

Compassionate Connections



REFLECTIONS ON HOSPICE SUPPORT FOR TWO BRAVE HUSBANDS

- Harriet Downes Slaughter

Struggling through the role of being a caregiver for 27 years to two amazing husbands diagnosed with cancer was not easy. But I truly think I am a lucky girl to have had those special men in my life. Talbot Hospice was an integral support system to me during those sad and often confusing times. Navigating a cancer diagnosis was all new to me, and I needed their caring support.

My first husband, and the father of my two wonderful children, Bob Downes, was diagnosed with melanoma about four years after we were married in 1973. We spent 13 years seeking treatment for him and traveled from Baltimore to New York City to Canada trying to prolong his young life. Bob was only 45 years old when he passed away and left me alone with two sad children, Allison age 14 and Bobby age 9. Life still gave us many wonderful times during those 13 years where our family was fortunate to make great memories, but there always seemed to be a dark cloud over our heads...cancer.

Fortunately, Talbot Hospice had entered our life during the final two months or so of Bob's life. My husband remained at home as there was no Hospice House back then. We had the services of a visiting Hospice nurse about every two or three days and she took his vital signs, adjusted medicines, provided advice, helped change bandages, and answered any questions we had. The nurse and I collaborated on how to best cover the many seeping wounds on his back, and I came up with the plan to use sanitary pads because of how absorbent they were. The nurse thought that



Harriett, Bob, Allison and Bobby

was a great idea and passed that innovation along to other nurses and patients. We worked as a team to care for my husband.

A retired doctor who volunteered for Hospice was a Godsend to our family then. He and my husband hit it off

immediately and discovered they

had so much in common to talk about, from hunting and fishing to restoring cars. Bob was weak and pretty much bedridden at that point, but he made a big effort to get himself up and ready for company every time the Hospice doctor was scheduled to visit. We were so lucky to have his friendship and support. As the end of Bob's life drew near, the doctor came to visit and check on us every day and stayed for several hours each time...much more time than was scheduled. During the final hours, I so appreciated having the doctor there for all of us, and especially for me as there were hard decisions to be made. I could not have managed without the Hospice doctor's kind support and the caring and compassionate support of all the Hospice staff.

Talbot Hospice was there for me again when my second husband, Richard Slaughter, was diagnosed with prostate cancer about nine years into our 24-year marriage, which was in 1993.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Emily Dickinson once wrote:

"Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all"

Just as Emily Dickinson's personal experience caused her to write about "hope" in a way we may not have otherwise thought about—as a bird residing in our soul that sings relentlessly—I, too, have a new appreciation for Hope as a result of the COVID pandemic experience.

As we begin to emerge from our COVID cocoon and venture out more in an attempt to return to some sense of normalcy, I am hopeful that we will not abandon the positives witnessed during the pandemic. Like many of you, I saw people supporting one another in new ways. We checked on neighbors that we might not have known particularly well. We found new ways to be together, learn together, play together, worship together and celebrate special moments together.

It warmed my heart to see families taking walks together, riding bikes, and tackling home projects that for one reason or another never made it to the top of the to-do list prior to COVID. As a result, for many of us, we have a much deeper appreciation for our community and the people in our lives, and I hope our appreciation only grows stronger.

Appreciating those currently in our lives is just as important as celebrating those from our past whose courage and dreams paved the way for us today. Jonas Salk, the developer of the polio vaccine said, "Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality."

Forty years ago, our founder, Dr. Eugene Guthrie hoped and dreamed for hospice care to be available to any Talbot County resident who needed it. Most importantly, he had the courage to make it a reality. Throughout 2021, we are honored and excited to be celebrating Talbot Hospice's 40th anniversary.

We will be hosting several events to honor our past and build upon our legacy for a better and more hopeful tomorrow. A tomorrow that ensures we continue to fulfill Dr. Guthrie's hopes and dreams for Talbot Hospice to be the trusted provider of care for anyone facing serious illness and end-of-life needs.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for sharing in our dream to serve our community. Thank you for embracing the hope of patients and families to live to the end with dignity and in comfort.

Christopher Chekouras, Executive Director

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Thanks to Johns Hopkins and their many drug trials and cutting-edge treatments, my husband was fortunate to live a fairly normal life for almost 14 years. Richard was adamant about being involved with the Cancer Center in Easton and often spoke to other men about his experiences and drug results. He wanted to do all that he could to increase the chances of his stepson, nephew, other family members and friends to benefit from prostate cancer research.

Hospice services came into our life about ten days before Richard passed away. He wanted to remain at home and Hospice was a big help in making that happen by ordering the hospital bed, arranging for the portable commode, scheduling a visiting nurse, delivering other necessary supplies, and assuring my husband not to worry because he was in good hands. The amazing nurse assigned to our family explained how Hospice would fit into our life and was so reassuring, caring and professional.

As the primary caregiver 24/7, I felt relieved knowing that Hospice was only a phone call away no matter what time of day or night.

