



MEADOWLARK HOSPICE

5 Reasons for Hospice Now

1. Quality of Life
2. Symptom Management
3. Spiritual Care
4. Caregiver Relief
5. Grief Counseling

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Flowers and Hope

by Dawn Phelps, RN/LMSW

A fragile green plant pushed its way up through a crack in the pavement in the concentration camp yard, and the hundreds of prisoners walked around the young plant to prevent crushing it beneath their feet. Each day as the prisoners attended roll calls, they carefully continued avoiding stepping on the plant, and the plant finally produced a bloom, then a flower!

It was during WW2 when millions of Jews were sent to concentration camps, and many were killed in gas chambers. Others died as common laborers, never to return home. So a tiny flower in the prison yard was a stark contrast, a sign of hope, of new life for those who were starving or facing brutal treatment from their captors. The story of the flower is associated with Gerda Weissmann, a fifteen-year-old Polish girl, whose life changed forever on September 1, 1949. Before that, she had lived a normal happy life with her parents and her nineteen-year-old brother. But their world changed when Poland was invaded, and Jewish people were snatched from their homes and forced to live in ghettos with limited food and few freedoms. Three years later her family was separated and sent to work camps or death camps. Gerda was in a work camp, and from 1939 onward for six years, Gerda became acquainted up close with loss after loss. Her nineteen-year-old brother was the first to leave the home, and she never saw him again. His advice to Gerda when he left was **"Be strong."**

Then one day her parents as well as others in the ghetto were separated. Her father was forced to leave on one train, and Gerda and her mother left on another. Then she and her mother were separated. A soldier forced her into the bed of a truck, telling Gerda, "You are too young to die!" And Gerda never saw her parents again. During the next few years, many of Gerda's friends and her best friend Ilse died during a 350-mile march during the winter that began January 29, 1945—4,000 began the march, and only 120 survived, including Gerda. They sometimes marched in the snow, and many had no shoes. So their feet froze, and their toes literally broke off. One night on the march, Gerda slept under the snow since there was no shelter. At the end of the war, Gerda was rescued the

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MEADOWLARK HOSPICE

Leadership Team

John Kelley, MD
Medical Director

Danielle Rothfuss, APRN, ENP-C
Nurse Practitioner

Amy Burr, BSN, RN, CHPN
Program Director

Kami Bolek, BSN, RN, CHPN
Patient Care Coordinator

Jen Meier, LMSW
Director of Social Services

Hospice Staff Nurses

Shelley Beikmann, LPN
Abby Bulleigh, BSN, RN, CHPN
Kyla Clark, RN
Rebecka Gierhan, RN
Lenita Glanzer, RN
Deb Hedke, BSN, RN
Margaret Kelley, BSN, RN, CHPN
Jenny March, RN
Sharon Ramsey, RN
Erin Shultz, BSN, RN
Kim Sixbury, BSN, RN, CHPN
Sherry Wiese, RN

Home Health Aide

Chelsea Davis, HHA
Petagaye Pearson, HHA
Tracy Wallace, HHA

Social Workers

Kathryn Benson, LBSW
Stephanie Garrison, LBSW

Bereavement

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Bereavement Writer

KayLynn Mead, LMSW
Bereavement Coordinator

Chaplains

Larry Brock
Sr. Janet LeDuc
Kathy Ouellette
Al Paredes
Julie Shields

Administrative Staff

Lilly Hitsman
Administrative Assistant/Billing

Jenny March, RN, CHPN
Volunteer Coordinator

Kim Sixbury, BSN, RN
Medical Records Coordinator

day before her twenty-first birthday, May 7, 1945. She was scarcely alive. An American soldier, Kurt Klein, freed her from a boarded-up factory. She had typhus and pneumonia, weighed only 68 pounds, and her hair had turned white. I wondered why Gerda lived while so many others died, and I believe there are some things that may have helped. First, she was from a family of **courage** and **love**. In her book Gerda states, "Their courage ignited within me a spark that continued to glow through the years of misery. . . . The memory of their love—my only legacy—sustained me in happy and unhappy times.... It is still part of me here in America."

