



TALBOT HOSPICE

(410) 822-6681

586 Cynwood Drive Easton, MD 21601

talbothospice.org

COMPASSIONATE CONNECTIONS

2025 / Fall



A Life of Service, A Legacy of Blessings

Eddy Blessing lived a life defined by strength, leadership, and care for others. A lifelong resident of Easton, he grew up on a local farm before dedicating more than three decades to public service with the Easton Police Department, retiring as Chief of Police after 31 years. His impact on Talbot County is lasting. He introduced the D.A.R.E. program to local schools, where it is still taught today, and served with pride as president of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association.

Known by many as a leader in the community, he was also the heart of his family. He leaves behind his wife Donna, four children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, with another on the way in January. His family described him as “bigger than life,” a man who always put family first and led them with love and strength. His son, Billy, shared that he continues to hear stories from people touched by his father’s influence, a testament to the enduring impact Mr. Blessing had on so many lives.

(Cont. on back cover)

Talbot Hospice

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Compassionate Connections

Hello & Welcome

A Note from our Executive Director

At Talbot Hospice, every moment of care, every gesture of compassion, and every story of comfort is made possible by the strength of our community and the incredible work of our team and volunteers. As we reflect on the work we do and those who make it possible, we are filled with gratitude.

This year marks a significant milestone: the 40th anniversary of Friends of Hospice and their amazing event, The Festival of Trees. Since their founding, this dedicated group has played an essential role in supporting our mission. Through their tireless fundraising efforts and unwavering commitment, they have helped ensure that patients and families receive the care, dignity, and support they deserve.



Their impact is visible in every aspect of our work, from patient services to family programs, and their generosity continues to uplift and sustain our efforts. What began as a small group of committed individuals has grown into a deeply valued partner in care.

As we look forward to our upcoming signature event in November, we are excited to honor their incredible legacy and celebrate a future shaped by compassion, generosity, and shared purpose.

To Friends of Hospice: thank you for 40 extraordinary years. And to all of you, our readers, supporters, and community partners: thank you for being part of this journey with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly Kirsch".

Molly Kirsch, BSN, RN

Molly Kirsch brings nearly 20 years of hospice nursing experience to her role as Executive Director. A former Clinical Director, she is passionate about compassionate end-of-life care. Molly serves on the Maryland Hospice and Palliative Care Network Board, and is active in Tidewater Rotary. She lives in Easton with her husband and two sons - they can usually be found enjoying sports or outdoor activities.

Hospice Cup XXIX



Racing with a Purpose

September 13, 2025

Hospice Cup XXIX was another incredible reminder of the power of community coming together for a cause. We are deeply grateful to be chosen as a beneficiary year after year, and it is a true privilege to be supported by an organization that gives back in such a meaningful way. The generosity of Hospice Cup not only raises essential funds, but also raises awareness for the compassionate care we provide to patients and families in our community.

2025's annual Hospice Cup was a wonderful celebration on the water and ashore, bringing together sailors, supporters, and friends to make a difference for hospice care. We are especially grateful to Mariah Leffingwell and her crew, More Cowbell, for racing on behalf of Talbot Hospice. Their energy and commitment helped make this year's event such a success, and we are thankful for all who joined in the race and festivities. From the regatta to the after-party, the spirit of community and generosity was felt everywhere.



Each year, we are reminded of what an honor it is to be a beneficiary of Hospice Cup's efforts. The dedication of this organization and everyone involved ensures that the impact reaches far beyond race day, supporting the compassionate care we provide for patients and families in our community. We are proud to stand alongside so many who believe in the mission of hospice and are truly grateful for the awareness and resources raised through this meaningful tradition.



Thank you to our event sponsors:
Peake Technology, and Campbell's Boatyard!

Community Connections



Vet Connect: Veteran to Veteran Café

Our Vet Connect: Veteran to Veteran Café provides a welcoming space where veterans can come together to share stories, find fellowship, and build community. These gatherings create meaningful connections among those who have served, offering both camaraderie and support in a relaxed, conversational setting. Whether through laughter, shared memories, or simply the understanding that comes from being with others who have walked a similar path, the café helps foster a sense of belonging and respect for the service and sacrifice of all who attend.



Sourdough Making Support Group

Our recent Sourdough Starter Grief Support Group was a beautiful reminder of how healing can be found in both community and creativity. As participants mixed, kneaded, and baked together, conversations naturally unfolded, creating space for shared stories of love, loss, and resilience. Just like a sourdough starter that grows stronger with care and time, the group found comfort in knowing that grief, too, can be tended to gently and patiently. The experience not only offered a new skill in breadmaking but also fostered meaningful connections and moments of hope.

Talbot County Garden Club Brightens Our Day

Members of the Talbot County Garden Club delivered handmade floral arrangements to Talbot Hospice, filling our halls with color and care. These beautiful bouquets did more than brighten a room - they lifted spirits, sparked conversation, and reminded our patients, families, and staff that they are surrounded by love. We're so grateful for this generous, blooming tradition.



