

Compassionate Connections



MOLLY KIRSCH NAMED NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Talbot Hospice proudly announces Molly Kirsch, BSN, RN as its new Executive Director. While this is a new role for Kirsch, she has more than a decade of leadership experience at Talbot Hospice, most recently serving as the organization's Clinical & Operations Director where she helped shape a values-centric organizational culture built on compassion, accountability, respect and teamwork.

Kirsch assumes the top leadership position following the retirement of Chris Chekouras, who served in the role from 2020 - 2023. Over the past several months, Kirsch and Chekouras have worked closely together to ensure a seamless transition.

"It has been a privilege to serve Talbot Hospice and our community these last three years, and I cannot think of a better and more capable leader than Molly Kirsch to lead and shepherd our organization well into the future," said outgoing Executive Director, Chris Chekouras.

"I am honored to continue my service to Talbot Hospice," said Kirsch. "I was blessed to have Chris as a mentor, and I look forward to building on our mission and developing the talent we have to expand our reach in the community. We are fortunate to be supported by an active and engaged Board of Directors, dedicated volunteers and a philanthropic community that appreciates the need to make our services available to everyone wherever they call home, regardless of their financial circumstances."

When asked about her goals, Kirsch pointed to increasing awareness of the full range of programs and services offered by Talbot Hospice -

programs which would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers and generous donors that are paramount to implementing every aspect of Talbot Hospice's mission.



"I want to learn from the community what they need from us and ensure that we are known not just for hospice care, but for the other care we provide, especially palliative care and our grief support programs. Talbot Hospice isn't about dying, it's about living the life you want to live."

Kirsch joined Talbot Hospice in 2010, first serving as the Director of the Eleanor A. Koons Hospice House where she was responsible for operational oversight and was then promoted to the Clinical & Operations Director overseeing hospice, palliative care, bereavement and volunteer services for in-home and residential patients. Before relocating to the Eastern Shore from upstate New York, she was the Lead Admissions RN and Liaison for Hospice Buffalo and a RN in the Intensive Care Unit at South Buffalo Mercy Hospital.

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BOARD PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As the vibrant colors of autumn begin to grace our surroundings, we at Talbot Hospice extend our warmest greetings to each and every one of you. It's a season of change and reflection, and we are excited to share some wonderful updates and upcoming events with you.

We are thrilled to introduce our new Executive Director, Molly Kirsch. With a wealth of experience in healthcare administration and a deep passion for serving our community, Molly has served as our Clinical Director before stepping into her new role. Her dedication to upholding the values of compassionate care aligns perfectly with the mission of Talbot Hospice. We are excited to see the positive impact she will undoubtedly have on both our staff and the families we serve.

As I was writing this letter, we were eagerly awaiting our Fall Gala, planned for September 23rd at historic Wye House. This event, chaired by Maureen and Robert Fogarty, was to be a magical evening celebrating our supporters, volunteers and staff, all of whom are united by one goal—to make every moment count for our patients and their families. However, Mother Nature had a different plan in the form of tropical storm Ophelia. With the safety of all involved uppermost in our minds, the difficult decision was made to cancel the event. However, all was not lost. Ticket holders were able to pick up their filet and crab cake dinners, wine and flowers and have their own mini-galas. Most importantly, the Fogartys and their hard working committee raised over \$90,000 to support the mission of Talbot Hospice. We are deeply grateful to Maureen and Robert and their committee members and to Beverly and Richard Tilghman for offering their beautiful home, Wye House, for the event.

Mark your calendars for a cherished tradition that brings joy to our community year after year! The Festival of Trees will take place from November 25th to 28th at the Tidewater Inn's Gold Room. This enchanting event transforms the space into a winter wonderland filled with beautifully decorated trees, each uniquely adorned by local businesses, groups, and individuals. This year's Festival promises to be even more special, as we celebrate not only the spirit of the season but also the unity that defines our community. Join us for four days of festive fun, live entertainment, and a chance to support Talbot Hospice's vital work. Your attendance and contributions directly impact our ability to provide compassionate care to patients and families during their most challenging times.

As we enter this season of gratitude and giving, we extend our heartfelt thanks to each one of you for your unwavering support. Together, we are making a meaningful impact in the lives of those facing end-of-life journeys.

