

# Perspective

Winter 2022

A community publication  
from Northern Illinois Hospice



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## Veteran Expert Shares Lessons Learned *Northern Illinois Hospice Welcomes Deborah Grassman*

Northern Illinois Hospice was honored to bring Opus Peace Founder Deborah Grassman, ARNP to Rockford for the “Veteran Care Symposium: Finding Peace at End of Life.”

Held at NIU Rockford, the event featured a full day of learning about methods for helping Veterans and their families. The three 90-minute learning sessions were geared toward registered nurses, social workers, mental health counselors, and Veterans and their families. The sessions and Veteran recognition and pinning ceremony were open to the public as well.

The day began with a discussion on Soul Injury®, a phenomenon discovered by five Veterans Administration hospice nurses after caring for 10,000 dying Veterans. A Soul Injury® is defined as a wound that separates you from your real self and is caused by unmourning



*Opus Peace Founder Deborah Grassman, ARNP, speaks to local clinicians and Veterans and their families during the November 16 event.*

loss/hurt, unforgiven guilt or shame, and fear of helplessness and loss of control.

The session on Soul Injury®, led by Grassman, provided educational



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

Hospice care arrived in America 50 years ago and Northern Illinois Hospice was an early pioneer. Sadly, community-based, nonprofit hospices like Northern Illinois Hospice are no longer America's norm.

Today, about one-quarter of hospice providers look like Northern Illinois Hospice. Medicare research shows that 70% of current hospice providers are for-profit entities, not charities. Research also shows that for profit hospice providers spend less than nonprofits on patient care. No surprise there.

Venture capitalists are acquiring hospices at a feverish pace, and news is filled with hospice mergers and acquisitions, "profits," and "shareholder value." According to 2021 data, the number of hospices owned by private equity firms soared from 100 to 400 between 2011 and 2019, and these trends are likely to accelerate. Sobering news for a healthcare specialty rooted in mission and values, person-centered care, and service before self.

Northern Illinois Hospice leadership keeps a close eye on national and local trends and works diligently to navigate the never-ending winds of change. We thrive during a time when some other nonprofit, community hospices have found it necessary to sell to for profit entities, merge, or go out of business. As we look ahead to 2023, we are expanding our offerings to enhance patients' quality of life and comfort. (Aromatherapy is coming soon!) Community-based palliative care, which will bring our legacy of great care to seriously ill individuals not yet ready for hospice, also will roll out next year.

Your support is so important to our efforts. Northern Illinois Hospice does thrive and is stronger because of you. From your donations, to volunteering, to encouraging friends and family to choose Northern Illinois Hospice, to insisting that your preferred nursing facility and healthcare provider make a referral to Northern Illinois Hospice, to supporting our events, to advocating for the seriously and terminally ill by asking elected representatives to expand and strengthen end-of-life care – your contributions matter. They matter greatly. We are stronger together.

Northern Illinois Hospice's approach to care is essential: local, experienced, high quality, with patients at the epicenter of all decision-making. During our five decades of supporting the most vulnerable in our community, Northern Illinois Hospice has been the standard for excellence. Ours is a mission worth fighting for.

Make today the BEST day!

Lisa Novak  
Chief Executive Officer



# Northern Illinois Hospice Celebrates DeKalb County Expansion with Open House and Ribbon Cutting

With much planning and anticipation, Northern Illinois Hospice expanded into DeKalb County and officially claimed a spot right in the middle at 2225 Gateway Drive in Sycamore.

The new office space allows the DeKalb County staff and volunteers a hub for the resources they need while caring for local patients and their loved ones.

“DeKalb County has a long history of embracing community hospice. Its residents, health care providers, and nursing facilities value high quality, end-of-life care,” said Lisa Novak, Chief Executive Officer. “Northern Illinois Hospice and DeKalb County are the perfect match, and our team is so proud to serve DeKalb County residents.”

To celebrate this new chapter, an official ribbon cutting and community open house was held on October 13. Led by the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce, the event was highly attended.

After the ceremony, all guests were able to take a tour, meet staff, and learn about volunteer opportunities and Northern Illinois Hospice’s approach to care.