When her brother Arthur was forced to leave home, his last words to Gerda were "**Be brave.**" Those words stuck with her. Her father's advice also helped her survive. He made **her promise** to wear her ski boots if she had to leave the home. And even though the weather was warm when she was separated from her parents, she kept her promise and wore her boots. Looking back, it was obvious to her that the ski boots probably saved her life as she witnessed so many with frozen feet during her 350-mile march. Her father had also made her **promise to not give up**, to not kill herself no matter how rough things might get. When he made her promise, he had his hands on the back of her neck. At one time when she was working in a factory all day and shoveling coal off of trains all night, she was to the breaking point and almost threw herself under a moving train. But it was then that she felt the sensation that her father's hand was again on the back of her neck, and she remembered her promise and did not end her life. They were a family of **faith and prayer**. It was common to see her father reading the Bible and praying. Gerda's family knew how to love and make fond memories. And she knew how to work. While living in the ghetto, Gerda and her mother knitted sweaters and scarves which they traded for extra food. The extra food helped keep them strong, and her strong **work ethic** helped her survive in the labor camp. Gerda had **hope** and **believed** that she was going to live through her experience. While she was on the train on her way to a work camp, she imagined the wheels of the train saying over and over, "I am going to live, I am going to live." Gerda had **hopes** and **dreams** even when she was cold, hungry, and in the worst of conditions. She dreamed of someday marrying and having a baby. She dreamed of someday be reunited with her parents and family. Gerda had rich **family memories** which she relived during her captivity. And she tried to remember the names of her kittens and the flowers around their house—roses, lily of the valley, tulips, violets, white lilacs, daisies and buttercups. She wrote, "I wanted the kind of love that I could imagine, accompanied by **flowers** and laughter."

She said, "I thought of Papa, Mama, and Arthur, and all the happy times.... Memory upon memory came back to life. And from that night on, whenever I thought of my parents, I thought of them in happy times, before the war, their faces perfect, not distorted by sorrow and hurt." And she remembered the words of her old grandfather who seemed to be saying, "**Have faith, my child.**" Maybe Gerda was like the one flower in the prison yard that pushed its way up through the crack, **determined** to survive and bloom in spite of the odds with one loss after another. But Gerda lived and married Kurt Klein, the American soldier who found her in the abandoned factory on May 7. Gerda's life did not end in Europe, but in America. She became a mother, a grandmother, and a writer, penning her stories about the horrors with hope mixed in. Memories, love, and flowers, lots of flowers emerge in her writing. Even in the agony of death and loss, she clung onto a life that is beautiful, good, and kind. She lived to retell her story, made new memories, and wrote a new ending to her life.

A story of **family**. Of **love**. Of **memories, flowers, and hope**.

Annual Volunteer Luncheon

On April 25, Meadowlark Hospice celebrated its volunteers with our annual Volunteer Luncheon at the Methodist Church in Clay Center, KS. What an amazing turnout it was! Out of 33 volunteers, 24 were present. Some of our retired volunteers also participated and several perspective volunteers and family members that Hospice served also came to the event. We were very fortunate to have a group of wonderful teens that helped out with setting up, serving, and tearing down the event.

The volunteers participated in getting to know you Tic-Tac-Toe and even though they only had to fill out one person per block, several filled the blocks out in its entirety. It was wonderful to see everyone socializing and catching up with each other. Volunteer Gwen Miller was the winner of our raffle drawing, a gardening basket. Volunteers enjoyed a homemade pulled pork luncheon with amazing sides! Everyone enjoyed it thoroughly. Volunteers shared stories of how Hospice changed their lives and also how their experience as a volunteer also impacted them personally and helped others. Our volunteers were recognized with certificates of appreciation for their years of service.



Pictured (L to R): Audra, Bethany, Tatianna, Eddie, and Yesenna



Carol Alexander – 12 years
Amanda Blackwood – 10 years
Lana Bloom – 17 years
Suzi Carlson – 1 year
Kandyce Cudney – 14 years
Anita Cyphers – 10 years
Linda Dahl – 2 years
Sr. Loretta Clare Flax – 4 years
Mary Garbarino – 8 years
Michele Graham – 18 years
Sandra Jellison-Knock – 2 years

Barbara Langston – 1 year
Theresa Meyer – 34 years
Gwen Miller – 12 years
Joyce Nelson – 6 years
Carol Ohlde – 13 years
Mary Alice Pacey – 30 years
Shirley Pfizenmaier – 22 years
Francis Richard – 22 years
Donna Saunders – 2 years
Daniel Seeberger – 4 years
Dianne Smith – 1 year

