

# Compassionate Connections

## TALBOT HOSPICE CELEBRATES 40 YEARS 1981- 2021

Cheers to 40 years! Throughout 2021, Talbot Hospice will celebrate four decades of caring for patients, families and loved ones facing life-limiting illness.

We will begin our year-long celebration with socially-distant programming and look forward to bringing the community together for a large gathering later this year as COVID-19 precautions ease.

As we look ahead to our next 40 years, we wanted to share a look back at how far we've come since our humble beginnings as part of the Talbot County Health Department.

**1981** - Hospice concept for Talbot County developed by the Medical Director of the Talbot County Health Department, Dr. Eugene 'Buck' Guthrie, Dr. Stephen Carney, and Kathleen Foster, RN, MS. Talbot Hospice Foundation, Inc. (THF) was incorporated in the State of Maryland as a non-profit organization on May 11, 1981. Volunteer Program initiated by Betts Guthrie and Millie Parrott. In its first year in business, THF served 20 patients with 24 volunteers.

**1983** - Bereavement Program developed by Pam Jennings, MS

**1984** - Talbot County Health Department obtains CON (Certificate of Need) for Talbot County. For the following decade, the Health Department would collaborate with THF to provide hospice services

**1986** - Friends of Hospice formed as a volunteer organization to raise funds for THF. They hosted the first Festival of Trees event that was co-chaired by Midge Fuller and Leslie Ware



**1994** - Office moved from the Talbot County Health Department to 216 South Street in Easton

**1996** - Pathways Program developed to meet needs of patients who are not yet ready for hospice care. Shore Health System creates a HomeHealth Department and the Talbot Health Department agrees to transfer CON for hospice care to Shore Health. THF signs coordinating agreement with Shore Health establishing THF as recipient of charitable donations and provider of volunteer, spiritual and bereavement services

**1997** - THF purchased land on Cynwood Drive to build a Hospice House and construction begins

**1998** - Hospice House opens with six residential guest rooms and administrative offices

**2000** - Lot next to Hospice House purchased by anonymous donor

**2001** - Chapel added to Hospice House

**2008** - Feasibility Study undertaken to determine community support for capital campaign to expand Hospice House

**2009** - Quiet phase of \$5 million capital campaign initiated and then suspended due to Recession

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- 2009** - Guthrie Society created to recognize donors to annual campaign, named after Dr. Eugene "Buck Guthrie, one of TH founders
  
- 2010** - Veteran Recognition program begins
  
- 2011** - Talbot Hospice celebrates 30th Anniversary. Talbot Hospice and Shore Health System undertake a joint exploration of means to unify hospice elements under one organization
  
- 2013** - Ceremonial groundbreaking for Hospice House Expansion - Phase I to install geothermal wells and parking lot
  
- 2014** - Board votes to seek certificate of need (CON) for hospice services in Talbot County, Maryland
  
- 2014** - Phase II of expansion project begins to enlarge Hospice House by 10,000 square feet
  
- 2014** - Talbot Hospice receives first CON granted to hospice in 15 years in the state of Maryland and is approved for licensure as a general hospice. Clinical staff hired October. First patient admitted in November. Shore Health (now part of University of Maryland Medical System) exits hospice business
  
- 2015** - Talbot Hospice becomes Medicare certified and approved for licensure
  
- 2015** - Hospice House opens three more rooms to patients, providing a total of 9 beds in the residence, expanded program space and offices for clinical staff
  
- 2017** - Bereavement Coordinator position expanded to a full-time role in order to address growing community needs
  
- 2018** - Board agrees to open final three guest rooms and initiate Palliative Care Program
  
- 2019** - Palliative Care Program launches
  
- 2020** - Talbot Hospice weathers COVID-19 pandemic and continues to provides services to patients and their families

## VIRTUAL SERIES WITH THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Talbot Hospice is proud to partner with the Greater Maryland Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to present a "Know Us Before You Need Us" virtual series to help our community better understand Alzheimer's and how our hospice and palliative care programs are equipped to support these special patients and their families. Please save the dates and look for more information in your email inbox soon!

