

# News From Crossroads House



Spring/Summer  
2021

Our goal is to provide care and support with love and dignity to individuals and their families as they journey through the dying process. We deliver the very best in comfort care to Genesee, Wyoming and surrounding counties.



Gail with Sasha.

## **"From the Outside Looking In"**

**by Gail Smith, Our Office Manager**

**It has been said** we never know the blessings that await us. There is one you probably have never thought of, which can be found at Crossroads House:

***Knowledge is a powerful thing.***

Many have heard about or experienced firsthand the love and care that is given to residents and their families at Crossroads House. The staff and volunteers there are some of the kindest, gentlest souls God has placed on this earth. This is not about me, but I need to share some personal information with you to tie this all together. Kathy and Frank Panepento brought me on board as the Office Manager in 2012. I will tell you, up to that point I was aware of Crossroads House, but *only* that—aware. Little did I know or realize that God was, in His own way, preparing me for what we all have to face at some point in our lives—the loss of a loved one. I have lost loved ones in the past: grandparents, aunts, uncles...we all have, but when it's your own spouse, it's a whole new ball game. In my capacity as Office Manager I am able to spend time with our residents, assist in their care, (though I openly admit that our volunteers run circles around me in that department), and be there with them through their final journey. I watch as our caregivers not only bond with our residents, but with their families as well. "It's a package deal," one of them told me when I first started my job. The care of the family is just as important. They have the same reservations, fears, and concerns about dying as the resident does. I never thought of it that way, but how true it is. Here is what being a part of the Crossroads House team has taught me. In 2015, I lost my husband to CHF and cancer.

(story continued on page 3)

Spring/Summer 2021

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.....  
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Kathy Panepento RN, Founder  
Jeff Allen, Executive Director

#### Our Staff

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Emily Crawford, Coordinator of  
Volunteer Services

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Check out our website at:  
[www.crossroadshouse.com](http://www.crossroadshouse.com)

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## Executive Director's Message

### *"Human Resources"*

"Human Resources" is most often associated with a group of people in a business responsible for employee benefits, hiring, firing, etc.. If we take both terms on their own...Human (people) and Resources (a source of supply or support) we get "People Supply," or "People Support."

Human Resources as defined that way took on new meaning in 2020. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, life for everyone was disrupted. Individuals, families, businesses, and organizations dealt with both personal losses and financial setbacks.

Non-profit organizations, like **Crossroads House**, were no exception. Twice during 2020, we made the difficult decision to pause resident care during surges in local COVID cases. The safety of our residents, families, volunteers and staff has always been of the highest priority. Most of our event fundraisers were either scaled back or cancelled altogether.

For 23 years, **Crossroads House** has used the following three-part funding statement: we don't charge for our services, we don't receive insurance reimbursement, and we don't accept state or federal funding. That is why we say, "We are a gift TO the community, made possible BY the community." In late March 2020, the federal government passed the CARES Act giving much needed assistance to small businesses and organizations through federal loans, grants, and the Payroll Protection Program. Accessing those funds, however, would mean that we would forever forfeit the third facet of our funding statement. Facing budget shortfalls, it was time to tighten our belts and step out on faith. That is where the amazing Human Resources of this organization and the community it serves stepped into action.

While we were paused, we immediately set about giving our resident rooms and entire first floor a MUCH needed remodel after 23 years of continual use. We did it on a shoestring budget, donated materials, and volunteer labor. During our second pause, we started work on a family suite (bedroom, kitchenette, and bathroom) upstairs for families to be able to stay close to their loved ones.

When 2020 came to a close, our downstairs remodel was complete, our upstairs remodel was well on its way, and thanks to generous *Human Resources*, **Crossroads House** made it through, while keeping our three part funding statement intact. As 2021 continues and we emerge from the pandemic, we remain committed to 100% of our support coming from the community we serve. By God's grace and your *Human Resources*, we continue the mission of providing the very best in end-of-life comfort care for your family, friends, and neighbors.. ..and we are honored to do so.



