

News From Crossroads House



Summer
2022

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.

"Sometimes the best way to treat a failing human heart is to set the stethoscope aside and ask about what matters to the patient."

Something that people wonder about is why our staff and volunteers at **Crossroads House** made the decision to care for the dying...and, how are we not depressed, sad people as a result of it? It may sound cliché to say that we receive so much more than we give, but it is deeply true. Every resident touches our lives by causing us to exercise our heart muscle and look beyond ourselves and the troubles of the world outside our door at 11 Liberty Street. In one instance at Crossroads House, be it a timely word, gesture, or eye-locking glance, a life can be changed, and it may be ours, as the caregivers.

Somehow being close to the very edge of life affirms the meaning and wonder of life.

As a bright, young man in medical school, Christopher Kerr was preparing to step into his future as a physician. He didn't consciously choose to specialize in death and dying, it "found him" all through his personal and professional life. Today he is the CEO and Chief Medical Officer at Hospice and Palliative Care Buffalo, with his MD and PhD in Neurobiology. He is a very kind-hearted man who lives on a farm in East Aurora with horses. He is someone who cares about life and death and the things in-between.

He is like you and me.



Christopher Kerr, MD PhD

As a result of validating the experiences of their terminally ill patients, he and his team possess seldom-talked-about insight into "the view from the bed." If you watch his Ted Talk on YouTube entitled, "I See Dead People," (along with the 4.6 million who already have) you will get an idea what his book is about. This work has also been the focus of a Netflix documentary entitled, *Surviving Death*, as well as a PBS documentary.

"Death is But a Dream: Finding Hope and Meaning at Life's End," came out in 2020, and has now been released in ten languages. You will want to write notes in its margins. Most people might think that as death draws near, they will see angels with trumpets and not deceased relatives, but such is the case with many people who shared their experiences with Dr. Kerr.

(story continued on page 3)

Summer 2022

Our Board of Directors

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Wendy Morse, Treasurer
Kelly Bermingham
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Volunteer Medical Advisor
Kathy Panepento RN, Founder
Charlotte Crawford,
Executive Director

Our Staff

Gail Smith, Office Manager
Diane Sia, Director of Development
and Newsletter Editor
Ashley Manuel, Coordinator of
Volunteer Services

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E-mail:
ofc1@crossroadshouse.com

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Meet Our New Executive Director



Let me first say...

...it is an honor and privilege to have been chosen by **Crossroads House's** Board of Directors to be the new Executive Director. I have big shoes to fill from the past Director, Jeff Allen. I would be lying if I said that this is where I saw myself two years ago.

*God moves in mysterious ways,
and I am so happy that He does.*

Just a little about myself. I have lived in Western NY my entire life. I am a nurse and have worked in many areas such as: physician's offices, nursing homes, and hospitals. I taught Nursing Leadership at GCC. I am also a NYS Certified Paramedic. The last 22 years were spent at Lake Plains Community Care Network (LPCCN), a rural health network covering Orleans, Genesee, and Wyoming Counties. I started as the Care Management Developer, then Associate Director, with the last 6 years as the CEO.

While at LPCCN I was blessed to work with multiple community organizations on projects for the betterment of the community; bringing like-minded groups together to collaborate on their similar projects enabling them to reach a wider, more diverse population. I loved my time with this organization and the opportunities they offered me.

I met Kathy Panepento, our founder, many years ago when Crossroads House was her vision and dream. I loved the concept she had. Little did I know that fifteen years later my father, James Brasington, would become a resident in the home. I was amazed and touched with the loving care he received as well as the attention and compassion the entire family received while there. It was then that the mission of comfort care became very near and dear to my heart; however, I did not become actively involved until 2 ½ years ago when I was invited to become a member of the Board of Directors. In March of 2022 I was asked to fill in as the Interim Executive Director, and I fell in love with Crossroads House, the mission, and all the amazing nurses, aides, and volunteers. Their passion and dedication for everything they do is contagious! I am extremely excited to become a part of the talented administration team as we constantly strive to move Crossroads House forward to expand our offerings and services, and grow to better serve you, our community.

