

Compassionate Connections

WELCOME CHRIS CHEKOURAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In August, we were thrilled to welcome Chris Chekouras as our new Executive Director. Chris joins us after serving as the Interim President and Chief Executive Officer of Saint Agnes Healthcare in Baltimore.

Assuming the top leadership role at Talbot Hospice represents a new personal and professional chapter for Chekouras as he “retires” from a three-decade-long career in healthcare management and administration and transitions into hospice and palliative care.

“The opportunity to join the Talbot Hospice team is in many ways the perfect opportunity, at the perfect time in my life,” shared Chris. “It is an opportunity to combine my passion for serving the community and leading an organization dedicated to caring for some of the most vulnerable members of our community in the final stages of their life. It is a great honor to serve as Executive Director, and I look forward to sharing my experience and continuing my learning.”

After a few months on the job, we wanted to check-in with Chris to see how he was settling in and getting to know Talbot Hospice and our community. Excerpts from our conversation are below:

Q: After working with Talbot Hospice for a few months, have any of your initial perceptions changed?

CC: When I was introduced to Talbot Hospice, I thought I understood the kind of work that’s done by our team and the amount of support we receive from our Board, volunteers and

community, but in just a short amount of time that appreciation has deepened and strengthened.

Through the interview and onboarding process I knew it was here, but it’s truly different to experience how people and the community are committed to what we do. And when you think about it, it’s in incredible privilege to do what we do - caring for people at the end of their life.



Q: Can you tell us about your first personal experience with Hospice?

My grandmother, who was 96 when she passed away, made the decision that it was time for her to go. As a family, we brought in hospice initially to help her, but what we didn’t realize was they were caring for our entire family during her last weeks. Hospice helped us to prepare spiritually and psychologically for the grieving process and also come to peace with her decision to let go.

Q: How can we communicate to our community that Talbot Hospice and its services are for so much more than an individual’s final days?

CC: We need to identify ways to tell our story more often and in different ways and work with our patients and their families to tell their unique Talbot Hospice story. They can be our best ambassadors. The more we are out there in the community talking about hospice care, the more we can dispel myths. So many people still hear the word “hospice” and think of the Grim Reaper...

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and that's not what it's about. So many people can benefit from hospice sooner on their journey.

We can also work with the medical community and do a better job of educating them about how hospice and palliative care can enhance patient care. We can help prepare them for those sometimes difficult end-of-life conversation with patients and their families, and help them understand that working with hospice and palliative care is not giving up and it's OK to talk about it.

My hope is that, like we've seen recently with mental health, we will start talking about the end-of-life more. If we do the work to dispel myths about hospice and palliative care, we will be able to connect with patients and families sooner on their journey to give them more fulfilling times and memories together.

Q: What traits do you admire in Talbot Hospice's team of caregivers?

CC: Compassion, kindness, selflessness and their incredible desire to give and comfort people. It is a very special person that is called to this work, and while they are doing what they are trained to do and what they love to do, they don't always realize the incredible impact they have on our patients and families. I am in awe of what they do.

Q: How does Talbot Hospice chart its path forward amidst the COVID-19 pandemic? What does hospice care look like now?

CC: We can still be hands-on, but our hands are now covered with a glove and our faces behind a mask. The compassion that we show and the depth of care we provide is still there, but it might look and feel a little different.

For us and everyone in healthcare, we're all still finding our way in how we continue to deliver the compassionate and personalized care people deserve and need in a time of continued uncertainty. No one has all of the answers to that yet. We need to be prepared to evolve and provide care and service to ensure that we are still committed to our mission and how we deliver that care.



Chris, his wife, Jennifer, his daughter, Kyra and their two dogs, Kali and Kamari participate in the Virtual Memorial Walk.

3 MILLION STEPS FOR HOSPICE!

THANK YOU to the 305 individuals who walked or ran 3,066,961 steps for Talbot Hospice during our Virtual Memorial Walk over September 25th - 27th! Another THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who helped make it possible!

"To say we are overwhelmed would be an understatement," said Emilie Joshi, Memorial Walk Co-Chair. "As we were planning for a virtual event, we thought it would be meaningful to challenge our community to walk or run one million steps of love for Talbot Hospice. We never anticipated that our community would triple our original step goal!"

Talbot Hospice decided to transition to a virtual event this Spring when the arrival of COVID-19 made it impossible to host the event as part of Oxford Day. Traditional elements of the event, such as the Dove Release, sponsored by Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, and the invocation were filmed in advance and shared with the community on social media.

There were also new additions to the virtual event, including the one million step challenge, a race bib to allow participants to write the name of the individual(s) they were honoring, and a new social media component where walkers and runners shared photos from their walk or run.

