Hospice of Care Corp: A Gentle Touch at the Final Farewell

Alleen and Bill Johnson, of Newbury, enjoyed 56 years of truly living during their marriage together; and when it became clear that he was dying, Bill desired to conclude his remaining days at her side, at home.

“We married in 1952. I hate to say this, but I met him at a neighborhood bar. Back then, many of us did not own a television, so I met up with friends to watch the boxing matches at the local bar,” recalls Alleen, a devote Catholic and member of St. Helen’s Church. “Bill was a great guy with a terrific sense of humor. Friends would get him going at parties. He could portray any accent and really knew how to deliver a joke.”

The loving wife says her husband was a good provider — a machinist who worked in the valve industry for heavy equipment. Through the years the couple had a son Steven and daughter Susan.

In later years, Bill began to experience back pain and needed to be careful when doing heavy lifting. Alleen recalls, “About three years ago, his back really started bothering him. Then almost one year ago, the pain intensified. He had three pain blocks, but they didn’t work. His pain doctor told Bill to come back in another six months, and they would try again.”

Bill soon spent his days simply laying in bed, coming downstairs only for meals. Arthritis and disc deterioration were causing excruciating back pain for Bill. Eventually, they moved his bedroom downstairs.

“Then one day Bill complained of chest pains, and I called EMS. At the hospital, they discovered he had a bad heart. We were surprised. He was transferred to Heather Hill for rehabilitation, but Bill could not handle the rehab. He wanted to come home,” Alleen explains. “He wasn’t a good patient there. He wouldn’t even feed himself, when I knew he could.”

Alleen agreed that Bill should come home, and she contacted Hospice of Care Corp.

“I cannot praise Hospice enough. Marie Etling, our nurse, came regularly and told me what to expect step-by-step. Sandy Fife, our Care Corp Home Health Aide, visited our home to bathe Bill and change his bed,” recalls Alleen. “They were wonderful!”

Hospice supplied the Depend pads, hospital bed, oxygen and pain medications. Marie would ask him if he was in pain, and he would say no. That was the biggest comfort. The pain medication

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Holiday Helps
You and your family are invited to Help for the Holidays on November 9th from 2 to 4 p.m. at The Club at Chardon Lakes, 426 South Street, located behind Bass Lake Tavern. This will be our 15th Annual Memorial Service dedicated to those who have lost a loved one during the past few years. Please RSVP to Burr Funeral Home at 440-285-2182.

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was working.
“Marie also suggested I begin making arrangements for Bill rather than making snap decisions at the end. I was so glad I listened to her,” Alleen admits. “The last three days Bill never woke up. Marie walked me through what to expect – the change in breathing – and suggested that the time was near, 24 to 48 hours.”

“People told me you have to say it is OK to go. I did after Father Jay gave Bill his Last Rites. I knew he had a straight shot to heaven. I rubbed Bill’s face and said, ‘It’s OK. Don’t worry. I am well taken care of.’ Bill opened his eyes, and they were smiling. It was like he thanked me that I told him it was OK to go.”

“I would recommend Hospice 110 percent”

On July 17 at 9 p.m., Bill Johnson passed away, a few months shy of his 87th birthday. Alleen called her Hospice nurse Marie who immediately came to the house and offered her emotional support.

“Hospice of Care Corp is a great outfit. Marie, Sandy and Troy (Mollé, licensed social worker) were excellent. They provided medical and physical support, but also emotional support. They are easy to talk to. Marie and Troy both said I was such a strong person, but I didn’t think of myself that way. Bill looked so at peace that I didn’t feel sad,” Alleen says.

Troy visited Alleen a few days after Bill’s death. “She brought me a beautiful flower arrangement,” recalls Alleen. “I would recommend Hospice 110 percent. I never gave it a second thought to have Bill at home. He was so easy to care for really, thanks to the support I received through Hospice of Care Corp.

“Most of his friends are with him now in heaven. He is probably hunting, fishing, trapping and playing golf.”

Website Provides Emergency Readiness Tips
VNAReadySeniors.org is an emergency preparedness website for seniors. This website helps senior citizens and their families prepare for emergency situations by offering a free Ready Senior Checklist to reduce the impact a disaster has on your life and help you begin again. Don’t wait until it’s too late. Visit VNAReadySeniors.org today to learn how you can prepare.

Volunteer – Change A Life
As a volunteer with Hospice of Care Corp, you can hold a hand, make a phone call, write a thank you note, help with special programs, address envelopes, feed a pet, bake a cake, listen to cherished memories, rake leaves, read a book, sing a song, play a guitar, give a hug, touch a heart, and most importantly change a life.

