

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Walla Walla Community
H O S P I C E

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

ANNUAL LETTER WRITTEN BY MELISSA SWOPES, 2019 BOARD PRESIDENT

My first experience with Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) was in 1997 with the passing of my mother. The staff were knowledgeable and helped my family and I begin to understand the journey my mother was on. With their help, I realized the journey was really for all of us. In 2016, my brother fell very ill and required immediate end of life care. You can imagine the overwhelming emotions that came with this news. I was blessed to have a member of WWCH take me under their wing and get my brother home within just a couple of days. The team was mindful, kind, compassionate, and empathetic.

It has been an honor to serve as the Board President the past twelve months. I have learned so much from my fellow board members, the leadership team, and Hospice staff. The board members are all volunteers and bring a wealth of diverse knowledge and experience to the team. We must not forget about our Hospice volunteers that serve beyond the board members. These individuals are an integral part of Hospice services. They assist the patients and patient family members with activities or errands, companionship, holistic therapies, and even the special honor of memorializing the patients' life story.

The Executive Director, Topher McClellan, acquired the agency during a significant transition of change after serving on the board for many years. He has demonstrated an innovative leadership style that created an environment of learning and growth. His efforts were focused on fulfilling each measure of the strategic plan. The board continues to be impressed with strategic accomplishments since 2017 and his enthusiasm to succeed. He has increased community awareness by utilizing radio advertisement, posting on social media, and hosting community events such as a 6-week grief support group at Davis School. Topher is committed to collaborating and building business relationships with other community partners that compliments the mission and philosophy of Hospice.

The organization conducts periodic employee satisfaction surveys. We have seen ongoing improvement over the last two years in areas including benefits, wages, processes, and personal development. The organization experienced some employee relation concerns that were resolved satisfactorily with the involvement of the board and Hospice leadership. This created an opportunity to reinforce Hospice policies and procedures that would support the needs of staff and leadership moving forward. The organization is filled with experienced, hardworking, compassionate individuals that are committed to fulfilling the mission of hospice.

In 2019, I began making home visits with the Hospice staff. I accompanied a Social Worker and a Registered Nurse at two different homes. I was impressed with the rapport and respect each of them had with the patient and patient family members. I observed each clinician make a point to ask about special people in their lives, recent visitors, or meaningful experiences since their last visit. They took the time to listen and share moments with each other. I witnessed staff support the needs of

patients with a calming and genuine nature. They demonstrated the ability to adapt and absorb the emotions and physical health changes surrounding the dying process and did so with compassion and finesse. Hospice services provide an opportunity to serve others in a highly sensitive and vulnerable stage in life. We ask individuals to open their homes to us, trust in us, and share their deepest feelings as their health declines through to end of life. We ask families to open their hearts to us so we can assist them during the dying process and after their loved one's have passed on. It would be an understatement to say that the staff at WWCH become a beloved member of the patients extended family.

"I witnessed staff support the needs of patients with a calming and genuine nature."

Recognizing the need for growth and diversity to sustain healthcare changes, Topher McClellan and Gina Pollard set forth on a journey to explore Palliative Care services. In 2017, Gina Pollard joined the Hospice leadership team with a desire to immerse herself in the industry, develop growth opportunities for the staff, and expand services in the community. She leveraged her desire to learn and grow with an opportunity to apply for the University of Washington Interprofessional Palliative Care Graduate Program. She was selected and was asked to be the site facilitator for the Tri-Cities area. Palliative Care focuses on helping patients with a serious illness or condition that has not yet met the need for Hospice care. Patients generally are diagnosed early on in their disease process requiring education and monitoring to remain healthy for as long as possible. We are grateful to have individuals leading the organization that engage in every opportunity to look beyond what today's needs are and set the organization up for future success.

Another substantial contribution to WWCH's success is the exceptional financial management and philanthropy. The Tree of Life ceremony is an incredible event sponsored by WWCH that promotes a moment of pause to remember those we have lost. The hospice team recognized approximately 1,100 community members from current and past years. In addition, patients in our communities may qualify for financial assistance through the generous gifts of our donors.

Those needing care and support during this vulnerable time have access to services because of you. Speaking of access, it is important for WWCH to expand our services into underserved areas. The first geographical service areas identified were Columbia and Umatilla County. In 2018 to 2019, we successfully increased our services in Columbia County by 20% and Umatilla County by 21%. We anticipate continued growth in Umatilla County since the closure of the hospice agency in Pendleton, Oregon. We continually look for ways to streamline the operations, to adapt to the changing regulatory landscape and to gain meaningful data to make informed decisions. WWCH has worked diligently to gather data and implement a strong quality assurance and emergency preparedness program which would pass a state survey. The first state survey conducted was a huge success especially given the entire leadership team changed in 2017. The team is engaged to assess and monitor quality on an

ongoing basis. They are receptive to feedback and mitigate challenges with a forward-looking approach. We acknowledge that 2019 was a year of quality development, business growth, community outreach, and team building. I am pleased with the progress we've made thus far, excited for the future Palliative Care Program, and looking forward to the 2020 Strategic Planning session.