(continued from cover story)

*“My husband Smitty wished to remain home to die instead of any alternative, even  
Crossroads House...”*

His feelings were simple as he expressed them to me: he did not wish to die at my place of employment with that constant reminder of his passing staring me in the face each day I went to work. If living in our house alone was too painful, I could sell the house and move somewhere else, but my job was something I couldn't just "change" nor would I EVER consider it. He knew that. *He was more worried about me than about dying.* I got scared. How could I take care of him at home? How would I know what to do? **The Lord provided me with all the knowledge and information that I needed, through working at Crossroads.** I knew what to do for him to make him comfortable. I knew when to dote on him, and when to just give him space. As the time of his passing grew closer, I knew what to expect. When his condition started changing, I knew what stage of the dying process he was in, (yes, dying is a process), what to do for him, and what was coming next. I was prepared because of my experiences at Crossroads House. I took the best possible care of him, and helped him to pass peacefully and comfortably. Six years later I have NO regrets. ***Knowledge is a powerful thing.***

Facing death is a part of living. Crossroads House provides the tools and the people to teach us not only *how* to die, but how to *live until we die*. This may not remove the fear of dying, but tending to a person that is dying, being able to walk with them through their final journey is truly a blessing. It's going to happen to all of us at some point in our lives. *Are you ready?* Consider becoming a volunteer at Crossroads House and learn the same valuable lessons that I did. Do you think, "I could never do that?" *Yes, you can.* You can share the experience of a dying person laughing, mending family rifts, or going out on the town to enjoy a "date night" with their significant other. To see them smile when they return from their adventures, *that* is priceless.



Our residents are in their final act of living. As a volunteer you get to *live with them*. It makes you appreciate your own life, and teaches you how to enjoy the little things. You get back so much more than the few hours you give. We welcome you to come on a tour of Crossroads House. Talk to our volunteers and staff. You will want to be a part of this glorious team.

God has given us the gift of **Crossroads House**, and He is allowing each of us to be a part of that gift.

*Thank You, Crossroads House.*

***Gail***

*CLICK ON GAILS PHOTO TO READ HER WEBSITE BIO*

We would like to extend our most heartfelt sympathies to the families of the residents we had the honor to care for since our last newsletter:

[Earl Dorman](#)

[Anna Marciniak](#)

[Viola Kerr](#)

[Margaret Jean Price](#)

[Wayne "Dutch" Robbins](#)

[John Sovocool](#)

[Jane Costanzo](#)

*Thank you for sharing your loved ones with us.*



## 10 Things You Might Learn About the End of Life, When You are a Caregiver

1. When you receive a life-limiting diagnosis, material possessions don't matter so much.
2. You may need reassurance from those you will leave behind, that they will be okay.
3. When you feel alone, having someone to talk to who is a good listener is a good thing.
4. It's easier for people to show you love when they know they're going to lose you.
5. Simple gestures can bring great joy.
6. A smile is a wonderful thing.
7. When you are nearing the end of your life, your words have the ability to impact lives. At the end of your life, when you can no longer speak, your presence has the ability to impact lives.
8. It's okay to spend time with someone and just share the quiet.
9. Food is an important part of living and dying.
10. When you feel that you have a calling in life to care for the dying, it is within you to love someone who you just met.



## Stay Connected!

Yee-haw, that was a cold day, but it was a gathering of warm hearts! We always have something going on! Whether it's a fundraiser, training class, grief support group, or an open house. We'd love for you to keep in touch. Our website has so many resources for you, such as information on:

- \* [Referrals](#)
- \* [Volunteering](#)
- \* [Family resources \(caregiver videos\)](#)
- \* [Cookbook ordering](#)
- \* [Past newsletters](#)
- \* [Our monthly radio segments](#)

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for the latest up to date scoop on what's happening. (Speaking of scoops, Janet, Jackie, and June enjoyed some at our Volunteer Appreciation event!)

