

35 YEARS NEW

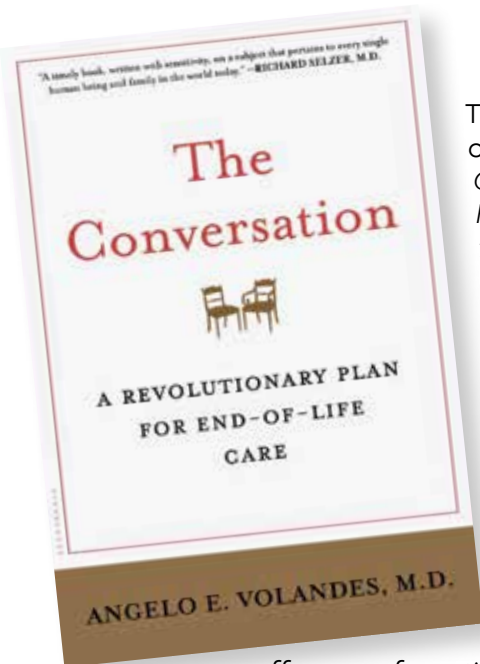
# Compassionate Connections

through Talbot Hospice

February 2016

## Talbot Conversations: *Make Your End-of-Life Wishes Known*

To celebrate our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Talbot Hospice has begun a community-wide educational initiative, Talbot Conversations, to encourage and assist as many residents as possible in understanding their choices at the end of life and completing their advance directives paperwork stating their wishes.



This initiative springs from our study of *The Conversation: a Revolutionary Plan for End-of-Life Care* by Dr. Angelo Volandes, physician and faculty member, Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital.

In his book, Volandes argues for a radical re-envisioning of the patient-doctor relationship and

offers ways for patients and their families to talk about this difficult issue to ensure that patients will be at the center and in charge of their medical care. Through his work as co-founder and president of Advance Care Planning Decisions, Volandes leads a group of internationally-recognized researchers who create and study video decision aids to empower patients and families to make informed decisions at the end of life.

**The kick-off event for *Talbot Conversations* will be March 31, 6 p.m., at the Avalon Theatre** where Volandes will talk about his book and his belief that a life well-lived deserves a good ending. This event is Talbot Hospice's gift to the community for their 35 years of support and will be open to the public at no cost. Book clubs are being encouraged to read and discuss the book and will be provided three complimentary copies per group.

Currently, efforts are underway to train volunteers to assist in completing advance directive paperwork. Beginning with National Healthcare Decisions Day, April 16, Talbot Hospice will host monthly workshops for individuals who would like help in understanding and completing the paperwork. These sessions will be free of charge and open to the public.

To learn more about the book *The Conversation* and about Dr. Volandes' work, visit [angelovolandes.com](http://angelovolandes.com) and [acpdecisions.org](http://acpdecisions.org).

For more information about *Talbot Conversations*, or to make reservations to see Dr. Volandes speak, visit [talbothospice.org](http://talbothospice.org) and click on the Events tab or call 410-822-6681.

*Let the conversation begin!*



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# BEREAVEMENT AND CAREGIVER Support Groups

Talbot Hospice bereavement and caregiver support groups are open to anyone in the community without charge, regardless of whether or not your loved one is/was served by Talbot Hospice and regardless of your county of residence.

Groups meet at Talbot Hospice, 586 Cynwood Drive, in the Clark-Guthrie Center. For additional information contact Shelly Kulp at 410-822-6681 ext.16 or [skulp@talbothospice.org](mailto:skulp@talbothospice.org).

## CHILDREN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Thanks to a generous donation from Brett Sause and Atlantic Financial Group, Talbot Hospice will begin a new monthly support group March 12 for children ages 6 to 12 who have lost a parent or loved one. The Saturday morning story hour will be held at the new Cynwood Drive facility in Easton. The sessions are free of charge and open to children who live both in and outside of Talbot County.

