More than two hundred veterans, family members, and community supporters filled every seat (and then some) of the historic Medina Community Theater on Saturday, May 4, for the local premier screening of the feature length film Honor Flight: One Last Mission.

As part of our commitment to the “We Honor Veterans” program, HMC Hospice of Medina County joined efforts with the Medina Community Theater to help share the film which follows a devoted team of Midwest volunteers as they race against the clock to send every local WWII veteran to the Washington, D.C. memorial built in their honor.

“We feel privileged to have been able to share this story with the community and especially with the thirty WWII veterans that were in attendance,” said HMC Hospice of Medina County Executive Director, Pat Stropko-O’Leary. “It gave us the opportunity to celebrate our local veterans and bring awareness to the Honor Flight program. We have received several calls and emails from people expressing their appreciation.”

Decorations of stars and stripes lined the vestibule of the theater, as the nostalgic sound track of the WWII era played in the lobby where veterans and their family members were greeted, presented with a commemorative shirt from the Medina Veterans Service Office, and ushered to their seats by HMC veteran volunteers. Upon entering the theater, the guests of honor were further welcomed by “poolees” from the U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Office in Medina. A closing reception, complete with traditional fanfare and applause, was held in the theater lobby.

“It was one of the most moving events I’ve ever attended,” said Robert Hayes of Cleveland. Hayes, a Vietnam veteran and three time Guardian Volunteer with Honor Flight Cleveland, continued by saying, “Seeing the young recruits and other kids in attendance was amazing!”

Retired Marine Sgt. Maj. Haywood Riley shares a few words of advice with recruits, Aaron Klubnik (L) and Jason Reed (R).

HMC Hospice of Medina County proudly thanks the generous supporters who helped make the event happen: The Medina County Veterans Service Office, Medina VFW Post 5137, Marine Corps League – Medina County Detachment #569, Rolling Thunder, Inc. Ohio Chapter 8, A Cupcake A Day, and Whitey’s Army-Navy Store, Inc.

For more information about Honor Flight Cleveland or to download a veteran or guardian flight application form, visit www.honorflightcleveland.com or call Joe Benedict at 216.225.5841.
As an ER nurse, I spent years watching people in pain and hearing inaccurate information about end-of-life care. That experience led me to hospice.

For the past thirty years, I’ve been blessed to earn a living doing what I love. What makes my job extra special is working along side a dedicated Board of Trustees and an exceptional staff that share themselves with our patients and families everyday. Our volunteers, in particular, help us in so many ways, never earning a paycheck but making a difference in the organization and the lives of so many.

HMC volunteers are essential to our purpose and mission; in fact, the early hospice movement was driven by volunteers. Today, federal law requires that at least 5% of our patient care hours be provided by volunteers. Last year 325 individuals donated 18,131 hours of service to HMC Hospice of Medina County, HMC Barberton Hospice & Palliative Care and HMC Life’s Treasures Thrift Shop; that is the equivalent of nine employees, saving the organization over $203,000. Volunteers spend time with patients and families, provide clerical support, work in the thrift shop, help with fundraising efforts, and serve on our Board of Trustees.

HMC origins were rooted in this community by volunteers, and throughout our growth, volunteers have always stepped up to lend their expertise to help us achieve our goals. This past year we lost two of these amazing people, Dick Gross and Jeff Kehnle. Even as illness forced both of them to curtail their involvement, they each kept a special relationship with us until the end. Their contributions will always be appreciated while their memory will never be forgotten.

More than twelve years ago, a simple plant sale organized by a few volunteer gardeners generated $55 and helped create special moments for a few patients. Twelve years later, under the driving force of one special lady, these annual plant sales have contributed over $23,000 to our “Special Needs Fund” that has helped finance patient services or requests that could not be funded with other resources. Wheelchair ramps, Christmas gifts for children, an anniversary celebration. . . the list goes on and on as does the generosity of plant sale organizer, Tammy Motzko. During our annual LifeFest Dinner & Auction, Tammy was recognized for her contributions and the “Special Needs Fund” was most appropriately renamed “The Tammy Motzko Gift Fund.” It’s our small way to thank her for all the work she has done over the years.

To all of you. . . those of you who have donated money, who have helped organize a fundraiser, visited with patients, run errands, worked in the office, served as front door greeters, or helped in the thrift shop: thank you. We could not do this without you. Please know how much you mean to us and how much you are appreciated by our patients and families as well. We are all forever grateful!
A year ago I took a vacation with my two daughters to visit my parents. The day after we arrived, my father got word his cancer had spread and was terminal. The doctor immediately contacted HMC Hospice of Medina County. We had no idea that he would only be with us another sixteen days, but we were supported daily by the hospice staff: nurses who visited and offered phone advice, volunteer respite care workers, and most importantly to my family, the Bereavement Specialist that provided a special opportunity for each of us to tell Dad how much we loved him, and for him to tell us back in his gruff but loving style.

