



From left, David Ciurzynski, Ed Smart, Janet and June Lee, Tracy Ford, Emmett and Antoinette Clancy (on the billboard), and Madison Wesolowski from Thompson Builds, at the ribbon-cutting for the new deck at Crossroads House.  
Photo by Joanne Beck of The Batavian

## Can We Ask a Favor?

You've probably noticed that this issue of our newsletter is more condensed than past versions, but don't worry, it's all part of a plan to provide more frequent and timely updates at less cost, to more of our donors and partners in the community. Thanks to grants from the Buffalo Sabres and the Conable

Family Foundation we have a powerful new donor platform we're onboarding that will make emailing our newsletter, among many other tasks we perform, easier than ever. We are appealing to our subscribers to **please consider providing your email address (even if you think we have it)** so we can build a solid and current list of all who would like to help us save on print and mailing costs by receiving future newsletters by email. We want to make it easy – just **text or call Debbie 716-474-0125 with your name and email address, and we'll add it to our new donor platform. If you REALLY want to have a printed copy, text your name and "PRINT" to the same number.** But we want to entreat you to consider email – it's crucial that we find ways to offset the rising costs of personnel and supplies that are vital to providing the very best care for our residents, while still being actively engaged with those of you that support this work in so many ways.

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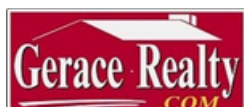


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# Crossroads House Newsletter

Spring /Summer 2025



## Love Lives Here

By Tracy Ford - Executive Director

As Executive Director of Crossroads House, I have the privilege of witnessing something truly extraordinary every single day—acts of compassion that transform what some might imagine to be a place of sorrow into a home filled with love and peace.

There's a common misconception that Crossroads House must be a sad place. After all, we are a comfort care home, walking alongside individuals and their families during one of life's most tender journeys. But to step inside Crossroads House is to experience something much deeper than sadness. It is to feel warmth in every corner, to witness grace in every action, and to be surrounded by an incredible community of volunteers who bring light to even the most difficult days.

Whether it's someone sitting quietly at a resident's bedside, pruning flowers in our peaceful gardens, changing a lightbulb, or organizing our storage spaces, every task matters. Whether you're assisting with a fundraiser, entering donations in the office, or welcoming guests through our doors, your work upholds the mission that defines us: to provide the very best in end-of-life care.

Our volunteers reported 6,623 hours in 2024 for a labor savings of \$221,795.89. Combined with the \$160,000 raised through their fundraising efforts, the impact on our budget is a favorable \$380,000!

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of this home. They offer not only their time and skills, but also their presence—the kind that says, "You are not alone." That presence is what makes Crossroads House a place of refuge, of comfort, and yes—of joy. Please consider joining us. We will find a role that works for you.



Crossroads House Volunteers at our 2025 Gala

## Here's What We've Been Up To!

Our Night Under the Stars Annual Gala was a huge success, raising over \$21,000, and bringing community together for a night of dining and dancing, while memorializing each of our past residents with a star of their own.

Our deck renovation is complete – a beautiful outdoor retreat overlooking our lovely, meditative gardens. It will be enjoyed by our residents and family members for many years to come. Thank you Emmett and Antoinette Clancy, and June and Janet Lee for funding this amazing project.

### In this issue:

Latest News and Happenings

A Day at the House

Debunking Volunteering Myths

New Donor Platform

Dr. Obear, our medical advisor has retired, and we welcomed Dr. Shan Dhanda to the position, with Dr. Obear remaining in an advisory role.

Crossroads House Collectibles, a brick and mortar storefront at Lake St in Bergen, became a reality. Selling the most prized donated collectibles, it is open Wednesday - Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm, staffed by volunteers, and all proceeds benefit Crossroads House.

A revival of our Musical Memories event was also a big success, and is planned as an annual event. It was a wonderful reunion of the musicians that supported Crossroads with their performances at this event before Covid sidelined it. The community apparently missed it very much!

Crossroads welcomed our 668th resident, as we work very hard to provide care to as many in need as we possibly can.

# Beyond the Bedside

By Debbie Paine- Executive Assistant & Volunteer

At Crossroads House, our mission is simple, yet profound: to help our residents not only die peacefully but live fully until they do. Inspired by the words of hospice founder Dame Cicely Saunders, our promise goes far beyond bedside care—though that, too, is part of it.

You may picture a volunteer holding a resident's hand, and that quiet, compassionate presence is central to what we do. But behind the scenes, there's a bustling community making it all possible. As a volunteer and employee, I see daily how it truly takes a village.

Most mornings, I arrive around 8 a.m. and often meet a garage sale volunteer or two. By 9, several are on-site prepping for our annual tent sale. From April through July, these wonderfully energetic volunteers—mostly retirees—sort donations, manage sales, and create a warm community around their work. New helpers arrive as the sale approaches, and during the event, even more hands join in. Last year, this crew raised over \$50,000 for Crossroads House. They even cook lunch on volunteer days, inviting anyone who “forgot” theirs to the table.

Inside, I check on our residents. Tracy, our Executive Director, and Marilyn, our Director of Resident Care, spend more time with residents and their families before heading to their offices. The overnight aide shares updates with the incoming shift—a nurse and a volunteer in the morning, followed by two volunteers in the afternoon. Our nurse remains on-call overnight for additional support.

On the stairs, you might find a few themed baskets waiting to be picked up for our annual raffles. Our raffle committee—another amazing group of volunteers—creates over 250 baskets each year, raising over \$10,000+ for the house. They coordinate from our Legacy Living Center but often stop by for supplies, drop-offs, or a quick hello. Many even serve as caregiver volunteers.