According to Talbot Hospice Bereavement Coordinator Shelly Kulp, guidance counselors in the local school systems will help identify children who would benefit from the program, but anyone can make a referral or inquiry. "Literature can be such a powerful tool for reaching children," said Kulp. "We want to develop a program where children can talk about their losses, read books together and engage in book-related activities."

Kulp's vision for this program is that a parent or adult will accompany the child who has experienced a loss. "I would love to create an atmosphere where entire families can do these activities together," Kulp said.

The group will meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, March 12–June 11. The group will take a break in July and August and resume in September. Some of the books that will be used are *Jungle Journey*, *The Invisible String*, *Tear Soup* and *Where Do I Belong?* by local author Rena Cherry Brown.



## GRIEF SUPPORT

### Two 6-week sessions:

Wednesdays: March 16–April 20, 1–3 p.m.  
Tuesdays: April 19–May 24, 5–7 p.m.

## CAREGIVERS SUPPORT

### Thursdays: 1–2:15 p.m.

This ongoing support group for caregivers meets weekly. Caregivers share ideas and find solutions to the challenging issue of caring for a loved one. Confidentiality is highly respected.

## TOGETHER, SILENT NO MORE

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month:

January 13–May 11, 6–7:30 p.m.

Talbot Hospice, together with Mariah's Mission, will be offering an ongoing monthly grief support group for those in the community grieving the loss of a loved one due to substance abuse.

## CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month: March 12–June 11, 10–11 a.m.

Talbot Hospice is beginning a new monthly support group for children ages 6–12 who have lost a parent or loved one. Children and their significant adult will use literature to talk about losses and engage in activities.

## LIFE REVIEW

### 6-week session: Wednesdays: April 13–June 1, 10:30 a.m.–12 noon

Talbot Hospice will host a Life Review Course co-facilitated by George Merrill and Sarah Sadler. Although appropriate to any age, Merrill suggests the life review becomes particularly useful in helping to clarify our understanding of life while integrating and offering perspective in the larger picture of who we are as people. This guided discussion invites participants weekly to consider several topics such as family, the friends and acquaintances who influenced and shaped us, how we view our work history, chosen vocations, achievements, the turning points that changed and altered our path, views of mortality and personal spirituality. The life review process is an educational exercise in deepening our understanding of our own history and the spiritual mysteries that are implied in the common humanity we share.

Merrill is an Episcopal priest, pastoral psychotherapist and former Talbot Hospice Chaplain. He has authored two books on spirituality, and his essays are broadcast twice monthly on Delmarva Public Radio. Sarah Sadler founded Evergreen Cove in 1993 and is a former Talbot Hospice volunteer. Upon moving to Oxford more than 30 years ago, she formed a consulting business focused on team building in small businesses. Prior to that Sadler had a psychotherapy practice in New Orleans.





## VOLUNTEER TRAINING

The spring session of volunteer training has been scheduled on the following dates and times:

**March 14 and 17, 9 a.m.—4 p.m.**

Topics covered include:

- Hospice purpose & philosophy
- Admission criteria
- Volunteer roles
- HIPPA & confidentiality
- Attitudes and fears
- Death & dying
- Spirituality
- Listening skills and boundaries
- Family dynamics
- Cultural diversity
- Grief
- Hands on training, standard precautions

Volunteer training is offered two times per year, once in the spring and again in the fall.

For more information, please visit our website at [talbothospice.org](http://talbothospice.org) or contact Lori Lantz, Director of Volunteer Services at 410-822-6681 or [llantz@talbothospice.org](mailto:llantz@talbothospice.org).

For Bob Shafer of Easton and Washington, DC, becoming acquainted with Talbot Hospice while caring for his beloved wife Sammy in her last days of her life, was the most important resource he could have found. Bob quickly realized that he could have benefited from Hospice services years earlier when his wife required his full-time care for an acute neurodegenerative disease.

Adrian Claire “Sammy” Shafer, age 82, passed away at Talbot Hospice House the day before Thanksgiving 2015. Bob had engaged Talbot Hospice 20 days before Sammy’s death, after several hospitalizations and ER visits. She was in Talbot Hospice House for five days before her death.