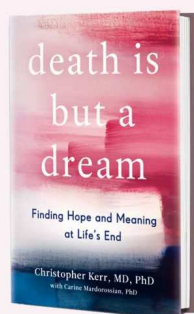
Charlotte Crawford

Executive Director

(story continued from page 1)

They have had end-of-life encounters with loved ones which have provided comfort, insight, closure, and in so doing, helped to alleviate their fear of dying. If you're ever alone at the bedside with a dying loved one, just the two of you, and they ask you, "Who is that sitting in the chair next to the bed?" you may believe them to be hallucinating, or that their question is a result of "the medicine talking." They might have dreams of being a child in their mother's arms, or cradle and hum a lullaby to an infant that died many years ago. As observers, we need to connect the dots. In our attempt to use the "logical" part of our brain to make sense of it, we miss out on the beauty of the experience. Although confusion and detachment can be a result of illness or medications, the patients who shared their stories in Dr. Kerr's book were alert, and fully-engaged. As they explained the significance of their dreams, they experienced a comforting, life-affirming presence in them, and a feeling that they were not alone. As end-of-life caregivers, we learn to be in the presence of impending death but not overwhelmed by it, afraid of it, or in denial of it. It is a hushed and holy time as the veil between life and death gives way, and we are filled with a sense of awe as to the sacredness of sharing in the experience. Thank you, Dr. Kerr, for showing us that it is never too late to have peace, to find meaning, and to experience love in its many forms. www.drchristopherkerr.com

"The knowledge of
death is never the
end of the discussion
in hospice care;
it is its beginning."



Dr Kerr is coming to Batavia!

Thursday September 22, 2022

6:30pm to 8:00pm

Batavia First Presbyterian Church
300 E Main Street, Batavia

Please "like" and follow our Facebook page
as ticketing information will be
forthcoming during the summer.



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:

Dennis Sexton

Lorraine Nolan

Frederick Carroll

Arleen Mortellaro

Wendy Williams

Dennis Kellogg

Joanne Thweatt

Patricia Pasinski

Margaret Main

Thank you for sharing your loved ones with us.

In Memory of Crossroads House Volunteers Recently Departed



Lorraine Nolan



Margaret Palmer



Mary Wilford



Jean Jackson

Margaret Palmer's daughter, Mary, describes the heart of a volunteer through this loving tribute to her Mother:

She will always be fondly remembered as someone who gave of herself; especially to those who needed it the most.

In her years as a volunteer at Crossroads House, she turned the challenging and often mournful time associated with comfort care into a celebration of life and a peaceful goodbye to the residents.

Her legacy will live on because of the loving impact she had on the lives she touched and especially through all those that love and miss her dearly...

What Brings You Comfort?

Our "comfort levels" have been tested, stretched, and ground out altogether for a few years, and some days it can seem like things will never get back to "normal." It's been written that "normal is a setting on a dryer," and isn't that so true! What is normal? Which way is up? What can we do as we hear every day about the state of our economy, the price of gas, senseless deaths at schools and supermarkets? There will be change, there will be suffering, but we can work towards a sense of balance to life as it is turned upside down and we travel the hills and valleys. As a comfort care home our focus is on bringing comfort to the dying and to their loved ones. We dial back our attention to the simple, small things that make a person's life meaningful. As you read on about the comfort of sharing the pain of loss within the framework of a small group, or the comfort of habits that we carry throughout our lives, consider what simple, small things bring you comfort. In case you are at a loss for what that might be, here are a few suggestions.



News from the Legacy Living Center...



A Crossroads House



About Our Grief & Loss Peer Support Group

by Hannah A.

There is no single way to handle grief and loss...

However, seeking help from grief support groups has proven to be helpful. The group is comprised of people who are dealing with the feelings associated with losing loved ones, and as they share their feelings and the strategies they are using to cope, this helps others in the group feel relaxed. They feel connected to one another because they are not alone in their grief. They share something in common so there is a deep sense of understanding and no judgement. Members have a sense of belonging.

It has been shown that in communities or cultures where it is a taboo to talk about death, support groups provide individuals with the chance to talk about death in an open manner, as well as learn the strategies used by others to handle such a difficult moment.

I looked up how many grief support groups there are in Batavia and I was only able to hunt down a handful of locations that offered it. The grief support group that Crossroads House hosts at the Legacy Living Center is a huge blessing to the community of Batavia as it's a safe place for those who are mourning to work through their grief. The group has 6 participants right now, and we like to keep it to a small group to make sure everyone is heard. The current group we have is wonderful. Although everyone is experiencing a different loss, they have been able to give and receive support from each other because they have an understanding of what each other are going through. This group runs for 8 consecutive weeks, for an hour and a half on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm. A few topics we've discussed are: learning coping skills, how to adjust to taking on new roles, dealing with the ups and downs of our emotions, and ways to remember and carry on the legacy of our loved one. I am very proud of the group we have, for taking that first step to seeking support.

