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Pennies from Heaven Lead to
Largest Donation in Hospice History
Director’s Message

November is National Hospice Month

Former President Jimmy Carter first designated November as National Hospice Month in 1978. Our celebration of National Hospice Month includes this new, quarterly publication and a series of Open House events throughout our region.

In this inaugural issue of the revamped Hospice Herald, we share the stories of our patients and their families, our volunteers, the dedicated clinicians who provide daily care, and the donors who support this calling.

Working with Hospice is a privilege.

I see how Hospice affects lives in a positive way each day. In this issue, you will read about Leota, Dorothy, Wendy, and Joyce and Larry. These men and women are real people in our community who represent the best of Hospice.

As you share in their journey, I hope you will be encouraged and comforted, particularly if you are currently facing the stress of coping with illness or loss.

Hospice is about enjoying life to the fullest each day, and we hope this publication conveys the quality, dignity and independence we seek to bring to our patients.

Join the Celebration.

In honor of National Hospice Month, we invite you to attend an Open House. Check out the calendar on page 11 for dates and locations.

While supplies last, we are giving out a gift to those who stop by our offices during November to help us celebrate National Hospice Month. Come by to pick up your gift, give us feedback on the new publication, or talk with us about volunteer opportunities.

We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Pat Price, Director
Mercy Hospice - Springfield
“People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.”

— Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

Every now and then, we meet someone who leaves an imprint upon our lives. They exude a quiet radiance that belies their circumstances. They are lit from within.

Leota Kunz is 94 years old. Nearly twenty years ago, she buried her beloved husband of 56 years. Now, she lives alone in a tidy, 1-bedroom apartment, filled with pictures of her 11 siblings, 4 children and 14 grandchildren.

A tiny woman with stylish silver hair and sparkling eyes, Leota suffers from arthritis and uses a walker to move about. Past fractures have limited her mobility and left her with recurring pain, yet she is busy embroidering a quilt for her latest great-grandchild and still does her own cooking.

Leota is currently under the care of St. John’s Hospice.

“I will be 95 in December,” she says, “if I live that long.”

A native of Illinois, Leota and her husband, an electrician, raised four children. A homemaker and self-taught seamstress, Leota sewed all her children’s clothing on a Singer sewing machine she bought nearly 80 years ago and still uses today.

They led a simple life, filled with the quiet joys of hard work, family, and activities at the Nazarene Church.

Leota came to Springfield, Missouri, about a year ago, after a period of declining health, to be close to her sister Wilma. A retired nurse, Wilma, lives in the same apartment complex. Of the original twelve children, only five remain.

Wilma is quick to sing Leota’s praises. Although she is 17 years younger, Leota is clearly her hero. She recalls how Leota, as a teenager, saved the family from homelessness when their Dad could not find work. Earning $3 a week cleaning houses, Leota saved enough for a down payment on a house for her family.

(Continued on the back page of this issue.)
Larry and Joyce Williams of Lebanon, Missouri, collect pennies, a habit they started in 1995 following the death of their only son Bryan. “I like to think of them as pennies from heaven,” Joyce explains. “When I find a penny, I imagine Bryan sending it my way and saying, ‘I love you, mom.’ I kiss each one before saving it in a jar.” Joyce and Larry proudly display two brimming jars of pennies they have collected in Bryan’s memory. It is a tangible way of keeping their love alive.

Bryan was a normal college student back in 1985, studying business at UMKC. During his free time, he loved to fish and camp. “There was a lake up near Smithville where he and I would fish for Crappie right off the bank,” Larry recalls with a sparkle in his eye, “we’d fish our limit in about an hour.” Joyce verifies the fish story adding, “I’d fry them up in a pan and they were so mild and delicious.” Their pleasure in the shared memory shines from their faces.

A growth on Bryan’s neck was the first sign that something was wrong. Eventually, a biopsy revealed that he had Non Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. It was a devastating diagnosis for the family, who had lost an older son prematurely at birth. “But Bryan was optimistic,”

“....So, don’t pass by that penny, when you’re feeling blue. It may be a penny from heaven that an Angel’s tossed to you.”

– Charles Marshburn, 1998
Larry explains, “and he went on with his life despite drastic chemotherapy and radiation treatments.”

