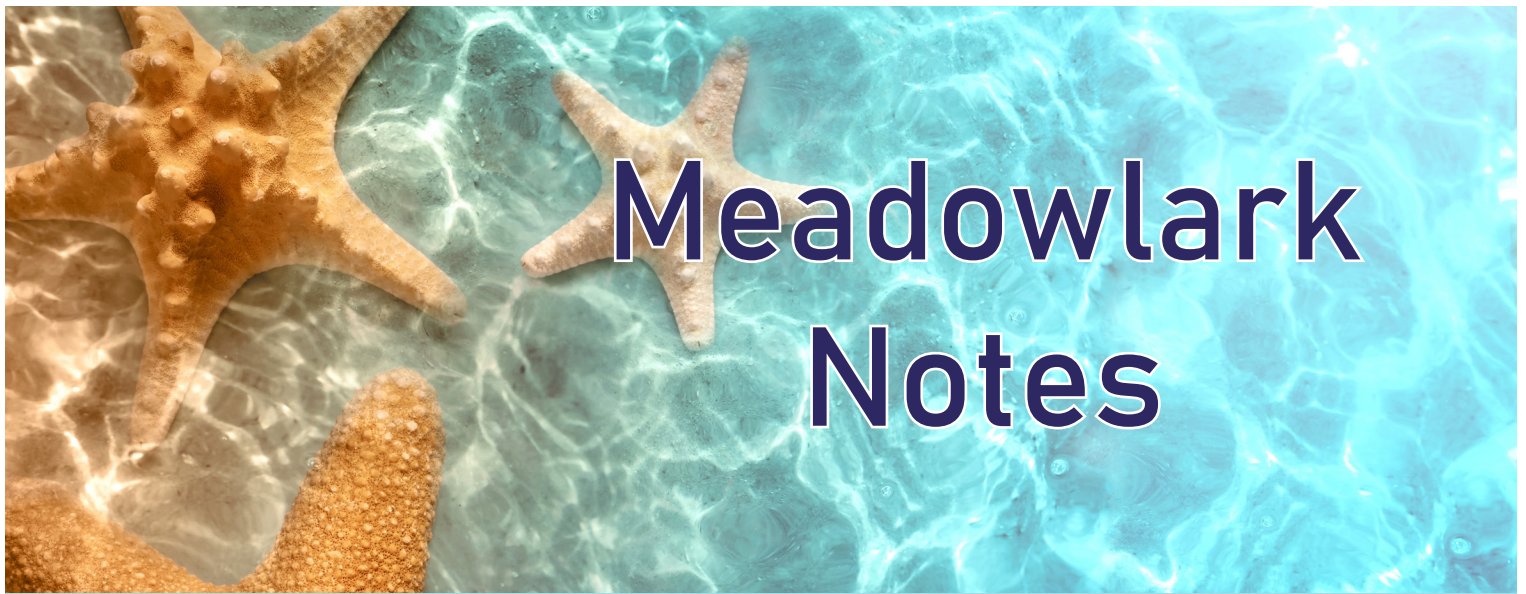




Meadowlark Hospice Newsletter

Issue 112 | Spring 2026



MEADOWLARK HOSPICE

5 Reasons for Hospice Now

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

Inside this Issue

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- New Employee Spotlight

The Starfish Thrower

by Dawn Phelps, RN/LMSW

A man was walking on the beach very early one morning when he noticed a boy reaching down, picking up a starfish, and throwing it in the ocean. As the man approached the boy, he called out to him, *"Hello! What are you doing?"*

The boy looked up and said, *"I'm throwing starfish into the ocean."*

"But why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the man.

"The tide stranded them. If I don't throw them in the water before the sun comes up, they'll die," the boy replied.

"Surely you realize there are miles of beach and thousands of starfish. You'll never throw them all back, there are too many. You can't possibly make a difference."

The boy listened politely, then picked up another starfish. As he threw it back into the ocean, he said, *"I made a difference for that one!"* (Story adapted from "The Star Thrower" by Loren Eiseley—1907-1977).