Hospice volunteers are key members of the Hospice of Care Corp team. Whether you choose to work directly with patients and families or to volunteer in any number of ways, you will make a difference in someone’s life. Please contact Donna Nedrow, R.N., Bereavement/Volunteer Coordinator at Care Corp, at 440.286. 2273.

A SEASON OF THANKSGIVING

You cannot live in Geauga County and not fall in love with the beauty that surrounds us during the fall Season. The vibrant colors of the changing maple leaves remind us of the beauty found in each season of life.

This season also provides us with an opportunity to thank those people who have touched and supported us through the year. It is our desire to thank those individuals now who have made a difference in our business and lives.

First, Care Corporation continues to be fortunate in attracting and hiring the best-of-the-best when it comes to skilled nurses, therapists, home health aides, homemakers/companions, social worker, administrative and support staff. They share common values, beliefs, and dreams with us – centering on providing excellent, uncompromised care for the sick in our community. These shared family values at Care Corp enable us to continue to provide a level of care frequently missing from larger home care organizations. We thank all of you for your passion for excellence and love for the patients and families you serve.

Next, Geauga County continues to be so very fortunate to have an exceptional group of physicians serving our community. We thank these dedicated doctors for referring their patients to Care Corporation and continuing to provide an outstanding level of care to residents of Geauga County. Your support and encouragement through the many changes in home health care delivery is greatly appreciated.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the thousands of patients and their families who have trusted Care Corporation through the years with the care for their loved ones. It is a privilege and joy that cannot be understated. We learn so much from each of you – we learn of dignity, love, strength, courage and much more.

May each of you be blessed in countless ways this new year. From our family to yours, best wishes for a healthy, happy and loving season.

Fondly,
Shirley A. Baker, President/CEO

Jason Baker, Vice President, Finance and Marketing

Alleen and Bill Johnson

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“Most of his friends are with him now in heaven. He is probably hunting, fishing, trapping and playing golf.”
Mary Mullet speaks lovingly of her sister Wilma June Yutzy who began her life's journey in Applecreek, Ohio, born to a farm family with nine children. Says Mary, “Wilma always had some special needs. She was a strong, hard working young girl, but she was cognitively a little slow.” The family learned late in Wilma's elementary school years that she had a disease which would progressively cause her to lose more cognitive ability as well as mobility. While she could, Wilma stayed on the farm with her parents. She enjoyed mowing the lawn, doing dishes and helping around the house.

Mary moved away, got married, and began her family. In 1982, when her parents could no longer care for Wilma, she came to live in Mary’s home in Geauga County, beginning a new part of her journey. Mary, her husband Ray, and their three children welcomed Wilma, her charming character and her cheerful smile.

Mary’s family worked hard to keep Wilma as physically active as possible. David, Mary’s son and Wilma’s devoted nephew, came home from school every day and called out to his aunt – “Time for a walk, Junie!” He frequently teased her into being active because he understood the importance of it. Still, the efforts of Wilma’s family were no match for the disease which continued to cause further regression. After nearly seven years of caring for her in their home, the family eventually could not provide the level of care necessary for Wilma to live her best life. Thus began the next leg of her journey. Wilma moved to Briar Hill Health Care Residence from 1989 to 2007.

Briar Hill is located only five minutes from Mary’s home so the family was still always around Wilma. They visited her frequently and brought their beloved “Junie” home for family parties and holidays. Although Wilma June loved her family and enjoyed being with them, she came to consider Briar Hill home.

Unfortunately, Wilma’s disease continued progressing. Finally, she was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. It was at this time that Wilma June Yutzy and her family invited the Hospice of Care Corp to walk with them through the conclusion of Wilma’s life's journey.

Marie Etling, RN, well-loved Care Corp nurse, serves as an important member of the Hospice of Care Corp team. Marie speaks in glowing terms of Marie. And when Marie speaks of hospice care, one hears a qualified health professional dedicated to the whole patient – mind, body and spirit. The experienced nurse has a profound understanding of what hospice care means to patients and their family members. Marie says she felt privileged to be there for Wilma, Mary, Ray and their children during Wilma June’s last days.

Marie emphasizes that Care Corp’s philosophy of hospice care embraces living life to the fullest. “Patients deserve to experience the greatest quality of life,” says the dedicated nurse. The hospice team works diligently to ensure this. Nurse Marie, together with the social worker, volunteers, and chaplain, carefully plan then provide services that assure the patient is loved and cared for through their remaining days.

Medically, Hospice of Care Corp nurses and Home Health Aides manage the symptoms that affect the patients, attempting to make their day as pain-free as possible. Marie explains, “We work hard to bring comfort with dignity, enabling the patients to live as robust and enjoyable a life as possible.”

