

Bear -Barbara Schenk

Tug Hill Winery Brunch - Loretta Keys

Necklace - Susan McVeigh

CONGRATULATIONS TO THOSE WINNERS!
FOLCH thanks everyone who bought raffle tickets.

Donating to Hospice: ***Pay it Forward!***



Hospice nurse, Tammy Thompson, with Kayla in front of Kinney Drugs.

We asked Kayla why she chose Lewis County Hospice this year and she shared, "Every year I choose an organization that helps others. Last year around my birthday my grandma got sick. Then in November they found out that she had cancer. Lewis County Hospice took care of my grandma and my family. I want other families to have the same opportunity our family had. My grandma loves my pay it forwards and I wanted to give money to Hospice in her memory."



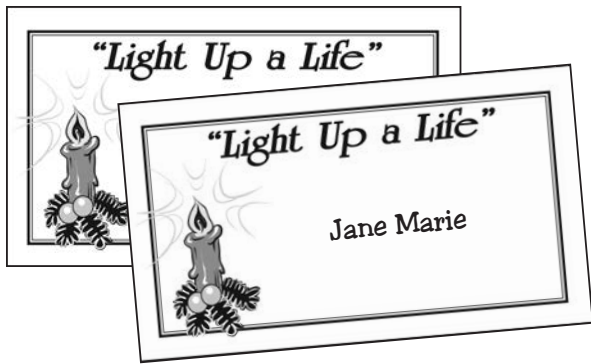
Kayla preparing to sell carnations for Hospice in front of Kinney Drugs.



Kayla sold carnations at Kinney Drugs to raise the funds. She distributed information about Hospice and shared her story with the community. Her mother, Amanda Peebles said, "We just want to thank Hospice for all they did and continue to do for our family. And, I'm proud my daughter chose Hospice as her pay it forward this year."

Lewis County Hospice is very grateful to this special young woman. ***Thank you, Kayla!***

Peter Meyer, Hospice nurse, and Crystal Collette, Social Worker and Bereavement Coordinator, accepting donation for Hospice from Kayla Rice.



Light Up a Life

Brightens Holiday Season

Plan to visit one of our Light Up a Life holiday trees during our Christmas Campaign, November 27th through December 9th. Funds raised will go directly to the compassionate care of local Hospice patients. With your donation of \$5.00 or more you can help lighten the lives of Hospice patients and their families in a simple, but touching way.

Just submit a name(s) of a loved one you wish to remember or honor and that name will be placed on a tag on the memory tree. Each name remembered or honored will be published in February in both the Boonville Herald and the Lowville Journal & Republican. In addition, there will be a Tree Lighting Ceremony this year in honor of loved ones and friends. (See information below)

Volunteers manning memory trees will be found at the following location November 27th through December 9th to receive your donations:

Croghan: Key Bank

Harrisville: Harrisville Central School

Turin: South Lewis Central School

Lowville: Lewis County General Hospital and Kinney Drugs

Lyons Falls: Community Bank, NA

Also, supporting businesses, including **Hair Vogue** and **Hair Haven** will have trees and name tags at their shops. If you have any questions contact Marcia Waligory at 376-3401 or Lorna Weber at 376-2553.

Light Up a Life Tree Lighting Ceremony

**Join us as we create a beloved community tradition
of remembering and honoring those you miss this holiday season.**

The celebration will include personal reflections by community members, inspirational music, and the lighting of our Tree of Memory in honor of loved ones and friends.

The tree lighting ceremony is open to everyone, not just those touched by Lewis County Hospice.

December 14, 2017 ~ 5:30 PM

**Veteran's Memorial Park
Parkway Drive Lowville, NY**

Join us for cookies and coffee to follow at the Lowville Village Firehall



Light Up a Life

Light Up a Life memory trees will soon be popping up around Lewis County, starting on November 27th when the "Light Up a Life" campaign officially begins. The campaign will run until December 9th. Community volunteers will be ready to accept donations of \$5.00 or more at a number of locations. (See page 7)

Each name remembered or honored on a Hospice tag will be published in February in both the **Boonville Herald** and the **Lowville Journal & Republican**.

If you would like to volunteer to man a memory tree or have questions, please call Marcia Waligory at 315-376-3401 or Lorna Weber at 315-376-4662.

You may also donate by mail to:

Carol Virkler
c/o Friends of Lewis County Hospice
PO Box 266, Lowville, NY 13367

Light Up a Life 2017

Please accept my donation of \$ _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

Given by: _____

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