Rescuing so many vulnerable starfish on the beach probably looked like a hopeless task to the gentleman who was watching the energetic young boy. And we too may feel like it is a hopeless situation to help so many needy people in the world. If you listen to the news, you know that the world's problems are monumental. Millions live in poverty. Some are hungry; some are homeless. Some are marching, protesting various causes.

Many are filled with hatred, selfishness, and greed. Many are sick and dying. Some are living in countries ravaged by war, and some are grieving the death of loved ones. With so many problems, how can one begin to make a difference anyway? More than likely, if you are like I am, you do not have enough money to be a major contributor to worthy causes. You may not be able to become a Red Cross volunteer or help with clean-up after a disaster. But each of us can still make a difference in the world, one person at a time, even though it may not be on a large scale—one day at a time, one hug at a time, one kind deed at a time. Even a smile can make a difference to someone who is struggling.

Mother Teresa who is well known for devoting her life to helping the poor in India said, *"In this life we cannot always do great things. But we can do small things with great love."* And she also said, *"If you cannot feed a hundred people, feed one."* Feeding one person

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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

Jenny March, RN, CHPN
Patient Care Coordinator

Jen Meier, LMSW
Director of Social Services

Hospice Staff Nurses

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Anjanette Hauserman, BSN, RN
Deb Hedke, BSN, RN
Margaret Kelley, BSN, RN, CHPN
Lisa Lastrapes, LPN
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

Dawn Phelps, RN, LMSW
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

Petagaye Pearson, HHA
Volunteer Coordinator

Kim Sixbury, BSN, RN
Medical Records Coordinator

does not seem as daunting as trying to feed hundreds—that's more doable!

After dealing with any monumental crisis, you may feel lost and in doubt about what to do next to adjust to your new circumstances. You may not have the fortitude or the physical energy to help others—at first, anyway. But someday you probably will.

If you can muster up the strength to do something good for someone else, you too will benefit! You will gain strength, confidence, and satisfaction from helping someone else, because doing good is also good for you. You might want to consider volunteering at a hospital, delivering Meals on Wheels, sitting with someone who is ill to give their caregiver a break. And thrift shops or hospices sometimes need volunteers.

No, you cannot save the whole world, and your deeds need not be large. Your presence may be the biggest gift you can give. The power of your presence, listening, a smile, a kind word, or a hug is immeasurable.

Every small deed and caring attitude can make a big difference for someone else and a difference for you too! And you can say as the young boy who threw a starfish back into the ocean, "I made a difference for that one!"

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." - Aesop

My Little Blue House



Meadowlark Hospice recently welcomed author and licensed professional counselor associate Heidi Dixon for a special visit with hospice staff, focused on grief support and healing after loss.

Dixon's book, *My Little Blue House*, has resonated deeply with the Meadowlark Hospice team. The book explores the emotional landscape that follows the death of a loved one, offering gentle guidance, honest storytelling, and practical tools for navigating life after loss. Staff members shared that Dixon's reflections felt authentic to the experiences they witness every day in their work with patients and families. Her ability to articulate the quiet, complicated moments of grief sparked meaningful conversations among the team long before her visit.

It was this impact—how the book validated their own observations and gave language to the often unspoken parts of grief—that inspired the team to invite Dixon to speak in person. They hoped to better understand the concepts behind her writing and explore how her insights could strengthen the support they provide. During her visit, Dixon introduced a concept she calls the "Christmas Tree" model of grief. It's a visual framework that illustrates how individuals move between emotional grief and the realities of daily life. The model emphasizes that grief is not linear, but rather a natural back and forth process that looks different for everyone.

"She explained that some days you're overwhelmed with emotion, and other days you're focused on simply getting through daily responsibilities," Director Amy Burr said. *"Both are normal, and both are necessary parts of healing."*

Dixon also highlighted the importance of balance in grief, noting that remaining stuck in either extreme—completely avoiding grief or becoming consumed by it—may signal the need for additional support. For the Meadowlark Hospice team, the visit was a continuation of the connection they felt through her book. It offered a chance to deepen their understanding, ask questions, and reflect on how Dixon's framework could enhance the care they provide.

