



The Journey

Care and Support for Patients and Families Dealing with Terminal Illness Volume 16 Issue 1 • Winter 2023

“There is within each
one of us a potential
for goodness beyond
our imagining;
for giving which
seeks no reward; for
listening without
judgment; for loving
unconditionally.”

– Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

Social Worker Trina Poppens Retires

There was an urgency behind the words zipping through the phone line that Trina Poppens could not ignore: “We need a social worker!”

Recently settled in Spokane to raise a family with her husband, Trina had sent her resume to an array of organizations, including mental health providers, hospitals and retirement homes. When she received the call from Hospice of Spokane, she stepped up to fill the need.



Trina Poppens

That was in 1992, back in the day of pay phones and beepers, when Hospice had only two or three nurse/social worker teams limited to serving Spokane County. (Today, the organization has grown to nearly 15 teams serving Spokane, Stevens, Ferry and Pend Oreille counties.)

Trina thought she’d just be at Hospice of Spokane for a little while, but the needs of a growing nonprofit organization filled her days with opportunities for imagination and ingenuity. And now, after 30 years and eight months, Hospice of Spokane’s longest-standing employee has retired.

“I like how you can be so creative in this line of work,” Trina said. “I’ve helped make memories and facilitate desires.”

Trina’s ideas led to the formation of several essential programs and initiatives. Around 1995, she helped examine the demographics of those being served by Hospice of Spokane and started a targeted outreach to people of color.

Trina’s love of animals, particularly dogs and horses, led to the formation of the Paws for Comfort program, which pairs trained pets and their owners with Hospice clients. The animals – primarily dogs, but also cats, and at one time a horse and a donkey – can help reduce

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It All Comes Down to Relationships



Gina Drummond, RN, MSN
Chief Executive Officer

As we usher patients and families through the end-of-life journey, we are reminded again and again of one thing. It all comes down to relationships. What matters most in the end is not the material wealth that has been accumulated or the stature or the accomplishments. What matters most to people are the relationships that they've treasured along the way. Their family, their friends, their pets. The meaningful connections that have given their lives joy, sorrow and every emotion

in-between. In the end, it's sometimes hard for folks to say goodbye because these connections are so strong.

As an organization, relationships are just as important. We are a part of the healthcare continuum in Spokane, and our hospital partners, long-term care partners and community providers are essential relationships for us. We are constantly seeking feedback and integrating this feedback so that we continue to meet the needs of patients, families, providers and care settings. We value the connections we share, and we know that these relationships cannot be taken for granted. Just as we tend to the relationships in our own personal lives, we work hard to tend to the essential connections we share professionally. We have all been through a number of challenges over the past few years. I am humbled to have borne witness to the teamwork and sacrifice that care providers have shared in our community and beyond. Patients and families have been the priority, and the collaboration that we've all been part of has reminded me of what a special community we live in. Thank you all for the amazing support you provide to us and to our healthcare partners in this community.

"Patients and families have been the priority, and the collaboration that we've all been part of has reminded me of what a special community we live in."

-Gina Drummond

THE JOURNEY is a publication of Hospice of Spokane, located in Spokane, Washington. Hospice of Spokane is northeast Washington's only nonprofit, community-based hospice, providing care and support to people nearing the end of life, their families and the grieving. Patient-centered care is provided by interdisciplinary teams comprised of physicians, nurses, social workers, nurse aides, volunteers, chaplains, bereavement counselors and other professionals.

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Hospice is a Team Sport

I'm frequently asked why I decided to change from being a primary care provider to the role of medical director at Hospice of Spokane. The one consistent answer I give is that my current role allows me to work with a team of dedicated professionals to provide not only medical care but social and spiritual care to our patients.



Dr. Brian Seppi

I attend weekly meetings along with nurses, social workers, Chaplains, and a pharmacist to review each of our patient's care plans. I'm convinced this team approach improves the care we provide to the patients, caregivers, and families we serve.

This team approach also extends to the providers who refer patients to Hospice of Spokane.

I'm frequently interacting with providers who refer patients our way. I encourage them to stay involved in the care of their patients. The relationships they have developed over years of taking care of their patients is something that can't be replaced, and their continued involvement is integral in providing end-of-life care that everyone deserves.