Upcoming Events



Writing and Storytelling Group

Oct 14, 2025

Our grief writing and storytelling support group meets every 2nd Tuesday at 5 pm, offering a compassionate space to process loss through journaling, poetry, and storytelling - no writing experience needed, just a willingness to share, reflect, and heal together.



Wave of Light

Oct 15, 2025

Join us October 15 at 7pm for Talbot Hospice's Wave of Light Remembrance Ceremony, honoring babies lost during pregnancy, childbirth, or infancy. Please arrive at 6:45pm and register in advance at talbothospice.org/events/wave-of-light.html. For support or questions, call 410-822-6681 x 116.



Annual Bake Sale

Oct 29, 2025

Talbot Hospice invites you to a Halloween Bake Sale Fundraiser on Wednesday, October 29, from 10am - 2pm at 586 Cynwood Dr., Easton. Enjoy delicious, spooky treats, and support hospice care for our community! Donate by cash, check, Venmo, or PayPal. To contribute baked goods, email arohrer@talbothospice.org by October 20.



Advanced Planning Workshop

Nov 4, 2025

Join us for an engaging evening focused on the important "next steps" we often put off - like advance healthcare planning and thoughtful estate giving. Your future self (and your children) will be grateful you took the time to get things in order. Enjoy good company, light refreshments, and the peace of mind that comes from planning well. Please RSVP to arohrer@talbothospice.org or 410-822-6681 X 136 by October 24.

Welcome To The Team



Heather Sims

Heather joins us as a GNA/CMT. She has two loving children, a son and a daughter. They like to go out to eat, go bowling, and to the movies. Heather is a friendly, outgoing person!



Nakiya Cooper

Nakiya joins Talbot Hospice as a CNA/CMT. Outside of work Nakiya loves going to brunch with her friends, shopping, going out to eat, and watching movies.

Festival of Trees Celebrates “Forty Years of Silver and Gold”

Presented by Friends of Hospice, the 40th annual Festival of Trees “Forty Years of Silver and Gold” will be held November 29 through December 2 in downtown Easton. Presented by Friends of Hospice, Festival of Trees has raised nearly \$4 million to assist with Talbot Hospice’s operating budget.

The tradition of Festival of Trees is rich with love and commitment to Talbot Hospice. After experiencing the loss of a loved one who was an early patient of Talbot Hospice, Midge Fuller and her friend Leslie Ware began a crusade and spent a year organizing the very first Festival of Trees in 1985. The organization is as vibrant as ever and Midge and Leslie continue their crusade even now as this year’s Festival co-chairmen.



Preview Gala

Launching the Festival of Trees has traditionally been the Preview Gala, a black-tie fundraising event, which will be held on Friday, November 28 at the Tidewater Inn’s Gold Room. From 6 pm to 8 pm, guests will enjoy a lavish affair with the first opportunity to view 100 exquisitely trimmed trees of varying sizes as well as a dozen elegantly decorated wreaths. A highlight of the evening is the opportunity to bid on a special tree decorated with exquisite Michael Aram ornaments. Tickets to the Gala are sold in advance only.

Santa 5K Fun Run/Walk

Dress with the holiday spirit in mind; participants hit the pavement on Saturday, November 29 at 9 am at Idlewild Park. The event is perfect for strollers, dogs and all abilities. On-site registration starts at 8 am and advance sign-ups are online at festival-of-trees.org.





Festival of Trees 2025

The Gold Ballroom opens to the public from Saturday, November 29 through December 2. On view will be 100 beautifully decorated and lit trees all adorned in white, gold and silver. Various live performances will entertain guests all four days. Of note this year is the return of The Shoppe, selling tasteful items that are perfect for the gift giving season.



“For forty years the Festival of Trees has brought our community together in the spirit of giving, remembrance and celebration. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, volunteers and attendees, we’ve supported the compassionate care provided by Talbot Hospice...One Beautifully Decorated Tree at a Time. Thank you!”

Leslie Ware & Midge Menzies
Founders, Friends of Hospice &
The Festival of Trees



Compassionate Connections



Santa's Workshop

This year's family-friendly event will be held on Saturday, November 29 from 11 am to 4 pm, nestled in the Tidewater Inn's Ballroom Garden. Children will be greeted by Santa and may pose for photos. Write a letter to Santa, enjoy an Elf Story Time, compete at game stations, create an ornament or color at various craft stations, and walk away with special tokens of the day. Santa's workshop is free with admittance to the Festival of Trees.

Carols by Candlelight

Carols by Candlelight is a magical holiday event, free to all on Saturday, November 29 from 5 pm to 7 pm. Sing along with choral groups, bell ringers, and musicians. Visit with Santa on the grounds of The Bullitt House at the corner of Washington and Dover streets. Everyone gets a free candle and candy cane. Food trucks will be on site and holiday merchandise will be on sale. This event is perfect for families of all ages to enjoy.