Participants walked in small groups, with family and friends, or on their own. Many shared their reflections and photos on social media and in the online step tracking group.



"The Memorial Walk has always been a special time for individuals and the community to come together to remember and honor their loved ones," continued Joshi. "We were proud that we were able to continue to provide that experience as well

as welcome out-of-town family and friends to join us for the first time. Even though we were apart, we were still connected throughout the weekend."

Steps were logged from across the Mid-Shore and from as far away as Daytona, Florida, Denver, Colorado and San Francisco, California. A large count was also contributed by the entire Bucknell University Tennis Team!

While raising awareness locally and across the Country, the Virtual Memorial Walk also raised \$27,030 for Talbot Hospice's four key programs: Hospice, Palliative Care, Pathways and Bereavement Services.

As the team begins plans for the 2021 Memorial Walk, they intend to raise the step goal, and also keep a virtual option available for the event, if it is able to return to its traditional format.

You can view more photos from the event on our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/talbothospice.

THANK YOU to our 2020 Virtual Memorial Walk Sponsors & Supporters!

Craig's Drug Store | Avon Dixon Insurance | Shore United Bank | Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home | Bay Imprint Economy Tree Service | Hertrich of Easton | The Easton Group at Morgan Stanley | S&K Roofing | Easton Elks Lodge | Shore Sportsman



Festival of Trees 2020



Midge Menzies and Leslie Ware (top) Photo courtesy of Ted Mueller. Menzies and Ware with Dr. Eugene Guthrie (right)

Founding Festival of Trees Chairs, Midge Menzies and Leslie Ware, have teamed up again to lead the event in its 35th year. Without a doubt, it will be a year unlike any other! Please read below for more details about this year's socially-distant events in support of the patients and families of Talbot Hospice.

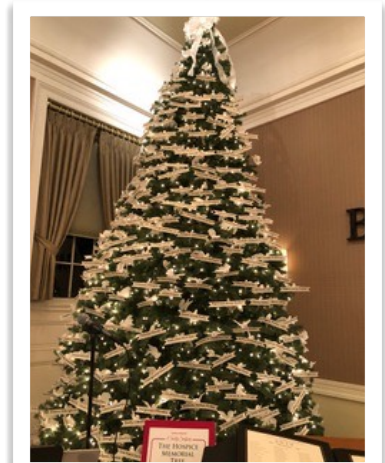


Festival of Trees is hosted by Friends of Hospice, founded in 1984 by Leslie Ware and Midge Menzies. It is a separate non-profit organization created specifically to raise money for Talbot Hospice. We are so grateful for their continued support as we all navigate COVID 19 together.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH, 10AM - 5:00PM * FREE ADMISSION
TENTED BRICK VENUE BEHIND THE TIDEWATER INN * PLEASE USE MILL STREET ENTRANCE

Hospice Memorial Tree

Friends of Hospice invites our community to view this year's Hospice Memorial Tree. **All families who have lost loved ones in 2020 are invited to place a family member's name on a dove that embellishes the tree.** This year's Hospice Tree is sponsored by Anne-Lise Fink.



Decorated Table Top Trees for Sale

36 table top trees ranging in size from 12" to 3 feet tall, inspired by the All American Christmas theme and decorated by members of our community will be available for sale. Proceeds will benefit Talbot Hospice.

The Red, the White, the Blue: A Celebration of an American Christmas



Candy Cane Scarves

To kick-off the Holiday Season, red & white candy cane scarves will be for sale for \$5.00 each on November 28th. Proceeds to benefit Talbot Hospice.



Poinsettia Sale

In the past, members of the community were able to purchase a poinsettia in memory of a loved one that would be part of a beautiful Poinsettia Tree in the Gold Room of the Tidewater Inn. The name of the loved one was included on the Memory Scroll next to the tree. Even though we will not be together in the Gold Room, our community may still purchase a poinsettia to honor a loved one, and their name will be published in the Star Democrat on November 25th. Each poinsettia is \$25 and may be picked up at Garden Treasures in Easton on December 2nd. Plants not picked-up will be shared with current hospice patients. You may purchase your poinsettia and learn more at www.festival-of-trees.org. Orders are due by November 13th.

Virtual Friends of Hospice Santa 5K Run!

DECEMBER 11TH & 12TH

Runners, walkers, families and friends can participate from anywhere over the weekend, and we encourage them to dress in their best Santa hat or costume. We hope to spread cheer this year as the young at heart witness Santas in action for Talbot Hospice.

