

# Volunteer Newsletter

## July 2022

### *Volunteer of the Month: Kate*



Kate is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year pre-med student at Michigan State University who started volunteering with us about 2 months ago! She is such a light to her patients and such a genuine, determined young woman that we are lucky to have on our staff.

When asked what her favorite part of volunteering with Open Arms is, she replied "It would have to be developing relationships with the patients. Watching them smile and be engaged is a really cool thing to experience."

Please join us in congratulating Kate for her outstanding volunteer work!

### The Transition to End of Life: Signs of Approaching Death

This is a summary of some of the symptoms dying persons may experience at the end of life.

For some people, the dying process may last weeks; for others, it may last a few days or hours. As death approaches, you may notice some of the changes listed below.

- Decreased Activity Level
- Fading Interest in Surroundings
- Desire for food/drink ceases
- Constipation
- Incontinence
- Decreased body temperature
- Blood pressure, heart rate and breathing rates gradual decrease
- Increase in pain
- Skin on knees, feet and hands become purplish/pale/grey and blotchy
- Periods of rapid breathing, no breathing, coughing or noisy breaths
- Agitation and periods of restlessness
- Consciousness fades
  - Often a coma-like state
- Sensory Changes
  - Illusions, hallucinations, near death awareness

If you are noticing any of these changes, do not be alarmed as these are signs of the natural progression toward end-of-life. Please let staff members at your designated facility, as well as your patient's hospice nurse know of your observations.

As a patient begins to transition, family may request to end volunteer visits. However, there may be instances where a "respite volunteer" may be needed. This is where you spend time with a patient who is imminent either because family is unavailable or would like time for a break from supporting their loved one.

### **What do I Wear to a Visit?**

- ID Badge
- Your Open Arms Volunteer T-Shirt
- Comfortable bottoms, preferably that reach your fingertips when your arms are at your side
- Comfortable shoes (I recommend closed toe shoes, wheelchairs...ouch!)

### **This Month's Important Dates**

July 4<sup>th</sup>: Observed holiday

July 5<sup>th</sup>: IDG 12pm

July 19<sup>th</sup>: IDG 12pm

### **MEET THE STAFF:**

#### **Tracy Abbo, Director of Nursing**



Tracy Abbo, RN, BSN, MHA, WCC is the Director of Nursing for Open Arms Hospice. Tracy's true passion has always been and continues to be, caring for patients and families in vulnerable stages of their lives. She possesses a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration with a minor in Health Care Ethics, and over 20 years of nursing experience that has ranged from emergency care, geriatrics, hospice, wound care, and nursing management. While being a nurse is an amazing role to have, she feels her greatest role is being a mom to five amazing children (Joshua, Hailey, Trevor, Braydi, and Bobbi Sophia) and a Nana to two more great kids (Leighton and Weston).

#### **Fun Facts:**

- Favorite color: Red
- Favorite food: Italian
- Favorite music: 80's
- Favorite candy: Butterfingers or Hershey's with Almonds
- Favorite sport: Football / Favorite sports team: New England Patriots (named her daughter "Braydi" after Tom Brady)
- Favorite holiday: Christmas

### **NEW VOLUNTEERS ALERT!!**

**Please join us in welcoming FIVE new volunteers to Open Arms!!!**

**Elizabeth-New Hope White Lake  
Catherine-New Hope White Lake  
Karen-New Hope White Lake  
Lily-College Student  
Skylar-College Student**

**These lovely ladies will begin orientation this week!**

#### Contact Information

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or comments you may have:

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**OPEN ARMS HOSPICE**