A Note from the Executive Director

Thank you simply does not seem to capture my true gratitude for the support Rock River Hospice and Home felt during our recent annual Festival of Trees event. The community continues to amaze me with their creativity in decorating trees, crafting and stepping forward to support our community. Each year families can purchase an ornament in honor or memory of a loved one and have it displayed for the week of Festival on our Tree of Memories. Thank you for sharing the memory of your loved ones with us this holiday season.

Holidays can be difficult for many as traditions often change as we age, families change and loved ones die. May you and your family continue to decorate trees or create new traditions to honor the memory of loved ones in the coming year.

As I reflect on 2019 for Rock River Hospice and Home, I am reminded at the dedication of our community to ensure families are supported in the final moments of life. A few highlights for our organization were: our first annual Pickleball Tournament, Memorial Garden dedication, addition of new volunteers writing living histories and creating hand molds for keepsakes for families, assisting patients fulfill their bucket list of final wishes, strengthened partnerships with community agencies, growth of staff, and community Veteran Pinning Ceremonies to honor veterans for their service.

Planning is underway for additional events in 2020, stay tuned to dates of upcoming ways to involve yourself with Rock River Hospice and Home. If you have a desire to assist in making final wishes of patients and families come true, please consider joining us in 2020.

“You may think your light is small, but it can make a big difference in other people's lives. Let your light shine.”

Thank you for continuing to shine your light in the lives of hospice patients.

Emily Taylor
Executive Director

Mission
Rock River Hospice & Home affirms life by providing exceptional care and support to those transitioning through serious illness, death and grief.

We Honor Veterans
"Testimonials … "
what people are saying about us.

"My sister passed away tonight at Rock River Hospice & Home. On behalf of my wife and I, I would like to thank all of you for the wonderful care you provided during her time of need. The entire staff was absolutely wonderful to work with. You should be very proud of all of them. I know my sister’s husband, son and grandchildren all echo our same sentiments. Dealing with death is always hard, but your staff helped make the process easier on everyone. Thank you again for all your love and prayers."

Hospice Family

"Before my brother's passing, he had just one wish. He wanted to go to Champs Bar in Sterling one last time. Unfortunately, that never happened. But to me, his ‘Champs’ came to him daily in the form of his hospice caregivers, and I thank you all for that. I was fortunate that he allowed me to care for him in his last 15 months of life. Those memories I will cherish for a lifetime. Everyone at hospice touched our hearts in so many ways. I could not have cared for him without the guidance and support of so many of your staff. Thank you all for being his ‘Champs’.”

Hospice Family
I pride myself saying I'm a tough old bird, I don't give up.

I thank God for the life I had and my lovely wife.

I pray every night to thank God for hospice, friends & family.

Doug Crofton

Doug Crofton, a Rock River Hospice & Home patient decided not to let his hospice diagnosis end his plans to complete his bucket list. Doug has been staying active while receiving hospice service. He is doing exactly what Rock River Hospice & Home hopes all patients can do - live a quality life. Doug has a twin brother, Michael, who has been involved with many of his bucket list adventures. Doug said, “My brother & I have been close for ever & ever.” Doug’s wife, Berta, shared stories about the twins when they were growing up. She stated that she couldn’t stand the Crofton twins when they were all growing up together. She shared that they locked her in a cooler once at the Dairy Mart. Berta said, “The twins were a handful & always up to something.” And the two haven’t stopped! One trip Doug and his brother went on was to Devil’s Lake. Doug stated, “The trip was amazing!” Doug and Michael also traveled to Union Station. Doug got a scooter so he could go on the all-day trip. “The scooter was the best thing I could have done. I practiced driving the scooter before the Union trip, so I didn’t crash,” Doug said. When asked what he would tell others if they weren’t sure if hospice was for them, he said, “I would tell them they were crazy. No one realizes how good you guys are & what you do.”
A Note from the Volunteer Coordinator

We are always in need of volunteers! Hospice volunteers are required to have 16 hours of training. Our volunteers can help in the Inpatient Unit to answer phones, letting visitors in, visiting patients, getting patients water, and/or assisting families. Volunteers can also visit patients in nursing homes or patient’s homes. If you have a special talent, you can share that with patients and families. We are looking for volunteers who can share a couple hours of their time. Volunteering for hospice can be very rewarding and it also means so much to patients and families.

