

## Wish Program Grants the Intangible

It's never too late to make memories or start a new hobby. This is especially true for patients who benefit from the life-affirming moments that sprout from Hospice of Cincinnati's Lasting Wish program.



Debby Palmisano and her grandchildren



For Debby Palmisano, a family arts and crafts day cast a sunburst of joy throughout her home and created memories that would live on in the hearts of her grandchildren. Four pairs of tiny hands took turns touching hers as a volunteer took photos. The images soon transformed into colorful works of art, lovingly framed and crafted by her grandchildren with the help of Hospice of Cincinnati Art Coordinator Jill Coughlin.

The morning produced precious keepsakes. However, the time together ignited gifts much less tangible and far more valuable. "There was a lot of energy and family love throughout the project," Coughlin recalls.

And so it has gone for 52 other wishes granted over the last year. Moments of joy that enrich the end of life journey.

### Good listeners

The Lasting Wish program has steadily grown as team members and volunteers become more familiar with its impact. Last year saw three times the number of wishes granted over the

program's first year.

"Hearing stories about other wishes granted often spark the imagination of team members to think creatively about what's possible," explains Lori Asmus, Volunteer and Holistic Services Manager. "You'd start to hear, 'That's a great story! My patient would love that!' and we'd say, 'Let's do another one!'"

Often, a wish is born from a patient's casual conversation with a member of their care and support team. That's how Doug Cales became the proud owner of an electric guitar. He had recently shared with Hospice of Cincinnati Chaplain Andrew Balk that his dream as a child was to learn to play the electric guitar. Soon, a donated guitar found its way to Doug's fingers, along with a small amp and guitar buddy to help him learn and play the chords more easily.

Wishes, like many other services provided by Hospice of Cincinnati, take teamwork. For this wish, Music Therapist Connie Ignatiou and music volunteer Steve Zinser stepped in, even playing a few tunes with Cales as his heart danced in rhythm.

### Collaborative community

Bringing wishes to life takes collaboration not only from team members but also from a caring and invested community. Donated items, outings and services help control costs while also engaging the community in becoming part of the wish-making process.

"For many of our patients, life is very routine and isolating," Asmus says. "It's an honor to bring moments of joy and lightness to their day with the Lasting Wish program. The patient's gratitude is so genuine and moving. I wish everyone had the chance to look into their eyes in those moments."

Hospice of Cincinnati's Lasting Wish program grants wishes to many patients. Visit [www.hospiceofcincinnati.org/donate](http://www.hospiceofcincinnati.org/donate) and follow the prompts for restricting your gift. Select the Make a Difference Fund.



Doug Cales and his new guitar

# Gayle's Update



Dear Friends of Hospice of Cincinnati (HOC) and HOC Navigators,

I hope this finds you doing well!

First, I wanted to share that 2022 marks the 45th Anniversary of Hospice of Cincinnati! We are so blessed to have served the hospice and advanced illness needs of the greater Cincinnati community for all of these years, and we are excited to continue to

move our vision forward, in no small part due to your kind generosity and ongoing support.

In the midst of the continued stress of COVID and the challenges that has brought to our clinical care team, now it is more important than ever to be focused on creating a workplace of Joy and Fulfillment.

I would like to tell you a bit about how we are going about that...We began offering JOY ("Just Open Yourself") retreats for team members at Tikkun Farm last spring. Team members spend one evening and the following day at the farm enjoying a peaceful setting where they can reflect with coworkers, and on their own, the stressors related to COVID that they have experienced over the past few years, and reflect on what their plan for well-being will be moving forward. Feedback from over 150 participants has been overwhelmingly positive, so additional retreats will be offered this fall and in 2023. Additionally, Breathing & Visualization sessions are being offered to team members during the course of their work day, and our onboarding program for new hires is being redesigned with a special emphasis on providing a warm, welcoming, and supportive culture.

This fall HOC co-hosted, along with the City of Blue Ash, a community-wide Veteran Welcome Home Event on September 28, 11:00am-1:00pm at Summit Park. Veterans gathered for lunch and fellowship, followed by a ceremony for Veterans.

I also want to let you know about our new HOC Circle of Caring, a giving circle open to all members of our community who want to support our mission with collective giving. The Circle of Caring convenes quarterly in the late afternoon and provides an opportunity for donors and potential donors to learn more about HOC Programs and gather for lite bites and enjoy social time. Please consider joining us on November 17th for our next gathering. RSVP to Jackie Baumgartner at 513-865-4598 or Jackie\_Baumgartner@trihealth.com.

Lastly, a special thank you to all who joined us at Gourmet Melodies in August. It was so nice to be back enjoying great food & music, and spending a beautiful evening together after being apart for three years.

Thank you for your ongoing support of HOC Navigators; without you, we truly could not do all that we are able to for patients and families.

With gratitude,

Gayle Mattson RN, BSN, MHA, President and CEO

We had a successful Gourmet Melodies Event that took place on August 13, 2022. 275 guests enjoyed live music, gourmet bites and drinks while overlooking Roebling Bridge and the Ohio River. We heard music from The Northern Kentucky Brotherhood, The Burning Caravan, My Brother's Keeper, and Queen City Silver Stars! We had over 50 growlers from 32 local breweries and establishments at our brewery corner and several awesome silent auction baskets for guests to bid on. Over \$63,000 in net proceeds was raised for Hospice of Cincinnati.

