

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Walla Walla Community
H O S P I C E

WHEN THERE ISN'T A CURE, THERE'S THE MIRACLE OF CARE.



Executive Director Report

WRITTEN BY JULIE REYNOLDS

I started my new journey with Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) on January 10, 2022. I would like to introduce myself and tell you about my background prior to becoming the new Executive Director at WWCH. I am a Registered Nurse (RN) who graduated from Walla Walla Community College in 1991, which was one of the last classes of nursing to wear nursing caps. I started my career as an LPN at St. Mary Medical Center in 1990 while finishing my RN. I worked all the floors as a float and then took a permanent position on the medical floor.

In 1992, I moved to Spokane WA and worked at Sacred Heart Medical Center in the Advanced Cardiac Care Unit. In 1996, I decided to come back to Walla Walla and applied for a job in the Transitional Care Unit (TCU). This was an exciting era in nursing. Nurses became viewed as professionals, the well-being of nurses was addressed with the "Mind your Back" campaign, nursing education was advancing, and, thankfully, nursing wages increased and the dress code relaxed.

I had seen a lot of death and dying on the cardiac unit. These were critically ill people who often required urgent attempts at cardiac resuscitation, and they either passed quickly or survived and were sent to the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. By contrast, in the TCU's comfort care room where we spent time with the patients and families who were too sick to go home or did not have the support at home to be able to go home with Hospice. This made me realize it takes a nurturing, compassionate caregiver to carry out the duties of preparing the patient and family for the passing of their loved one. After working on the floor for several years, I did regulatory paperwork for the TCU and the inpatient Rehab Unit and then Supervisor of the TCU. The next position was as Case Management Supervisor and then Director after obtaining my BSN from the Providence University in 2016. In this position, I managed Discharge Planners, Social Workers, and Utilization Review Nurses. I dealt with

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[EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT CONTINUED]

insurance denials and Compliant Documentation Management Integrity with the providers. Now nurses and healthcare providers wear hats as part of their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to keep them safe. During the Covid-19 pandemic, I have witnessed such resilience in the health care teams across many settings. One example was a family who was struggling because their loved one was dying in the ICU and they could not visit in the hospital due to Covid-19. When they were allowed to come see them through the glass window, it put them at ease. The providers would go outside to talk with family members, which helped them, deal with the anxiety of not being able to be by the side of their loved ones. These situations brought some providers to a breaking point at times, but then they would come back and do it all over again the next day with a newfound hope. The perseverance and compassion I witnessed was the most I have seen in my career as a nurse. We need to dedicate time and effort for the continued healing of our community. Hospice has advanced and grown over the years and I am committed to continue this sacred work. My goal is to educate the communities we serve on advanced care planning, palliative care, and end of life care. I am dedicated to the mission of Hospice and to the health of our wonderful staff and volunteers.

Director of Patient Care Services Report

WRITTEN BY GINA POLLARD, BSN

In 2021 the Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) team continued to safely provide care and support for our patients, their families and their caregivers. We continue to set the bar high and are continually assessing ways we can do better. This past year we introduced all new Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) initiatives.

These initiatives include:

- SIA (Service Intensity Add-on) visits to be completed by nurses and social workers for at least 85% of our patients in the final seven days of life
- Visit frequency changes made for patients identified as SIA in the electronic medical record for both nurses and social workers
- Medication Reconciliation
- CNA documentation: Coordination of care with the Interprofessional team and documentation within the CNA scope

In 2021, WWCH also successfully completed our Washington State survey and we are looking forward to our upcoming Oregon State survey in 2022.

We also identified gaps in support during the weekends and said, “*We can do better*”. We set out to support our patients', families', and caregivers' needs on the weekend by building in support via a contract for triage support using a company called Hospice On Call. This helps our WWCH nurses focus on the patients needing in-person visits and decreasing interruptions during those visits.

We also approved weekend nurse support by approving a nurse position that would work Tuesday through Saturday to create more overlap on the weekend. Stay tuned, more support is planned for 2022.

WWCH continued to provide virtual options for our patients to facilitate certification, and recertification for

hospice services, patient and family care conferences, virtual bereavement groups, and more.

WWCH is blessed to have such a resilient clinical team. The amount of heart the WWCH team has for the mission and dedication to excellence humbles me. With all the flexibility we have had to demonstrate as a team during the pandemic, we have continued building trust, providing patient-centered care, and have stayed focused on our mission to provide compassionate care to patients in the final stages of life and support for their loved ones and caregivers.

Our patients model resilience to us every day, and are the true heroes amongst challenging times throughout the pandemic. Their life stories, their ability to find joy and laughter, hope, and love while approaching end-of-life reminds us each day why what we do is important. They inspire us and are the center of it all.

