

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Walla Walla Community  
H O S P I C E

**SERVING COLUMBIA, WALLA WALLA, & NE UMATILLA COUNTIES**

My introduction to Walla Walla Community Hospice was as a new RN working at Walla Walla General Hospital. When the need arose, WWCH would come and assess patients and discuss the services and support they could provide. The encounters were always professional and compassionate; their reputation was, and continues to be, fantastic.

After practicing as an RN for a year my grandfather was admitted to his local hospice. From the positive encounters I had experienced with our local hospice I expected a similar experience. Unfortunately, this was not my experience. My family was going through the journey of losing someone very special to us; he was the glue that held the family together and was the grandfather, husband, father, brother, and great-grandfather we all came to rely on. During this difficult time, we did not receive the support we needed. We were made to feel that the hospice was trying to hurry his death along. When we expressed our concerns, the hospice staff didn't seem to be present and/or want to listen to us. Their behavior and attitude suggested they were in a hurry to get to their next visit (if they visited at all).

This left a lasting impression on me. When I became a nurse, it was...and still is...to provide compassionate care to patients as they go through their healthcare journey. Experiencing health issues can be a scary and it can be hard to navigate healthcare systems. Patients and their families require support and assistance in understanding this stressful and confusing time. Experiencing poor treatment first-hand as a family member while observing subpar care for my grandfather made me all the more determined to remain present while providing compassionate care to my own patients. I never want a patient or their family to believe their concerns are falling on deaf ears. My purpose as a nurse is to guide, educate, and support patients through their health care journey.

It's hard to lose someone, and even harder without support. I am thankful our community is blessed with a hospice full of wonderful, caring, and compassionate individuals. They truly live our mission statement: "To provide compassionate care to patients in the final stages of life and support for their loved ones and caregivers."

When I was invited to join the WWCH Board of Directors in 2019, I relished the opportunity to become part of such a wonderful organization and give back out our community. When I

**WRITTEN BY JESSICA DOUGHERTY-BURT, 2020 BOARD PRESIDENT**

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was asked to be the Board President for 2020, I was hesitant in accepting; I did not have a lot of hospice experience and had been on the Board of Directors for a short time. In the past year I have learned much...but there is still more to learn. I am thankful the Board of Directors is made up of a diverse group with a variety of talents and expertise who remain willing to contribute and support WWCH in spite of the unique challenges they face during this difficult time.

2020 taught health care employees to be flexible. The year was full of surprises, unexpected obstacles and

challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Director, Topher McClellan, and Director of Patient Care Services, Gina Pollard, stayed up to date on guidelines to ensure that they implemented and educated staff on best practices to protect staff and patients. This was no small feat: recommendations seemed to change daily as more was learned regarding how the virus spreads. In spite of all this, WWCH has a team of individuals who pull together to meet the needs of the patients and the organization; they are resilient and do not shy away from a challenge. In spite of the challenges and obstacles, I believe WWCH as an organization has grown, become stronger, and will continue to provide excellent support to both our community and patients through 2021 and beyond.

## Executive Director Report

WRITTEN BY TOPHER MCCLELLAN

The year of 2020 began for Walla Walla Community Hospice with aspirations for growth, planning for the future of the organization, and offering a new service to the communities we serve. Census at hospice was consistently over budget; a strategic planning session was slated for July, and plans to begin an outpatient palliative care program were being developed. Little did we know, this would soon change in early March when the CDC announced a virus outbreak was anticipated to reach pandemic levels.

Before March 2020, minimal guidance was provided to our organization by state officials on how to adapt, stay informed, and stay protected while continuing to provide care to our vulnerable patients and their families. Our Clinical Director, Gina Pollard, quickly assembled an infection control protocol that would give us valuable data for mitigating and preventing infection amongst our staff and being transmitted to patients and caregivers. We began to evaluate our protective equipment reserves and devised a method for identifying potential risks for our patients, their loved ones, and households.

*"...the mental, emotional and psychosocial effects of living and working in the course of a pandemic have weighed heavy on our team"*

It appeared during the first few weeks that the public at large needed to follow isolating protocols and increase sanitation and infection prevention practices. We presumed if these were complied with, we may experience a surge of infections for a few weeks, then return to operational normalcy after a month or so. We all hoped and anticipated that this outbreak would soon be over. However, the pandemic raged on while our patient census broke records throughout the Summer and Fall months of 2020. At first, our primary struggles were balancing staff with increased demand for hospice care during a pandemic and having limited accessibility to facilities and homes for a fear of cross-contamination. Over this past year, personal protective equipment has been essential to remain in touch with patients and their families.