Over 20 years ago, this organization helped my family and I through a difficult time. They are here today because of their quality reputation and word-of-mouth by community members. WWCH is working hard to spread the message but can't do it alone. If you've been touched by Hospice in some way, please share your stories so others may benefit as well. The greatest compliment you can give is to entrust your loved ones to our care.

Executive Director Report

WRITTEN BY TOPHER MCCLELLAN

"It is a challenging time to be a health care provider"

At Walla Walla Community Hospice, every day presents an opportunity to recognize exceptional blessings and accomplishments and also to adapt and overcome diverse challenges. This last year, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the detailed and coordinated efforts of our team members and the importance of working

together to achieve a common goal. I am very proud of this team and can say with confidence that your community hospice is fully committed "to provide compassionate care to patients

in the final stages of life and support for their loved ones and caregivers".

We have maintained our commitment to provide high quality care to those in need while adapting to new regulations and searching for ways to increase our operational efficiency. We continue to serve all patients, regardless of complexity or financial means, with a humble awareness that our services are vital to patients and families coping with end of life situations.

It is a challenging time to be a health care provider - costs increase and the regulatory environment continues to change. Funding is limited, yet providing quality care for our patients and loved ones and the growing need for services abound. Thankfully, Walla Walla Community Hospice has realized success, in part, due to the many generous donors in the community who have been touched by hospice in one way or another. From donations, memorial gifts, volunteering, community grants—they all help to support us and to continue providing the miracle of care. Thank you for your commitment to Walla Walla Community Hospice and I appreciate your support and dedication to our mission.

IN 2019, WE SERVED OUR PATIENTS . . .

WWCH OFFERED COMPASSIONATE, END OF LIFE CARE TO 387 PATIENTS. 73% OF THOSE RESIDED IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY, WHILE 20% WERE IN UMATILLA COUNTY AND 7% IN COLUMBIA COUNTY.



Director of Patient Care Services Report

WRITTEN BY GINA POLLARD, BSN, RN

2019 proved to be a year of growth and resilience. The clinical team showed marked compliance with 24-hour charting turnaround times and documentation of coordination of care within the interdisciplinary team.

We also standardized our referrals process to facilitate admissions while continuing to stay true to our processes and policies. Ongoing training every other week with newly established nurse's meetings that have really bonded the team, provide the nurses a platform to discuss learning opportunities and share knowledge. WWCH is now receiving steady referrals from our newest service area in Pendleton and we feel privileged to be caring for this community. We also offered a grief group in Pendleton which was well attended with our community partners at Cason's Place. Our experienced clinical team continues to build strong relationships within this community as well as all the communities we serve. We are committed to providing excellence in end-of-life symptom management and provide layers of support to the patients and families we serve. Our team of doctors, nurses, social workers, spiritual support counselors and certified nurse aides are ready to answer the call.

"2019 proved to be a year of growth and resilience"

Committed to Quality & Compliance

WRITTEN BY IONNE OTT, OPERATIONS, COMPLIANCE & QAPI

Operations & Compliance - Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) recognizes that knowledge is power. 2019 tested our abilities to communicate our skill set and our knowledge. We were encouraged to share what we knew with each other and it turns out that shared knowledge empowers employees. Who knew? Operational transparency makes for an empowering platform for employees to stand on. Stability provides effective compliance.

Quality Matters - Walla Walla Community Hospice (WWCH) is committed to quality care. Medicare guidelines provide the fundamental operational requirements we need along with the direction our agency takes for internal assessments. 2019 was a pivotal year for us in our data collection methods. WWCH's Quality

Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) program integrated "real-time" data along with retroactive data in order to identify opportunities for growth. Weekly data collection (a not-so-easy task) for manageable measures has given our team a chance to have insightful discussions, a proactive approach to define what quality care looks like for each individual using patient-centered plans of care. We continue to review survey results sent to patient families by a third party vendor after the patient's death. These survey results discern the training we provide WWCH employees and what logistical decisions are made to meet our community needs.

SOME 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- WWCH conducted cross training among its employees. Maintaining the value of transparency at the forefront, employees were put to the test by receiving training for different positions. Higher appreciation manifested itself through the understanding for what's completed in day-to-day tasks. Employees were trained in the areas of referral triage, on-call, bookkeeping, operational compliance, audits, and medical records.
- WWCH refined the audit process for performance improvement in all disciplines. Compared to 2018, we saw a 15% increase in collaborative efforts among the interdisciplinary team for end of life care. This 15% demonstrates ongoing improvement in communication to provide quality patient care.