Sr. Susan Stoeber – 11 years
Lora Stohs – 13 years
Mary Tate – 1 year
Jan Taylor – 25 years
Stacie Thomas – 11 years
Al Urich – 16 years
Sylvia Wapp – 23 years
Jackie Wingard – 12 years
Clyde Wollenberg – 22 years
Rita Wollenberg – 8 years
Patricia Bennett – New volunteer

Retired volunteers Carol Brown (29 years) and Verna Lee Musselman (16 years) were also present.

Our volunteers do a myriad of things, such as providing companionship to patients, running errands, helping with light housekeeping, administrative tasks and providing a friendship and shoulder to lean on in difficult times, not only for the patients but for their families as well. Meadowlark Hospice volunteers are a unique and wonderful group of people that not only donate their time but their hearts!

Annual Volunteer Luncheon Photos



Hospice Gifts, Grateful Family and Memorial Gifts

Meadowlark Hospice gratefully acknowledges the hospice gifts and memorials.

Hospice Gifts

Clay Center Chapter O.E.S. #180
GFWC Kansas Modern Pioneers Study Club
Margaret Gonser
Kathryn J. Fritz

Memorial & Grateful Family Gifts

Robert "Bob" Bauer
Robert & Karen Fabean

Bob Demanett
Audrey Elyea

Phyllis Ellis
Dail & Kathy Smith

Fred Elyea
Audrey Elyea

Wanda Kling
Jo Barclay
Muriel & Sandie Bonsall
Robert & Rebecca Brown
Kevin & Deanna Derowitsch
James & Jean Jensby
Robert & Michelle Martin
Jerry & Linda Melton
Jean Noble
Deanna Reynolds & Chad Novotny
Rod & Sandra Stacken
Joe & Jana Strecker
Wanda Kling Memorial
Doug & Kayleen Wilkinson

Donnis Knoettgen
Dail & Kathy Smith

Mariel Kolle
Janet Habluetzel

Grace "Evelyn" Love
Jeff & Marie Wheaton

Timothy Olmsted
The Family of Tim Olmsted

Jerry Patterson
Jeannie Patterson

Gary Quillin
Jim Logback
Micky Rogers

Dorothy Revell
Pam Campbell
Jane Coons
Don & Eilene Henderson
Douglas & Kathryn Herman
Heather Kunc
Richard & Julie LeClair
Randy & Sherry Trost

Sharon Schweitzer
Carol Adams
David & Catherine Affolter
Lee & Deanna Barleen
John & Carol Benfer
Melvin & Linda Braun
Jim & Mary Garbarino
Deanna Hammond
Mark & Carol Pfizenmaier
Sharon Schweitzer Memorial
Brenda Sortor
Karen Stevenson
Gary Unruh
Fred & Dee Wait

Garry Senters
Dan & Sue Affolter
Garry Senters Memorial
Dixie Senters

Donald Slaughter
Kyle & Aubrey Anderson
Jo Barclay
BRB Services
John & Marjorie Horkman
Douglas & Dawn Jackson
James & Jean Jensby
Paul & Verletta Moon
Jean Noble
Douglas & Joann Parrack
Peter & Mary Kay Sherlock
Doug & Kayleen Wilkinson

Dixie Sortor
Carol Adams
Sharon Carlson
Barbara Booth & Jenna Carver
Roger & Valerie Coberly
Dorothy Debenham
Dixie Sortor Memorial
Jerry & Cindy Habluetzel
Doyle & Dixie Jones
Michael Kidwell
Randy & Jeanette Kidwell
Barbara Anderson & Lisa Kloefkorn
Bill & Terri Lee
Judy Rohe
Casey & Janice Urban
Mike & Patricia Walker
Donna Wichman

Joan Spunaugle
Joan Spunaugle Memorial

Darrell & Darlene Walden
A.W. Slaughter

Final Wishes



In hospice care, we cherish the moments that bring joy to our patients. Sometimes, this means sharing life stories, singing beloved songs, spending time with family, or attending a special event.

