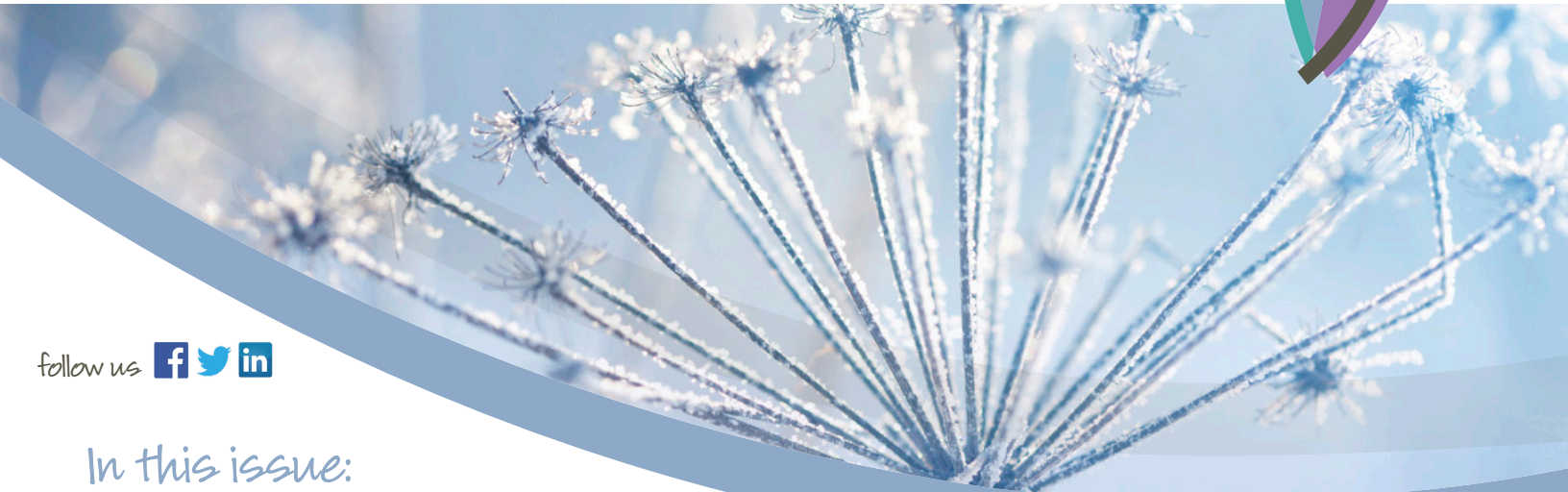


Perspective

Winter 2021

A community publication
from Northern Illinois Hospice



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Our Mission Inspires Local Family

Every day, the Northern Illinois Hospice team encounters gratitude for the expert care and support it provides. The Towns family is one of those grateful families.

When Carl Towns Sr.'s health declined, his son, Carl Jr., and his mother, Albertha, knew they needed help. One call to Northern Illinois Hospice and they were confident they made the right decision.

"The immediacy of the response was incredible," said Carl, Jr. "Northern Illinois Hospice came out the same day I called and took care of everything."

Carl Jr. admits he was hesitant to call hospice at first because he thought it meant "giving up." He quickly realized that wasn't the case, noting "Northern Illinois Hospice was swift to get us everything we needed. A hospital bed to sit him up, the CNA



Albertha Towns and her son, Carl Jr., share a special photograph that features Carl Jr. and his father.

taught us how to change linen, and much more. It made life so much easier for us and for him," said Carl Jr.

The Towns family felt relief for the care that was given to Carl. As the Stage 4 cancer progressed, weekly visits from the team provided peace



First in *caring* for life's final months

Story continues on page 4



MISSION

Northern Illinois Hospice is a trusted community partner dedicated to:

- providing extraordinary and dignified care, comfort and compassion to individuals and families at the end of life;
- removing barriers to care access so all eligible individuals, regardless of ability to pay and payment source, receive exceptional care and support; and
- educating others about end-of-life planning and hospice and palliative care.

VISION

Our vision is to be a local and national leader in hospice and palliative care and to enrich end-of-life experiences through our quality, innovative approaches, and supportive education.

CORE VALUES

COMMUNITY
COMPASSION
EXCELLENCE
GRATITUDE
INTEGRITY
QUALITY
SERVICE
STEWARDSHIP
VISION

From the Chief Executive Officer

Wouldn't it be nice to talk about something not called a pandemic, COVID-19, and the Coronavirus?