When he died so quickly, the hospice staff were gentle with my Mom, who herself was very frail. We worried about Mom’s continuing care and support during her grief and were comforted to know that HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center would continue to serve her by offering her counseling through their outreach programs.

Ironically, it was three weeks later when MOM suddenly died, that I discovered how much I needed grief support for myself. I called the toll-free number from home several states away, just to talk to someone who knew my parents and the sadness that enveloped me those weeks and months after my parents’ death. Thank you, HMC Hospice of Medina County & HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center. I hope others will benefit from your services as much as I have.

Anita

Each year hundreds of local families like Anita’s are offered comfort, support and education through HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center. While HMC receives reimbursement for most clinical services through Medicaid, Medicare, or commercial/private insurance companies, extended bereavement supports are not covered. It is through generous donations and fundraising efforts that HMC is able to offer a wide array of grief support programs and educational workshops.

“HMC serves anyone in need regardless of ability to pay. We wouldn’t be able to make this commitment without the support and donations that make our fundraisers possible,” said Events Coordinator, Anna Guy-Leach.

Your attendance or gift to any of the events listed below help to ensure the continuation of hospice services. Your gift also helps sustain the grief support services that are offered free of charge not only to hospice families, but to the entire community.

**LifeFest Dinner & Auction**

Hosted in April, this annual dinner and auction provides an exciting evening of friendship, fine dining, and a frenzy of bidding on both silent and live auction items.

This year’s annual gala, held on April 19 at Weymouth Country Club, enticed bidders with fifteen (15) luxury items including exotic trips, tickets to sporting events, and even elaborate dinner parties. Hundreds of local businesses, restaurants, and private donors contributed merchandise, gift certificates, and works of art to the evening’s silent auction, giving guests one hundred and thirty two (132) tempting packages to bid on.

Special thanks to all those that made the evening a huge success. For a complete list of our sponsors/donors, visit www.hospiceofmedina.org.

**Light Up A Life**

The holidays can be a difficult time for those that are grieving. The “Light Up A Life” holiday campaign offers several opportunities to help families and friends honor those they have lost.

**100 For Hospice**

Medina business owner Pat Spoerndle turns his love of golf into an opportunity to raise money for HMC Hospice of Medina County by golfing a marathon 100 holes in one day. He is sponsored by individuals and businesses who support him by donating per hole or who are inspired to give an amount at any level.

This year’s 100 for Hospice golf challenge will be held on August 5 at Fox Meadow Country Club. For more information contact Pat Spoerndle at 330.721.8822. A pledge card can be found on the back panel of this newsletter.

**Pancake Breakfast**

For the past three years, Arno Kramer and the staff at Yours Truly Restaurant in Medina have hosted a pancake breakfast on Thanksgiving morning. The meal is free; however, donations are greatly appreciated.

Need more information about any of our fundraising efforts? Contact Anna Guy-Leach at 330.722.4771 ext. 234.
If The Shoe Fits Plant It

Old shoes and boots make whimsical planters for flowers. Use sturdy leather shoes or boots for longer-lasting planters or funky pumps to add style to any garden or deck. Be sure to make drainage openings in the soles for healthy plants, so if the shoes have holes in them, all the better. Bear in mind the limited size of shoes and boots when choosing what kinds of flowers to plant in them; small or slow-growing plants are appropriate. Be sure to check out the variety of planters (aka shoes) at HMC Life’s Treasures Thrift Shop. Also browse our selection of purses, baskets, and wide brimmed hats for added “garden fashion”.

Would you like more ideas on how to restore, recycle and renew your HMC Life’s Treasures Thrift Shop finds? Sign up for our weekly email featuring crafty ideas, sale reminders, and all the latest thrift shop news. To subscribe, visit www.hospiceofmedina.org/subscribe.

All proceeds from HMC Life’s Treasures Thrift Shop benefit HMC Hospice of Medina County, HMC Barberton Hospice and Palliative Care and HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center.

Misconceptions about Palliative Care

Misconception #1: Palliative care is the same as hospice.
Palliative care should not be confused with the hospice benefit offered by Medicare. Palliative care provides comfort care for the pain and symptoms associated with a chronic illness. Unlike hospice, palliative care does not require a patient to be certified by two doctors as being six months from death and does not require foregoing most curative treatments. Palliative care is aimed at improving the patient's quality of life.

Misconception #2: If you accept palliative care, you must stop other treatments.
Again, not true. Our health care system, financed by Medicare, Medicaid, and almost all health insurance plans, now recognizes that many people who are nowhere near death can benefit greatly from the additional pain and symptom control that palliative care offers while receiving other treatments.