This year, we had a unique opportunity for a staff member to fulfill a patient's heartfelt request - to pass on one of her treasured skills. She creates delicate, intricate dolls from paper, and her wish was to teach this craft to someone so that it could live on. Our Home Health Aide (HHA), Chelsea, eagerly embraced this opportunity, spending a day with her learning and creating a paper doll together. The patient was overjoyed to share her gift, knowing that her artistry would continue beyond her own hands.

Celebrating Hospice Staff

March was a special time to honor social workers and the invaluable contributions they make to our organization. We deeply appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of our hospice care, which allows us to incorporate their compassionate approach in supporting our patients. Social workers play a vital role in ensuring holistic, thoughtful care. Thank you to Jen Meier, MSW, Stephanie Garrison, BSW, KayLynn Mead, MSW, and Kathryn Benson, BSW, for all of they do for Meadowlark Hospice!

March 30th was a special day to honor doctors! We are incredibly grateful for our medical director, John Kelley, MD, whose expertise and leadership guide the care of our hospice patients. We also deeply appreciate all the attending providers who support the patients we serve. End-of-life care is a profound journey, and our patients find comfort in having their trusted providers remain by their side throughout it.

April 23rd was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our exceptional administrative assistant and biller, Lilly Hitsman. Lilly plays an essential role in our organization, juggling multiple responsibilities with dedication and efficiency. She skillfully handles questions and requests, ensuring that everyone has the support and resources they need. Her contributions are truly invaluable. Thank you, Lilly!

May is a time to celebrate nurses and the incredible contributions they make through their work. We are truly fortunate to have the best! Our dedicated nurses devote countless hours to caring for the families we serve, guiding them through the end-of-life journey with compassion. They ensure that patients experience comfort and dignity every step of the way. Thank you to Shelley Beikmann, LPN, Kami Bolek, RN, BSN, CHPN, Abigail Bulleigh, RN, BSN, CHPN, Kyla Clark, RN, Rebecka Gierhan, RN, Deb Hedke, RN, BSN, Margaret Kelley, RN, BSN, CHPN, Jenny March, RN, CHPN, Sharon Ramsey, RN, Erin Shultz, RN, BSN, Kim Sixbury, RN, BSN, CHPN, and Sherry Wiese, RN.



Call 785.632.2225 or
Email: JMarch@ccmcks.org



Volunteer Education In-Service

SECOND Monday of each month	11:00 a.m. Republic County - Courtland United Methodist Church - 308 Main St
SECOND Monday of each month	1:00 p.m. Cloud County - Concordia Sister Susan Stoeber's Home - 443 W 18th St
THIRD Monday of each month	11:00 a.m. Clay County - Clay Center Meadowlark Hospice - 709 Liberty St
THIRD Tuesday of each month	9:30 a.m. Washington County - Washington Washington County Courthouse - 214 C St
THIRD Tuesday of each month	Noon Marshall County - Marysville Marysville Methodist Church - 1500 N St

Bereavement Groups

Serving Northeast Kansas

Join us for one of our
bereavement groups.

**Learn to Live
Life After Loss**

Washington
2nd Tuesday
12:00 pm

This group meets at the KSDS office. We share a pizza together or you may bring your own lunch to eat while we meet. This group is led by KayLynn Mead, social worker.

Clay Center
2nd Tuesday
4:30 pm

This group meets at Meadowlark Hospice. This group is led by KayLynn Mead, social worker.

Belleville
3rd Thursday
Call For Time

This group meets at the Belleville United Methodist Church. This group is led by Stephanie Garrison, social worker.

Marysville
4th Thursday
4:00 pm

This group meets at Community Memorial Healthcare in the South Plaza. This group is led by Jennifer Meier, social worker.

*Call about community bereavement groups in
Concordia 785-243-4454



**MEADOWLARK
HOSPICE**

Please call our office at
785-632-2225 to confirm dates
or for more information!

Meadowlark Hospice Continues To Encourage Conversations

No matter your age, health, or family relationships, end of life and advance care planning conversations are hard conversations for families to have. Most conversations are happening in crisis situations, leaving decision-makers unsure if they are making the right choices. This is especially true when the decisions involve continued care to increase the quantity of life, but adds no value to quality of life. The “need an answer now” decisions end up being made without an understanding of the patient’s healthcare wishes. Many families are left saying “I wish I knew what he/she would’ve wanted.” On April 16th, we observed National Directive Day, aiming to raise awareness within our communities about **advance directives** and their critical importance.