The reality is that Northern Illinois Hospice is health care, and the pandemic has been a day in, day out reality for us. We are surrounded by exquisite professionals dedicated to first-rate patient care and teamwork.

I could not be prouder of our team's work this past year during the public health emergency.

Considered Phase 1a workers in the COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Plan, more than 75% of Northern Illinois Hospice staff have been vaccinated at this time. We continue to have a sufficient supply of PPE, and our team is doing an exceptional job with infection prevention and control practices.

Northern Illinois Hospice has played an important role during this pandemic. Why? Because we provide care at home. As with every day of our 42 years of existence, our team of professionals go directly to the individuals we serve, wherever they call home, including personal residences and facilities.

Staying safe at home has provided tremendous peace of mind and comfort for families. Those who have been fearful to "doctor," those who are not sure how to navigate pandemic restrictions and have been concerned about an ER visit or hospital stay, welcomed Northern Illinois Hospice's expert care and support at home and our 24-7-365 availability.

Pandemic and otherwise, Northern Illinois Hospice's care, education, and support stands up and our team always is so thankful to serve families who need us.

Make today the BEST day!

Lisa Novak
Chief Executive Officer



Grateful Family Program

This month, we are debuting our “Grateful Family” program, an initiative that offers families and friends the opportunity to express their gratitude for the compassionate, insightful, and supportive care the Northern Illinois Hospice team provides.

Claudette Christensen’s daughters recently reached out to us to share how our team provided support during their mom’s final journey:

“More than anything, our mom wanted to come home, and we wanted to bring her home as soon as possible,” said Julie Heeren, Claudette’s daughter. After ten days in the hospital and a short time at a rehabilitation center, Claudette’s health was quickly failing. Julie, not sure what to do next, contacted family friend, Northern Illinois Hospice RN Renea Proctor, and asked if hospice could help. “I was so glad she called me. Often people just don’t realize what we can do,” said Renea. “We support not only the patient, but the entire family.”

Julie’s next call was to Northern Illinois Hospice Intake Coordinator, Donna Alexander. Donna remembers, “I heard the uncertainty in Julie’s voice. She was worried that she and her family would not know how to care for her mom or what to expect. I told Julie, believe me, you can do this!”

From that point, the Northern Illinois Hospice social work team sprung into action and, within a day, Claudette was home and equipped with a hospital bed and other essential medical equipment. The team provided Julie and her sister, Lori Linley, with the knowledge and confidence to make their mother comfortable, and they will never forget how loving and kind Northern Illinois Hospice aide



Former Northern Illinois Hospice patient Claudette Christensen poses with her children. From left to right: Scott Christensen, Lori Linley, Claudette Christensen, Jim Christensen and Julie Heeren.

Sandy Anguiano, CNA was.

Hospice nurses, social workers, and other clinical staff are experts at assessing changes in their patients and empowering family members to confidently care for their loved ones. “We could be ‘comforters’ to our mom,” said Lori. “Mom squeezed my hand four times, and we all gently rubbed her cheek. We wouldn’t have had those moments without hospice.”

Claudette died December 11, 2020, a little after 10:00 p.m. The family gathered and sang hymns, shared stories about Claudette’s strength, zest for life, and unconditional love for family. “We could not have done what we did without Northern Illinois Hospice’s help,” said Lori. “The nurses and team became like family. They give everything they’ve got.”

The entire team at Northern Illinois Hospice and Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation are profoundly touched by the gratitude families share with us. Claudette’s family shared their story and directed memorial gifts in their mom’s memory to Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation. In addition, they

became donors themselves, making personal gifts in memory of their mom and in honor of her care team.

Grateful Family stories and tribute gifts are a priceless way to show support to Northern Illinois Hospice. Kind words and generosity ensure the genuine dedication and expertise of the Northern Illinois Hospice team remains available to all those who turn to us as they embark on life’s final journey.

Please visit our website and click the “Grateful Family” link and tell us your unique story. For your convenience, you can make an online gift at the same time. Additionally, we welcome you to drop us a note or call us at 815.398.0500. Ask to speak to a member of the Foundation team. We can’t wait to hear from you and welcome you into the grateful Northern Illinois Hospice family!





Patient Gifted with Garden Goodies

This past year, Nancy* told her Northern Illinois Hospice care team that she would like to visit Anderson Japanese Gardens to learn about its design and to see the fall leaves. Anderson Japanese Gardens generously offered to give Nancy and her significant other a docent-led tour. Then, Nancy's symptoms worsened, the temperature outside suddenly dropped, and the number of COVID-19 cases in our region quickly rose. Nancy reluctantly decided that the outing would be too difficult. When we shared this situation with Anderson Japanese Gardens, staff gathered a collection of gifts, including a blanket, tea, and coffee table book with beautiful pictures of the Gardens. These thoughtful gifts allowed Nancy a meaningful experience without leaving her home. Thank you, Anderson Japanese Gardens, for helping us make life brighter for those on our care — even when plans change!