Misconception #3: Electing palliative care means you are giving up.
In fact, quite the opposite is true. A new perspective and new resources to improve quality of life are provided for the patient. There is every reason to take steps to treat pain and other symptoms, starting with evidence that unrelieved pain may produce mood disorders, notably depression, and can actually hasten death. Choosing palliative care is not about trading time alive for comfort -- it is about trading comfort and time alive for time spent suffering.

Misconception #4: Palliative care shortens life expectancy.
Again, not true. In fact, important recent evidence now indicates that providing palliative care alongside standard care not only improves many people’s quality of life, but also extends their lives. This appears to be true particularly when the palliative care is added early in the illness.

Misconception #5: There isn’t much need for a palliative care consultation because my doctor will address my pain and other symptoms.
Many wish this were true, but for a number of reasons, it often isn’t, especially in the case of older patients who experience disproportionate amounts of unrelieved pain, particularly if they have dementia or other cognitive impairment. In fact, some advocates believe hesitation among doctors is still an obstacle.

For more information about relieving the pain and symptoms associated with a chronic illness, contact the health care professionals at HMC Hospice of Medina County at 330.722.4771. A consult with our Advanced Practice Nurse will identify your needs and direct you to the type of care that will best improve your quality of life.
Never Getting Over it, but Sometimes Getting through
by Kim Ventresca, LISW
Clinical Manager of Bereavement Services

I was facilitating a grief education group several months ago when, during one of the sessions, a group participant said, “I just don’t understand how the rest of the world can keep going about their lives when my world is at a stand still.” It started me thinking about the kind of “get over it” place our world can feel like when we are grieving the loss of a loved one. Many who have suffered a loss have even been told, “It is time to get over it” or “move on.” Grievers are left feeling frustrated, misunderstood and even abandoned by those they count on most to understand and support them during what may be the most difficult time in their lives.

One of the problems with this “get over it” mentality is that it suggests the grief we feel after the loss of a loved one is something we are capable of getting over. The truth is, for many, the work of grieving becomes a process of learning how to live with the loss, not how to get over it. It means learning how to make sense of a world without our loved one while developing a new and very different connection to them; a connection that no longer exists in the physical world but in our hearts and minds. We need to do this important grief work while also trying to successfully function every day in our “get over it” world. This can be a daunting task, especially if we feel like we are tackling it alone.

What I remember most about the comment made by that group participant was the reaction of the other group members. The response was a sea of nodding heads; all people who understood exactly what was meant by the comment because they too felt the hustle and bustle surrounding their grief-filled worlds. Our group participants discover they are NOT alone in their grief and this discovery can make their grief work feel a little less daunting. Finding a safe space, like a support group, to share these thoughts and feelings with others who understand can be so valuable to those who feel the pressure to “get over it.” It can provide a much needed reprieve from putting on a brave face for the world and can offer a real chance at starting the process of learning how to live with the loss, not how to get over it. For more information or to register for one of our grief education groups, I invite you to call us at 330.725.1900.

HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center, an outreach service of HMC Hospice of Medina County, provides a variety of workshops and Grief Education support groups for the public, whether or not you have any previous affiliation with hospice. For more information, please call HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center at 330.725-1900.

Groups & Workshops
HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center
330.725.1900

Circle of Friends
Second Tuesday of Each Month
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
(door open at 5:00 p.m.)
Weymouth Country Club
Cost: $13 (includes meal)
A social group for men and women ages 60+ who have lost a life partner.

Quarterly Memorial Observance
Thursday, July 11, 6:30 p.m.
Join us at this Interfaith service as we remember and honor HMC Hospice of Medina County and HMC Barberton Hospice & Palliative Care patients who have died. The name of your loved one will be read. A time for refreshments and fellowship will follow. You may attend as many times as you need. Please call to register.

Grief Education Series
Begins July 30, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Whether or not your loved one used hospice services, our bereavement counselors will support you through the grieving process during this six-week workshop. Bereavement Specialists help participants achieve personal growth and adjust to the new reality of their lives. Please register by April 22.

Grief 101
Thursday, August 1, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
A bereavement specialist will provide an overview of what is normal during the grief process, strategies for coping, suggestions for self-care, and available support through HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center.
Takings Time for You

For many, the challenges of caring for an elderly, chronically ill, or disabled family member are simply a part of daily life. Caregiving is a demanding job and few of us are equipped to do it alone. Time away or even short-term breaks can relieve stress, restore energy, and promote balance in your life.

Finding support
Maintaining your own health is key to managing your role as a caregiver. Using the help of others before you become exhausted, isolated, or overwhelmed is ideal, but just anticipating regular relief can become a lifesaver. Sharing the responsibility for caregiving and getting support for yourself are paramount; yet finding the right balance requires persistence, patience, and preparation.

