

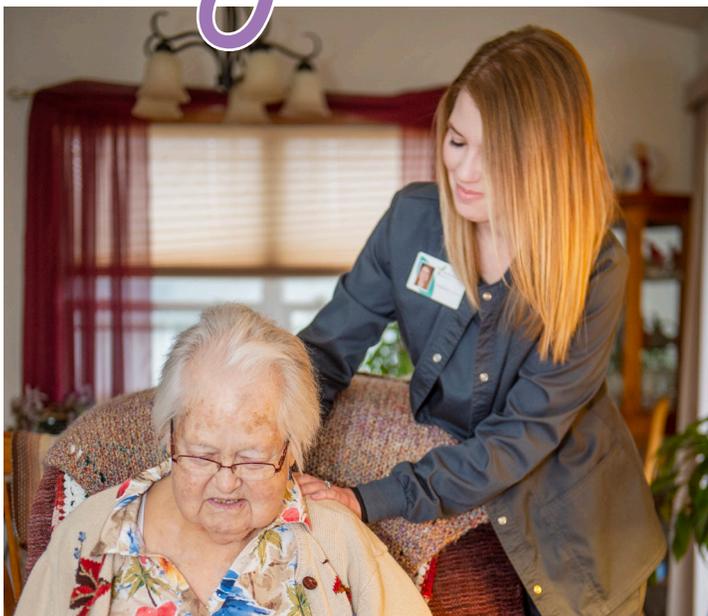
Perspective

Winter/Spring 2026

A community publication from
Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation



Together, We Are Something Greater



When you support Northern Illinois Hospice, you are making more than a donation. You are choosing to belong to a community of compassion, resilience, innovation, and hope.

At the center of our mission are the patients and families we are honored to serve. Our hospice community forms an extraordinary circle of care around them.

Of course, this Circle of Care includes **YOU!**

Your generosity fuels essential programs, services, and moments of care that make all the difference for individuals on our services. You and other donors— individuals, families, businesses, churches, foundations, clubs, and organizations— make possible serious illness care that goes beyond what insurance reimburses.

The Circle of Care includes clinical support - nurses, aides, social workers, spiritual support, nurse practitioners, music and massage therapists, and physicians. They do more than provide expert care. They offer reassurance, promote dignity, and offer

We have been involved with Northern Illinois Hospice for almost two decades, helping to assure that the services provided are available when our communities need them the most.

— J. L. Clark Legacy Foundation Board

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When Neighbors Heal Together, the Whole Community Thrives

In late December 2025, eight women sat around the table at a local deli to laugh, cry, and share some “girl talk.” However, they first met in a very unexpected way: as grief support group participants! They all attended a six-week Bridge of Hope Bereavement Care Group, led by Cindy Holda, M.Div., Northern Illinois Hospice Bereavement Coordinator.

“Grief brought these women together, but the friendship they’ve built, from having walked similar journeys, keeps them together,” said Holda. “The support group ended but, as friends, they have met every other month for the past two years, and plan to continue doing so into the future.” They spend their time talking about their families, new babies on the way, the holidays, work, retirement, caring for family and friends, and coping with loss. They share photographs, stories, celebrations, challenges, and care for one another. Some of the



Support group friends clockwise from left, Mary, Sandy, Laurie, Ashley, Jeanne, Judy, and Colleen.

women have called their dinners and time together “a lifeline.”

“The women in the group often meet in smaller groups between scheduled dinners for coffee, movies, and shopping. This sisterhood has blossomed over the past two years, and it’s humbling to see the friendships that have formed from attending a bereavement group. For that, I am truly thankful,” adds Holda.

Through the generosity of our donors, Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation supports bereavement groups and programming.

The Bridge of Hope Bereavement Care Group meets for six weeks each quarter and touches on topics such as the realms of grief, people who mean well, nurturing yourself and getting support, memories, emotions, learning survival skills, and secondary losses.

The next Bridge of Hope Bereavement Care Group is scheduled for June 2026. Please check the Northern Illinois Hospice [website](#) calendar for bereavement support activities and groups, or call 815.398.0500.

Charitable Alternative to RMD’s Taxable Income

Did you know there’s a simple, tax-smart way to support Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation—one that may also help lower your taxable income?

It’s called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), and for many donors age 70½ or older, it’s one of the most impactful ways to give. A Qualified Charitable Distribution allows you to give directly from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a qualified charity, like Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation, and the gift avoids taxable income for the donor.