Bob commented to Lisa May, LCSW-C, CT, Family Services Coordinator, right before his wife’s death, “I can’t imagine dealing with all of this without Talbot Hospice—your entire organization is an angel of mercy.”

After exhausting every doctor and private brain clinic, in the Baltimore, DC, and Philadelphia metro areas, Bob and Sammy lost their battle with Alzheimer’s. Bob comments, “Her mind and persona were gone...We had decided that there would be no heroic measures to keep her alive when her time had come.”

As Bob reflects on Sammy’s final days at Hospice House, he recalls the beautiful room “fit for a queen” where she stayed with a beautiful view out the window. He adds, “It was the right option for us. I am sorrowfully at peace with our end-of-life experience.”

In addition to Talbot Hospice House, Bob engaged an end-of-life doula, a trained hospice volunteer who helps someone who is actively dying. The doula is a member of the hospice team who provides emotional support and a calming presence, and helps the family understand the physical changes associated with dying. There are currently 20 active specially-trained doulas with Talbot Hospice. Doulas care for patients in their homes, in nursing facilities, as well as at Hospice House, serving three to six hour shifts.

Phyllis Peddicord, one of Talbot Hospice’s five original doulas, was one of the several doulas who were assigned to Sammy Shafer. Phyllis was with Sammy at her moment of death and comments, “Doulas are specially trained to

# Finding Hospice at the Right Time in Our Life Journey

by Amy Steward



Photo courtesy of Wendy Cadell, whose grandmother, Rebecca McCarty Cole, recently used Talbot Hospice Services.

help with the moment of death. We are extra hands and eyes for the patient. Families appreciate what we can offer throughout the dying process. It is a sacred moment helping someone pass from one realm to another. I feel privileged to be with the family and the patient at this time.”

According to Bob, one of the most important benefits of hospice are the caregivers, which allow family members to spend more quality time with their loved one. He didn’t have any respite over the two years that he cared for Sammy full-time. He adds, “I was on fumes for a long time and it affected the quality of the final days with my wife.”

“There is not a handbook for this journey. It would have helped me if I had found Hospice earlier. “

“I am telling all my friends to make acquaintance with their local hospice organization now before they need it—to go to their events and get to know them. It is a tremendous resource for understanding the wisdom of and navigating end-of-life resources.”

When someone has an illness that a doctor thinks may limit their length of life to six months, the patient may choose the Medicare Hospice Benefit. Research shows that comfort care measures consistently add greater quality of life compared to people with the same diagnosis who don’t engage Hospice. Perhaps most valuable, death can happen without the fear of pain and with comfort and peace when the array of services Hospice provides are in place before symptoms and needs become an overwhelming crisis.

The next steps for Bob are to go through the grieving process for his wife and to hold her remembrance services. Her ashes are to be spread atop Aspen Mountain in Colorado where she lived many years of her happy and active life as an avid skier, an accomplished horsewoman, and a wily tennis doubles competitor. He hopes to become a Talbot Hospice volunteer in the future as a way to repay the support that was given to him and to his wife and to help others going through the process of losing a loved one.

Bob concludes, “I have promised myself to contribute to humankind in this way as a tribute to Sammy and the extraordinary person she was.”





# Never Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen! by Amy Steward

When Cammy Passarella of Oxford starts her volunteer shift as cook at Talbot Hospice, the first thing she does is to put spices in water on the stove to make Hospice House take on the aromas of home. Cammy, who has been a volunteer with Talbot Hospice since 2004, is one of 20 cooks who cook and prepare food for breakfast and dinner for hospice patients and their families 365 days a year.

Cammy recalls, "My husband's mother was in hospice at the end of her life. I was impressed with the dignity they allowed her in hospice and decided I wanted to give back in some way. After I retired from a career in education, I moved to the Eastern Shore and began volunteering."