Volunteer Programs

WRITTEN BY LUCI BERG, VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

2019 WWCH Volunteers

234
generous volunteers devoted...

884
HOURS OF
FUNDRAISING &
BOARD OF DIRECTOR VOLUNTEER TIME

4,935
HOURS OF
PATIENT CARE VOLUNTEER TIME

SAVING OUR ORGANIZATION
\$131,643.80!

Volunteers provide much support to patient care and day-to-day functions at Walla Walla Community Hospice. Our Medicare certification requires that 5% of our patient care paid staff time be matched with hours by patient care volunteers; we keep track of these hours and estimate a dollar value, which in 2019 was \$131,643.80. We had 234 total volunteers in 2019 who provided 4,935 hours of patient care volunteering, and 884 hours for fundraising and in-kind time from our Board of Directors.

There are many ways to volunteer for hospice, they include: patient visits, bereavement mailings, office support, grief group assistance, board of directors, committees, maintenance and repair and events such as Tree of Life, An Evening of Elegance and the Pond & Garden Tour.

If you are interested in volunteering, call to see what opportunities are available that match your interest, skills, and availability!

Camp Amanda Turns 35

WRITTEN BY LUCI BERG, CAMP AMANDA COORDINATOR

Camp Amanda is a weekend camp held each July at Camp Kiwanis for children ages 7-14 who are grieving the death of a significant person in their lives. The campers are matched one-to-one with an adult volunteer, and they participate in a craft project, swimming, archery, small and large group discussions, games, and fishing. Through these activities, the campers get to know each other and discover they are not alone. They learn it is okay to run, play, and laugh and how to express their many emotions in acceptable ways. Thanks to the support of the community, the campers can attend at no charge. In February, there is a one-day reunion where the previous summer's campers and volunteers gather together.

This year, Camp Amanda was held July 26-28. The campers and volunteers bonded, shared, learned, cried, and laughed, making it a life-changing experience for all. Campers headed back home on Sunday with a new sense of self-confidence to guide them in their grief.

CAMP AMANDA
2019

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CAMPERS

CAMPER COMMENT:
"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I LEARNED AT CAMP AMANDA IS THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE DEALING WITH A BIG LOSS LIKE ME, AND I AM NOT ALONE. EVERYONE WAS SUPER NICE AND THEY DIDN'T MAKE FUN OF WHAT I SAID."

PARENT COMMENT:
"SINCE CAMP, HE HASN'T HAD ANY MORE MELTDOWNS OUT OF NOWHERE. HE HAS MADE SUGGESTIONS OF HOW TO HONOR HIS FATHER AND OTHER GREAT COPING SKILLS HE HAS ADOPTED SINCE ATTENDING THEY HAVE BEEN SO BENEFICIAL."

VOLUNTEER COMMENT:
"CAMP AMANDA FOR ME THIS YEAR WAS POWERFUL. WHAT A BLESSING!! MY HEART IS FILLED WITH AWE AND APPRECIATION FOR THE BRAVERY OF THESE CAMPERS. I LEARN FROM THE CAMPERS AND THE PROFESSIONALS WHO LEAD THE CAMP. I AM GRATEFUL FOR THIS EXPERIENCE."

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VOLUNTEERS

Outreach, Education & Events

WRITTEN BY BRAD MCMASTERS, COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVENTS

2019 was a year with multiple goals for outreach and education. We wanted to convey two important messages, the benefits of early admission into hospice care and taking control of our healthcare goals. Our third objective was to increase awareness of our services in NE Umatilla County.

The year saw an increased amount of outreach. The staff shared our mission and messages with assisted living facilities, Senior Centers, Ministerial Associations, physician groups, and service organizations such as PEO chapters, Kiwanis, Lions, Exchange Clubs, and more. Staff participated in community events, business networking events, health fairs, networking luncheons, Chamber Banquets, etc.

Our message was shared in person, but professional videos and voice content were also created for cable TV, social media, and radio spots. There were multiple radio interviews and many press releases were picked up by regional media outlets. A strong focus was placed on increasing awareness in NE Umatilla County, including an Every Door Direct Mailer (EDDM) from Milton-Freewater down the Highway 11 corridor and throughout Pendleton proper. Thank you to Coffey Communications for their charitable contribution of design work and printing costs. Our Facebook presence continued to grow, increasing our number of followers by 11% with nearly 80,000 organic post impressions.