It’s time to get courageous and start talking with your loved ones about the things that can make a difference in your health care and their peace of mind. Conversations about advanced directives and end of life care are at the top of the list of uncomfortable conversations we avoid. The problem with this avoidance is that it leaves loved ones feeling as if they are playing roulette, gambling that their decisions regarding your healthcare align with what you would have wanted. “While 92% of Americans say it’s important to discuss their wishes for end-of-life care, only 32% have had such a conversation. 95% of Americans say they would be willing to talk about their wishes, and 53% even say they’d be relieved to discuss it (The Conversation Project National Survey, 2018).” The time is now to take a step forward to have and encourage these conversations with your friends and loved ones. Be Courageous!

In order to have these conversations, it’s important to know what is meant when someone says “advanced directives.” Even among healthcare professionals, there is a lack of knowledge about exactly what advanced directives include, and when they can or will be used. Advanced directives in the medical community include a “Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare”, a “Living Will,” and a “Do Not Resuscitate” declaration. (At the very least, please make sure to receive education about “Durable Powers of Attorney for Health Care.”)

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions (DPOA-HC) allows you the opportunity to choose whom you want to make medical decisions for you. This designated person makes medical decision on your behalf only when you are unable to do so. This is a written document in which you specify your wishes regarding medical care. The DPOA-HC does not cover legal and/or financial matters.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order is written when a person wishes to have a natural death. A DNR order does not mean you no longer receive care; it means you continue to receive care, but when your heart stops beating or respirations cease, you are allowed to pass without interventions. A DNR order is not required to begin hospice care, but education will be provided upon admission to hospice regarding a DNR. If you do not want resuscitation started, ask your doctor to write a DNR order for you to keep in your home.

A Living Will allows a person to state in advance what their medical wishes are about artificially prolonging life when they have a terminal condition. It only applies when the person has been diagnosed and certified as terminally ill by two doctors. It does not direct care during an emergency situation.

Advanced Directives are living documents that you can adjust as your life situations change. The document review should follow the D’s: Decade, Diagnosis, Decline, Divorce, Death, and Destination. Decade is when you enter a new decade of life. Diagnosis means when you receive a new diagnosis that at some point will impact your health care needs. Decline is when your health condition starts to change and you begin the transition to requiring more assistance. Divorce is just that—whether yours, or anyone else involved in your advanced directive needs. Death is when you have appointed a DPOA-HC that has passed before you. Destination is something to consider if you travel or relocate elsewhere for a season. There are many options available to help you initiate a conversation with your chosen DPOA-HC. It’s important to discuss with your chosen DPOA-HC your final wishes, so they can carry out your healthcare decisions.

The Meadowlark Hospice team would like to open our doors to you to engage in conversations about advanced directives. We can discuss what the different directives are, and provide resources for you to take steps to complete your directives. Appointments are available to meet in our office, at your organization, or your home to begin the greatest gift you can give your loved ones, peace of mind. Please call our office at 785-632-2225 to arrange a time that we can help you begin your courageous conversation. Remember, National Directive Day serves as a reminder to prioritize these important conversations and ensure that your healthcare decisions reflect your values and desires.



Phone: 785-632-2225
Fax: 785-632-3557
Email: mhospice@ccmcks.org
Web: meadowlarkhospice.org

We are available to present programs to area organizations!



New Employee Spotlight

We would like to welcome Rebecka Gierhan, RN, to our hospice nursing team. Rebecka brings a love of caring for people and a genuine compassion to our team.



Rebecka is from Lawrence and has been living in Clay Center for 8 years. From KSU she earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree in Microbiology and completed the Manhattan Area Technical Colleges' Nursing program. In her free time, she enjoys traveling and anything outside. Rebecka and her husband Ryan have one son, Ryker, who turned one on Valentine's Day.

We are thankful for the time our families will get to spend with her. She will bring peace and comfort in their time of need.

Mission

Our mission is to provide loving, compassionate care for those living with a life limiting illness.

Serving

Clay, Cloud, Marshall, Republic, Western Riley, and Washington Counties.

Meadowlark Notes



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