Series Dates:

April 21st, May 19th and June 16th



## THANK YOU BAYSIDE QUILTERS!

COVID-19 has not slowed down the Bayside Quilters who have continued to make beautiful quilts to honor the service and sacrifice of our veteran patients.

During this time of limited physical contact, these quilts provide comfort and warmth.

## WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

*We are proud to introduce you to two of our new Talbot Hospice team members.*



### **Laura Monto - Hospice House Chef**

Laura joined Talbot Hospice following a three-decade career in catering and food service management and we are so lucky to have her. She was drawn to Talbot Hospice because she wanted to contribute to caring for people by cooking for them. Her favorite part of her job is when patients and their loved ones enjoy eating something she has prepared. When asked what she wishes our community knew about Talbot Hospice, Laura said, "I wish people knew how sincere and caring the staff at Hospice is, and that it is a beautiful place."

### **Dawn Ruby, RN, BSN - Hospice Home Care Clinical Manager**

Dawn came to Talbot Hospice following nearly five years as a RN in the surgical unit at Shore Regional Health System. "I have always loved being part of end-of-life care. Coming from the hospital setting where we supported Palliative Care and End-of-Life patients, I always knew that when I was ready to leave acute care, it would be for a career in Hospice. I feel that caring for a person and their families in the final days of their life is an honor and such a gift to give." In her short time with Talbot Hospice, Dawn has already come to appreciate the teamwork and collaboration between all disciplines to ensure the patient and their family receive the best care possible and have access to all the resources they need. When asked what she wishes our community knew about hospice, she replied, "I wish the community knew not only do we have end-of-life care, but we also have a palliative care program to help with symptom management and quality of life when faced with an end-stage condition. We are here to help. We can take the burden away from caregivers so they can spend time enjoying the company of their loved one."



# TALBOT HOSPICE PROVIDES GRIEF

The following story, written by Jack Batty, is part of our Know Us Before You Need Us public education campaign. It also appeared in the March 2021 issue of Attraction Magazine thanks to our 2021 Know Us Before You Need Us Sponsor, Dr. Kelly O'Donnell.



ZaVion Spriggs

Kaneka Rodriguez knows what is like to lose a child.

Her son, ZaVion Spriggs, age 14, lost his life to a rare skin disorder called Stevens-Johnson syndrome. During and after his 62-day hospitalization, Kaneka struggled

with grief but received helpful advice and wisdom from social workers. This kind of support is available to Kaneka and anyone in a similar situation through Talbot Hospice – both during the patient's illness and after he or she has passed.

In recalling her pain and grief, Kaneka said, "I had to keep going because of my two daughters, Sa'Mara Spriggs, 17, and La'Mira Spriggs, 14. Sa'Mara is involved in dance, track and cheerleading while La'Mira plays basketball and is an artist. Both attend Cambridge-South Dorchester High School. Kaneka said she also had wisdom and support from their father, Vernon Spriggs.

Lindy Barton, a social worker and Talbot Hospice's bereavement coordinator met Kaneka while she was helping care for Lindy's father, Dick Davidson.

Through their friendship they were able to connect, and some 18 months after losing her son, Kaneka was able to open up and tell the whole story for the first time. Lindy noted that Kaneka had "empathy" skills. "Just six months after losing

her son, Kaneka was taking special care of my dad and that takes a pretty special person."

End of life is a challenging time but in most cases it involves an older person.

What happens if that person is a child? Sadly it does happen. Thousands of children die every year in the U.S., many from terminal illnesses.

***The Children's Pediatric Program at Talbot Hospice offers home-based palliative care for children and their families facing life-limiting illnesses. The program coordinates medical, psychosocial and spiritual support. The program also provides spiritual support for the family after a child dies.***

Jody Gunn, grief and spiritual chaplain at hospice, noted the emotional shock of child loss. "With their whole life ahead of them, it's unthinkable for a child or parents to consider end of life."