*Alone we can do so little;  
together, we can do so much.*

*-Helen Keller*



## *“She was 95 Years Young”*

Margaret Jean Price 1925-2021

She didn't mince words and didn't want a lot of fuss, even when her days became numbered. That's what we loved about her; Jean had grit. She was a natural-born caregiver and served others by becoming one of the first occupational therapists in the country-no small feat for a woman in those days. She intended not to marry, or have a family, so she thought. Her sister Sue cautioned everyone, "Don't tell Jean, but I think she's falling in love with Arthur." And the rest, as they say, is history. They would raise 6 children, part time at their home in Byron, part time



aboard their boat that docked on Lake Ontario.( Picture the Brady Bunch getting ready for school in the morning on a 38 foot floating house.) Perhaps the close quarters contributed to their close-knittedness. The Prices traveled together quite often, looked after aging relatives, and though separated by distance over the years, this never got in the way of their connectedness. Jean always had a plan. At birthday celebrations she would remind everyone that she intended to live to 85. (Pictured is Jean at 90.) She grew up without a mother (lost her at age 4) and suffered the loss of 2 adult children, yet she lived feeling blessed and grateful. Her deep Christian faith (Elba Presbyterian Church), acceptance of others, and belief in the equality of all, made this tiny, 4' 9" lady large in the hearts of those who came to know her.

"What did you learn from your Mother?" "What *didn't* I learn from my Mother?"

Her children did, in fact, learn swear words!!

"Bilge water and electrolysis! Nuts dang spit crud! Great green jumping grasshoppers!" to name a few.

Jean's bucket list was short, but achievable: 1. Climb a mountain 2. See an ocean. When she retired from the VA Medical Center, she volunteered as a caregiver at Crossroads House until the age of 92. At home, she still did the dishes, hauled the trash, painted her porch, and when the kids visited, would show off her ability to run down the hallway. As a caregiver, it wasn't so easy to accept being a care-receiver when she became our resident at Crossroads. Betty, her former [Mondays, 8-noon] shift-mate, would visit often and reminisce about their bedside experiences. Having raised a family of independent thinkers, Jean's great concern for the world she would leave behind was the intolerance others had towards their fellow man. She loved history, genealogy, Scotland, and animals. She left the world a better place and showed us how to impact the lives of others with a heart full of love, sprinkled with a dash of grit. Thank you for sharing your last days with us, Jean.

***Your Crossroads House Family***



**Check out our website to hear recordings from our monthly radio segments on WBTA Radio!**

Kathy Panepento, (center) the founder of Crossroads House, shared about not letting her genetic tissue disorder prevent her from following through on her vision to start our comfort care home. Mickey and Jamie Charters (left) describe how their relationship evolved from volunteer shift buddies to husband and wife! (Note: they still volunteer on Saturday nights!) Elaine Page (right) talks about her life experiences and why she became a Crossroads House caregiver.

**CLICK ON EACH PICTURE TO HEAR THEIR RADIO BROADCAST**

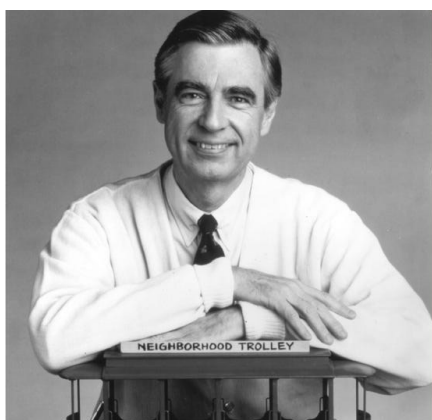
## Announcing the *Legacy Living Center*...