Understandably, the mental, emotional and psychosocial effects of living and working in the course of a pandemic have weighed heavy on our team. Nevertheless, they have continued to provide excellent care through a pandemic fog that seemed to have no end in sight. Many of our staff have had to struggle with childcare needs due to school closures and remote learning, and some have needed to quarantine after possible exposure to the virus. Through all of this uncertainty, our team supported and depended on each other, every day. They chose to fully commit to providing compassionate care to patients, support for their loved ones and caregivers, and meet the needs of the community under limited circumstances and duress. As weeks turned into months, and months into a full year we continue to work separately, yet together, evaluating and adapting to new information on a regular basis.

*"... the pandemic raged on while our patient census broke records throughout the Summer and Fall months of 2020."*

At this point it is clear we are not yet beyond the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are anticipating a day of celebration for our hospice staff who put their own lives at risk to care for those most vulnerable. These committed individuals continue to inspire me with their resilience and dedication to the mission.

Walla Walla Community Hospice would like to thank the many generous people of the community whose generosity and commitment to our mission has enabled us to serve hundreds of patients and their families each year. Your investment in hospice allows us to continue to provide loving, nurturing, and compassionate care. Thank you very much. We couldn't do all that we do without the dedication and generosity of donors like you who answer the call to give again and again.

# Patient Care Services Director Report

WRITTEN BY GINA POLLARD, BSN, RN

It's safe to say that last year was a challenging year for the Nation and our community during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were so many unknowns as well as changes during this time.

I could go on about our plan to ensure our team at WWCH had all the PPE (personal protective equipment) they needed, how we tracked supplies, implemented COVID-19 screening tools for our staff both in and out of the office, tracked potential exposures, followed the newest recommendations from the CDC, and implemented working remotely for most of our team, etc.

I could go on about these things, but I won't. In a year where the central focus was flattening the curve and keeping our communities safe, something remarkable happened. We witnessed a renewal of compassion and commitment to our mission.

The mission of Walla Walla Community Hospice is to provide compassionate care to patients in the final stages of life and support for their loved ones and caregivers. And during the last year we have done just that. Not only did we maintain excellence in caring for our patients and their caregivers but we pushed ourselves to think outside of the box in order to stand in the gap for each other and the community we serve. When we should have run low on masks due to limited supplies nationwide our volunteers and our community members stepped up and got busy sewing masks of bright and beautiful patterns. When we realized grief groups could not be held in person, our team showed resilience and made available virtual grief groups. Now family members from out of state are able to benefit which would not have been possible with the in-person grief groups pre-COVID. Patients that were in facilities had new rules now to help them stay safe. Our Spiritual Support Counselors started putting gift baskets together for these patients to let them know how much we care for them and that they are not alone.

Our hospice staff meetings are also now on virtual platforms. Our usual agenda items include announcements, policy review, infection prevention measures, CDC updates, weekend report, quality improvement initiatives, survey readiness, etc. One thing you may not know about our all staff meetings is that we are purposeful in giving space for our work family to check in with each other. Sometimes we are celebrating a new grandchild, a work anniversary, or a birthday (singing happy birthday on a zoom platform can be challenging with delays and echoes - we have learned to embrace it all and laugh together). Sometimes we share a loss, or a disappointment. It is a safe space where we find support for one another. Similar conversations are had throughout the week with the team supporting one another. Our team takes care of one another so that we can take care of those who we serve.

Our resolve was tested this past year . . . **and we continue to rise to the challenge.**

*"In a year where the central focus was flattening the curve and keeping our communities safe, something remarkable happened. We witnessed a renewal of compassion and commitment to our mission."*

# Committed to Quality & Compliance

WRITTEN BY IONNE OTT, OPERATIONS, COMPLIANCE & QAPI

## Operations & Compliance

If 2020 has shown us anything, it's our ability to adapt. Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) adapted quickly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Exemplifying resiliency, WWCH took action of distance working starting in early March. As we witnessed the healthcare industry respond to this new virus, we got on the boat and faced the storm of unknown outcomes. Our agency operations activated the emergency preparedness plan implemented back in 2017. All of our staff fell into compliance and continued to carry out the mission from home in spite of our own apprehensions, testifying to our true dedication to the WWCH mission.