"It was a meaningful opportunity for our team to learn, reflect, and strengthen the care we provide," said Burr. *"Conversations like these help us better support our patients and their families during some of life's most difficult moments."*



It would be difficult to find volunteers who go above and beyond the way Meadowlark Hospice volunteers do. If you are considering joining our hospice team as a volunteer, we invite you to reach out. We would be happy to connect you with one of our volunteers so they can share their experience and help guide you as you make your decision.



Hospice Gifts, Memorial Gifts and Grateful Family Gifts

Meadowlark Hospice gratefully acknowledges the hospice gifts and memorials.

Hospice Gifts

Carol Adams
Gene Peschel
Shari Poole

Larry & Sharon Kadel
Roger & Tricia Koester
Scott & Wilma Nelson
Wayne & Savannah Robeson
Rod Stacken
Wilson Family Funeral Home

Memorial & Grateful Family Gifts

Jerald "JB" Barnard

Douglas & Bette Grauer
Vicky Gross
Jerald Barnard Memorial
Janice Smith

Ronald Caron

Anonymous Donor
Todd & Faye Cyr

Lonnie Craig

The Lonnie Craig Family

Michael Dunn

David & Catherine Affolter
Chris & Cathy Carlson
Patti & Roger Clark
Kevin Dunn
Monte & Emily Green
Phil Martin
Carol Michaud
Mark & Carol Pfizenmaier
Dianne Smith

George Gregory

Janice Gregory & Family

Verle Grittman

Kristine Nelson
John & Brenda Wisbey
Ruth Ann Zimmer

Nancy Habluetzel

Janet Habluetzel

Dee Hilton

Dee Hilton Memorial
Ed & Sharon Evans
Deanna Laffery
Carol Michaud
Scott & Kris Rickley

Rodney Hine

Jo Barclay
Sharline Boland
Donna Eisenbarth

Kathy Kindel

Jo Barclay
Donovan & Mary Cummins
Kirk & Rhonda Hanson

Eleanor McChesney

Dan & Susan Omli Peterson

Sondra Megrail

Avery Auto Parts
– Lawrence & Stephanie Avery
Stan & Debra Buseman
Darrell & Kay Denton
Bryan & Konnie Evans
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Kevin Larson
John & Christine Linder
Brandi Lippert
James & Judy Lippert
Annette Marden
Larry & Connie Needham
Patricia Newell
Matt & Rhonda Richter
Brandon & Lori Rogge

Lois O'Neil

Doug & Pam O'Neil

Ray O'Neil

Doug & Pam O'Neil

Melvin Rengstorf

Kim & Colleen Holle
Lora Stohs

Betty Rosebaugh

Mary Beem

Elaine Scheele

Evelyn Baker
Theresa Buggia
Dennis & Cathy Cashier
Rick & Kandyce Cudney
Janet Duever
Elaine Scheele Trust
John & Myrna Gleue
Katherine Manley
Lora Stohs
William Jr. & JoAnn Walcott
Don Scriptor
Dail & Kathy Smith

Sharon Seematter

Chris & Stacie Murdoch

Hospice Myths

Myth #1:

Hospice care is only for cancer patients.
Fact: Hospice care is for anyone with a terminal prognosis of 6 months or less. This can include dementia, heart and lung disease, kidney failure, and many other life-limiting diseases.

Myth #2:

Hospice care is only provided in a home.
Fact: Hospice care is provided in the setting that the patient calls home. This can include nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

Myth #3:

Hospice care is expensive.
Fact: Hospice services-including medication and equipment related to the terminal diagnosis-are completely covered under the Medicare/Medicaid Hospice Benefit. Most private insurance carriers also offer a hospice benefit. Medications not related to the terminal diagnosis are the patient's responsibility. Room and board is also the patient's responsibility.

Myth #4:

Hospice is for the last days of life.
Fact: Patients and families benefit most when hospice services are begun as soon as an individual learns of his or her terminal diagnosis. Hospice care, at any stage, but particularly when started early, can significantly lighten the burden of an end of life illness.

Myth #5:

Your doctor will no longer be involved in your care when you begin hospice.
Fact: The hospice team works closely with your primary physician to ensure you receive the best care at end of life. Hospice care is provided by highly specialized professional staff, including a medical director, registered nurses, social workers, home health aides, chaplains, and volunteers.