### A Crossroads House



**When** St. James Episcopal Church approached us about the possibility of using their former rectory building, the timing couldn't have been better! Upstairs at Crossroads House, we were bursting at the seams, especially during the time leading up to our basket raffle fundraisers. (A hundred and fifty baskets have to go *somewhere*! ) Beautiful, old Victorian homes have lots of nooks and crannies which makes them quaint and cozy, but limits the space for meetings and what-have-you. As many may not know, we do not own the building we occupy as Crossroads House. The trustees at the Batavia First Presbyterian Church approved our rental agreement at a cost of *\$1.00 per month*. This is the agreement that is currently in the works with St. James, so that we can use the stately yellow Tudor known today as the **Legacy Living Center**. We have already had small armies of volunteers paint each room, move in furniture, and manicure the yard. It's lovely! This spring it served as the site of our first six-week Grief Support Group. Because of the spaciousness, we were able to make space for our raffle basket making operations, eBay sales storage, training meetings and a "filming studio." This is where we will create our own videos so we can virtually train those who are caregiving for a loved one at home. This is a need we responded to when the early days of the pandemic limited in-person meetings. (Our founder, Kathy Panepento did videos on her cell phone!) Because of the extra space we've created on the second floor at Crossroads House, soon there will be a **Family Bedroom Suite** which will allow loved ones to be close by and comfortable. Future plans at the **LLC** include the development of programs that will be open to not only caregivers, but the whole community on topics such as: filling out MOLST, Advance Directives, and Health Care Proxy paperwork, Stress & Anxiety Workshops, and Dealing with Burnout. We will also be partnering with other local non-profits to offer the space for staff retreats and meetings so that we can support them as the people-helping organizations in our area. It's because of the community we serve, and their belief in our mission that we are able to "do more good in the neighborhood." That's what we call a "win-win."



“

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'”

Mr. Rogers

Insider Inc.

Our mission is growing  
to serve more needs in  
our community!



## *What brought you to Crossroads House?*

It's a question I've heard many times at roundtable introductions, and I always have my pocket answer at the ready: "I had a family member die here, and one day at a fundraising event, I felt a firm external push to get on board." Quick, simple, and accurate—well, sort of. The whole truth is a little more complicated than that. Crossroads House is a place just this side of Paradise where unbridled love stands vulnerable and unashamed, where strangers

embrace each other like family, and where the bond of human compassion shatters all societal differences. It is a privilege and an honor to be a part of the process that takes place within these walls, and I would love to tell you that I felt that way from the very moment I first stepped foot in the door. But I didn't. My husband's grandfather, Jim, was dying in the side room, and I felt strange, and awkward and out of place.

Like many people, I was not, in any way, comfortable with the concept of death and dying at that time in my life, and while it was important to me to share time and space with the remarkable man taking his last breaths in front of me and to be present for my grieving loved ones, I was simultaneously fighting a strong desire to be anywhere else. It was baffling to me. How on Earth could this little house manage to find all these incredible volunteers willing to face this level of existential dread and emotional turmoil on a regular basis?

After Jim's death, I spoke of Crossroads House fondly, albeit not very often, but the conundrum of its existence continued to rattle around in the back of my mind. Years later, when I had an opportunity to take part in a benefit concert at the request of a family friend, I gladly accepted, and when it came time for the humble request for donations and volunteers, I did indeed feel a very firm internal shove. Okay, should I write a check? No. That wasn't it. I needed to volunteer, and despite the icy pit in my stomach, I knew it with absolute certainty.

I could have scrounged up any number of excuses to avoid making the right choice in that moment, Lord knows I wanted to, but let me tell you what I would have missed out on. As a result of leaning into my discomfort, I have been exposed to some of the most life affirming and inspiring moments. I have incorporated gratitude almost effortlessly into my daily routines, and my relationship with the concept of death has shifted from complete avoidance and downright terror to comfortable acceptance and awe. I have learned to validate those I love on a regular basis, and it has made me a better mother, a better wife, and a better friend. I have built a strong network of some of the kindest people I have ever met, and I have made connections with those who in the last moments of their lives have taught me more about love, life, and courage than I could have ever hoped to learn on my own.