**A pseudonym has been used to protect the patient's privacy.*



Carl Jr. proudly displays a sketch of his father created by one of his daughters.

Our Mission Inspires Local Family

continued from page 1

of mind and the family was able to enjoy quality time with Carl.

The gratitude they feel toward Northern Illinois Hospice inspired them to share their experience with hopes that other families seek help. "The 'H' in hospice is for help," said Albertha. "The whole time we had help, and it was priceless."

Carl died peacefully at home last November. Carl Jr. says his father considered it a "gift" to be put in a position during his life to help people. He was a man who lived to serve others and it was an honor for Northern Illinois Hospice to share in his end of life journey.

More About Carl Sr.

Carl Jr. was proud of the legacy his father left behind. He made an impact in the Rockford community by helping others. He served in many capacities including the Rockford School Board, and was a founding member of RAMM (Rockford Association for Minority Management). Carl worked as a Human Resource Manager at Ingersoll Milling, and was also a member of Pilgrim Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon.



Our Amazing Appreciation Avenue

On October 22, 2020, Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation and Northern Illinois Hospice Volunteer Services teamed up to host “Appreciation Avenue,” a drive-thru event to thank our dedicated and generous donors and volunteers for their unwavering support. The event was the perfect opportunity to safely connect with those who do so much to support the Northern Illinois Hospice mission. It was fun for both attendees and our staff.

Thank you to Midland States Bank for exclusively sponsoring this event and to Harder Signs for providing signage in-kind!



WHAT ROCKS? *We do!*

Northern Illinois Hospice was named BEST HOSPICE ORGANIZATION in the annual Rockford Register Star "What Rocks Rockford" contest.

"We are thrilled to be recognized by our community. We consider it a privilege to care for local residents through end of life and we are so grateful to be honored in this way," says Lisa Novak, CEO of Northern Illinois Hospice. "Receiving this award during the COVID-19 pandemic holds a special place for us as area families turn to us for expert, compassionate care and comfort. This recognition is especially meaningful during these challenging times."

The "What Rocks Rockford" contest spotlights local businesses in more than six different categories.



When Giving Becomes Leading: Major Gifts & Naming Opportunities

The Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation Board of Trustees is thrilled to announce naming opportunities throughout Northern Illinois Hospice's headquarters on Harrison Avenue. "Founded by the community for the community over 40 years ago, Northern Illinois Hospice is honored to have been welcomed into the lives of generations of families in our region," said Northern Illinois Hospice and Northern Hospice Foundation Board Trustee Jerry Paris. "We are proud to belong to the community we serve and excited to 'open another door' to our supporters wishing to make transformational tribute gifts to our organization."

Naming opportunities range from \$25,000 for naming the Clinical Area Conference Room, to \$1 million for naming the building. Just as each space is unique, so too are the ways donors may choose to make their contribution commitments. Please contact the Director of Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation Susan Lundin at 815.398.0050 to discuss how your generosity can be a memorable tribute while also impacting generations of patients and families for years to come.

Grant to Fund Virtual Reality Equipment

Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation is proud to announce that it has received a \$9,300 grant from the Dr. Louis & Violet Rubin Fund of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois' Community Grants Program. This grant will fund the purchase of virtual reality equipment and software that allows users to "embody" an individual as they transition to home hospice care or experience the progression of prevalent, often age-related diseases like Parkinson's disease and

Alzheimer's disease.

We look forward to sharing this engaging, educational resource with our region. This new technology, and the educational programming that will be implemented around it, will generate insights into the daily experiences of our elderly community members. We know that knowledge and understanding will lead to better, more empathetic care. Northern Illinois Hospice will offer this virtual reality training to

staff and volunteers, area healthcare professionals, family caregivers, and community groups. The training can be conducted virtually if it is not yet safe to hold in-person training sessions.

If you are interested in being added to our communication list regarding this educational programming or have questions, please contact Holly Sammons, Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation Specialist, at 779.210.3576 or hsammons@niha.org.

2021 Virtual Support Groups and Additional Support Offerings

Open to anyone who has experienced the death of someone close to them, our groups and workshops focus on learning, healing and encouragement. All are welcome. Pre-registration is required. Please email avitale@niha.org or call 779.774.9820 to RSVP. Be on the lookout (via the Northern Illinois Hospice website and The Grief Café on Facebook) for our new offering: Facebook Live – Talking about Grief and Resilience.