"Our patients model resilience to us every day"



Committed to Quality & Compliance

WRITTEN BY IONNE OTT, OPERATIONS, COMPLIANCE & QAPI

Operations & Compliance

Entering the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic was not easy. I am happy to report that Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) continued to exemplify resiliency in the face of adversity. Looking back on the year, I picture all WWCH team members linking arm in arm, standing in the gaps for each other, supporting each other and showing up to serve our beautiful Walla Walla community. I was able to witness a group of people I call my colleagues navigate the exhausting changes that Covid-19 brought. I wish I could say that the regulations surrounding this pandemic were properly outlined, but the healthcare industry was still treading water. In spite of this I am proud to say that this team remained compliant and maintained consistent, quality care for our patients.

SOME 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- WWCH passed successfully when Washington State surveyed us in June. Although we were working remotely we were able to come together virtually in preparation for survey readiness. Upon the arrival of WA State, we were ready and felt confident that, although there were consistent changes, we stayed as stable as we could. WA State was able to identify some room for improvement in our administrative efforts and praised us in our clinical efforts.
- Our board members approved three new Performance Improvement Projects (PIPS); goals that allow us to identify an area of growth where we can push our professional experience to the next level. WWCH will always have an eye towards continuous improvement because we strive to be better.

Quality Matters

There is something to be said about quality of care. The World Health Organization identifies quality of care as “the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes.” In a moment of truth and reflection we can admit that it is not human nature to have death as a desired outcome... but we all have a time when this outcome becomes real to us. There was a lot of loss in 2021. Loss of loved ones, loss of lifestyle, loss of expectations and loss of trust. Something that WWCH has not lost is its recognition that we have a high standard for quality of care. We are there to provide quality care for your loved ones. We support each other and provide opportunity for a healthy lifestyle. We pivot our expectations accordingly and we sustain trust. We are intentional about the care we provide our patients, employees and volunteers because we trust that the qualities we have to do the work we do are exceptional.

Camp Amanda

WRITTEN BY LUCI BERG, CAMP AMANDA COORDINATOR

This year we had fully planned to have Camp Amanda, our three-day summer camp for children grieving a loss. It was to be in-person with a few adjustments due to COVID (a limit of 15 campers, ages 7-12, safe-distancing, COVID-19 tests upon entering camp, following State guidelines regarding masking, food service, etc.). As Camp approached, COVID numbers in Walla Walla rose, becoming some of the highest in the State.

Furthermore, the week before camp, the entire Umatilla National Forest where Camp Kiwanis is located, was closed due to wildfires. The Camp Amanda leadership team was forced to cancel, initially intending to postpone a few months into fall. However, the COVID infection rates were still very high and camp was officially cancelled for the second year in a row. We are very optimistic that we will be facilitating a full, in-person Camp Amanda in 2022!



Volunteer Programs

WRITTEN BY LUCI BERG, VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

Continuing to rally through a pandemic, 41 volunteers helped WWCH save \$118,919.68 in 2021. Of those, they provided 1,294.25 hours of administrative and patient care volunteering, as well as hours dedicated from our volunteer Designated Physician, Dr. Zawatzky. Volunteers selflessly gave a total of 92.50 combined fundraising hours and in kind time from our Board of Directors.

1,294.25
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

“Volunteers don’t necessarily have the time; they have the heart.”
– Elizabeth Andrew

\$118,919.68
SAVED!
BECAUSE OF
VOLUNTEER
SUPPORT

To learn more about being a hospice volunteer, visit wwhospice.org/volunteer, call 509-525-5561, or email Luci at luci@wwhospice.org.

Outreach, Education & Events

WRITTEN BY BRAD MCMASTERS, COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS

Events

What can we say about outreach and events in a year we could do very little outreach and had no in-person events? With the exception of a handful of employees, the office remained closed for all of 2021. As a healthcare organization and to err on the side of caution, this was necessary in order to keep our patients and staff safe. It started with the cancellation of the **Evening of Elegance** in February. We chose not to do a virtual event, because we didn't want to burden our local businesses with donations after such a difficult year.

With a slight reprieve in Covid infection rates during the summer, considerable work was done to hold the annual **Pond and Garden Experience**, but as the date approached, the Delta variant reared its head in the Valley and this event, too, was cancelled. Our partner appreciation campaign in November, **Dr. Cookie** entailed the purchase of individually-wrapped cookies which were then packaged and delivered to the community with huge smiles behind our masks. This is a great event for us to pay tribute and thank all of those involved in the continuum of care of our patients.

The end-of-year fundraising campaign, the **Tree of Life**, once again translated very well to a virtual experience. After a mailing to our current donor base and a media push to the public, we sat back in our respective homes and received the generous donations, mostly by mail. 307 independent transactions resulted in \$25,850 in donations. But the most important data from this event were the 514 tributes made by donors and the 473 tributes which were the patients we'd cared for in 2021. 991 decorative paper ornaments with the names of these loved ones were hung on the Tree of Life, located in the Grand Lobby of the Marcus Whitman Hotel. A touching ceremony via a Zoom webinar was broadcast live with 57 attendees. Many others watched the Facebook Live broadcast and later viewed the recorded version.