Care Corp hospice services are provided in the home or local nursing homes. Home, simply stated, is the safe, familiar and supportive environment where a patient feels most comfortable and in control.

Marie explains home is not only the appropriate place for hospice care, “It is a natural place to be,” she quietly states. Care Corp’s hospice team members are ever-mindful of the importance of being at home and the trust bestowed upon the team when they are invited in.

The Hospice of Care Corp team is a close-knit group of skilled, well-trained, and caring individuals capable of providing excellent care. “We are unique because we are small and local. By providing services only in Geauga County, we are always nearby and accessible,” Marie confirms. Care Corp is knowledgeable about the county, its culture and mores. Team members are also familiar with other service providers and caregivers in the area. Knowledge and familiarity bring stability and strength to the Hospice program, and an additional sense of security to those who trust the team to walk them through the final mile.

Wilma passed at the age of 66. Mary and Ray were happy to emphasize that Care Corp's hospice services did not end with her death. They still hear from Troy Mollé, Care Corp's hospice social worker, and the hospice team still assists Donald, the love of Wilma's life, in his grieving process.

Of the team's work with Geauga community members, Marie says, "We serve a variety of patients. Some are wealthy, some are not. We serve townfolk and farmers, and individuals of many races and ethnicities. We work to provide comfort and peace to all. We learn something from every patient and incorporate it, when appropriate, into our work with the next patient.”

Mary believes that sister Wilma, her family, and her circle of friends benefited from having the Care Corp hospice team there at Wilma’s side for the last few steps of her life’s journey.
Care Corp’s Staff Gives Thanks this Holiday Season

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. – Melody Beattie

As a special Thanksgiving feature, Care Corp’s staff shares with HOMEPAGE readers what they are most thankful for this year. You’ll discover common themes emerge. But, then again, there are a few fun, uncommon responses! May each of you have a healthy, blessed Thanksgiving!

Linda Petersen, Operations Assistant
“The gorgeous weather is what I am most thankful for today. I’m also thankful to be working at Care Corp. All my coworkers are so nice.”

Janet Malec, Home Health Aide
“LIFE!” (Janet is a woman of few words.)

Elizabeth Petersen, Vice President of Operations
“I am thankful that I live in the USA and can vote for my candidate of choice this fall.”

Debbie Koch, RN
“I fractured my wrist in July, so I am thankful it is healing. I have movement in it and can work.”

Martie Takacs, RN, Manager of Skilled Services
“I am thankful that my son Kevin is out of the Army. Kevin served for 15 months in Iraq. I am also thankful for my three grandchildren — with one on the way.” Martie has all grandsons!

Debbie Fromme, RN
“I give thanks for my family and our health. Specifically, I am thankful for my husband Eric and our daughter and sons.”

Jason Baker, Vice President of Finance and Marketing
“I am thankful for all the wonderful people at Care Corporation, the many great doctors we work with and the clients and families that entrust us with their care. I’m also thankful that I sold my boat!”

Vickie McDaniel, Home Health Aide
“For my family and that I have a car that runs. In the past few months, I’ve driven a Pontiac, van, Nissan, truck, van…”

Adrienne Friihauf, RN, Hospice Case Manager
“I’m most thankful for my son.”

Judy Kolesar, Data Entry
“I am thankful for the birds. I love nature and its beauty in general. I also give thanks for my family, kids and grandkids.”

Donna Nedrow, Volunteer/Bereavement Coordinator
“I am thankful to all the people in my life who made an impact on who I am today – the good and the bad folks.”
Despite living in an age of unprecedented medical advances, death is an inescapable reality. Perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can give our loved ones is peace of mind knowing that their decisions for our final medical care reflect our wishes.

Everyone should take time to educate themselves about options and make their wishes known to others regarding their future medical care. Advance Directives will guide medical decisions if you or your loved one becomes incapacitated and are unable to make personal wishes known.

Ohio’s Advanced Directives

Advance Directive refers to a person’s verbal and written instructions about future medical care in the event that the person becomes unable to speak for him/herself. Advance Directives give you a voice in important decisions concerning your medical care when you are unconscious or too ill to communicate. Don’t worry, though – as long as you can express your own decisions at the time, your Advance Directives will not be used, and you can accept or refuse any medical treatment.

Each state regulates the use of Advance Directives differently. Types of Advance Directives in Ohio include:

- Living Will
- Health Care Power of Attorney
- Ohio’s Do-Not-Resuscitate law
- Organ and Tissue Donation

Living Will

In 1991, Ohio recognized each person’s right to have a Living Will. This document allows you to decide, in advance, the type of care you would like to have or withhold should you become terminally ill and are unable to express your health care wishes, or are permanently unconscious. To be considered permanently unconscious, two physicians (one of whom must be a medical specialist in an appropriate field) must decide that you have no reasonable possibility of regaining consciousness.