When Richard's condition changed and the drugs needed to be altered, the Hospice nurse was right there to make the necessary adjustments in order to keep my husband comfortable and that was so



Harriett and Richard with daughter, Allison, and their grandchildren.

comforting and assuring to me. The Hospice staff members were truly a shoulder to lean on. Minutes after Richard passed away and the phone call was made to Hospice, I didn't have to make any other decisions about calling the funeral home or other end of life final choices. Through previous conversations, Hospice had it all in place and my family could just rely on each other during our sad time of grief. Once again, I was so grateful to have the caring and compassionate services of the Talbot Hospice staff.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland is so fortunate to have Hospice care nearby. My family and I could not have provided our best loving care to two amazing men without the help and support of Talbot Hospice.

Would you be interested in sharing your Talbot Hospice Story? If so, please reach out to Mia Cranford at mcranford@talbothospice.org.

40TH ANNIVERSARY BANNERS

Thank you to everyone who sponsored a banner this Spring to honor a loved one and help us celebrate our 40th anniversary! We had an overwhelming response and have decided to print another 30 banners that will be displayed in downtown Easton in October. Each banner is \$150. Banner reservations and images are due by August 31st, if they don't sell out sooner. You can reserve your banner at www.talbothospice.org and contact Laura Richeson at lricheson@talbothospice.org with questions.



2021 HOSPICE CUP

TALBOT HOSPICE HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS ONE OF ONLY THREE HOSPICES TO PARTICIPATE IN HOSPICE CUP 2021 ON SEPTEMBER 18TH!

Hospice Cup is America's largest charity regatta in numbers and dollars, and began in 1981 as an informal race among a small group of people interested in sailing and hospice care. Since then, the race has evolved into Hospice Cup, Inc - a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds for and awareness of hospice care in our region.



Based out of Annapolis, MD, they host an annual sailing regatta each September to raise funds and awareness of participating local non-profit hospices. This year Hospice Cup celebrates 40 years of raising sails, funds, and awareness for hospice care. Participating hospices use funds raised through Hospice Cup to continue to offer quality end-of-life care to patients, their families, and friends.

How can you help? Register to race or become a sponsor!

Talbot Hospice receives a third of all race registration fees and one third of all overall Hospice Cup Sponsorships. In addition, Talbot Hospice receives 100% of sponsorship dollars from our local partners. Hospice Cup offers generous sponsorship packages that offer businesses exposure on both sides of the Bay Bridge. Want to learn more? Visit www.talbothospice.org/events/hospice-cup or contact Mia Cranford at mcranford@talbothospice.org.

Thank you to our sponsors who have already stepped up! There is still plenty of time to join us.



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FESTIVAL OF TREES UPDATE

Tree Sponsors and Decorators Needed!

Mark your calendars for the 36th annual Festival of Trees to include beautifully decorated Christmas trees on display and for sale in the Gold Room of Easton's Tidewater Inn over Thanksgiving weekend, November 27-30. All funds raised by the festival go to Talbot Hospice to support their mission of offering compassionate care to people facing an end-of-life illness, loss and grief.

Attending a recent meeting to discuss large tree sponsors and decorators were co-chairmen of large trees Midge Menzies (left) and Brenda Forbes-Butler and also Maire McArdle, who is in charge of decorators for the large trees.

There will be 50 large trees available for business and individual sponsors to purchase, ranging in size from five feet to nine feet tall. At the close of the festival, all trees will be delivered to the local destination indicated by the sponsors. Volunteer decorators are also needed to create beautiful Christmas trees using this year's theme of "A Winter Wonderland." Consider helping with this amazing cause. For more information, visit festival-of-trees.org or call 410-819-3378.



WELCOME BACK VOLUNTEERS!

At long last, we were finally able to welcome our volunteers back in June!

As COVID-19 restrictions loosened, we phased-in the return of our volunteers to all areas of our operations. You can now find our volunteers supporting our patients and families, greeting visitors at the front desk, helping out with community events and supporting our day-to-day administrative operations.

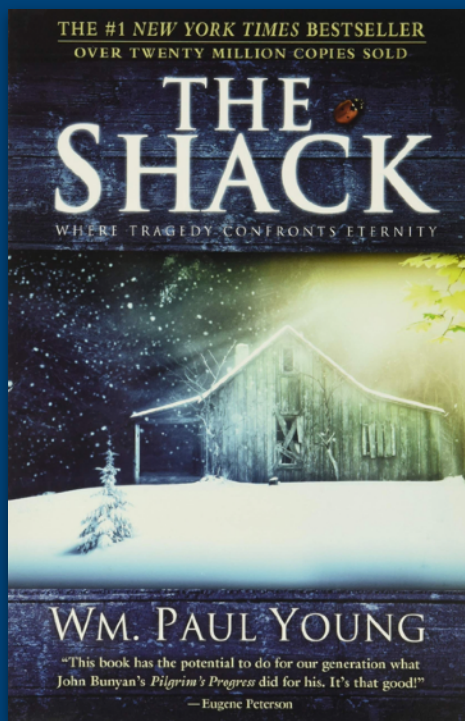
Perhaps the most exciting part of welcoming back volunteers is the resumption of our Pathways program, which is 100% staffed by volunteers. Pathways volunteers provide companionship as well as practical, emotional, social, spiritual and bereavement support for participants wherever they call home. They also support caregivers by providing all-important respite so they can have time for themselves to rest and restore. We were able to continue checking-in our Pathways participants during the pandemic, but being able to reconnect in person has been a joy.