Myth #6:

You can't contact Meadowlark Hospice until your physician suggests hospice.
Fact: Anyone may call at any time to learn about hospice services at no obligation. A physician's order will be required for admission, but anyone is free to learn about their treatment options. We encourage individuals to contact our office when planning your advanced directives to learn about the hospice benefit before you are facing a crisis. Many families have reported that they just had no idea what hospice could do.

Myth #7:

Hospice means giving up hope.
Fact: Choosing hospice does not mean death is imminent. With Hospice, the miracle isn't the cure, it is in the caring. The Hospice team provides support and symptom management so families can share quality time together doing the things they love.

A Lowly Yellow Dandelion

Buttercups and tulips were blooming, and lawns were showing off bright yellow dandelions sprinkled in the green grass. Spring was bursting out all over!

The temperature was just right for a young mother and her little girl to go outside. As the young mom sat in her lawn chair, soaking up the warmth of the sun, the little girl explored the yard. After a while, the little girl picked a dandelion. Then, with her yellow "flower" in her chubby little hand, she headed toward her mother.

The little girl's face beamed with excitement as she handed her yellow "gift" to her mom who accepted it with an enthusiastic "thank you" and a hug. Hopefully the mother-child-dandelion interaction, which has happened between many little ones and their parents for hundreds of years, will continue to help teach children the joy of giving in the future.

Research has shown that people who do good things for other people are the happiest people of all. Even toddlers are usually happier when they give something away instead of getting something.

Perhaps the "giving" lessons we learn in our childhood will later be used to give informally to friends or family or formally as a volunteer at a church, hospital, or hospice, for instance. I read an article on a Mayo Clinic website, written by Angela Thoreson, a clinical social worker, about what volunteering can offer. She listed:



*Sense of purpose and valuable skills
Improved physical and mental health
Nurture new and existing relationships*

Givers do not usually give so they will get, yet they still may be rewarded with new connections, satisfaction, appreciation, and a new-found purpose in exchange for the kindness they give away. Fortunately, there really is truth to the saying, "Doing good is good for you!" and it is fun to think that the joy of being kind may originate in the springtime of life with a toddler, a mom, and a weed, a lowly, yellow dandelion.

"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier." - Mother Theresa

*"Do all the good you can, by all means you can,
and in all the places you can, at all the times you can,
to all the people you can, so long as ever you can."*

- quote possibly by John Wesley 1700s

Meadowlark Hospice MONTHLY VOLUNTEER IN-SERVICES



- **Courtland** - 1st Tuesdays @ 11AM - United Methodist Church
- **Concordia** - 2nd Tuesdays @ 9:30AM - The Nazareth Motherhouse
- **Clay Center** - 2nd Tuesdays @ 12PM - Meadowlark Hospice office
- **Washington** - 3rd Tuesdays @ 9:30AM - Washington County Hospital
- **Marysville** - 3rd Tuesdays @ 11:30AM - United Methodist Church

Contact: Petagaye Pearson, HHA,
Volunteer Coordinator
785-632-2225
ppearson@ccmcks.org

Let's make a
difference, together!

Bereavement Groups

Serving Northeast Kansas

Join us for one of our
bereavement groups.

Learn to Live
Life After Loss

Washington
2nd Wed
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 Wed
4:00 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!



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 are excited to welcome two new nurses to our hospice team who bring compassion, dedication, and a strong commitment to patient centered care.



Lisa Lastrapes, LPN, has joined our clinical staff and will be supporting our patients and families with skilled nursing care and a caring presence. Lisa is known for her attentiveness and teamwork, and she is passionate about providing comfort and dignity to those we serve.



Anjanette Hauserman, BSN, RN, also joins our hospice team, bringing professionalism and a patient focused approach to nursing care. Anjanette is committed to supporting patients and families through every step of their hospice journey and collaborating closely with the interdisciplinary care team.

We are grateful to have Lisa and Anjanette as part of our hospice family and look forward to the positive impact they will make on the lives of our patients, families, and fellow team members. Please join us in welcoming them both!

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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