Adaptability got us through. 2020 showed us that when a team, a work-family stays together, courage, dedication, and relentlessness combine to get us through so that we can meet our patient's needs.

## Quality Matters

Above all things, quality of life matters. 2020 was a time when we all reflected on identifying what quality of life is. Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) commits to quality at the end of life, a most vulnerable time for both patients and families. We commit to advocating for our patients, no matter what dynamics come our way. As federal laws allowed for flexibility during this unprecedented time, we maintained our Condition of Participation standards. We were able to meet one of our performance improvement project goals, and we saw constant improvement amongst all our quality assurance measures.

## SOME 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- WWCH collaborated with local facilities, identifying the expectations for our employees outside of private residential care. Our collaboration continued as new federal regulations were presented in late fall. We made extensive efforts to provide personal protective equipment, relying on our special volunteers whom made masks for us in a time of a mask shortage.
- WWCH made technological advances in order to support distanced working while maintaining HIPAA compliance, learned about telehealth, and converted physical forms into electronic forms for both easy access to the patient and minimal exposure during transport.

# Volunteer Programs

WRITTEN BY LUCI BERG, VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

Even through a pandemic, our committed volunteers helped WWCH save \$50,259.60 in 2020. We had 98 total volunteers who provided 764.25 hours of patient care and administrative volunteering, and 313.50 hours for fundraising and in-kind time as our Board of Directors. Volunteers were able to help with our annual event, the Evening of Elegance in February, though events after this were canceled due to the pandemic.

98

VOLUNTEERS

313.5

HOURS  
OF EVENT &  
BOARD  
VOLUNTEER  
TIME

764.25

HOURS  
OF OFFICE &  
PATIENT  
VOLUNTEER  
TIME

\$50,259.60

SAVINGS FOR WWCH IN  
2020 DUE TO THE  
GENEROSITY OF OUR  
AWESOME VOLUNTEERS

Hospice is in need of increasing our volunteer base in preparation for lessening social distancing restrictions in 2021. If you are interested in learning more about the ways you can volunteer, please visit [wwhospice.org/volunteer](http://wwhospice.org/volunteer) or email [luci@wwhospice.org](mailto:luci@wwhospice.org).

- PATIENT SUPPORT
- VETERAN SUPPORT
- ADMINISTRATIVE
- SPECIALTY SERVICE
- EVENTS
- CAMP AMANDA

## Camp Amanda - Pandemic Panda Weekend

**WRITTEN BY LUCI BERG, CA COORDINATOR**

This year we waited as long as possible to decide if we were going to have to cancel Camp Amanda due to the pandemic, and it was decided in May that it would be the safest for everyone that we cancel. Camp Leadership came up with alternate, socially-distanced plans for the same weekend.



**DRIVE-IN MOVIE**

**75** kids  
**150** adults

Thursday, July 23rd, we hosted a movie at the Milton-Freewater Drive-In Theater. Attendees watched the movie "Up." This film helps children understand grief as it is about an older gentleman who is experiencing the loss of his wife; he planned to grieve alone, but ended up meeting a young boy who goes on a grief adventure with him.

Friday, July 24th, [campamanda.com](http://campamanda.com) was launched. Grief materials and videos from Camp Amanda Staff talking about the stages of grief are available on the website. It also includes video interviews of former campers, parents of campers, as well as interviews of campers/parents who have become Camp Amanda Counselors. All of these people share their different experiences with Camp Amanda to help others who might be anxious, unsure, or scared about attending.



Saturday, July 25th, we hosted a drive-through scavenger hunt, starting at the Hospice office and consisting of 5 stops. When participants arrived at each stop, they received a "fun" prize as well as information on the stage of grief for that stop. In order to proceed to the next stop, they would need to solve a puzzle.

We estimate that we reached a total of 90 adults and 175 kids throughout the weekend, not counting those who viewed the website. During a normal camp weekend, we only have the capacity for 30 campers and 30 camp counselors. Many left knowing at least one thing about Camp Amanda or grief they probably didn't know before! While we might have been a bit homesick for Camp Kiwanis, we were so happy to provide a new experience to the community this year!