We are also looking forward to welcoming new volunteers and for the first time will be offering a virtual training in late August. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in becoming a Talbot Hospice volunteer, please let me know. There is a job for everyone!

- Megan Ryan, Volunteer & Pathways Coordinator
mryan@talbothospice.org



Volunteers got right back to work and got their hands dirty planting an herb garden at Hospice House that Chef Laura uses to prepare meals.



Save the Date!

Please SAVE THE DATE for October 28th at the Avalon Theatre!

We will be hosting Paul Young, author of the *The Shack* - the #1 New York Times Bestseller that was also adapted into the film starring Octavia Spencer.

Paul will be discussing the book and how he wrote it as a metaphor for grief and the "the house we build out of our own pain."

The event is free and open to the public, but tickets must be reserved. There will also be a ticketed VIP meet & greet at the Bullitt House afterward. Visit www.talbothospice.org for more info!

GRIEF CAMP RETURNS IN AUGUST



Following its successful first year in 2019, Talbot Kids Grief Camp returns this August after a year off due to COVID-19.

Grief Camp is open to any child ages 5-17 on the Mid-Shore who has experienced the loss of someone close to them, regardless of whether their loved one was served by Talbot Hospice. Children attend for no charge thanks to the generous support of our donors.

While children grieve differently than adults, they also need an outlet for their grief just as adults do. They

express themselves through play and support, so camp is the perfect support of work and fun. Grief camp is led by Talbot Hospice's Bereavement Team and other professionals who create a safe and supportive space for children to connect to others who experience the loss of a loved one.



2021 Talbot Kids Grief Camp will be held on August 20 & 21st at the Quaker Friends Meeting house in Easton. Visit www.talbothospice.org for more information and registration.

THANK YOU NURSES AND CNAS!

This spring we honored the dedication of our nurses and CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants) who are on the front lines caring for our hospice and palliative care patients throughout the community. THANK YOU for all you do!



WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome Dina Daly, Cassandra Guy, Rodanthe Hanrahan, Rev. James Nash and Debbie Walsworth to our Board of Directors!

Dina Daly has recently become the Executive Director of B.A.A.M., Inc, a non-profit organization that serves African American boys in the Easton area. She and her husband founded B.A.A.M., as well as a scholarship program for African American males attending a four-year college. Dina has a Bachelor's degree from Suffolk University and her Masters in Social Work from the University of Maryland. Prior to accepting her current position, Dina was the Director of the Caroline County Department of Social Services.

Cassandra (Cassie Guy) has worked at Shore United bank for the past 25 years. She is currently a Vice President and compliance officer. She has a BA in Business Administration from University of Mary Washington. She volunteers in local schools with the "Teach Children to Save" initiative, at the His Hope Haven homeless shelter and at Saints Peter and Paul.

Rodanthe Hanrahan enjoyed a career in energy development in the U.S. and China with the AES Corporation. She has a BS in Energy Studies from Brown University and a MBA from Georgetown University. She is an active volunteer in the community, having served many organizations, including The Country School, YMCA of the Chesapeake, Women and Girls Fund and currently serves on the Academy Art Museum board.

The Very Reverend James Nash, V.F. is currently the pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Easton. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from U. of Delaware and a Masters in Divinity from St. Mary's Seminary. He also serves as part-time Catholic Chaplin at Nemours Hospital for Children in Wilmington. Prior to joining the priesthood, Father Nash worked in the finance industry.

Debbie Walsworth joins the board as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee. Debbie is the Managing Partner of the BSC Group - Certified Public Accountants. She is a graduate of Wilmington University and has her Master's Degree in Taxation from the University of Baltimore. In addition to being a CPA, she is also a Certified Pension Consultant (CPC) and a Certified Financial Planner (CFP). She has been with BSC Group and its predecessors for over 30 years. She works with a diverse group of clients that include individuals, businesses, estates, and trusts. Debbie has volunteered with many boards and is currently a community member of Talbot Hospice, a member of Talbot County Economic Development Commission, and the immediate Past-Chair of the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce.



*New Board Members: Cassandra Guy, Deborah Walsworth, Dina Daly and Rodanthe Hanrahan.
Not pictured: Father James Nash*



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Thank you,
Dr. Kelly O'Donnell, for supporting our efforts to connect with our community and educate the Mid-Shore about the many ways our compassionate services and support are available long before the very end of life.