You see, volunteering isn't just for those who have extra to give. Sometimes it takes those who don't have nearly enough—not enough time, not enough energy, not enough awareness, not enough hope--and fills them to overflowing.

*Emily Crawford, Coordinator of Volunteer Services*

***CLICK ON EMILY'S PICTURE TO READ HER WEBSITE BIO***

**For more information on becoming a volunteer at Crossroads House, you may start the online application process by visiting our website at [www.crossroadshouse.com](http://www.crossroadshouse.com), or contact Emily at [emilycrawford@crossroadshouse.com](mailto:emilycrawford@crossroadshouse.com).**

## **Our Wish List**



- Hand sanitizer
- Clorox wipes
- Paper Towels
- Air freshener spray
- Mailing labels (Avery 8163)
- Label Maker-M tape 3/8
- Postage stamps
- White copier paper
- Gift Cards: Aldi's, BJ's, Save-A-Lot, Walmart, Tops, and local restaurants for residents' families
- Lotions for men and women
- Cleansing wipes
- Pump-style hand soap
- Cans of ginger ale, 7-Up & juices (small)
- Mixes for: brownies, muffins and cookies
- Vegetable oil
- Applesauce & pudding cups
- Butter
- Swiffer Dry Cloths
- Murphy's Oil Soap
- Windex
- HE laundry soap
- Boudreaux's Butt Paste (Walmart)
- Anti-Monkey Butt Paste (Walmart)
- Half and Half coffee creamer
- 13-gallon trash bags
- Paper plates

**CLICK HERE TO ACCESS WISH LIST ITEMS**

**ON AMAZON.COM INCLUDING**

**SOME DREAM ITEMS!**



*.....from the bottom of our hearts!*

To the groups of young people who have worked on projects around Crossroads House.

To employees who bless us with the dress-down money they've collected in the lunch room.

To businesses that write us that check year after year.

To students who are interested and want to learn more about the work we do.

To anonymous Santa Clauses who drop Wish List items at our door.

To volunteers who cut short their family time to take a shift on weekends, holidays, and any day when they could be doing something else.

To families who suggest Crossroads House for memorial gifts and to those who give them.

To our consistent monthly donors, and those who give what they can, when they can. **We appreciate you all!**

Are you doing your shopping online these days? Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), and if you choose **Crossroads House** as your charity, we will receive a donation from Amazon based on the amount you purchase. It won't cost you anything more, so *thank you*, and **HAPPY SHOPPING!!**





## Crossroads House News and Events

There are several ways you can stay informed of what's going on, and get details about our fundraisers:

Our Facebook page \*\*\*\*[www.crossroadshouse.com](http://www.crossroadshouse.com) \*\*\*[The Batavian](#)\*\*\*[The Daily News](#)

Also, check the WBTA calendar for our [monthly radio broadcast](#) with Chris Kalen.

Listen in as the **Crossroads House Family** shares stories from the heart. If you've missed our radio segments, they are linked on our website under the Community tab!

### **Thank you to everyone who ordered Comfort Foods!**

Back in the fall when we collaborated with the Ficarella family on creating our cookbook, we had no idea it would be so well-received! We asked our volunteers to submit their best recipes and along with those contributed by the Ficarellas, we produced a collection of over 200 of the best! Connie Ficarella was a resident at Crossroads House, and she, along with her love of cooking, was at the heart of her family. Our cookbook is dedicated in her memory and the Ficarella family not only funded the printing of it, but every dollar of the \$14 cost for this high-quality, hardbound book comes back to Crossroads House! At this time, we have more in stock, and they are available for purchase if you missed out on the first and second batches. Please see below to order your copy. The feedback has been wonderful, and they make great gifts! ***Special thanks to the Ficarella family for their friendship and generosity!***

### ***Over 600 sold and on the third printing!***

There are many ways to order your copy of our cookbook!

#### To have it mailed to you:

\*Use the form on the back cover and send to Crossroads House with your payment.

\*Order online at [www.crossroadshouse.com](http://www.crossroadshouse.com), or use the QR code below.