Registration is \$35/person and includes a race t-shirt. Alicia and Karli will have pick-up locations available the week of the event. Please contact Alisha at tamars98@gmail.com or call at 443-786-0847. Stay tuned for more details on the Festival of Trees website at www.festival-of-trees.org.



Santa Run Chairs,
Alisha & Karli Saulsbury

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH!



Hospice and palliative care programs across the Country are reaching out to raise awareness about the benefits of hospice and palliative care. This year’s national theme is, “The Faces of Caring” to highlight the work of every hospice professional who has continued to provide comfort and compassion to patients and their families amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospice is not a place, but high-quality care that enables patients and families to focus on living as fully as possible despite a life-limiting illness. We are proud to join with our colleagues to raise awareness across the Country of the benefits of hospice and palliative care. Look for more next month!

A NEW WAY TO SAY THANK YOU

In a normal year, fall is the time we gather together to thank members of the Guthrie Society for their generous support of Talbot Hospice. COVID-19 forced us to cancel our traditional party, so we asked for help from some local businesses to help us say a proper “THANK YOU” in the form of the “Guthrie Box” that included everything needed for a fun cocktail hour at home.

Our fabulous team of volunteers was on hand to help us assemble the boxes at the Oxford Community Center and then deliver them to the homes of our Guthrie Society members.

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals for helping us say “thank you”: Morgan Stanley, Janet Larson of Benson & Mangold Real Estate and Lisa’s Cake Pops, Amanda David of Edward Jones and Craft Cooking Company, Teddy Bear Fresh and Hair O’ the Dog Wine and Spirits.



WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



New Board Members: Dr. Michael Fisher and Peter Gallagher

Talbot Hospice is pleased to welcome Dr. Michael Fisher and Peter Gallagher to its Board of Directors!

Dr. Fisher is a retired gastroenterologist who served the Eastern Shore in private practice, as an Attending Physician at the Easton Memorial Hospital and University of Maryland Shore Medical Group and as the Medical Director of Eastern Shore Endoscopy. He and his wife Karen, are Hospice volunteers and supporters.

Peter and his wife, Caroline Boutte, are faithful Talbot Hospice supporters. Gallagher is a business executive and civic leader and is currently a director of Arlington Asset Investment Corporation.

DR. STEPHEN CARNEY - OUR FIRST PRESIDENT

The Talbot Hospice Family is saying farewell and thank you to Dr. Stephen Carney, who passed away over the summer. Dr. Carney was instrumental in the establishment of Talbot Hospice and served as the very first Board President. He was a steadfast supporter and advocate for Talbot Hospice and the patients and families we serve. We are forever grateful for the time and gifts he shared with us. He will be greatly missed.



From his obituary: Dr. Carney's dedication and contributions to the Eastern Shore medical community were legendary. He helped grow Memorial Hospital, now UM Shore Medical Center, into one of the most respected healthcare facilities on the Shore and served as its Chief of Staff. His practice developed Easton's first kidney dialysis center. He was also instrumental in founding the Shore Regional Cancer Center in 1990, serving as its first medical director. Most notably, he served a patient base of countless families and individuals in Talbot and Dorchester Counties and beyond, often covering multiple generations and many of the Shore's backroads, regularly making house calls and often accepting seafood, waterfowl and assorted crafts in return for his services.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We are proud to introduce you to two of our new Talbot Hospice Caregivers!



Theresa Ledford, CNA - Hospice House

Before joining Talbot Hospice, Theresa was a Dental Assistant for 37 years before going back to school for her CNA at Chesapeake College. She was drawn to working in hospice care after her mother-in-law's experience with hospice in Arkansas. "I was totally amazed at the care and compassion shown not only to her, but to the whole family, and I wanted to be able to help take care of those in need. I wish the community knew how much those who work at Hospice really care for their patients and their families."



Denise Longo-Schoeberlein, CRNP, MSN - Palliative Care

Denise joined Talbot Hospice after retiring from a 37-year career with Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore where she worked in oncology, surgery and palliative medicine. She also recently completed a Masters Degree in creative writing! Denise supports patients and caregivers as they navigate their new normal with chronic illness. "I am passionate about education and helping patients and families better understand their medications, treatments and symptom burden to maximize their quality of life. I also strive to empower patients and families to make their own choices for their care after they have a clear understanding of their illness. I believe that palliative care should be initiated early in complex disease diagnosis to help patients and families better manage their symptoms and optimize their quality of life

while always being mindful of their goals of care. Hospice is often under-utilized in our health care system. The research has demonstrated that patients have improved quality of life and decreased symptom burden with earlier involvement by a hospice support multidisciplinary team.



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"Know Us Before You Need
Us Campaign" kicks-off in
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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.