Hospice volunteers and staff shop for food, suggest recipes for meals, and cook the meals at Hospice House. Sometimes a patient's family will ask for a specific recipe to be made and sometimes, volunteers bring their own recipes. Hospice purchases the ingredients needed for each recipe and everything is there in the Hospice pantry when cooks arrive. For Cammy, it means coming once a month and preparing a meal. She comments, "I enjoy cooking. It's my way of touching the lives of patients here."

Cammy and her husband have even cooked Christmas breakfast for hospice patients and taken part in special celebration meals when asked. She adds, "When we know there is a special occasion for a patient, we try and do something special like a favorite dinner or a birthday party. Although it is the end of their life, the focus is on the celebration of their lives and what they have done."

She recalls a Christmas when a family gathered around a young woman who was a hospice patient, sharing gifts and laughter in her final days or a 90th birthday party where everyone, including the patient wore paper crowns.

Talbot Hospice is looking for more volunteers to come cook at Hospice House, particularly bakers who may be able to come in a few hours a week to bake fresh cookies and treats to share with visitors and families. Lori Lantz, Director of Volunteer Services, states, "If you make a mean meatloaf or people rave about your omelets or brownies, why not donate your services to us? We make the process painless and you can choose when and how long you volunteer."



Pictured is Cammy Passarella of Oxford during her volunteer shift as a cook at Talbot Hospice. Cammy, who has been a volunteer with Talbot Hospice since 2004, is one of 20 cooks who cook and prepare food for hospice patients and their families 365 days a year.

Talbot Hospice has 350 volunteers doing a variety of jobs in the areas of administration, bereavement, family services in the home, communications, fundraising, Hospice House, gardening, special events, cooking, flower arranging, sewing, arts and crafts, doulas, and veteran recognition.

From its beginnings, Hospice has been a grass-roots, volunteer initiative. Talbot Hospice has always adhered to the Medicare mandate to have 5 percent of all jobs involving patient care be done by volunteers – a practice that continues to this day.

Lori comments, "A lot of our volunteers have had family and friends who received the benefits of hospice in their lives and have been affected and moved by that experience and want to make the world a better place. As we are growing and adding more services to our program, we have a need for new jobs to be filled by volunteers, especially cooks and greeters in our newly expanded Hospice House."

Lori points out that the qualities of a hospice volunteer are to have a servant's heart, to be compassionate, nurturing, and grateful and to meet people where they are in the dying process. Many of the volunteers at Talbot Hospice are entrenched in the community, volunteering for a number of other organizations.

Talbot Hospice takes volunteers of all ages and provides an intensive 16-hour training twice a year for those working with patients or families. The training addresses a variety of end-of-life issues, including bereavement, the dying process, hands-on patient care and

communication skills. Additional topics covered are hospice philosophy, attitudes and fears about death, spirituality, listening skills, setting boundaries, family dynamics, and cultural diversity. The organization also provides ongoing trainings for its volunteers throughout each year depending on the volunteer job.

Lori adds, "We try and match the best of our volunteer talent with our patient needs." Cammy states, "The staff at Talbot Hospice makes sure each patient feels special. I admire what they do, and I feel good when I leave."

**Talbot Hospice is offering an upcoming Volunteer Training on March 14 and 17, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For further information, contact Lori Lantz at 410-822-6681.**

# Volunteer Wassail Party



Above:  
Barbara McCaughey  
Janet Granger



Above:  
Roxie Palmer  
Barbara Lundkvist  
Susan Blankner



Right:  
Brenda Stone  
Lori Lantz  
Phyllis Peddicord



## TALBOT HOSPICE MEMORIAL Walk

**Saturday, April 23, 2016  
8 a.m.**

Oxford Community Center  
Adults \$25 | Students \$10  
Children 12 & Under Free

Register at  
[talbothospice.org/events](http://talbothospice.org/events)





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## Wish List

Thank you for considering making a donation to cover the cost of the following item(s):

**Seven small refrigerators for patient rooms in Hospice House at a cost of \$125 each.**

Donations can be made online (please mention “refrigerator” in the comments section), or checks can be made payable to Talbot Hospice and mailed to 586 Cynwood Drive, Easton, MD 21601.