*Above: Northern Illinois Hospice staff, board members, and friends were joined by the Sycamore Chamber of Commerce for a ribbon cutting at 2225 Gateway Drive, Sycamore, on October 13.*

*Below: A few members of Northern Illinois Hospice DeKalb County’s team pose for a photo during the open house and ribbon cutting. From left: Care Navigator Sue Rankin, MSW, LCSW; Volunteer Diane Hance; Certified Nursing Assistant Sherrie Johnson; Case Manager Cindy Nicholls, RN; Volunteer Judy Richey; and Music Therapist/Bereavement Coordinator Jen Conley, MT-BC, LPC.*



Northern Illinois Hospice’s DeKalb County Office



2225 Gateway Drive  
Sycamore, IL 60178

*(By appointment only)*





Mary (center) with several members of her Northern Illinois Hospice care team: (left) volunteer Betty LaFrance; (back right) care navigator Krissy Frank, MSW, LCSW; and (front right) music therapist Jen Conley, MT-BC, LPC.

## Patient Pleased with DeKalb Care

DeKalb resident Mary McIntyre had little experience with hospice care before she discovered Northern Illinois Hospice.

While she supported husband, he was only on hospice services for a short period of time. When it came time for her to need hospice support, she was pleasantly surprised to learn Northern Illinois Hospice was serving DeKalb, and more than her physical pain and symptoms would be managed.

“I never knew so many things were available to me on hospice,” Mary said. “I am happy Northern Illinois Hospice has come to DeKalb. I am grateful for the support I have been receiving.”

She enjoyed the time reading with volunteer Betty LaFrance, and writing her own original song with music therapist Jen Conley, MT-BC, LPC.

Mary’s story, including a link to her original song, was featured in the Northern Illinois Hospice Annual Appeal, which arrived in mailboxes a few weeks ago. It can be viewed at [northernillinoishospice.org/give](http://northernillinoishospice.org/give).

Mary received Northern Illinois Hospice’s support for five months before her death on November 14, 2022. Her loved ones are in the thoughts and hearts of the Northern Illinois Hospice team. Mary was a special lady.



Veterans received commemorative pins during a recognition ceremony at the Veteran Care Symposium.

## Veteran Expert Shares Lessons Learned

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materials and self help tools to help participants learn how to self-compassionately connect with the part of themselves that is holding pain and shame, allowing reconnection with their soul and with who they really are.

Other sessions included Liberating Unmourned Loss and Wholistic Tools and Practices. The final 90-minute block of the day was dedicated to a Veteran recognition and pinning ceremony and a Vietnam Veteran Welcome Home ceremony.

Deborah Grassman, a Nurse Practitioner, is the author of two books, *Peace at Last* and *The Hero Within*. She is a contributing author for four textbooks, has 25 published articles, and is featured in five documentary films. Deborah also directs the Opus Peace Institute.

\*\* Special thanks to Bergstrom Foundation as our symposium benefactor and to Olson Funeral and Cremation Services for providing lunch for the attendees.

# An Un-Fore-Gettable Day of Giving and Golf



Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation's 34th Annual Charity Golf Event held on August 5th was an all-around success thanks to our event sponsors, supporters, attendees, volunteers, and, of course, our fantastic 2022 Golf Co-chairs and committee.

The day began with a round of golf at Rockford Country Club. After 18 holes, attendees were treated to music, cocktails, and hearty hors d'oeuvres on the deck overlooking the Rock River.

This year, the course game revenue and event donations were directed to the Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation's "Wish" program.

By day's end, more than \$66,500 was raised to exclusively benefit the programs and services our patients and their families depend on for compassionate, skilled care and heartfelt support.

We always enjoy the golf play day and spending time with some of the most kind-hearted people we know. Thank you to everyone who made this day a tremendous success, including our Premier Sponsor, UW Health. We are beyond grateful to those who came together to help us ensure everyone in our region has access to extraordinary hospice care.

*Above: The Peak Medical Home Care team enjoyed playing all 18 holes during the Northern Illinois Hospice Charity Golf Event.*

*Middle Left: Nearly 100 golfers enjoyed Rockford Country Club during the 34th Annual Charity Golf Event on August 5, including Gil Pena.*

*Left Bottom: Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation Board Member and 2022 Golf Committee Co-Chair Julie Humpal rounds the course with Northern Illinois Hospice Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer Noel Nickel, MBA.*



Thank you to  
2022 Golf  
Co-chairs

Julie Humpal  
Laura Pena



# HEARTS OUT TO HOSPICE!



For the past 14 years, Neighbors Bar & Gaming in Loves Park has hosted “Hearts Out to Hospice!” to support Northern Illinois Hospice. This year’s fundraiser featured an all day cookout with multiple bands providing live music, raising \$4,000 to support Northern Illinois Hospice patients. We are extremely thankful to Kelly Evink, the Evink family, and the Neighbors Bar & Gaming hardworking staff, and generous patrons who continue to support us year after year. A special thank you to Jonathon Sutherland and this year’s bands, O.G.M.C., Shifty Shafer, and The Dirt Road Rebelz.