Our office volunteers are vital too. They help with donor acknowledgments, organize files, and manage mailings. Others drop in to chat with Volunteer Coordinator Jenn or Tracy, offer help for upcoming fundraisers, or introduce new volunteers. Our 10 major fundraising events would not be possible without the dozens of volunteers who show up to plan, run, and clean up each one.

Behind the scenes, our maintenance and grounds volunteers keep both of our locations in great shape. They mow lawns, tend gardens, fix what needs fixing, and keep our spaces welcoming and safe—all helping us save critical resources. Even our Board of Directors is hands-on: some fundraise, others mow the lawn, and one chairs both our tent and Christmas sales.

What truly sets Crossroads House apart is the sense of family among our volunteers. Whether here every week or just once in a while, each person contributes something meaningful. We share a commitment to this mission and to each other, celebrated through our appreciation events and, more importantly, in the daily joy of working together for a greater purpose.

A day at Crossroads is full of caregivers, makers, organizers, and helpers—all with hearts of gold.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Follow us on Facebook and watch our events page for details on our fundraisers and other important events! Share with your friends! We'll be most grateful!



### ANNUAL TENT SALE! JULY 23-26!!

August 23: Crossroads House Meat Raffle

September 6: Memorial Butterfly Release

September 14: Kiwanis Food Stand

October 22: Spaghetti Western

November 14: Annual Memorial Service

November 21-22, 28-29: Annual  
Christmas Sale

December 6: Luminary Lighting



2024 Meat Raffle



2024 Spaghetti Western



2024 Christmas Sale





# You Don't Have to Be a Nurse (and five other myths about volunteering)

By Jenn Shaffer  
Volunteer Coordinator

When people hear "volunteer at Crossroads House," they often picture someone sitting quietly at a bedside. While that's a beautiful and meaningful part of what we do, it's only one piece of a much larger picture.

In reality, our mission is carried out by a village of volunteers: caregivers, gardeners, fixers, fundraisers, organizers, and everything in between. If bedside care isn't the right fit for you, that's okay! There are so many other ways to make an impact. I often hear the same hesitations from potential volunteers...many of which I felt myself in the beginning.

## **"I'm not a nurse. I wouldn't know what I'm doing."**

You don't need a medical background. Caregiving volunteers follow a clear plan laid out by the Staff Caregiver on duty. If you can follow directions and lead with a kind heart, you're more than qualified.

## **"I'm not sure I'd be comfortable providing personal care."**

That's completely valid, and if caregiving isn't the right role for you, there are plenty of other ways to support our mission! You could help sort donations for our garage sale, help make raffle baskets, mow the lawn, prep mailings, or join a fundraising committee. Every role helps fulfill our mission.

## **"What if I'm alone with a resident?"**

You won't be. Volunteers always work in pairs, and staff is always on call. We work as a team and you'll always be supported.

## **"I don't have a lot of time to commit."**

You don't need a set schedule. Some volunteers have a weekly shift, others jump in during event season, spring clean up, or help here and there. Whether you have an hour every week or help with one event a year, we're grateful.

## **"I'm not strong enough to lift or do physical work."**

No problem. You'll never be expected to do anything you're not comfortable with, and there are many roles that don't involve lifting at all, like writing thank-you notes, helping sort inventory, or tending the gardens.

## **"It must be so sad."**

There are emotional moments, of course. But there's also joy. Laughter over lunch in the kitchen, stories shared late at night, and friendships formed through shared purpose. And if you ever need a reminder of just how uplifting this community is, just come to one of our fundraising events. Whether it's a meat raffle, basket raffle, gala, or bowling tournament, they're full of energy, fun, and heart. Our volunteers know how to work hard and have a good time.

Still unsure? Come tour the house. We'd love to show you around and answer any questions you have about joining our family, no commitment necessary.

At Crossroads House, it's not about being perfect. It's about being present. Let us know how we can help you find your unique way to make a difference.

## A word from our Volunteers...

"I never thought this would be something I'd be able to do, for a number of reasons. This house is full of joy. When I need a lift, Crossroads House always brings me back up."

-Julie Mancuso

"Everyone at Crossroads House will make sure you are never alone. Everybody here is very supportive; if you have questions, they will get you answers. Even if they don't know the answer, they'll find the person that does. You will always be supported."

-Nancy Shellenberger

"There's a place for everyone here. I always think back to the quote, 'Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, but they have the heart'. It's a good place to make time for."

-Valerie Bartholomew

"Someone once said to me, 'How do you do it? I would just be crying all the time'. And here's the thing - I've been a crier for as long as I have known me. There are many reasons to cry - sad cry, happy cry, scared cry, see someone else cry and so you cry. All valid. You might even say, all necessary. But in the presence of the dying, you will find that more times than not, people are ready. They have a plan. Maybe they are anxious to see a loved one that passed before them. Maybe they just want the pain to end. Whatever the reason, you can almost not help but feel peace as they take their final breath. Peace in the fact that we at Crossroads House, and you as a volunteer, guided them through the process. Helped them with their plan. Made a difference in their life and the lives of their family members. It isn't immediate once you start to volunteer. But it is something that evolves as you spend more time with our residents. Yes, there is sadness at Crossroads, but there is also much joy, and tears of joy are good for the soul."

-Pauli Miano



Crossroads House  
Resident Care  
Volunteers  
at recent training  
session