Crossroads House has been so blessed by the relationship we have with Hannah! She is a recent graduate from the University of Buffalo with a Master of Social Work degree and credentials in Serious Illness Care. Currently living in the Buffalo area, Hannah intends to continue her career in end-of-life care. During her time as an intern with us, she found that her experience with death and dying was not as scary as she thought it would be, and has been honored to share space with our residents.

Best wishes for success in the future, Hannah; come back and visit any time!

Our next Grief & Loss
Peer Support Group
will be in the fall;
information will be
posted on our
Facebook page.

The Legacy Living Center is the former rectory of St. James Episcopal Church, down the street from Crossroads House. It is a multi-functional building that we use for meetings, training, and making baskets for our raffles.



Bringing Comfort as a Comfort Care Caregiver

by Debbie Paine

I've been fortunate to be able to volunteer time as a comfort care caregiver at Crossroads House for nearly 10 years. Each resident and their family arrives hoping to benefit from Crossroads House's mission, as expressed by hospice pioneer Dame Cecily Saunders, that "We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die." Comfort care means that we volunteers are given all the pharmaceutical and social tools necessary to do the best we can to alleviate the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain of the remarkable people we serve. Within that framework, I've noted another universal source of comfort our residents seek, which we also uniquely provide: we can indulge them in the comfort of their habits. Consider the soothing power of our own habits. The best way to appreciate this is to think of a time a habit was disrupted. It may have been something exceedingly minor, like not having a favorite creamer for our morning coffee, or something that rippled through the entire day, like missing a shower because we overslept. We hold tight to our morning rituals and bedtime routines, our favorite treats, pillows, pets. Some of us enjoy wine, beer, or a dish of ice cream in front of the evening news, Jeopardy, or reruns of Law and Order. Each of these recurring activities is like an oasis, punctuating the multitude of microevents in our day that are beyond our control, with the solace of agency and continuity.

Most end-of-life care alternatives are the very antithesis to allowing for habits. Hospitals and nursing homes are limited in how much individual attention can be provided, leaving little room for attending to the personal preferences of patients. At Crossroads, encouraging the continuation of personal habits is considered another treatment, another aspect of a resident's care to be addressed.

You may have thought, as I have, that when facing a terminal diagnosis, you will cast aside your self-discipline and allow indulgence in the things you've long denied yourself (in the interests of health, finances, or decorum). But if what I have observed among our residents over the years is typical, it's a safe bet you won't do this at all. We are prepared to provide our residents with decadent treats, massages, and pampering. Yet I've seen residents request lowfat yogurt in lieu of gelato or ice cream; they may waiver a moment given the choice, but their habit of picking the healthiest option will prevail. Some residents continue to maintain meticulous checkbooks and to-do lists, though caring friends or family had been looking after most of their affairs. I felt the utmost admiration for a resident that continued to perform her version of a daily "workout" despite being bedbound. Interestingly, none of these precious souls was in denial of their situation.

Not everyone's personal practices focus on healthy living. I felt equally conflicted and honored to join a resident outdoors on the porch as she enjoyed her evening cigarette and coffee after dinner with her family. Another enjoyed an evening brandy or two with a longtime friend who continued this habit with him. Habits are comfort - they define us and imbue us with an identity that declares that we are here, we exist, we feel, we have essence. Why should we want to change any of that, if we are to truly *"live until we die?"*



If you are interested in becoming a **Crossroads House** volunteer, applications can be found on our website under the **Volunteering tab**. We have opportunities for caregiving, fundraising support, gardening, and more! Have any questions? Give us a call at : (585) 343-3892



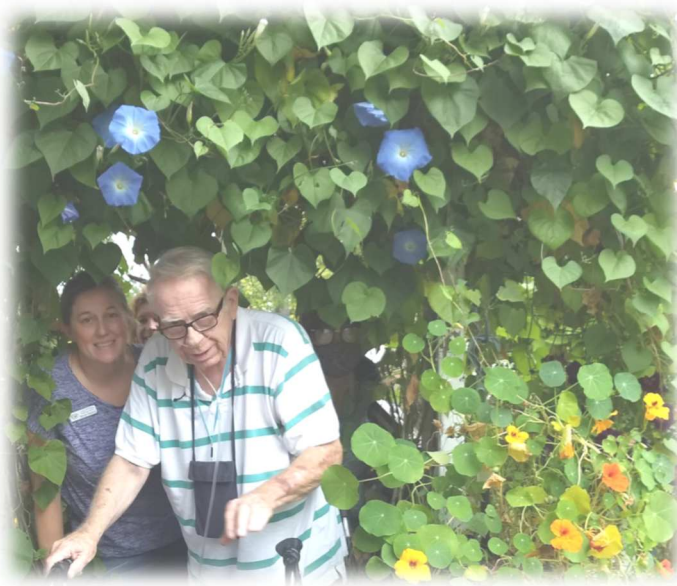
Fred with Chester,
(therapy dog in training)

"...my Dad particularly mentioned Tom, must be overnight guy or early morning, my Dad says he does everything for him: helps him shower, helps him with his teeth, cooks...everyone is so wonderful.."