**Save the date for the next Gourmet Melodies event: August 12, 2023**



Kiana Trabue and Felicia Beckham



Olivia Thomason, Caroline Zalla, Rob Maher, Sami Silverstein, Gabriella Scacchetti



Leanne and Jay Bernard





# New Fund Honors 28-Year Volunteer

Knowing how to connect with people is a special gift Bobbie Ford brings to Hospice of Cincinnati. Whether connecting spiritually or through a tasty milkshake that transcends physical comfort, Bobbie has dedicated 28 years to caring for patients and their families. In addition, she and her husband, Ashley, have generously donated to Hospice of Cincinnati since 1986.

To honor Bobbie's years of volunteerism and to ensure continued financial support after they're gone, the couple recently established The Barbara Hill Ford Endowment Fund. Their gift represents an increase of 10 percent in dedicated endowment funds for Hospice of Cincinnati, bolstering support for Hospice's greatest needs.

Bobbie explains that her volunteer involvement has exposed her to the many ways Hospice of Cincinnati supports families, helping inspire her financial



Ashley and Bobbie Ford

support. "Having seen firsthand by working in the inpatient care center what they do with the money they receive from donations, I know it's being well used," she says.

Ashley shares, "We feel grateful and privileged in being able to help in this way – and maybe inspire others to continue to support the cause in whatever way they can." To recognize this transformational gift, along with Bobbie's decades-long

volunteer service, the 200 Wing of the Margret J. Thomas Inpatient Care Center in Blue Ash was named the Barbara Hill Ford Wing during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in August.

Bobbie does admit to selfish motivations for the couple's generous gift. "I want it around when I too become an end-of-life patient, and I want it available to patients I love and to the patients I've had the privilege of working for."

## Supporting Passion: A Dream Come True

Caring for hospice patients is not just a job you go to, says Luann Scherer. As a former critical care nurse, she understands that the work is physically, emotionally and intellectually demanding.

"I believe it's a vocation," she says. "It touches your spirit. When you see tragedy and trauma in the lives of patients and families, it affects you because you bring your whole self to work."

Fostering resiliency has been a longtime passion for Luann and became more important when her daughter became a nurse. Knowing both the "joy and anguish" that comes with caring for terminally ill patients, she wanted to help the hospice team "bring their full selves to the job without it emptying them."

In her role as Hospice of Cincinnati



Luann and JF Scherer

Board of Trustees president (2019-21), Luann worked with administration in developing a strategic plan that would help address team member burnout and foster a workplace of resiliency, joy and fulfillment. From that work, the Joy in the Workplace program was born. Together with her husband, JF, Luann recently made a \$200,000 gift to help fund the program.

Luann says it was music to her ears when she was approached for support. "To have a program developed that was something I can support wholeheartedly is honestly a dream come true," she recalls. Luann and JF have been generous and consistent donors since 2011.

Luann is quick to explain that the program is an investment in a long-term cultural shift. "What I hope to see is that supervisors have a real understanding of how to support their team members and that team members have a better understanding of how to support themselves and one another in healthy ways."

The Bethesda Foundation provides philanthropic support for Hospice of Cincinnati. To learn more, call (513) 865-1516.

# End the Year Well



As the end of the year approaches, you may be looking for ways to save on taxes.

Here is a checklist of several tax-wise year-end charitable gifts that can provide you with tax savings and possible income benefits:

- Make a gift of appreciated assets
- Fund a charitable gift annuity
- Establish a charitable remainder trust
- Make a gift of life insurance

To learn more about how you can benefit from these gifts please contact: Laura Kumler, [Laura\\_Kumler@trihealth.com](mailto:Laura_Kumler@trihealth.com), 513-865-5219 or talk to your estate planning professional.

**OUR MISSION:** Hospice of Cincinnati/HOC Navigators creates the best possible and most meaningful advanced illness and end-of-life experience for all who need care and support in our community.



## Save the Date

**Donor Impact Event**  
*November 9, 2022*

**Circle of Caring**  
*November 17, 2022*

**Celebration of Life**  
*December 15, 2022*

**Circle of Caring**  
*February 23, 2023*

**Fernside Classic**  
*May 12, 2023 & May 15, 2023*

**Gourmet Melodies**  
*August 12, 2023*

*For more information please contact Katie Buescher at [BethesdaFoundationEvents@trihealth.com](mailto:BethesdaFoundationEvents@trihealth.com).*



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**About HOC Navigators**—Our programs include Hospice of Cincinnati, PalliaCare® Cincinnati, Hospital and Clinic-Based Palliative Medicine, Conversations of a Lifetime®, Social Connections, and The Goldstein Family Grief Center. Fernside, a 501(c)(3) organization, is an affiliate of Hospice of Cincinnati. Hospice of Cincinnati is a non-profit hospice sponsored by Bethesda Inc. in a collaborative community partnership with TriHealth and Bon Secours Mercy Health.

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