Poinsettia Tree

View the beautiful 12-foot poinsettia "tree" during the Festival of Trees in the Gold Ballroom at The Tidewater Inn. Elegant white poinsettias, sold in advance to raise money for Talbot Hospice, will adorn the tree throughout the Festival. A memory scroll features those names to honor this holiday season. Take home your poinsettias for the holidays or donate to Hospice House.

Keepsake Luminaries

A returning favorite! Keepsake luminaries honor a loved one. A limited number of the metal luminaries will be sold online, then displayed in the Gold Ballroom. At the conclusion of the Festival of Trees, the luminaries will be available for pickup in time to enjoy for the holiday season.





“With heartfelt gratitude, we thank Friends of Hospice and Festival of Trees for 40 years of extraordinary support and dedication to our mission and our community.”

**Molly Kirsch, Executive Director
Talbot Hospice Foundation**



Moments of Meaning & Impact

Each day at Talbot Hospice, we are privileged to witness the beauty of humanity in its many forms. Life's most profound moments unfold here, reminding us why presence, love, and connection matter.

14 June
Dear Hospice staff,
Please accept my
gratitude on behalf of my
Mother, Corinne Russell.
Her final days were
peaceful & comfortable. Your
thoughtful & respectful
care will never be
forgotten,
Warmly,
Cecelia Russell

There are not enough words in the English language
to tell you how wonderful your staff in the office
and the nurses that came to my home to care for
Darryl.

All the wonderful people at
Talbot Hospice:
You brought expertise,
support & gentle care to
us as my husband, Dr. George
Curlin, was very ill & died at
our home in March.

Honorariums, Memorials, Bricks & Plaques

Celebrate the life of someone dear to you by purchasing an engraved brick or plaque to be placed on the grounds of Talbot Hospice. As you honor the memory of a loved one, your gift provides needed support so that we may continue to maintain the high standards of comfort, support and care at Talbot Hospice.

Engraved bricks and plaques may be purchased in memory of or in honor of someone special.

Bricks \$250

Plaques \$500

Bricks ordered before April 1st will be installed in the spring.
Bricks ordered before September 1st will be installed in the fall.

To learn more, contact the Development Office at 410-822-6681
or visit
talbothospice.org/donate/additional-ways-to-give



Living, Loving, And Learning A Leaf Ireland

A Note From Our Medical Director

Let me explain this title, as I am sure at first glance, it makes no sense. Talbot Hospice had a guest in the resident wing who recently passed away. He was a gentleman that I grew attached to, as did others that met him. I think those who work in Hospice have some attachment to all our patients but sometimes there is just a little more that happens.

For sake of privacy, I will call him Fred even though that wasn't his real name. Over a period of several months Fred taught me what it was like to have lived a full life. He certainly embraced life fully and took risks rather than just going along the safe route. Despite having an outer shell that could be taken as rough and tough, he was a man with true emotion, who loved, especially his family as well as the things that are important in life. I continue to learn from our guests in hospice. All you must do is take the time to listen.

While reflecting on the loss of my friend and patient, I noticed that fall is in the air. I noticed leaves falling

off trees and could not help but think about one of my favorite stories, "The Fall of Freddie The Leaf." The author, Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D., was the same author who wrote the book "Living, Loving and Learning". I highly recommend reading these wonderful works. Life does follow a cycle, once that leaf that has been hanging on finally lets go, it joins others on the ground and a new life begins. I think the Freddie I got to know was hanging on until he could see his family was okay and new members were being born and that he could finally let go.

My wife and I just had the opportunity to go to Ireland. Beautiful country, especially the Western coast, but what was so memorable were the Irish. We came back feeling as if our souls were massaged by these warm, welcoming caring people. This is easily recognizable because our hospice is full of "the Irish". Be good to each other; continue to learn, love and live and believe in the sacred cycle of life.



Robert Sanchez, MD

Dr. Sanchez has been a referring physician to Talbot Hospice since its inception in 1981, became an Assistant Medical Director in 2015 and then Medical Director in 2020. When not sharing his time and talents with Talbot Hospice, Dr. Sanchez enjoys performing with the Tred Avon Players at the Oxford Community Theatre, boating, photography, gardening, bridge and most recently, pickleball.



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Eddy first entered our care in 2023. Staying in the Hospice House, where his room was often filled with family and friends, at times with more than 17 visitors gathered to be by his side. After six weeks of care, he experienced the rare joy of graduating from hospice, an occasion his family marked with a graduation party. The additional two years that followed were deeply meaningful to them. When Eddy returned to our care, it was only for a few days, but he passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by those he loved most.

Eddy Blessing's legacy is felt in the programs he built, the community he served, and the family he so dearly loved. If our lives are measured by the people we touch around us, then R. Edward Blessing's life was full to the brim. His story is a reminder of the profound ways one life can shape a community and how love and care, both given and received, leave a lasting mark.