Relationships with partner organizations such as [The Compassionate Friends](#) and [Cason's Place](#) were further developed in 2019. TCF still uses the Filipi Memorial Room as a meeting place with some marketing assistance provided by WWCH. They partnered in a community event for a Worldwide Candle Lighting Memorial Ceremony on December 8th. Cason's Place, a child-centered grief support program in Pendleton offered WWCH space in their facility for support groups and storage. In exchange, WWCH began offering administrative and marketing assistance.

WWCH entered the arena of advance care planning by developing the *Are You Good to Go* workshop. The first was held in June in the hospice office and another in Milton-Freewater in November. Both workshops had a panel consisting of a physician, an attorney, a social worker, and a spiritual support counselor and used the [Five Wishes](#) advance care planning tool as a guideline. The workshops were well-attended and free to attendees.

The 2019 events were successful, starting with the **Evening of Elegance** Auction & Dinner in February. It was attended by 260 guests and raised \$97,921, the highest grossing fundraising event in WWCH history. 342 ticket holders and 50 volunteers toured 10 lovely properties during the **Pond & Garden Experience** in September. 8 vendors, 5 musical guests and 5 working artists also participated. The event grossed \$12,228 and garnered a lot of positive community response. The **Dr. Cookie** campaign, though not a fundraising event, delivered 400 dozen cookies to nearly 200 community partners involved in the continuum of care of our patients. It is a feel-good event which lets our partners know how much we appreciate them. The **Tree of Life** end-of-year fundraising campaign raised \$27,000, resulting in over 1,000 paper ornaments honoring loved ones placed on the tree located in downtown Walla Walla. The culminating candle and tree lighting ceremony was attended by nearly 50 people. There were other fun events supporting or involving Hospice such as live music sponsored by [Waterbrook Winery](#) and a tour and tasting of the Browne Family Vineyards organized by [Canoe Ridge Winery](#) and [Wylie Monuments](#).

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The Bereavement Team, consisting of WWCH Social Workers and Spiritual Support Counselors, led numerous grief support groups over 2019. There were several 10-week closed groups titled ***Understanding Your Grief*** in both Walla Walla and Pendleton. A drop-in group, ***Solace*** was held weekly in the Filipi Memorial Room. In February, the ***Chill+Spill*** workshop helped teens develop grief coping skills through art, journaling and discussion. For the second year in a row in August, the team facilitated an outdoor afternoon of ***Rock Painting*** as a positive outlet for working through grief and commemorating loved ones. The annual ***Holiday Grief Support*** event was offered in November to help attendees prepare to manage their grief during the holiday season. Team members supported staff at two workplace environments who'd experienced a dramatic loss. Finally, a program was developed in which members of the team visited Davis Elementary on a weekly basis over several week to help children recognize the ways we grieve and to develop coping skills. All grief support opportunities are offered at no charge to all residents in the tri-county service region of WWCH.



WWCH OFFERED 128 HOURS OF GROUP GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT AND 40 HOURS OF EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH AT NO COST TO THE RESIDENTS OF ITS ENTIRE TRI-COUNTY SERVICE REGION.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO POSITIVELY AFFECT THE IMPACT WE MAKE IN OUR COMMUNITY, PLEASE . . .

DONATE

DONOR THANKS

We are fortunate to have so many who support our work in a myriad of ways. They give by donating their time with our patients or in our office, by attending our events, by bidding on or donating auction items. They supply food for our summer camp, grow flowers or make quilts for our patients, and bake cookies for our community partners. ***To all of you, we thank you.***

We would like to acknowledge the top 100 cash donors in 2019. These cash donations go directly into our general fund which allows us to perform the work outside of the scope for which we receive reimbursement, such as community-wide grief support, Camp Amanda, Advance Directives workshops, and Educational Community Forums. ***To all of you, we thank you.***

Michael Taylor
Carol Dayton-Votendahl
Jane Coffey
Patterson Charitable Foundation
Blue Mountain Community Foundation
United Way of The Blue Mountains
Yancey P. Winans Trust
Northwest Grain Growers Inc
Dunham Cellars
Maryann & Russell Byerley
Brian Abrahamson
Nelson Irrigation
Jerry Mosgrove
Clara & Art Bald Trust
Susan Monahan & Mark Brucks
Tom and Sandi Madsen
Precept Brands
Lynne and Russ Pierce
David Lincoln
Shannon McFall
Lawrence North and Andrea Dobson
David Bowers
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Ketelsen Construction
Dwelley and Julie Jones
Walla Walla Cruisers Car Club
Jesse Wilkinson
Wingman Birdz + Brewz LLC
United Way of Umatilla & Morrow Counties
Kathleen Wamble
Elizabeth Schaus
Richard and Jean Masteller
Hal Larson
Nathan Holmberg
David and Carol Gordon
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