DOES A QCD MAKE SENSE FOR YOU?

- You must be **age 70½ or older** at the time of the gift.
- Funds must be transferred **directly from your IRA custodian to Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation.**
- Gifts must go to a **qualified 501(c)(3) organization.** Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation is a 501(c)(3). Our Federal ID# is 46-5074562.
- Your IRA provider will report the distribution to the IRS, so it’s important to note that the transfer was a Qualified Charitable Distribution.

As always, please consult with your financial or tax advisor to determine what’s best for your personal situation.

If you’d like to learn more about making a Qualified Charitable Distribution, a donation, or planned gift to Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation, we’re here to help. Please contact the Foundation team at 815.398.0500. Your generosity makes meaningful programs possible!



Artist and art donor, Wes Courier, poses with his family. From left: Denise (Courier) Clark, Charles Clark, Dr. Deana Courier, Wes Courier, Jr., Wes Courier, Christine (Courier) Edwards and Jeff Edwards.

Rockford Community Rallies: Art Sales Raise Thousands to Benefit Northern Illinois Hospice

One man's "gift" led to a "heartfelt gift" to Northern Illinois Hospice Foundation last year.

When Peggy Courier was diagnosed with cancer a few years back, the tight-knit Courier family took the news hard. They quickly rallied together with Wes hardly ever leaving Peggy's side.

The Couriers knew they needed additional support and expert care, so they turned to Northern Illinois Hospice. Their hospice care team became an extension to Peggy's family caregivers. After a long and courageous battle,

Peggy died in January 2025.

Peggy's husband Wes knew he wanted to show his gratitude to Northern Illinois Hospice through his art. He connected with our Foundation, and through his relationships at Anderson Japanese Gardens, Wes and his family planned a benefit art show.

A retired bank executive, Wes grew up in Marengo and spent much of his career in the Sterling/Rock Falls area before moving to Rockford with Peggy. Oil painting soon became more than a hobby. It was a true passion. Wes had always loved impressionist works,

especially beautiful landscapes, so much so, he and Peggy traveled to Monet's Garden in France several times, where Wes studied and refined his art.

Wes displayed dozens of his works at an Anderson Japanese Gardens art show. Dozens of people showed up to purchase his beautiful work! Wes sold nearly 40 of his original works for a total of \$4,295, benefiting Northern Illinois Hospice families! The show was a beautiful way for Wes and his family to honor Peggy and to share their deep gratitude for the care Northern Illinois Hospice team brought into their lives and home.

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a comforting presence. They witness, in real time, how hospice care touches not only patients, but spouses, children, grandchildren, friends, and caregivers.

Our circle is strengthened further by volunteers, who choose to give their time, talents, and hearts. Whether sitting quietly with a patient, offering respite to a caregiver, or helping behind the scenes, volunteers and their purposeful work embody the spirit of hospice.

The Circle of Care also includes our partners in care- trusted local and regional organizations and providers who help us deliver high-quality health care.

The Northern Illinois Hospice community exemplifies the "power of many." Every contributor is vital to our mission-and united, we improve the lives of families who need our help!

We are a community rooted in

shared purpose. Together, we offer the promise that compassion will be provided, dignity honored, and no family will face an advanced illness without support.

When you are part of Northern Illinois Hospice, you're part of something meaningful and enduring: a legacy of care that will comfort families today and for generations to come.

That is community at its best.



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Volunteer Community Vital to Patient Experience

We appreciate our generous donors who support our Volunteer Services department. They bring the “sunshine” to patients and families, making their days brighter!

Donor support makes possible Pet Peace of Mind—a program that keeps patients and their pets together. In addition, our volunteers provide pet therapy visits and create birthday, anniversary, and “just because” bags to brighten patients’ days.

Volunteers also connect with our patients through shared skills or interests like painting and drawing, gardening, or playing card games.

Music volunteers are the most recent addition to our service offerings. These individuals are specially trained by our licensed board-certified music therapists to provide patients with meaningful music to help brighten their days. Time and again we see how music helps the heart!

Our We Honor Vets program connects veteran volunteers with patients who also served in the military. It’s heartwarming to see the special bonds formed through this program.

Our volunteers and donor communities are beautifully knitted together. Volunteers generously give their time, while donors graciously provide resources that sustain and enhance Northern Illinois Hospice.