It is a common misconception that once a patient is enrolled in hospice that they no longer can receive care from non-hospice providers. We welcome the continued involvement of a patient's primary care or specialty provider.

When we work with non-hospice providers to care for our patients, we have the added advantage of their medical knowledge and, more importantly, it gives the patient a trusted voice on their care team. Transitioning to hospice can be frightening for both patients and families; having the trusted

voice of a provider who knows the patient makes this transition easier and improves the care the patient receives.

Medicare and traditional insurances understand the value of having a patient's provider included on the hospice care team. They'll continue to pay for care provided by non-hospice providers if they are listed as the patient's attending. If a provider is not listed as the attending, we ask the provider to let us know prior to any services provided so we can arrange payment with the provider's office. Either way, having the non-hospice provider on the care team is a great benefit for us and the patient.



Care Conference

Recently we had a patient in our hospice house whose husband was struggling with her decline. I had a long conversation with the husband on symptom management, but he continued to struggle to accept his wife's change in condition. I fortunately was able to get the patient's primary care physician on the phone, and it was not until the husband had a conversation with the primary care physician that he felt at peace with her care and allowed us to adequately treat her symptoms. The relationship they had with the primary care provider made all the difference in the world in the care we were able to provide to his wife.

Hospice is a team sport, and the team is stronger with the continued involvement of a patient's primary care or specialty provider. This is not only helpful for the patient but gives the non-hospice provider the added advantage of being part of a tremendous team of professionals who have one goal: allowing a patient to live the best life they can live for as long as possible.

A Tribute to Cathy Mindemann Office Coverage Nurse



Cathy Mindemann

Signing on to hospice care with Hospice of Spokane means that the patient and family will be cared for and supported by a team of professionals. The team includes a physician, nurse, social worker, nurse aide, chaplain, volunteer, and bereavement counselor.

Cathy Mindemann is one of our treasured office coverage nurses on the team. She came to us after many years as a Nursing Services Manager at St Joseph's Care Center. Her passion for quality patient care is evident in everything she does, and we were lucky when she joined our team.

She is not only an amazing team member, but she leads always by example in doing what's right in every situation. She spends much of her day interacting with other nurses, refilling prescriptions for patients and families, and talking patients and families through hard situations. She is usually the person to triage a home situation to decide if an emergency visit is needed and which team member needs to be deployed. "I tell people my job is somewhat like an air traffic controller," explained Cathy. "I strive to get everyone the help they need, ensuring that the most critical and time-sensitive needs are met first." Cathy is quick to add, "This work is about relationships."

Patients and families often remember their phone calls with Cathy. Her calm, reassuring presence is a constant in our organization. She serves as a source of quiet, calm reassurance for every team member she interacts with, and we have come to know her as a source of much healing and peace in difficult times (which we've experienced over the past few years).

Nursing is Cathy's second career. Her first degree was in Finance, and she spent many years in the banking industry before she decided that she wanted to make a bigger difference in caring for people and pursued a nursing degree. Her many years of experience at St Joseph's Care Center have served her well in talking to people in crisis, caring for not only patients but also families and in encouraging and supporting team members. Cathy knows better than anyone that providing quality health care requires a team of people who are all working together for the good of every patient and

"I tell people my job is somewhat like an air traffic controller," explained Cathy. "I strive to get everyone the help they need, ensuring that the most critical and time-sensitive needs are met first."

-Cathy Mindemann

family being served. "It is such an honor to be invited in on such a sacred journey with the patients and their families," said Cathy.

Some of the values our organization is known for are dignity, peace, respect and compassion. Cathy embodies these values. When faced with a situation, where there are no totally clear answers we need only ask, "what would Cathy do?" and we are suddenly pointing in the right direction. Cathy is beloved and Hospice of Spokane is better every day because she is here.

Thank you for a Successful Taste of Life 2023

On February 24, 2023, over 350 community supporters, staff and volunteers gathered in person for our signature fundraising event, Taste of Life, at

the Historic Davenport Hotel. After two years of a virtual event, it was a celebratory evening, seeing old friends and making new ones.



