



# HOPE NOTES

## FALL 2025

### Hospice Alliance Provides Education to the Community

#### *Hospice 101 for Emergency Responders.*

Hospice Alliance not only provides care and support to patients, families, and loved ones, but our team of skilled professionals serves as an educational resource for individuals, businesses, and groups throughout our service area. We offer nearly twenty distinct programs, ranging from professional and staff development seminars to presentations focused on family and community education. Our team of experts are prepared to speak on any topic that may apply to navigating the end-of-life journey, and a complete program list can be found by visiting [hospicealliance.org/services/educational-opportunities](http://hospicealliance.org/services/educational-opportunities).

Our Clinical Team Manager, Kilea Steinke, was invited to present at the Kenosha Fire Department's annual training to educate the Kenosha Fire Fighters and EMS staff on hospice care in emergency settings, and to make sure that their staff are equipped with the tools they need to provide the best care possible to hospice patients across Kenosha. Kilea presented the training three weeks in a row to ensure all members of the fire department's team received the information. Her presentation covered topics such as lift-assists, code statuses, and the basics of hospice care, also known as 'Hospice 101'. Following the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and share real-life stories and scenarios in which they had applied the topics discussed.

We are grateful to EMS Division Chief Bill Glass for inviting us to share this valuable information with the Kenosha Fire Department. Kilea's collaboration with their team is just one of the many opportunities we have had to work with other community organizations on raising awareness about hospice care.



#### **A Conversation on Care**

*Sharing hospice basics with Wilmot United Methodist Church.*

Hospice Alliance Education RN Sheri Milligan-Holborn was invited to join the Wilmot United Methodist Church's Senior Fellowship group to present on Hospice Basics. She led an insightful conversation that educated participants on what hospice care is and who is eligible to receive it — ensuring that attendees understand our offerings and feel comfortable sharing this information with their friends, families, and peers.



Hospice Alliance staff member Kilea pictured with EMS Division Chief, Bill Glass.

# A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As the seasons change and autumn settles across southeastern Wisconsin, I find myself reflecting on what a privilege it is to lead an organization so deeply rooted in compassion. At Hospice Alliance, each day reminds us that caring for others — whether through the bedside presence of a nurse, the comfort of a therapy dog, or the gentle guidance of a bereavement counselor — is a sacred act.

Those of you who know us know that our care for others reaches well beyond the walls of our Hospice House, and you'll see many of our outreach efforts highlighted in this newsletter. From presentations for local first responders to thoughtful conversations with faith communities and seniors, our team continues to form connections that educate, support, and empower others. These efforts don't just share information; rather, they build understanding, trust, and confidence among neighbors who may one day need our care or know someone who does.

Education is just one expression of our commitment to serve. You'll also read about our Connections program, which helps children and families plant literal and symbolic seeds of hope, and about our Service of Remembrance, where more than 200 members of our extended Hospice Alliance family gathered to honor loved ones. These moments of togetherness remind us that grief shared is grief softened — and that community is one of the most powerful healers of all.

Behind each of these programs stands a remarkable network of staff, volunteers, donors, and partners. Whether you offered a comforting word, sponsored an event, baked cookies for a gathering, or shared your professional expertise, you have strengthened the circle of care that surrounds every Hospice Alliance patient and family. We could not fulfill our mission without the support of many, and I am grateful to each of you reading for your role in helping us help others.

Thank you for being part of this journey with the Hospice Alliance team. Your generosity and involvement allow us to not only meet needs, but to anticipate them; to educate, comfort, and walk alongside others with dignity, grace, and hope, forever adding life to days.

With gratitude,



Rita Hagen, MSN, RN  
Executive Director, Hospice Alliance



## Calling All Furry Friends!

Hospice Alliance is seeking compassionate pet therapy volunteers! If you or someone you know has a certified therapy animal and would enjoy sharing their time to bring comfort and joy to our patients, we would love to hear from you.

To learn more or to get involved, please contact our Volunteer Manager Beth at (262) 652-4400 or email us at [volunteer@hospicealliance.org](mailto:volunteer@hospicealliance.org).

## Honoring Loved Ones at Our Service of Remembrance

*A meaningful day of remembrance.*

On June 25, 200 members of the Hospice Alliance community came together for our Service of Remembrance and Brick Memorial. This year, we added 29 bricks to our section of the brick walk at the Kemper Center. We are grateful to our volunteers, staff, the Kenosha Area Vietnam Veteran Honor Guard, and all of you who helped make this event a memorable way to honor the lives of those you have lost. If you are interested in purchasing a brick, the order form and instructions can be found on the last page of this newsletter or at [hospicealliance.org/support-us/honor-a-love-one](http://hospicealliance.org/support-us/honor-a-love-one). For more information about purchasing a brick, please call Marketing and Development Manager, Rachel at (262) 652-4482 x 1253.



Rita Hagen, Executive Director

# Root River Poker Run!

*Our 2nd annual event was a success, save the date for next year.*

With our second annual Root River Poker Run now in the books, we invite you to save the date for our third annual event, scheduled for Friday, July 17, 2026.

A huge thank you to our sponsors: Baird, Carpet Plus Outlets, Community State Bank, Draeger Langendorf Funeral Home & Crematory, and Realistic Builders. We also extend our gratitude to all our wonderful attendees, the Hospice Alliance staff and volunteers, and Sue Burden, who served on our planning committee. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the locations that served as our stops for the event: ChartRoom, Corner House, Harbor Lite Yacht Club, Reef Point Marina, Rivers End Marina, and a special thank you to Joey's Yardarm for providing the food for our event. For more information on how to get involved and to be among the first to know when registration opens, please sign up for our email list.