## Northern Illinois Hospice: First on Your Giving List

Did you know that 69% of Americans donate to charity? And, if you and 69% of the people receiving this newsletter each made a \$50 gift to the Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation 2022 Annual Fund Campaign, together your kindness would total \$130,000!

Most likely, you are reading this newsletter because you or someone dear to you has been touched by the expert end-of-life care only Northern Illinois Hospice can provide. Your memories and experiences are personal and unique, and they likely provide you with compassionate insight into what others are going through. Perhaps your family has benefited from support of Northern Illinois Hospice donors or you’ve seen first hand how far a donation can help a family navigating a terminal diagnosis.

### Ways your giving helps Northern Illinois Hospice

**Make an annual gift.** The Annual Fund Campaign supports many services including: volunteer training and volunteer support, bereavement counseling, visits from our full time, certified Music Therapist, Pet Therapy visits and the Pet Peace of Mind® program, and Massage Therapy.

**Become a Legacy Society member.** By including Northern Illinois Hospice in your will, trust or estate plan you are providing sustaining support for the organization well into the future.

There is still time. Studies show, 30% of annual giving occurs in December, with 10% occurring in the last three days of the year.

From the bottom of everyone’s hearts at Northern Illinois Hospice, thank you for your support. You are appreciated as a donor and friend. Questions? Please contact Susan Lundin, Director of the Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation, at [slundin@niha.org](mailto:slundin@niha.org).



## 2023 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. To register, please go to our website [northernillinoishospice.org](http://northernillinoishospice.org). For more information on Rockford area events, email Andrew Vitale at [avitale@niha.org](mailto:avitale@niha.org).



Bridge of Hope  
Six-consecutive Mondays  
Beginning January 24  
2:30 - 4 PM  
Federated Church  
612 W. State St., Sycamore

For more information on DeKalb County events, email Jen Conley at [jconley@niha.org](mailto:jconley@niha.org).



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

Search The Grief Café on Facebook.



## Employee of the Year



Congratulations to our 2022 Employee of the Year, Penny White!

For 19 years, Penny has worked with our clinical team to ensure patients, families, and staff feel supported. We are so lucky to have her on our team!

*Photo: Penny White, Clinical Administrative Assistant, with Paula Sanders, RN, BSN, CHPN, Director of Clinical Services.*

## Northern Illinois Hospice Offers Stress-Busting Caregiver Course

This past summer, two Northern Illinois Hospice staff members teamed up with Lifescape Community Services to become certified in caregiver stress-busting.

Volunteer Program Coordinator Sheila O’Leary, MAHS, and Hospice Liaison Jennifer Ramsby, RN, CHPN became certified and kicked off their first program on October 11.

The WellMed Foundation describes “The Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers™” as an evidence-based program that provides support to family caregivers of persons with dementia or a chronic illness.”

The program is designed to improve the quality of life for family caregivers by learning to manage stress and cope better with their lives.

The classes cover stress management techniques, including breathing, meditation, massage, art, aromatherapy, journaling, and music. The final class encompasses all previously taught techniques to help create a path to wellness.

“We are so grateful for the wonderful opportunity to partner with Lifescape on this,” Volunteer Program Coordinator Sheila O’Leary said. “It’s a really fabulous program that allows Northern Illinois Hospice the opportunity to support community caregivers’ needs. The program is rich in information and tools for self-reflection and self-care skill development. We are so grateful to those in our first group for their participation and openness. We’ve all learned together.”

Northern Illinois Hospice continues to develop programs and projects to best support patients, families, and the community.

For more information, call 815.398.0500 and ask for Sheila in Volunteer Services.





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First in *caring* for life's final months

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## #WALK2ENDALZ

Northern Illinois Hospice staff and their families joined the fight against Alzheimer's this past September for the Walk to End Alzheimer's event in Rockford. For the past few years, Northern Illinois Hospice has not only walked in the event, but sponsored it as well. Alzheimer's affects many of our patients and many more in the community. We are proud to support the Alzheimer's Association and the awareness they bring to our communities.



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