He graduated from college and accepted a position with Macy’s in California, determined to live life to its fullest. “He always said it wasn’t the quantity of life that mattered, but the quality,” Joyce remembers. After nearly nine years of battling his illness, Bryan’s condition worsened and he was unable to continue working. Heartsick, Joyce and Larry traveled to California to bring him home. Throughout the next year, they cared for Bryan with all the courage they could muster. After nearly eleven months, their doctor suggested Hospice. The clinical care, comfort and moral support they received from Hospice during the subsequent weeks had a profound effect on the couple. “I’m not sure we could have gotten through it without them,” recalls Joyce.

On a humid day in July, Bryan breathed his last. He was 31. It is a day the couple can never forget and the beginning of a long journey through shared grief. Larry, a retired highway patrol officer, took a job driving a school bus to keep busy. Numb with grief, Joyce was unable to return to her work. She could not eat and lost weight.

“I was angry at God,” Larry admits, “and afraid that I would lose Joyce too.” At a time when many grieving couples drift apart, they came together to confront their loss. “She’s been my beautiful wife for almost 53 years,” Larry explains, “I couldn’t have gotten through this without her.” Together, they attended a grief support group at the hospital. In the meantime, their Hospice team provided ongoing support and encouragement.

And the pennies kept coming. As the first jar overflowed and they started a second, an idea began to blossom. “We have a life insurance policy that we couldn’t decide what to do with,” Larry explains. “We wanted to do something in Bryan’s memory, and we kept thinking about the excellent Hospice care he received and how Hospice supported us after his death.” In August, Larry and Joyce made St. John’s Hospice-Lebanon the beneficiary of a $250,000 life insurance policy as an endowment in honor of their son. It is the single largest Hospice gift designated to St. John’s to date.

According to David Dennis, Administrative Director of St. John’s Home Care in Springfield, “this generous gift from the Williams family will help advance hospice and palliative care in the Lebanon area.”

At first, the couple planned to remain anonymous. “But we thought about all the folks who need Hospice care, and we decided to go public with this donation in the hope that others will be inspired to give as well,” says Larry.

Karen Simpson, Vice-President of the St. John’s Lebanon Heritage Foundation, worked with the Williams to finalize their gift. “The endowment in memory of Bryan is an inspiration to all of us,” says Simpson. “Both Larry and Joyce hope that other folks will follow their lead and consider a planned gift to Hospice or perhaps cancer care.”

“Bryan’s memory will live on through the gift that his folks have made and will literally touch thousands of lives for years to come,” says Simpson.

“We think Bryan would be proud,” says Larry, and Joyce nods her approval.

By Holly Guerreiro

If you would like to arrange for a tribute gift or memorial in honor and remembrance of a loved one, contact the St. John’s Foundation for Community Health at 417-820-6111. Tribute gifts may be directed to any fund or community, ensuring that your gift benefits both the community and cause for which you have a passion. Gifts may be made in honor of a loved one, a nurse or physician. To donate online, visit stjohns.com/foundation.
SUBJECT: SHAMPOO WARNING!!
I don’t know WHY I didn’t figure this out sooner!!!!

It’s the shampoo I use in the shower! When I wash my hair, the shampoo runs down my whole body, and (duh!) printed very clearly on the shampoo label is this warning, “FOR EXTRA VOLUME AND BODY.” NO wonder I have been gaining weight!!!

Well! I have gotten rid of that shampoo and I am going to start using Dawn dish soap instead. Its label reads, “DISSOLVES FAT THAT IS OTHERWISE DIFFICULT TO REMOVE.” Problem solved! If I don’t answer the phone...I’ll be in the shower!

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The Goldberg Brothers - The Inventors of the Automobile Air Conditioner

Here’s a little factoid for automotive buffs or just to dazzle your friends.

The four Goldberg brothers, Lowell, Norman, Hiram, and Max, invented and developed the first automobile air-conditioner. On July 17, 1946, the temperature in Detroit was 97 degrees.

The four brothers walked into old man Henry Ford’s office and sweet-talked his secretary into telling him that four gentlemen were there with the most exciting innovation in the auto industry since the electric starter.

Henry was curious and invited them into his office. They refused and instead asked that he come out to the parking lot to their car.

They persuaded him to get into the car, which was about 130 degrees, turned on the air conditioner and cooled the car off immediately.

The old man got very excited and invited them back to the office, where he offered them $3 million for the patent.

The brothers refused, saying they would settle for $2 million, but they wanted the recognition by having a label, ‘The Goldberg Air-Conditioner,’ on the dashboard of each car in which it was installed.