**Please allow 10 to 15 business days for shipping of your order.**

#### For local pick up:

\*Call Crossroads House ahead of time to schedule payment & pick up of your order (585) 343-3892 so that a frequently-ringing doorbell does not disturb our resident. Thank you!

\*Stop in at Ficarella's Restaurant or order at [www.ficarellaspizzabatavia.com](http://www.ficarellaspizzabatavia.com) where you can purchase it alone or have it added to your food order, for pick up or delivery!

***Thank you!***



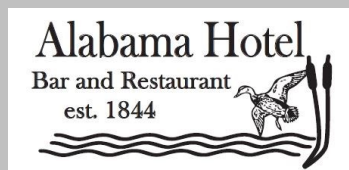
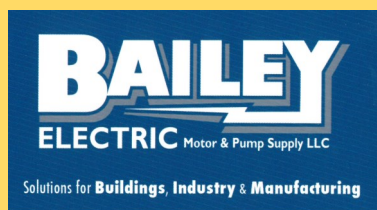
Scan with your smart phone or tablet to order your cookbook!

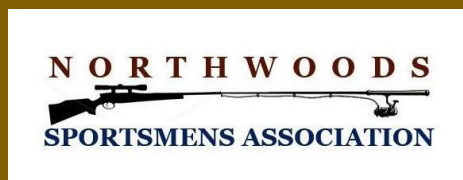
**Our annual business campaign**, which was sent out during the winter, was a bit of an anxious time for the administration team at Crossroads House. Reading the news throughout the past year and seeing how local businesses were affected, we didn't know if it would be within their operating budgets for our partners to continue supporting the mission at Crossroads House. And that, we totally understand. We have come to realize that the business leaders who partner with us, sustain us in a major way. There are many who, though not shown as a medal level sponsor this year, gave what they could give. For all of our sustainers, we are so grateful. The model of Crossroads House doesn't make a whole lot of sense from a business standpoint. Provide the best possible care 24/7, and *nobody gets a bill*. For this reason Crossroads House has come to be known as "*The best care that money can't buy.*"

## *A Special Thank You to the*

### **Medal Level Sponsors of our 2021 Annual Business Campaign!**

## **Gold Silver Bronze**





### Thank you to our 2021 Newsletter Sponsors!



If you would like your business to be on our mailing list for our next campaign, please contact Diane Sia at: [dianesia@crossroadshouse.com](mailto:dianesia@crossroadshouse.com). Medal Level and Newsletter sponsorship can promote your business in our newsletter, on our [website](#), and as a supporter on our [Facebook page](#).

*"Crossroads House is a gift TO the community, made possible BY the community."*



**Crossroads House**  
**PO Box 403**  
**11 Liberty Street**  
**Batavia, NY 14021**



*If you've never been to Crossroads House  
click on the photo to take our Virtual Tour*

Would you like to receive our newsletter by email instead?

Contact us at [newsletter@crossroadshouse.com](mailto:newsletter@crossroadshouse.com) along with your mailing address and we'll take care of you.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: My Gift is in Memory of or My Gift is in Honor of

Name of person: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation of \_\_\_\_\_

**Cookbook Order Form**

\_\_\_\_ Cookbooks at \$14.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping/ handling for 1st book = \$ 3.50

Shipping/ handling for extra books= \_\_\_\_\_

( \$1.00 for each additional book)

My cookbook total = \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: \_\_\_\_check or \_\_\_\_credit card

Please make checks payable to  
**Crossroads House.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have provided for Crossroads House in my Will.

\_\_\_\_\_ My donation is for the Crossroads House Endowment Fund.

Credit card information: Visa / Mastercard

**Credit Card** or **Paypal** account donations may be made on our website: [www.crossroadshouse.com](http://www.crossroadshouse.com)

Please deduct \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my credit card.

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3 digit number on back of card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date



**Your contribution is tax deductible as  
provided by law.**

**Thank you for your generosity!**