A Living Will gives your physician the authority to withhold all life-sustaining treatment and permit you to die naturally and take no action to postpone your death – providing you with only that care necessary to make you comfortable and relieve your pain. This “comfort care” may include removing nutrition and hydration (food and water) that is administered through feeding tubes or intravenously.

Planning for Medical Care at the End of Life

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CEO's Message

FY 2007-2008 was a strong year for Parkside Care Corporation. As Geauga County residents grow older, many find they need supportive and/or skilled home care services available through Care Corporation. We are thankful you continue to choose Care Corp for your home health care. It is our honor to be invited into your homes.

We provided just fewer than 30,000 skilled visits, and 25,000 unskilled hours to nearly 1000 clients utilizing the skills of 100 staff and volunteers. We continue to learn and grow as is required in the world of health care. We had our CHAP Accreditation site visit this September, and we are pleased to announce we continue to meet CHAP’s high standards of quality in our Home health, Hospice and Private Duty businesses.

As we celebrate our 25th year in business, we are so proud that Care Corporation continues to be the provider of choice for the residents of Geauga County. We would like to thank our skilled and compassionate staff for the exceptional care they provide our clients. Without a doubt, these outstanding individuals continue to be what distinguishes Care Corporation from other home health care companies serving Geauga County. Our “home grown” staff is truly concerned about their patients – caring for them as they would their own family members. Their “family values” are reflected in the special touch they provide on each visit.

We also recognize the outstanding physicians practicing in Geauga County who continue to support Care Corporation. Thank you for your unending support.

Finally, to the residents of Geauga County – thank you! We are honored by the trust you place in us as we continue to care for you in the comfort of your own home.

To all of you, may you have a healthy and happy new year!

Sincerely,

Shirley A. Baker, President/CEO

Jason Baker, Vice President, Finance and Marketing

Bereavement Support Group

Don’t try to handle your grief alone. Care Corp’s Bereavement Support Group meets every Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to assist those who have lost a loved one. Please call Donna Nedrow, Care Corp Bereavement/Volunteer Coordinator at 440-286-2273 to RSVP.
Let your physician, family and friends know that you have a Living Will before an illness or tragedy occurs. Better yet, provide these loved ones with a copy of your Living Will.

Ohio’s Health Care Power of Attorney
Ohio’s Health Care Power of Attorney document allows you to name a person to act on your behalf to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to make your own decisions. This person becomes an attorney-in-fact for you.

A Health Care Power of Attorney is different from a financial power of attorney that is used to give someone authority over your financial matters. By completing the Health Care Power of Attorney form, the person has the power to authorize as well as refuse medical treatment for you. This authority is recognized in all medical situations when you are unable to express your own wishes. Unlike a Living Will, it is not limited to situations in which you are terminally ill or permanently unconscious. For example, your doctor or hospital may consult with your attorney-in-fact should you be injured in a car accident and temporarily lose consciousness.

Do-Not-Resuscitate Law
A third Advance Directive is the DNR. If you do not wish to have Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) performed, you may make this wish known through your doctor’s order called a DNR Order. A DNR Order addresses the various methods used to revive a person whose heart has stopped (cardiac arrest) or who has stopped breathing (respiratory arrest). The DNR Law helps people communicate their wishes about resuscitation to medical personnel inside or outside a hospital or nursing home setting. It allows emergency medical workers to honor your physician-written DNR Order in the home, nursing home, or other setting.

Following the established 1998 DNR Law, the Ohio Department of Health established two types of DNR Comfort Care Orders that allow people to choose the extent of treatment they wish to receive at the end of life. A person with a “DNR Comfort Care Arrest Order” will receive all the appropriate medical treatment, which may include components of CPR until the person has a cardiac or respiratory arrest, at which point only comfort care will be provided. By requesting the broader “DNR Comfort Care Order,” a person is choosing – from the moment the order is written – to have only comfort care measures provided should an event occur that is life threatening or ending. Your physician can explain the differences in DNR Orders.

Organ and Tissue Donation
A fourth Advanced Directive is Organ and Tissue Donation for anyone who wishes to donate organs and/or tissues after death. It is important to let your family know your decision to be an organ and/or tissue donor ahead of time so your wishes may be carried out immediately. Ohio law requires that a Living Will created after December 15, 2004 include a person’s preference about anatomical gifts.

Exercise Your Right to Choose
All 50 states and the District of Columbia have laws recognizing the use of Advance Directives. Care Corporation provides these forms to our patients. These forms are also available free of charge at your doctor’s office or downloaded from the internet.