"A child in hospice goes against what we expect about end of life," noted Lisa Rizia, home care manager and nurse educator at hospice. She has worked with children and parents who have been in the local pediatric program.

Lisa explained that the hospice team – usually a nurse, social worker, chaplain and sometimes a volunteer – goes to the home of the patient. "We help with the psychosocial and spiritual aspect. Unlike adults in hospice, the parents generally administer the physical care and have the option of continuing curative care."

*Continued Next Page*

# COUNSELING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Lisa continued: “The hospice team starts off visiting the home once or twice a week and steps that up as needed. “We let the parents and the child get to know us and build trust. They know they’re not alone, and can call us day or night.”

Especially with the loss of a child, the bereavement team can be the most help to patients and families. The parents are taking care of the child and the team is taking care of the parents.

There is specialized training for staff says Molly Kirsch, Clinical Director at Talbot Hospice “because caring for children in hospice is very different. They are not just a small version of an adult.”

Additionally, there is local support for families who lose children. The Child Loss Support Group, started 35 years ago, meets monthly and brings together parents who have experienced the death of a child of any age.

The founders of the support group included Rhonda Higginbottom, the late Millie Parrott, and Dr. Rob and Lynn Sanchez. Rob is Talbot Hospice’s medical director and Lynn is a former hospice board member. Rhonda served as the support group’s monthly facilitator for 30 years. Each year the support group conducts a celebration of life ceremony at the Healing Garden, a secluded oasis tucked away near the busy entrance to Easton Club.



*Bench at the Children’s Healing Garden*



*Back Row: Jody Gunn, Linda Barton, Lisa Rizia  
Front Row: Dr. Robert Sanchez, Lynn Sanchez*

According to Lynn Sanchez, the memorial was created in 2000 by the child loss group “as a place to remember, meditate and pray.”

Kaneka Rodriguez, who slept on a cot in her son’s hospital room at Johns Hopkins for 62 days, says you never get over losing a child. But she offers this advice: Remember the good times; don’t have guilt; don’t bottle up your emotions; believe that one day you’ll see your loved one again.

***Talbot Hospice is here for the community to help them through their grief no matter who they are or where their loved ones died.***

Talbot Hospice provides compassionate care, comfort and support for patients and their families and caregivers wherever they call home. Talbot Hospice serves patients facing life-limiting illnesses through hospice and palliative care, as well as its pathways and bereavement programs. Services are available to patients and caregivers regardless of ability to pay.

*For more information, visit [www.talbothospice.org](http://www.talbothospice.org)*

## THANK YOU, FESTIVAL OF TREES FOR 35 YEARS OF SUPPORT



On January 22, 2021, Talbot Hospice gratefully received a check for \$64,206 from the Friends of Hospice from their 35th Annual Festival of Trees Event. Festival of Trees leaders and volunteers overcame the challenges presented by COVID-19 and hosted another successful event to support Talbot Hospice and the patients and families it serves.

*Pictured are Dana McGrath, Midge Menzies, Leslie Ware, Chris Chekouras, Brenda Forbes Butler, Sheila Monahan and Mia Cranford.*

## WYMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION CHALLENGE A SUCCESS!


Last fall, we were fortunate to receive a generous gift from the Wyman Family Foundation to support our pediatric hospice programs. That gift also came with a challenge to friends of the Wyman Family to join the cause and give to Talbot Hospice, too. Funds received in the challenge were directed to where they were needed most for us to continue to care for patients and families regardless of their ability to pay. We completed the challenge shortly after Thanksgiving, and are proud to share that the effort raised \$113,500! These generous contributions make a big difference in helping us close the gap for uncompensated care provided by Talbot Hospice.

## HELP US CELEBRATE 40 YEARS!

Help us celebrate 40 years of compassionate care by purchasing a banner for \$150 in memory of your loved one. A banner with your loved one's picture, which you will be able to have as a beautiful keepsake, will be displayed in the month of May in downtown Easton. There are only a total of 30 banners available for purchase. Thank you for supporting Talbot Hospice!