Music by the Zonky Jazz Band and a Mardi-Gras themed event set the tone for a festive evening. Tastes of delectable wines, beers and ciders by 17 local purveyors were paired with delicious hors d'oeuvres, prepared by the culinary team at the Davenport. All this, combined with an array of fundraising activities, resulted in over \$127,000 being raised for Hospice of Spokane!

We want to thank ALL those who supported us. Your generosity is helping us provide care and support to the terminally-ill patients we serve, along with support to their families.

Interested in Volunteering?

Hospice of Spokane was founded by a group of dedicated volunteers in 1977 and has served our community for more than 45 years. Volunteers still form the backbone of our organization. They help in many ways, including in clients' homes, senior living facilities, in our office, or out in the community.

Volunteer activities may include, but are not limited to, companionship and conversation with a client, grocery shopping or other errands, meal preparation, light housekeeping or yard work, playing an instrument or singing, helping with mailings or other office tasks, or helping at fundraising events or other community events where Hospice of Spokane has a presence.

The following training sessions have been scheduled:

MAY VOLUNTEER TRAINING*

May 16-25, 2023

Tuesdays and Thursdays

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER VOLUNTEER TRAINING*

September 18-27, 2023

Mondays and Wednesdays

5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Training Location:

Hospice of Spokane

121 S. Arthur St.

Spokane, Washington

** Need to attend all training sessions.*

If you would like more information about becoming a volunteer, please contact the **Volunteer Department at Hospice of Spokane, 509-456-0438.**

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anxiety, create socialization opportunities, give isolated people a valuable time for touch and snuggling, and help people feel more comfortable talking about grief.

It was actually one of her Hospice of Spokane clients who led Trina to horses. The dying wish of a 16-year-old was to ride horseback along the beach with her father. Trina worked to make that happen, calling various horse trainers and equestrian organizations, and arranging the logistics. That experience sparked Trina's love of horses. She learned to ride in her 50s, has two horses of her own, and has also been able to connect other interested Hospice clients with horses.

The unique and satisfying challenge of figuring out the best way to fill a need fueled Trina's passion throughout her time at Hospice of Spokane.

About 15 years ago, Trina helped develop a program that bridges a gap between hospitals and parents of children dealing with life-threatening illnesses. The Pediatric Palliative Care Program works to connect families with social services in their own community so that the kids don't have prolonged stays at the hospital. The team members have a vast network of community resources they can call on to help families better manage care for their child. The needs, as varied as the clients, can be emotional, medical, financial, material, or respite.

"That's what has made this job so challenging and so interesting," Trina said. "It's like having a lens that gives you a very narrow focus and then allows you to broaden the view and examine their whole life."

Throughout her three decades with Hospice of Spokane, Trina has served many hundreds of clients -- some for very long times, some for just a day.

"I have been learning all the way through," she said. "I've learned so much about myself. People have taught me a lot about living and about spirituality. I am not afraid of death anymore."

Spending time with people near the end of their journey, she has witnessed the sense of peace that envelops them.

"I've asked them 'How did you get there?' and I've heard so many individual stories," she said. "They have an understanding, a confidence that everything will be OK."

In addition to the knowledge passed on by her clients, she has valued the talents and deep passion of her Hospice of Spokane coworkers.

"It's a family here," she said. "Collectively, we've got it all."



Zeus

These are the gifts that Trina will take with her to the next chapter of her life. Hopes for her retirement days include spending more time with family, traveling and "not getting up early." She and her husband train narcotic detection dogs, and Trina is excited to get started with a new pup, while also expanding their training to include explosive device detection.

"Trina leaves behind a legacy of what we all strive for -- life-long learning, the importance of listening, and making lives better for others," said Gina Drummond, CEO of Hospice of Spokane.

Thank you, Trina, for all the ways you made us better.

Thank You!

This list includes contributions made to Hospice of Spokane from July 1 to December 31, 2022. We try hard to list each name correctly; if corrections are needed, please call our Development Team at 509-456-0438 or email info@hospiceofspokane.org.

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