Volunteer Training will be from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on January 18 and 19. The training will be held at Rock River Hospice & Home, 2706 Avenue E, Sterling. Call Stacey Nielsen, Volunteer Coordinator, (815) 625-3858.

*SPEAKERS BUREAU*

Education is essential to understanding hospice philosophy and end-of-life decisions. Staff members and specially trained volunteers are available to speak to your group about a variety of topics. We customize our presentation to fit your needs and welcome opportunities to share information about hospice, bereavement and end-of-life care. To schedule a speaker, call (815) 625-3858.

*Speakers Bureau*

Congratulations to our employees celebrating service anniversaries during November, December, January & February!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stacey Byer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1/13/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalie Conklin</td>
<td>11/15/18</td>
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<td>Alcie Daniels</td>
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<td>Deb Hodges</td>
<td>2/1/18</td>
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<td>Katie Jones</td>
<td>11/16/18</td>
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<td>Tina Miller</td>
<td>1/10/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peg Williams</td>
<td>2/4/19</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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www.hospicerockriver.org
Why I work at RRHH?
I came to hospice seeking a new opportunity that is a better match for my skills. Hospice took care of one of my loved ones and I want to give back to an agency that holds a special spot in my heart.

What I hope to accomplish ...
I hope to ease the workload of my co-workers and help with the intake process, making it easier and quicker for families to receive our services and care.

Family ...
Boyfriend - Travis; Three children - Madi, Mason and LT; One step-daughter, Emery; and Two dogs - Brice and Gunner.

Hobbies ...
Learning to use a Cricut, home improvement projects, hanging out with the kids (especially outdoors), and I am a sports person.

Mental Energy Tips
Mental energy is killed by excess tension and excess tension makes problems seem unsolvable.
submitted by Ann DeWaele, RRHH Employee

Tips to conserve and enhance mental energy.
* Take time for yourself. Put yourself in a relaxing mood like listening to your favorite music.
* Break your goals into goals you have already attained or make sub-goals, then give yourself credit for reaching and passing them.
* Take pride in smaller accomplishments. Sometimes a good start toward a goal can be exciting.
* Increase movement: Physical and mental energy go hand in hand.
* Quit the pattern of negative thinking or don't go back to repetitive or boring thinking.
* Every opportunity in a situation is a learning opportunity.
* Don't rehearse failure. Negative mental image will lead to negative mental expectation.
* Never think - I have thought this all out in my mind. There is no way I can do anything about it. This thinking will deplete mental energy.
* Keep enthusiasm high - accomplishment is rewarding.
Upcoming Events

For updated information about RRHH events, please call (815) 625-3858 or visit www.hospicerockriver.org.

Every Thursday
Bushy's Slots
Erie, IL

7 p.m., Drawing

Bushy's Slots in Erie is holding a Queen of Hearts Raffle drawing (first drawing was December 5) every Thursday night at 7 p.m. 30% of the jackpot when the Queen is found will be donated to Rock River Hospice & Home.

January 18-19, 2020

Volunteer Training
January 18-19

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Rock River Hospice & Home
2706 Avenue E, Sterling, IL
Open to the Public

Call Stacey Nielsen to register, 815-625-3858.

Are you looking for a way to give to RRHH? Described below are two options. Please consult your tax attorney and financial planner before making a donation.

A QCD is a direct transfer out of an IRA to a qualified charity. QCDs are designed to satisfy Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). A RMD is an annual required distribution from IRAs once the owner obtains age 70 ½. Unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA, a QCD is not considered taxable income. This will keep your taxable income lower and may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare. Please consult with your tax advisor to determine if both your IRA and charity qualify for QCDs.