## The Superpower of Planning Ahead

*Empowering super agers to plan ahead.*

Hospice Alliance Executive Director Rita Hagen hosted a jam-packed breakout session at this year's Aging Well Conference at UW-Parkside. Rita was able to share information with the group of 20+ caregivers, healthcare professionals, and community members on the importance of Advance Care Planning.



Hospice Alliance Executive Director Rita Hagen presenting at the Aging Well Conference.



Hospice Alliance staff members Theresa, Zeltzin, and Rachel at the Aging Well Conference.

## Hospice Foundation of America Webinar

*A conversation on the importance of complementary therapies in end-of-life care.*

Each year, as part of our ongoing commitment to community education, Hospice Alliance hosts a viewing of the Hospice Foundation of America's annual webinar. This May, we invited healthcare professionals to our office to view their "Improving Dying" webinar, in which end-of-life care providers shared insights into the benefits of programs such as music therapy, pet therapy, and digital therapy. Hospice Alliance recognizes the importance of caring for the whole person, and offers complementary therapies to provide the best quality of care for them – physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Attendees were then able to ask questions and engage in insightful conversations with a panel of Hospice Alliance staff members: Connie Dues, Social Worker; Jennifer Sytkowski, Social Worker and Bereavement Coordinator; Heidi Wojtak, Music Therapist; and Hospice Alliance volunteer Pet Therapist Susan McCarthy. We are thankful to our sponsors, Casey Family Options Funerals & Cremations, Piasecki Funeral Home, and Proko Funeral Home for enabling these important conversations.

# Hospice Alliance in the Community!



## Going for Gold!

Hospice Alliance Life Enrichment Coordinator Nadia Garcia and Community Liaison Theresa Munns volunteer at the Tri County Activity Professionals Senior Olympics.



## Connections

### Planting Seeds of Hope



We invite children, teens, and tweens who have lost someone close to them to join us for Connections. Our Connections program is a support group for children, teens, and their trusted adults. This program offers a way for families and friends to connect with others who are also experiencing grief. Connections is held on the third Thursday of each month from October to May, and we host seasonal remembrance events during both winter and summer. To learn more and to register, email [bereavement@hospicealliance.org](mailto:bereavement@hospicealliance.org) or (262) 652-4400.



### Planting Memories in honor of a loved one lost.

Each August, we host Planting Memories as a part of our Connections program. Planting Memories is a seasonal bereavement event that invites children, teens, and their guardians to the Hospice House Garden to paint a small terracotta pot and plant a flower in memory of their loved one. It was a beautiful evening of remembrance, creativity, and connection, made perfect by the sunny skies and the presence of our 20+ attendees. We are grateful to the volunteers who help make this day a great success every year, and we are thankful to have received a grant from the Susan B. Anthony Awards, which allows us to continue providing refreshments to those who attend our Connections programming.

# Memorial Bricks Make Great Gifts!

*Create an everlasting memory of your loved one with an engraved brick at the Hospice Alliance Memorial Brick Walk*

When you purchase an engraved brick to be placed at Kemper Center, your special tribute also helps support Hospice Alliance's mission of "adding life to days" and to continue to provide exceptional care and supportive services to all, regardless of ability to pay.

**Brick Grid Message** - Use the grid below to spell out the message for your brick. Punctuation and spaces count as characters. Please make sure we can distinguish between capital and small-case letters in the spaces below, if you choose to use both.



BRICK - 4" X 8"  
\$150.00 - 3 Lines  
12 Characters and Spaces per Line  
White area of grid



SUPER BRICK - 12" X 12"  
\$500.00 - 7 Lines  
19 Characters and Spaces per Line  
White and blue area of grid

Your Name

## PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment for your brick purchase should accompany this form.

Your Address

A check payable to **Hospice Alliance Foundation**

Return this form and check to Hospice Alliance,  
10220 Prairie Ridge Blvd., Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Phone

Charge my credit card \$

Visa      Mastercard      Discover      Am Ex

\_\_\_\_\_

Expiration:    /

I'm dedicating this brick: (please print)  
\_\_\_\_ In honor of \_\_\_\_ In memory of

Name (s)

Orders may also be placed with a credit card through our secure website. Visit <https://www.hospicealliance.org/support-us/honor-a-love-one/> For more information, please call our office at (262) 652-4400.

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Name (s)

Name (s)

Name (s)



# Hospice Alliance

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## SAVE THE DATE

### **Ring and Remember**

Kemper Center, Founders Hall  
November 13, 2025

### **Dining For Donations**

Panera Bread  
6935 75th Street, Kenosha  
November 20, 2025  
4 - 8 pm

### **Shopping for Donations**

DeBerge's Framing & Gallery  
2009 63rd St, Kenosha  
December 6, 2025  
10 am - 4 pm

### **An Evening of Wishes**

The Club at Strawberry Creek  
March 7, 2026

### **Service of Remembrance**

Kemper Center  
June 24, 2026

### **Root River Poker Run**

July 17, 2026

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**For more information visit  
[hospicealliance.org](http://hospicealliance.org)**

## **Hospice Alliance**

10220 Prairie Ridge Blvd.  
Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158



## **Hospice Alliance Leadership**

### **Operations Board**

John Plous, President  
William Katt, Secretary/Treasurer  
Rita Hagen, MSN, RN, Executive Director  
Joshua Bloom, MD, Medical Director  
Laura Burnett Shoemaker  
Diana Christofferson  
Michael Coleman  
Cindy Franke  
Katie Lachell  
Rachael Proko Viola  
Richard Regner  
Nancy Retana  
Ron Tenuta

### **Foundation Board**

Len Iaquinta, President  
Richard Regner, Vice President  
Jean Garretto, Secretary/Treasurer  
Jennifer Hurley  
Todd Letven  
John Plous  
Sandy Riese  
Aaron Sens

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