Outreach

The majority of our outreach was centered around grief support, something we learned very early on that we could do well in a virtual environment. A very touching video was created by Elkhorn Media Group featuring Dan Neisner, the spouse of a dear, previous patient. Our message was the benefits of grief support for individuals and families and with a further goal of normalizing male participation. This video may be viewed on our YouTube page.

For **National Advance Directives Day** in April, a drive-through was planned in the parking lot. Participants picked up branded bags with Advanced Directives materials such as the Five Wishes booklets, along with other gifts and treats. Additional bags were delivered to regional senior centers that week.



Social media grew ever more important in 2021. Our Facebook Page reach increased nearly 8% over 2020, while our Instagram reach increased by 174.6%. Our new likes and follows on Facebook increased by 34.6% on Facebook. People seem to appreciate our social media presence and message.



GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Very early on in the pandemic, the Bereavement Team, consisting of WWCH Social Workers and Spiritual Support, were able to successfully transition to online grief support. Throughout 2021, this continued with **Solace**, which are weekly drop-in sessions and **Understanding Your Grief** which are 10-week sessions, closed to new members once they begin. There were three of these 10-week sessions held in 2021.

In the summer, a drive through event in which the team passed out **Rock Painting** kits was very well attended. In addition to the kit were age-appropriate grief support materials.

The very touching and informative **Holiday Grief Support** event was held online in November and appreciated by all who participated.

Administration wisely installed Luke Self as the Bereavement Team lead and he has done an excellent job organizing the grief support programs and preparing to ramp them up in 2022.



Donations & Planned Giving

In 2021, WWCH received many investments in our work in the form of donations from individuals and organizations. A partnership with the Blue Mountain Community Foundation and their Valley Giving Guide program was exceptionally beneficial to us during the period of year-end giving.

Fundraising was so negatively affected by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, WWCH felt it was important to invest time and resources in a Planned Giving program to encourage supporters to consider designating major, lasting, and sustainable gifts to WWCH as part of an Estate Plan. To learn more about planned giving options, visit wwhospice.org/donate.

Each and every donation we receive is an investment in the work we do and regardless of the amount, is valued and appreciated. On the following page, we'd like to acknowledge the top 75 donors. If your name or organization has been overlooked, it could be that the donation was input in 2022 or there was an unfortunate human error. We apologize for any oversight.

Top Donors of 2021

Elise Adams
William Allen
Suzanne Babbitt
Robert Bahr
Jason & Sarah Beechinor
Patrick Beilfuss
Wrandoll Brenes
Heidi Brenes
Christi Brennan
Robert & Doris Brinson
Russel Brooks
Marc & Karri Bruce
Aaron Burns
Nancy "Penny" Colton
Lonnie & Sherrice Croft
Jennie Dickinson & Jay Ball
Dan & Laurel Dierdorff
Madonna Doocy
Mark & Tina Driver
Joerg Ebel
Ray Fleenor
Mark & Shamaree Fortune
Kyla Frasco
Rick & Darcey Fugman Small
Donald Greenwalt
Michael & Cathy Haight
Molly Hallgrimson
R Cheryl Horne
Paul & Susan Hosticka
James Hudson
Brett & Denise Isenhower
Derrick Jefferies
Dwelley & Julie Jones
Stephen & Cindy Jones
Kathy Kopf
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Tim & Meri Larkin
Keith Laubhan & Joanne Schmitz
Zoe Lindsay
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Jessica Maher
Emily Marks
Cherelee Martin
Shannon McFall
Tom & Sara Moran
Steve & Marianne Nelson
David & Theresa Nichols
Lawrence North & Andrea Dobson
Nancy Olson
Keith Otipoby
Jennifer & Chris-Allan Peha
Lynne & Russ Pierce
Marcia Plocharsky
Joyce Plyter
Marc & Irene Randow
Karen & Justin Robison
Pamela Robison
Peter Viavant & Robynne Snow
Harold Saxby
Jane Scribner
Dale & Lindy Smith
Mile & Allison Stensrude
Jeffrey Stiles
Melissa Swopes
Mike & Heather Tacheny
Anne Threlfall
Kerry & Peggy Tierney
Amy Underhill
Richard Valentine
Katie Weed
Christopher White
Rebecca Wolfe
Dale Yuzer

In Closing

Walla Walla Community Hospice is a non-profit hospice organization which has been operating since 1980. It employs a staff of administrative professionals, MDs, RNs, LPNs, CNAs, Social Workers and Spiritual Support professionals. WWCH serves Columbia, Walla Walla, and NE Umatilla counties providing compassionate care for patients in the final stages of life, support for their caretakers, and grief support and education to the community as a whole.

In 2021, the administration and staff of WWCH showed great resilience by caring for a record number of patients, by implementing many new practices to improve patient care, and by supporting grieving individuals of all ages, all the while navigating the Covid landscape and dealing with a national labor shortage.

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. A remittance envelope may be enclosed. We rely on the generosity of our donors to invest in our education, outreach, and grief support programs. You may also visit wwhospice.org/donate to make a one-time donation or to learn about planned giving options.

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 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.



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