Planning your relief
Planning starts with analyzing needs, both yours and your loved one’s. Assessing your needs for the type, skills, frequency, and location of services is critical to ensure you receive appropriate support. As a caregiver, are you looking for an extra set of hands to help around the house? Or is regular free time for yourself what you’re looking for? Perhaps you need help with transportation? Keep track of your daily activities and then make a list of the areas and times when you most need help.

Identifying your loved one’s needs, abilities, and preferences will also help you find the right match. Are social activities primary? Do they require assistance with walking, eating or medications? Do they need mental stimulation? Or exercise? Answering these questions will help you determine what options to pursue.

Engaging family members
Family members and friends may be able to help out while you run an errand, take a break, or even go on vacation. However, just as the burden of caregiving is often more than one person can handle, it can also be a tough process for families to share. Even the healthiest families can be severely stressed by ongoing care, and the division of labor is frequently lopsided. To avoid added family stress, be sure to talk openly and regularly. Keep everyone up to date on your loved one’s needs and condition. Encourage family members to be honest about what they can and cannot do. Welcome different viewpoints, accept limitations, and be willing to try alternate strategies.

How HMC network agencies can make your life as a caregiver a little easier
Through our “Circle of Care,” HMC offers patients and caregivers assistance on many levels. Here are just a few ways we can help:

For hospice patients and caregivers, HMC Volunteers are available to run errands, help with light household chores, or simply visit with patients while care givers take time out for doctors appointments, a nap, lunch with a friend, or even an afternoon at the spa. Respite Care is also available to hospice patients when caregivers need an extended period of rest.

HMC BridgesHome Helpers, a private pay service, brings assistance to healing/recovering patients and their caregivers. State-tested nursing assistants provide a helping hand with a variety of daily living activities.

Our lending library located in the lobby area of HMC The Robertson Bereavement Center offers several resources that can help caregivers manage stress and avoid compassion fatigue.

For more information about how HMC can help support you as a caregiver, call HMC Hospice of Medina County at 330.722.4771. Watch for details on our upcoming caregiver support series.

Seven Signs of Caregiver Burnout
1. Loss of appetite
2. Overly emotional
3. Feeling overwhelmed
4. Withdrawal
5. Isolation from peers
6. Losing focus at work
7. Lack of interest in appearance
In Loving Memory

Finding ways to honor our deceased loved ones is an important part of learning to live with their death. It gives us an opportunity to continue expressing our love and sends a message to the rest of the world about how much we loved them and cherish their memory. There are many things you can do that will honor your loved one and at the same time keep his/her memory alive. In many instances, the way you remember the person will be a source of wisdom that can last for years and be an inspiration in life.

How you choose to memorialize your loved one is limited only by your creativity. Take into consideration what you learned from them, how he/she helped others, and how you feel he/she would like to be remembered. Ask others you trust for their input. Then decide how you will keep the memory of your loved one alive by the tangible reminders you create.

Here are just a few ways to begin showing your continuous love:

- Plant a memory garden, tree or bush that blooms each year. Refer to it as “Sarah’s garden”, “Mary’s tree” or “Joe’s plant.” Be sure to locate it near a window so that you can watch its growth and progress year round.
- Do something to carry on the charitable interest of your loved one. Perhaps preserving a community landmark, sponsoring of a child in an orphanage, helping the homeless, or volunteering at a soup kitchen. You may also want to consider establishing a scholarship in his/her name at a local high school or college.
- Inquire at your local public library or community park if they would accept a donation of a bench with your loved one’s name on it, or place something special in your own garden or yard that pays tribute to the deceased.
- Consider purchasing a memorial brick with your loved one’s name or special message on it. The form below can be used to order a brick that will become part of the grounds at the HMC Hospice Care Center located on Windfall Road in Medina. Bricks can be ordered any time but will only be installed in the Spring and Fall. Call 330.722.4771 ext. 234 with any questions.

Custom bricks can be installed as tributes that honor a special person, to mark a family milestone, or as permanent memorials to loved ones.

Insert form here:

Your Name ____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________ City _______________ State ________ Zip.
Phone ___________________________ Email ________________________

INSCRIPTION

(Limited to 16 characters per line, including punctuation marks, letters and spaces,

Your payment of $100.00 can be made by check, Visa or Mastercard. Checks should be made out to:
HMC Hospice of Medina County
5075 Windfall Road
Medina, Ohio 44256

Please charge my donation to: Visa Mastercard Discover
Card # ___________________________ Exp. Date _______ 3 Digit Security Code _________
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Mail to: 100 for Hospice • c/o 7D Marketing Inc.
345 N. State Road • Medina, Ohio • 44256

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