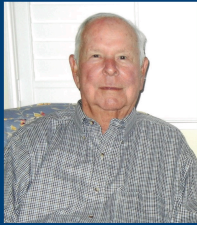
You may order your banner online at [www.talbothospice.org](http://www.talbothospice.org) and send in your picture via email. You may also mail a check with your picture by April 12, 2021 to Talbot Hospice, 586 Cynwood Dr. Easton, MD 21601 Attn: Mia Cranford. Please see below for picture requirements. If you have any questions, contact Laura Richeson at 410.822.6681 or [lrcheson@talbothospice.org](mailto:lrcheson@talbothospice.org)

**High resolution photos are preferred. We can accept images from 72 to 300 dpi. Questions? Give us a call!**



# Talbot Hospice

Know Us Before You Need Us



In memory of  
**Eugene H.  
Guthrie, MD**

## REMEMBERING MILLIE PARROTT



In 1981, Millie Parrott (and Betts Guthrie in the very beginning) founded the volunteer program integral to the initiation of a Medicare-Certified Hospice program in Talbot County. Medicare requires that volunteer hours for patient care be equal to 5% of medical

hospice staff hours. Due to her organizational talents, understanding of practical family needs and her compassion, Millie built a volunteer program that was the envy of hospices throughout the state, greatly surpassing the Medicare requirement.

Millie visited every hospice family to discern and fulfill the unique needs of each patient and family. She had a brilliant ability to match the right volunteers to a family. She understood and conveyed the appropriate boundaries for volunteers to become effective partners in care with families.

Millie recruited and maintained a large number of successful volunteers because she was an excellent listener and an honest, direct communicator. The volunteers admired her greatly and derived great satisfaction from "the job;" some staying for many years - even now continuing. She supported every one of them with her no-nonsense style and her empathy.

Millie was also fun. She hosted the staff Christmas party every year that included all of the Health Department Hospice team. It was an uproarious gag-gift exchange filled with laughter.

Millie was Talbot Hospice's Volunteer Coordinator for more than 25 years. She paved the way for the very successful volunteer program coordinators who followed her - continuing now in the capable hands of Megan Ryan. Millie died on December 8, 2020.

- Liz Freedlander

*Some people meet the person who changes their life forever in their formative years, but I met mine in my forties in Millie Parrott. Like the very best mentors and teachers, she saw something in me I didn't and urged me to disregard my fears and give hospice work a try. I began as one of her volunteers, then her assistant and then I took over her job when she retired.*

*I was terrified by the prospect of following in her footsteps. At the time, in Talbot County, if a person needed hospice care, it was "time to call Millie Parrott." It was quite intimidating. I illustrated her retirement card with a drawing of a tiny me being lowered into her gigantic shoes.*

*I worried because I forgot names easily, whereas Millie knew every one of her devoted volunteers' names, strengths and personalities, and she was able to match them with the right family's needs and situation. I was shy and awkward with new people, but when Millie would take me to visit patients and their families, I saw the instant trust we were offered as hospice workers; tight shoulders and anxious voices softened as we listened to their stories and we were able to say, "Yes. We can help." My self-consciousness gradually disappeared.*

*I quickly realized what a lucky student I was to have Millie's confident role-modeling as I grew into work that became not just a job but a passion for me, as it always had been for her.*

*Thank you, Millie, for everything.*

- Wendy VanNest

### SHARE YOUR TALBOT HOSPICE STORY!

*We are always looking for families and loved ones to share their Talbot Hospice stories so we can better educate our community about the programs, services and care we offer. If you would be willing to share your experience, please reach out to Laura Richeson at [lrcheson@talbothospice.org](mailto:lrcheson@talbothospice.org). Thank you!*



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"Know Us Before You Need  
Us Campaign" kicks-off in  
November 2020!*

Talbot Hospice 2020, 2021

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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.