Now old man Ford was more than just a little anti-Semitic, and there was no way he was going to put the Goldberg’s name on two million Fords.

They haggled back and forth for about two hours and finally agreed on $4 million and that just their first names would be shown.

And so, to this day, all Ford air conditioners show -- Lo, Norm, Hi, and Max -- on the controls.
A Seniors Brunch

A group of seniors were sitting, talking about all their ailments.
“...My arms have gotten so weak I can hardly lift this cup of coffee,” said one.
“Yes, I know,” said another. “My cataracts are so bad; I can’t even see my coffee.”
“I couldn’t even mark an “X” at election time, my hands are so crippled,”
“I can’t turn my head, the arthritis is in my neck,” said a fourth.
“My blood pressure pills make me dizzy,” exclaimed a fifth.
“I forget where I am, where I’m going,” so said the sixth.
“I guess that’s the price we pay for getting old,” stuttered an old man as he shook his head.
“Well, count your blessings,” a woman cheerfully said, “thank God we can still drive.”

GOODBYE, MOM

A young man shopping in a supermarket noticed a little old lady following him around. If he stopped, she stopped. Furthermore, she kept staring at him. She finally overtook him at the checkout, and she turned to him and said, “I hope I haven’t made you feel ill at ease; it’s just that you look so much like my late son.”
He answered, “That’s okay.”
“I know it’s silly, but if you’d call out ‘Good bye, Mom’ as I leave the store, it would make me feel so happy.”
She then went through the checkout, and as she was on her way out of the store, the man called out, “Goodbye, Mom.”

The little old lady waved and smiled back at him.
Pleased that he had brought a little sunshine into someone’s day, he went to pay for his groceries.
“That comes to $121.85,” said the clerk.
“How come so much? I only bought 5 items.”
The clerk replied, “Yeah, but your Mother said you’d be paying for her things, too.”
Volunteer and Patient

Dorothy Davidson has been a Hospice volunteer for two and a half years. When asked why she does it, the first word that comes to mind is love.

“This is a way of doing for others what I was unable to do for my own family,” Dorothy explains.

“When my parents, aunts and uncles needed help, I was too far away. It is such a privilege to be able to share this time with Hospice patients in my community.”

St. John’s Hospice Volunteers provide a wide variety of services for patients. They listen, encourage and befriend, placing no demands on the patient or the caregiver.

Today, Dorothy is meeting with Lillie, a Hospice patient who has Congestive Heart Failure.

Dorothy and Lillie greet one another with laughter, joking, and hugs. Clearly, this weekly visit is a time they both appreciate. Both women clutch well-worn Bibles. They begin their time together by singing two hymns—“Blest be the tie That Binds” and “Blessed Assurance.” They don’t need a hymn book. When one voice falters, the other chimes in with the missing verse. The melodies, it seems, are imprinted upon their hearts.

Holding hands, they pray, thanking God for their time together. Dorothy reads from a study guide. Today’s lesson is: “Who is in Control?” They progress through the lesson, sharing bits of wisdom learned amidst life’s joys and sorrows. As the lesson winds down, there is no question about “who is in control” of these two women. They share a love for Christ, and He is the center of their time together.

Prior to becoming a volunteer, Dorothy benefitted from St. John’s Hospice services herself.

“My husband passed away with St. John’s Hospice in 2008,” she explains.

“I feel privileged to serve as a Hospice volunteer. I cannot think of a better way to spend some of my life than in service to others. I enjoy helping patients re-live memories of times past and talking about whatever they wish,” Dorothy explains.

“I know time is precious and I want to spend the time I have wisely. This is a good way—the best, I think. I’m so thankful for the opportunity to serve as a volunteer for St. John’s Hospice.”

By Sharon Farmer

“Blest be the tie That Binds,”
John Fawcett, 1782

“Faith Binds

“Volunteer and Patient

“When we asunder part, it gives us inward pain; But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.”

“Blest be the tie That Binds,” John Fawcett, 1782
Hospice:
It’s All About Relationships

Wendy McCabe, RN, joined our St. John’s Hospice nursing team in January.

Today, she is working with Jim, a St. John’s Hospice patient with COPD.

The mood is easy and relaxed as Wendy puts on her gloves for Jim’s blood draw. She playfully warns him of “sugar labs coming up next month.”

