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Talbot Hospice Foundation
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10th Anniversary of Hospice House

In July of 1998, an exceptional and valuable resource became a reality to residents of Talbot County; the first two guests were admitted to the Guest Wing in the brand new Hospice House residential facility on Cynwood Drive in Easton. July 1, 2008 marks the 10th Anniversary of this peaceful, lovely residence, and in the ten years that have ensued 400 hospice patients have been served in the six-bed Guest Wing. Staying true to the original mission of offering 'hope, compassionate support, and services to all members of the community facing end-of-life issues' Talbot Hospice continues to be a premier, committed and respected home for celebrating life.

With over 280 volunteers, Talbot Hospice Foundation has a unique business model; volunteers help deliver the services which are offered at no charge. Dedicated to the concept that dying is not just a medical event and that trained community lay people can play a significant role in providing practical and emotional support to those facing death and grief, volunteers collectively have contributed annually over \$225,000 worth of time and services. Services are delivered not only in Hospice House, but in homes, in nursing homes and in assistant living residence throughout Talbot County.

Funded exclusively through the generosity of the community, Talbot Hospice receives no reimbursement through Medicare or other insurance payers. Contributions range from the individual, to the largest single donor, Friends of Hospice, which raises money through the annual Festival of the Trees celebration. In addition, churches, corporations, local clubs, grants and a growing endowments helps support the operating budget for Hospice House, hospice programs and a staff of 15.

Incorporated in 1981 as a non-profit, the Talbot Hospice Foundation was the result of a study conducted by Drs. Eugene Guthrie and Steven Carney, and Kathy Foster, RN from

the Talbot County Health Department. Looking to develop an agenda to address those with a terminal diagnosis their initial objective was to “respond with compassion to the emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs of the terminally ill persons and others affected by the loss of life”.

In the beginning, they worked from a dining room table with two volunteers, Dr. Guthrie’s wife, Betts and Talbot resident Millie Parrott. Over time the concept grew and eventually they moved into the basement of the Talbot County Health Department. In just one year’s time, 24 volunteers and one part time staff member had served 20 patients and their families.

In 1994 Talbot Hospice moved from the office in the Department of Health to 216 South Street. With a tremendously positive community response, the proposal of constructing a Hospice House was initiated. By 1997 the vision of constructing a house soared. \$1.7 million dollars was raised in 11 months, land was purchased on Cynwood Drive and construction was initiated!

In the first year of operation, the Guest Wing at Hospice House served 29 patients or 41% of all hospice patients in the community. Designed to be home-like and welcoming, each guest room had a private bath and doors which opened to an outside garden. Light and warmth filled the living room, dining room and adjacent administrative offices. Presently, the 7400 square foot house has remained relatively unchanged except for a small chapel which was added in 2001.

Working in conjunction with a medical partnership with Shore Home Care Hospice, Talbot Hospice Foundation offers all hospice services that are mandated by federal and state laws. Today with a 27 year history, Talbot Hospice is highly respected within the community and continues to serve its original mission of ‘offering hope, compassionate support, and services to all members of the community facing end-of-life issues.’ With this in mind, the foundation has taken note of the current reality that Talbot County is growing older faster than any other county in the mid-Atlantic region.

According to Mike Menzies, President of the Talbot Hospice Foundation Board of Directors and President of Easton Bank and Trust, “Our expansion committee recognizes the demand which will likely grow over the coming decade and believes we must prepare for that demand. We will meet these challenges and continue to deliver the best hospice care in the state”.

With the Guest Wing in use round the clock, the bereavement programs in need of additional meeting space and the conference room continually utilized by community organizations, Talbot Hospice House is running at full capacity. “Over 10 years ago, a group of dedicated community leaders recognized the need for hospice to have a permanent presence and residence in our county. They believed in the ‘build it, they will come’ concept and turned that vision a reality. The services offered at our facility have the potential to impact everyone whether it’s end-of-life care in our Guest Wing, the loan of a wheelchair, participating in a bereavement support group or using our community room for a meeting,” said Executive Director Julie Crocker. “The commitment and compassion we feel about our mission is evident the moment you walk through our doors. The Hospice House, and all it represents, is indeed a treasured community resource.”

Talbot Hospice House is grateful for the continuous support of the residents of Talbot County who have never wavered in their belief of our unique and valuable mission. While providing patient and family care, community education and advocacy, our house maintains the dreams, hope and love that make up life.