A donor-advised fund is a charitable investment account with the sole purpose of making donations to charitable organizations. When you contribute cash, securities or other assets to a donor-advised fund you are generally eligible to take an immediate tax deduction. Those funds can then be invested and grow tax-free until the funds are distributed to a qualified charity of your choice. If you have assets with high unrealized capital gains, this may be a great option for your charitable giving. Please consult with your tax advisor and a financial advisor to determine if a donor-advised fund is the right fit for your charitable giving.

Anytime you shop Amazon, shop AmazonSmile and choose Rock River Hospice & Home as your charity of choice, and a portion of your purchase will be donated to RRHH.

www.hospicerockriver.org
The 30th Festival of Trees was a success because of the contributions given by the generosity of the communities served by Rock River Hospice & Home. RRHH says thank you to all businesses, organizations, volunteers, decorators, chairpersons, sponsors, donors and the general public for the generous amount of time, talent, and financial support given to the Festival of Trees. We realize resources are limited and precious and we truly appreciate your expressions of support in an effort to help us continue helping others.

The proceeds from the Festival of Trees assist Rock River Hospice & Home, a United Way partner agency, in providing care and support to the terminally ill and their families at no cost. The professional staff and team of volunteers have offered expert and compassionate care for over 37 years to those during a most vulnerable time.

On behalf of the staff, board of directors and volunteers, please accept our sincere and heartfelt thank you. Please know that through your generosity, you have helped to provide hope and compassionate care to your fellow community members.

We wish you and yours happiness throughout this holiday season.
Calendar of Events 2019-2020

Every Thursday
Queen of Hearts Drawing (benefits RRHH)
7 p.m., Bushy's Slots, 9068 Moline Rd., Erie, IL

January 18-19
Volunteer Training
8 a.m.-3 p.m., RRHH, 2706 Avenue E, Sterling

June
Annual Golf Outing
Exact date and Location to be announced

Second Monday of the Month
TIME (Together in Memories) - Grief Support Group
Noon, Rock River Hospice & Home

All events are at RRHH unless otherwise noted. Look for more details regarding future events in newsletters, special mailings, local media and our social media accounts. Questions? Please call (815) 625-3858 or email karen@hospicerockriver.org. Also visit www.hospicerockriver.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

"By Your Side, Our Family Caring for Your Family."

To receive this newsletter electronically, send an email to karen@hospicerockriver.org.
Christmas can be a painful time for some. It may be the first Christmas without a beloved family member who has recently died; it may be a time that has always been difficult. The constant noise around us about joy and celebration, about getting together with family and friends, may remind us what we have lost or have never had. Broken relationships, unemployment, ill health, the pain of isolation - all these can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending. We need a space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern; we need to know that we are not alone.

We need encouragement to live the days ahead of us. For these reasons, First Presbyterian Church offers a special “Longest Night” service on December 19 at 6:00 PM.

Come join us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God’s presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle - and that God’s Word comes to shine light into our darkness, even on the longest night of the year. Everyone, regardless of church background (or lack of it) is welcome. An offering will be taken for donation to Rock River Hospice and Home. The short service will be followed by a brief time for light refreshments and fellowship.

Call or email for more information: 815-625-0452  firstpresbyteriansterling@live.com
Become a HOSPICE Volunteer

Hospice Volunteer Training
January 18-19, 2020
9 a.m.-3 p.m.

2706 Avenue E, Sterling

Volunteers are a valuable part of the care Rock River Hospice & Home provides. Volunteers fill a unique role in providing comfort and support to patients and families by giving their gifts of time, energy and compassion.

To make a difference in someone’s life, call or email Stacey at 815-625-3858 or staceynielsen@hospicerockriver.org.

“Volunteers comfort with their presence. One does not need to know all the right words to say but the ability to just be present.”

Gina Davis