Jim seems to enjoy the teasing. “She makes me feel like she has all the time in the world,” he explains with a smile.

Jim describes Wendy as very personable, kind, compassionate and cheerful.

Although she visits weekly, Wendy carefully explains each step of Jim’s care routine.

Jim’s wife hovers nearby and she, too, is quick to sing Wendy’s praises. “Wendy fits in with the flow of our household and communicates with everyone who enters,” she explains.

Wendy McCabe has had lots of opportunities to hone those clinical and communication skills. She began her career at 17, as the youngest student ever admitted to her nursing school in New Zealand. Over the past 20 years, she has worked in New Zealand, India and the United States.

One of Wendy’s most profound career memories occurred when she was working in the neonatal unit at a hospital. The grandmother of an infant under Wendy’s care was living out her final days in a hospice facility nearby. Wendy carried the infant to her grandmother’s bedside so they could meet for the first and only time.

When asked how she does this type of work day after day, Wendy responds quickly: “How can you not do this? People think hospice is all about death, but it is not. Hospice is about making sure patients have a rich quality of life. I do everything I can to make those last days comfortable and worth living.”

As Wendy winds up her visit with Jim and says her goodbyes, her dedication to those principles is evident. “Hospice is all about relationships,” she adds.

Clearly, the family Wendy just visited share her feelings.

By Sharon Farmer

The most important ingredient we put into any relationship is not what we say or what we do, but what we are.
- Stephen R. Covey
**Mercy’s Name, Logo Coming to a Community Near You**

This fall a major milestone occurred as we began our transition to a single naming system based in the word “Mercy.” Mercy’s name change will take place in stages over the next six months. Our adoption of the new name and logo will take place in January 2012.

Your next issue of this publication will bear the new name and logo. Following the rollout:

- **Current Name** | **Will be Known as**
  - St. John’s Hospital | Mercy Hospital – Springfield
  - St. John’s Hospice | Mercy Hospice
  - St. John’s Home Health | Mercy Home Health

Be watching for volume 2 of the Hospice Herald in February bearing the new name and logo.

**Lights of Love Fundraiser Planned**

We will celebrate the Lights of Love Campaign with a special tree lighting ceremony on Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 11:30 a.m. in the McAuley Conference Center, just off the main lobby of St. John’s Hospital in Springfield. Money raised during the campaign allows us to enhance the care we provide to patients and families. Refreshments will be provided. To learn more, call 417-820-7553. If you are interested in making a gift to the campaign, contact St. John’s Foundation at 417-820-6111.

**Bereavement Groups**

- **Berryville** - 1 p.m. Wed., Jan. 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15 & 22
- **Lebanon** - 6:30 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24, Dec. 1 & 8
- **Springfield** - 2 p.m. Tues., Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & Dec. 6
- **Springfield** - 2 p.m. Tues., Jan. 10, 17, 24 & 31

**Hospice Month Open Houses**

- **Aurora** Hospice Office - Nov. 16, 1-3 p.m.
- **Berryville** Hospice Office - Nov. 15, 2-4 p.m.
- **Lebanon** Hospice Office - Nov. 14, 2-4 p.m.
- **Shell Knob** Hospice Office - Nov. 18, 1-3 p.m.
- **Springfield** Hospice Office - Nov. 17, 2-4 p.m.

**Lights of Love Activities**

- **Berryville** Lights of Love Ceremony – 2 p.m. Thurs., Dec. 8
- **Berryville** Memory Tree Service – 1 p.m. Tues., Dec. 13
- **Springfield** Lights of Love Ceremony – 11:30 a.m. Tues., Dec. 13

**Volunteer Activities**

- **Aurora/Shell Knob** Volunteer Meeting – 2 p.m. Tues., Nov. 8
- **Aurora/Shell Knob** Volunteer Christmas Luncheon – 12 p.m. Thurs., Dec. 15
- **Aurora/Shell Knob** Volunteer Meeting – 2 p.m. Tues., Jan. 10
- **Berryville** Volunteer Banquet – 11:30 a.m. Tues., Nov. 1
- **Lebanon** Volunteer Meeting – 12 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 17
- **Lebanon** Volunteer Christmas Dinner – 5:30 p.m. Mon., Dec. 5
- **Lebanon** Volunteer Meeting – 12 p.m. Thurs., Jan. 19
- **Springfield** Volunteer Meeting – 10 a.m. Tues., Nov. 8
- **Springfield** Volunteer Christmas Brunch – 10 a.m. Tues., Dec. 13
- **Springfield** Volunteer Meeting – 10 a.m. Tues., Jan. 10