Warmest Wishes,



Sheila Monahan, Board President

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Kirsch received her Bachelor of Nursing in 2002 from the University of Rochester and has continued her professional development.

Kirsch is active in the local professional

community and is a member of the Shore Health System Hospice Consortium, Hospice & Palliative Care Network of Maryland and Alliance Kids. Kirsch is also a graduate of Shore Leadership. She lives in Easton with her husband, Sean, and two sons, Finn and Logan.

2023 GALA - OPHELIA COULDN'T STOP THE PARTY!



Even though the Gala we planned was washed out, all was not lost! We still raised significant funds for Talbot Hospice programs and services, we handed out nearly 200 meals with wine and flowers to our amazing Gala guests, we were able to briefly mingle, chat and laugh with all who picked up their "gala to go," we

Tropical Storm Ophelia couldn't stop us from celebrating and raising funds for Hospice! Despite having to cancel our original vision for a "Night Under the Stars" at Wye House, our creative and dedicated Gala Chairs, staff and volunteers found a way to save the party. On Gala day, instead of gathering together in the rain, gala attendees had the option to pick-up their gourmet meals and wine "to go" from Talbot Hospice and then take them back to their homes to enjoy a "mini gala" with friends.



experienced kind hearts and positive attitudes all afternoon, and we felt joy and happiness knowing our guests still enjoyed each other's company, safely, at their own mini galas!

Thanks to all for their flexibility, good humor and unwavering commitment to our mission!

2023 REMEMBRANCE CEREMONIES

"We remember them and care for you"

Join us for an outdoor Community Remembrance Service at one of six sites around Talbot County on **November 14th at 6pm.** We will gather for a short candle-light service to remember the special people in our lives who we have lost this year.

- **Cordova**
Cordova Volunteer Fire Dept.
11864 Kittys Corner Rd, Cordova
- **Easton**
Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
1214 S. Washington St, Easton
- **Oxford**
Oxford United Methodist Church
101 N. Morris St, Oxford
- **St. Michaels**
Chesapeake Maritime Museum
213 N. Talbot St, St. Michaels
- **Tilghman**
Characters Bridge Restaurant
6136 Tilghman Island Rd, Tilghman
- **Trappe**
Scott's United Methodist Church
3748 Main St, Trappe

Sponsored by Talbot Hospice in cooperation with the above community partners.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Talbot Hospice is thrilled to welcome Jane O'Mara and John Horner to its Board of Directors!



Jane O'Mara is Senior Portfolio Manager with FBB Capital Partners, an independent Registered Investment Advisory firm with locations in Bethesda and Easton. Prior to joining FBB Capital Partners, Jane held various roles in commercial real estate finance, banking, and brokerage industries. Jane is a graduate of St. Mary's College of Maryland and holds a master's degree from New York

University where she studied community development and real estate finance. As an undergraduate, she was an All-American sailor, helping her team to several national championship titles. Jane and her husband GK live in Oxford with their two children.



John J. Horner, Jr. is the Executive Vice President of Operations & Chief Operating Officer at Easton Utilities. His experience and leadership have been focused on the daily operational activities by ensuring the safe delivery of reliable utility and broadband services.

Prior to joining Easton Utilities in 2016, John held various senior level positions with Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE). His primary responsibility was to provide leadership to the 500 utility employees who operated the electric and gas distribution systems.

John graduated from The Johns Hopkins University with a BS in Electrical & Computer Engineering and holds an MBA from Loyola College. He has served on the boards for the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, MD/DC Utilities Association, and the Friends of Hospice. He currently serves on the board for the Tidewater Rotary. John has two children and resides in Easton with his wife and dog.

"COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS:" NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH



Throughout the month of November, Talbot Hospice is joining with its partners and colleagues across the country to raise awareness about the benefits of hospice and palliative care.

The 2023 national theme, "Courageous Conversations," focuses on the profound impact of the seemingly simple act of having a conversation about dying. What does death mean in my life? If I am faced with a terminal diagnosis, how would my values shape my end-of-life journey? How do I want my loved ones to engage with me toward the end of my life? It's

difficult to think about these questions but having these courageous conversations with ourselves, family, friends, and doctors can mean the difference between having the type of death a patient wants - one that matches up with their values and desires - and one that doesn't allow them to have a say in their own end-of-life journey. Throughout Hospice and Palliative Care Month this November, we are encouraging everyone to have these Courageous Conversations to start a meaningful dialogue on "dying a good death."