**SCAVENGER HUNT**

**27** KIDS  
**14** ADULTS

# Outreach, Education & Events

**WRITTEN BY BRAD MCMASTERS, COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS**

Though 2020 started off strong with fundraising (see Evening of Elegance information below), it was soon apparent that the rest of the year was going to be difficult for outreach and events. Like so many other non-profits, we rose to the challenge and found creative ways to share our message and maintain a presence in the community.

**COMMUNITY NETWORKING** - We continued to be present in the community through online forums by attending or presenting to organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Exchange Club, Kiwanis, etc. We increased our communication through virtual avenues, including social media. There was a 5% increase in our Facebook following. And from the 180 posts, nearly 100,000 impressions were made on people's newsfeeds (79,529 organic and 18,308 paid impressions).

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH/EDUCATION** - Our first virtual event was the **Live Well-Die Well Walla Walla** presentation in May. The event featured end-of-life author, podcaster, and TedX presenter, Kimberly C Paul. Paul had been on a cross-country speaking tour and we were to have been her first stop in Washington. When her tour was cancelled, her presentation was streamed on Zoom and included Q&A with she and Hospice staff.

Hospice began a series of online **Book Clubs**. The first club took place in early summer and focused on the book, Bridging the Gap by Kimberly C. Paul. The second book was "Driving Miss Norma" by Tim Bauerschmidt and Raime Liddel. In both cases, the authors were able to join the group for some of the online meetings.

**EVENTS/FUNDRAISERS** - In February, we celebrated four decades of service to our community at the annual **Evening of Elegance Dinner & Auction**. "Cheers to 40 Years" was the theme and in addition to being a high-spirited, enjoyable evening, it was the highest grossing Hospice fundraiser to date at just over \$100,000. We chose to hold the annual **Pond & Garden Tour** virtually. Four homes were featured and four videos were professionally filmed and edited. A simple thirty-minute webinar premiered the videos which are now available to view on our website.

The annual **Tree of Life** was a successful end-of-year fundraising campaign with over 368 individual donations made in the memory of 588 individuals. 588 decorative paper ornaments with the names of those loved ones hung on the Tree of Life, located in the Grand Lobby of the Marcus Whitman Hotel. As our second largest annual fundraiser, the campaign netted \$22,681.07, just slightly more than each of the previous two years. The theme this year featured the image of a snowy cabin and the hand-etched glass ornaments sold quickly as many wanted to commemorate the year we all had "cabin fever". The tree and candle lighting ceremony was a simple virtual event in which the names of each tribute were read.

Though we look forward to returning to a time in which outreach and events are once again in-person, we have learned quite a bit about using virtual platforms both internally and externally. We have found great value in being able to share our mission, services and resources within and beyond the boundaries of our service area during this challenging year.

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

When the Hospice office went to a remote work environment the second week of March 2020, non-patient care endeavors, such as in-person grief support, were eliminated. At the time, the Bereavement Team (consisting of Social Workers and Spiritual Support Counselors), were finishing up ten-week sessions in both Pendleton and Walla Walla. They immediately saw the need for continued support during these uncertain times. They pivoted quickly and by March 19th were planning a pilot online grief support series using the Zoom platform. Their quick response was recognized in an April 6th article on the National website, [Hospice News](#).

The team offered three ten-week sessions of the aforementioned grief group which is called Understanding Your Grief. They added a weekly online, drop-in support option called *Solace*. In November they presented a two-hour Holiday Grief Support event online.

The team was delighted to find that through their virtual offerings, they were able to extend their support to the outer limits of their service region and beyond. Recipients of their support were from as far away as Virginia, Southern California, Alaska, and many points in between. The team anticipates always offering a virtual platform for support in the future.

Join Us

### GRIEF SUPPORT

Currently being offered online



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

509.525.5561

[info@wwhospice.org](mailto:info@wwhospice.org)

[wwhospice.org/griefsupport](http://wwhospice.org/griefsupport)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In a year where many struggled to find normalcy in both our professional and personal lives, and sometimes found ourselves in distress, we couldn't be any more appreciative of our volunteer Board of Directors. This group of professionals remained engaged and committed to the work we do at Hospice. The 2020 Board of Directors were:

Jessica Dougherty-Burt, *Board President*

Dan Dierdorff, *Treasurer*

Jeremy Hyndman, *President-elect*

Brian Hope

Jennifer Peha

Heather Tacheny

Brandon Zaro

Merilee Richardson

Becky Cardell

Rebekah Heath

Tom Moran

Mario Delgadillo

Joanne Payne

Melissa Swopes



## DONORS

In 2020, we received approximately 850 donations (though we prefer to call them *investments*) from generous individuals and organizations ranging in value from \$10 to \$10,000. Each and every one of these donations are invaluable to us because they represent an investment in the work we do, in the patients we care for and in the community we serve. Though we appreciate every donor, we would like to acknowledge our top 75:

Carol Dayton-Votendahl	Dorothy Valaer	Joyce Underwood & Chris Brizendine
Hayden Homes Idaho, LLC	Ed & Kelly Chvatal	Larry and Teddy Beer
Patterson Charitable Foundation	Gene Valaer	Michael & Lauri Corliss
Blue Mountain Community Foundation	Kristen Riegert	Nancy Simon
The Macomber Family	Lynne & Russ Pierce	Sarah & Daniel McClure
Jane Coffey	Marcia Plocharsky	Steven & Dianna Woolley
Michael Taylor	Myles & Myrna Anderson	Susan Monahan & Mark Brucks
United Way of The Blue Mountains	Patty Anderson	Thomas & Sara Moran
Clarence B. Smith	Thomas Sawatzki & Lori Thomas	Timothy & Krista Davidson
Dan & Laurel Dierdorff	Donald Greenwalt	Virginia Mahan
Kenneth & Laura Norris	Donna Scheibe	Jose Jimenez
Nelson Irrigation	Karen & Justin Robison	Mary Jimenez
David Lincoln	Michael Haight	Susan Robison Kummer
Dunham Cellars	Ronald Martin	Power House Theatre
Tom & Sandi Madsen	Benjamin and Jean Gibbs	Dan and Sarah McClure
Kelly's Restaurant & Lounge	Brian Abrahamson & Brad McMasters	Emely Hobbs
Katherine Kelly	Cappy Ritchie	Gretchen Zickuhr
Walla Walla Exchange Club Foundation	Cathy & Michael Haight	Hal Larson
Larry & Sharon Clinton	Christ & Kelli Kontos	Joe Corvino
Shannon McFall	Clinton Fanning	Mary Van Quill
Lawrence North & Andrea Dobson	David & Carol Gordon	Richard & Jean Masteller
Bill & Donna Jacobson	Duane & Maryann Cole	Robert McKinney
Dan & Melissa Thiessen	Eric Kimball	Marc & Irene Randow
Dave & Cecile Rhodes	Jennifer & Chris-Allan Peha	Leo Doyle
Don & Jennifer Jackson	John & Tracy Royce	Stephanie Swyter

If you believe your acknowledgment was omitted or your intention was to remain anonymous, please contact [brad@wwhospice.org](mailto:brad@wwhospice.org).

## WHY PEOPLE DONATE TO WWCH

Aside from the fact that individuals or families have a positive experience with Hospice and choose to give back, after that experience, there are a number of reasons why Walla Walla Community Hospice should be your charity of choice in annual and planned giving.

**Proven Track Record.** In its 40+ years of operation, Walla Walla Community Hospice has a proven record of success and fiscal responsibility. As a non-profit, that information is transparent and readily available.

**We have a large service area.** To address the needs of a geographically-dispersed rural population, WWCH's approximate 1300 square mile region includes Columbia, Walla Walla, and NE Umatilla counties. Dual State certification, clinical licensing, and supporting the large service area is a challenge to maintaining the profitability of the organization.

**Not all of the work we do is reimbursable.** Most patients have eligible forms of hospice benefit coverage through CMS (Medicare/Medicaid) or private insurance. Other patients do not qualify or have private coverage, but we are committed to never turning a medically-eligible patient away. Charitable funds are set aside and designated by the Board of Directors for this purpose. In addition, WWCH offers many services to our community and entire service region which is not reimbursable through CMS. Our extensive grief support and educational programs are funded by donations and fundraising efforts.

The purpose of this Annual Report is to share information with our partners in the community, to those who support us, and to those who want to learn more about us.

If you would like to know more about Walla Walla Community Hospice, we encourage you to contact us to schedule a phone call, a meeting, and/or a tour. We welcome questions and feedback.

Our full financials are available to view on [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org) where we have achieved a Platinum rating as a result of our commitment to transparency as it relates to sharing financial information.

Our EIN is 91-1144144.



*When there isn't a cure . . .*

*There's the miracle of care.*



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