For more information on these events, please contact your local St. John’s Hospice office.
- **Aurora/Shell Knob**: 417-678-2158
- **Berryville**: 870-423-5272
- **Lebanon**: 417-588-5900
- **Springfield**: 417-820-7550
By Chaplain Anne Cheffey

What do you think of when you hear “hospice?” If you are like most people, you think of death. As a Hospice chaplain, I am often asked, “How do you do what you do—helping people to die?” I look at them and respond, “I don’t help people to die. I help people to live!” I help them to make and enjoy the best of whatever life they have left, living it to the fullest of their abilities, until there is no more.

All of us have a beginning and an end. Our experience, as well as the Bible, tells us that all will die. (Hebrews 9:27) It’s what we do with that time between the beginning and the end that makes the difference—the memories we create, the love we share, the laughter that bursts forward when we tell a silly joke, the hugs that we give our families and the hugs that we receive from them.

It’s a choice that everyone has. Do you choose to live every moment that you have to the fullest? I do. I choose to live.

One of my favorite sayings (not typical for a chaplain), goes like this: “Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaim, “Wow! What a ride!”

Hunter S. Thompson

Contact Information

St. John’s Home Care Services
People of all ages, from babies to seniors, may qualify for St. John’s Home Health services. We serve 29 counties in Missouri and Arkansas. Services include:

- Nursing visits
- Rehab therapies
- Home health aides
- Hospice care
- Homemakers
- Private duty nursing
- I.V. therapy
- Podiatric care

To learn more, contact: 417-820-5550 or 1-800-595-7167.

St. John’s Medical Supply
St. John’s Medical Supply provides home health equipment and service with free delivery and set up in these locations:

- Medical Supply: 417-820-7115 800-942-3044
- Medical Supply-Berryville: 870-423-5293 866-890-0091
- Medical Supply-Cassville: 417-847-4085 800-576-4340
- Medical Supply-Eureka Springs: 479-363-9244 866-890-0091
- Medical Supply-Lebanon: 417-588-9330 888-696-2450
- Medical Supply-Rolla: 573-426-2244 866-277-4360
- Medical Supply-Rogers, AR: 479-619-1515 877-619-1515
Lit from Within (From page 3)

The sisters become animated sharing photos of an annual celebration enjoyed by women of the family. Four generations gather annually to celebrate their love and engage in some light-hearted fun. A frame emblazoned with the words “Family, Friends, Forever,” contains a picture of the women performing a skit, an annual retreat tradition.

Another photo shows the “Hollywood Girls,” as they call themselves, posing in costumes, including one elderly woman in a wheelchair draped in tulle. Clearly, these women know how to have fun. Plans are already underway for next year’s retreat, which Leota hopes to attend.

Leota has found a new spiritual home, attending a local church led by her nephew. She and Wilma enjoy shopping, attending a Bible study that Wilma leads at their apartment complex, and spending time with Wilma’s children and grandchildren who live nearby.

Time has shifted the roles for these devoted sisters.

Wilma is Leota’s primary caregiver now, with support from a caring team of professionals at St. John’s Hospice.

Leota knows each of them by name. She describes her nurse Rhonda, who is present for this interview, as “efficient and concerned.” Rhonda, in turn, shares how she comes away encouraged whenever she visits Leota.

Leota recounts how Josie, her home care helper, “does the vacuuming” and “hung Christmas lights on my balcony.” She shares how Chaplain Anne listens and encourages her and explains that Dr. Leonardo, her physician, visited her at home.

Clearly, Leota appreciates this dedicated team, and the support they provide.

When one reaches Leota’s age, it would be easy to focus upon what is lost, and despair over what is to come. Nothing could be further from reality. “God has been good to me,” Leota explains.

“I am happy because I know where I am going when I leave this earth.”

In Leota’s living room, colorful, stained glass fish “swim” in a crystal fish bowl. In the sunlight, they fill the room with bright streaks of color. But when the lights go out, so do they. Leota’s radiance is not as ephemeral. Despite the difficulties of her present situation, she continues to sparkle and shine.

Leota is lit from within.

By Holly Guerreiro

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.

Psalm 28:7, NIV