WELCOME WES WILLIAMS, NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT!



Welcome to Wes Williams, our new Director of Marketing and Development. Wes has broad experience in healthcare marketing and community relations leadership, as well as entrepreneurial ventures. He comes to us from Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum where he led the Charity Boat Donation Program.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HOSPICE CUP!

For the third year, Talbot Hospice was a grateful beneficiary of the annual Hospice Cup in Annapolis! Hospice Cup, Inc is a 501(c)(3) 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. The 2023 event was a banner year with \$140,000 raised - the largest amount in six years! Talbot Hospice was again the only Eastern Shore beneficiary. Thank you to our local sponsors, Tracy Higgs-Wagner with Meredith Fine Properties, Chuck Mangold Jr. with Benson & Mangold Real Estate and Hause Brothers Contractors.





The 15-foot Hospice Memorial Tree will honor loved ones cared for by Talbot Hospice with symbolic white doves.

Friends of Hospice presents the 38th Annual Festival of Trees “*Caroling, Caroling Through the Town*”

Friends of Hospice is getting ready to go *Caroling, Caroling Through the Town* for this year's Festival of Trees themed event! Festival of Trees is hosted by the 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.

The Festival is chaired by **Karla Wieland-Cherry**, a long-time volunteer. Karla has chaired the Table-top Trees and other behind-the-scenes work for many years. She is joined by an amazing team that are both new and seasoned volunteers, including her family.

Preview Gala

A formal Preview Gala party will be held on **Friday, November 24, from 5:30-8 pm** in the Gold Ballroom of the Tidewater Inn. Guests and sponsors get a first glimpse of the 50 large trees that transform the space into a magical room of light and glitter. Tickets will be available on our website: festival-of-trees.org.

The Festival of Trees

This beloved centerpiece of the 4-day event runs from **Saturday, November 25, 2023 through Tuesday, November 28, 2023** in the Gold Room of the Tidewater Inn. For more information on the 2023 Festival, visit our website: festival-of-trees.org



TED MUELLER PHOTOS

For more information visit festival-of-trees.org

Decorated Tabletop Trees and Poinsettias for Sale

50 tabletop trees ranging in size from 12" to 3-feet tall, inspired by the *Caroling, Caroling Through the Town* theme and decorated by members of our community will be available for sale during the Festival. Beautiful white, red and pink poinsettias will also be for sale prior to the Festival. These flowers are a wonderful way to honor a loved one. All proceeds will benefit Talbot Hospice.

Carols by Candlelight

This free family holiday event will be downtown for its 4th year on **Saturday, November 25th from 5-7 pm** in front of the Tidewater Inn. A festive holiday marketplace will be open for food, fun crafts and trinkets along with Small Shop Saturday in downtown Easton. Santa will be joining in the songs of the season during the event!

Santa 5K Run and Walk

Don't forget your running shoes! Our Santa 5K Run and Walk will take place **Saturday morning on November 25th** at Idlewild Park in Easton. Registration will open in October.

Santa's Workshop

New this year to the Festival will be another fun family event on **Sunday, November 26**. We will have activities for children while families are viewing the beautifully decorated Festival trees. Santa will be available for visiting during 12noon-4pm. There is no extra cost for this – it is included in the price of admission to the Festival!



Photos from past events, opposite page: (Top) The Gold Ballroom Festival of Trees display; (Bottom from L-R) Gala Preview party with Karla Wieland-Cherry and her family; Festival of Trees display; Tabletop trees for sale; Carols by Candlelight stage with Midge Menzies and Leslie Ware; and Santa 5K Run elves. This page: Poster art by Stephen Walker.





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2023 GUTHRIE PARTY!



Thank you to Tom & Alexa Seip who graciously hosted our annual Guthrie Party at their home on Friday, October 6th. The annual event is a special opportunity to say "thank you" to members of our Guthrie Society who contribute \$1000 or more in a year to Talbot Hospice. The Guthrie Society is named for Dr. Eugene " Buck" Guthrie, one of the founders of the Talbot Hospice.



We are also especially grateful to Tom and Alexa's grandson, Oliver, who was our chauffeur for the evening and donated half of his tips (\$112) back to Talbot Hospice!