Carol and Lorraine, always the best of friends. They found meaningful work they could do together and Crossroads House was doubly blessed.

Happiness starts with a wet nose
and ends with a tail.



Nicole escorted Dennis to his home so he could collect some seeds for us to plant in our Memory Garden this year.

"If there ever comes a day where we can't be together, keep me in your heart. I'll stay there forever."

-Winnie the Pooh



Our "Wish List"

- Large baskets for our Spring & Fall Raffles
- Forever postage stamps
- Clear packaging tape
- White copier paper 8 1/2 x 11
- Mailing labels (Avery 8163)
- Label Maker-M tape 3/8
- Gift Cards: Aldi's, BJ's, Save-A-Lot, Walmart, Tops, and local restaurants for residents' families
- Cans of ginger ale, Coke, Diet Coke, 7-Up, Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, and juices (small)
- Pudding cups
- Butter
- Coffee: regular and decaf
- Half and Half creamer
- Swiffer Dry Cloths

Thank you for adding us to your shopping list!



Are you doing your shopping online these days? Go to 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!!**



To our Facebook followers who support us with a comment, a "like," or a cute emoji on our posts.

To the organizations who say "tell us what you need."

To those who receive our Annual Campaign letter and make a donation.

To the local business men and women who write out a check to Crossroads House every year that they can.

To everyone who writes our fundraisers on their calendar so they don't forget to go.

To those who pay more than the sticker price at our Annual Garage Sale.

To schools that teach their students the importance of giving back to their community and bless our mission in the process.

To our volunteers who give their time to Crossroads House and expect nothing in return yet believe they have received so much.

To the family members who come back to visit and find friends and comfort within our walls.

To everyone who supports the mission of Crossroads House because they care about the end-of-life experience, and want the best for those we care for, who are on that journey.

To our future residents who will entrust us with their care and their families who share them with us:

You are the reason for Crossroads House.

**Stay
connected!**

www.crossroadshouse.com

*In case you haven't been to our website lately, we have a new look!
You can find information on:*

Referrals Upcoming Events Our History Virtual Tour
Meet Our Staff WBTA Radio Broadcasts Newsletters Make a Donation
Volunteering Caregiving Videos



Upcoming Events & Fundraisers

Please follow our Facebook page so you will receive detailed notifications about these events or check the Community Calendars on The Batavian or in The Daily News as the times draw near.

July

Weds July 27- Sat July 30: Annual Garage Sale

August

Tues Aug 2: Miss Batavia Restaurant Fundraiser

Sun Aug 14: Alex's Place Restaurant Golf Event

Thurs Aug 18: Van Hulburt Memorial Golf Event

September

Sun Sept 18: Kiwanis Car Cruise

Thurs Sept 22: Dr. Kerr Event (see page 3)

October

Weds Oct 19: Spaghetti Western Dinner

November

Fri Nov 4 -Sat Nov 5: Fall Basket Raffle

Fri Nov 18- Sun Nov 20 & Fri Nov 25-Sun Nov 27: Christmas Sale



Thank you to everyone who comes out to enjoy our fundraisers, donates to them, or helps behind the scenes. *We could not do what we do without you!*

We are so grateful..

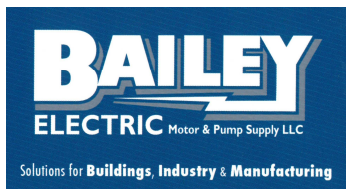
...to the Medal Level Sponsors of our **2022 Annual Business Campaign!**

Thank
you!

If you would like your business to be on the mailing list for our next campaign, please contact us at: ofc1@crossroadshouse.com. As a token of our thanks for a Medal Level Sponsorship we will promote your business in our newsletter, on our website, on our business banner which is displayed at our fundraisers, and as a supporter on our Facebook page.

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

Gold Medal Level Sponsors



Silver Medal Level Sponsors



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FUNERAL HOME
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Bronze Medal Level Sponsors



Thank you to our 2022 Newsletter Sponsors!



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Would you like to receive our newsletter by email instead of getting a paper copy?

Reach out to us at newsletter@crossroadshouse.com along with your contact information and we'll take care of you.

Donation Form

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 _____

_____ 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

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!