Mindful May Mondays (MMM)
6-consecutive Mondays
Beginning May 3
3-4 p.m.
No RSVP is necessary, but is requested.

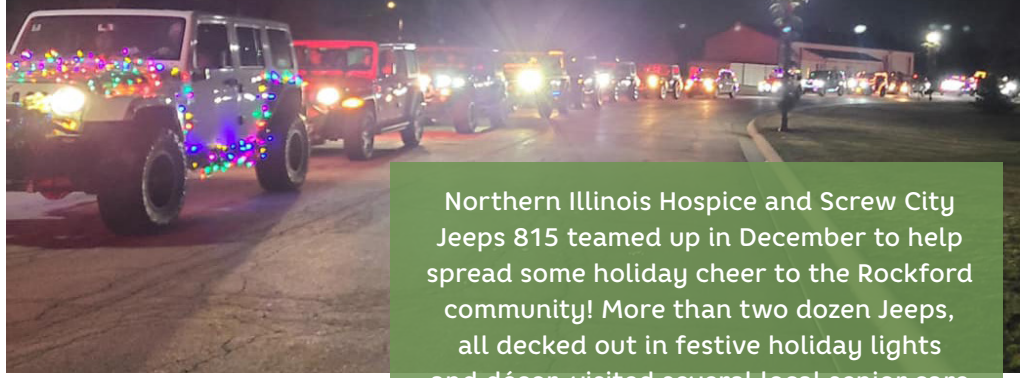
This group will be open to Northern Illinois Hospice families, caregivers, and the community-at-large.



Join us for a “safe space” to gather, ask questions, and share ideas about grief, loss, and bereavement.

Search The Grief Café on Facebook.

Jingle Jammin' Jeep Parade



Northern Illinois Hospice and Screw City Jeeps 815 teamed up in December to help spread some holiday cheer to the Rockford community! More than two dozen Jeeps, all decked out in festive holiday lights and décor, visited several local senior care facilities. Residents and staff were treated to a great light show as they watched from their windows!



Patient Midge Anderson enjoyed time with her golden puppy, “Ruffy.”

Pet Therapy Goes Robotic

Pet therapy is one of several integrated therapies offered to patients being served by Northern Illinois Hospice. A pet visit offers many benefits, including reducing anxiety, easing depression, and encouraging communication. A pet also can reconnect the patient with the experience of a beloved former pet. Most of all, it provides comfort to patients.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, in-person pet therapy visits were suspended, leaving a void for some of our patients. Thanks to generous donors who give to our Pet Peace of Mind program, Volunteer Services purchased a robotic puppy. The puppy has built-in sensors and speakers, so the pup can respond to motion and touch. “Ruffy” also has a heartbeat, lifelike coat, and responds to voices.





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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Perspective

Winter 2021

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from Northern Illinois Hospice

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Northern Illinois Hospice Staff Receive COVID-19 Vaccine

Northern Illinois Hospice staff are doing their part to stop the spread of COVID-19. As healthcare workers, our team plays a critical role caring for others in the community. Employees were offered the vaccine in early January and more than 75% of staff opted for the vaccination.

"Getting the two-part vaccine is an important step in taking care of yourself and others in our war against COVID-19," said Northern Illinois Hospice Medical Director John Myers, MD FACS FACC. "The advantage of getting a vaccine far outweighs any risk. Do it for yourself and colleagues! Be part of a 'healthy herd!'"

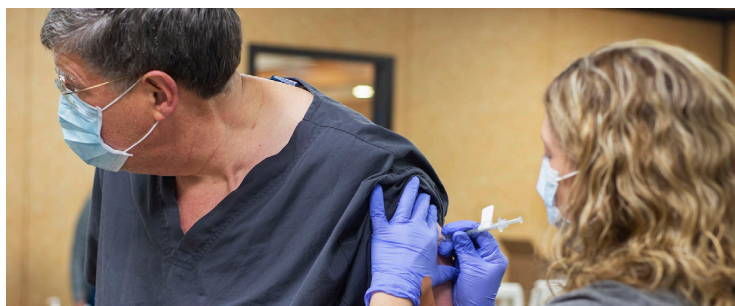


Photo: Northern Illinois Hospice Medical Director John Myers, MD FACS FACC, receives his second COVID-19 vaccination at SwedishAmerican Hospital.

If you would like to be removed from our mailing lists, please call 815.398.0500.