

# Hospice of Westchester TODAY

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[www.HospiceofWestchester.org](http://www.HospiceofWestchester.org)

## Coping with the Holidays

BY Mary K. Spengler, RN, MS, LNHA, CEO

*The holidays can be a difficult time for people who have experienced the death of someone loved. Memories of good times at the holiday season can remind us of our loss. Watching others who are celebrating when we feel overwhelmed and lonely can be painful. Holidays force us to realize how much our lives have changed since our loss. Many bereaved are more comfortable developing new holiday rituals or adapting family traditions.*

According to Kim Gordon, LMHC-FT, Bereavement Coordinator Hospice of Westchester, "The first step in coping with grief at the holidays is to acknowledge that the first holiday season is difficult and then to prepare for it in advance by making specific plans that include your loved one's memory. Oftentimes, the anticipation of a holiday can be more difficult than the day itself. Planning ahead will help you to manage your emotions."

### SOME TIPS FOR COPING WITH GRIEF AT THE HOLIDAYS

Set realistic expectations for yourself. Decide if you want to handle the same responsibilities you've had in the past. Say yes when others offer to cook, shop, decorate, etc. Consider shopping by internet or phone this year. Give yourself permission to do less.

Surround yourself with people who love and support you. Share your plans with family and friends and let them know of any intended changes in the holiday routine.

Try to avoid "canceling" the holiday despite the temptation. It is fine to avoid

some circumstances that you don't feel ready to handle, but don't isolate yourself. Allow yourself some time for solitude, remembering and grieving, but balance it with planned activities and distractions from your grief.

Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger – allow yourself to grieve. It is important to recognize that every family member has his/her own unique grief experience and may have different needs related to celebrating the holidays. No one way is right or wrong. Experiencing joy and laughter does not mean you have forgotten your loved one.

Draw comfort from helping others. Consider giving a donation in memory of your loved one. Invite a guest who might otherwise be alone for the holidays.

Take care of yourself. Avoid using alcohol to self-medicate your mood. Physical exercise is often an antidote for depression. Stay in touch with close friends and family. Buy yourself something frivolous that you always wanted but never allowed yourself to indulge in.

Create a new tradition or ritual that accommodates your current situation.

Some people find comfort in the old traditions. Others find them unbearably painful. Discuss with your family the activities you want to include or exclude this year.

### EXAMPLES OF RITUALS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Create a memory box. You could fill it with photos of your loved one or written memory notes from family members and friends.



**Light a candle to honor your loved one.**



**Put a bouquet of your loved one's favorite flowers on your holiday table.**



**Visit the cemetery and decorate the memorial site with holiday decorations.**



**Have a moment of silence during a holiday toast to honor your loved one.**



**Place a commemorative ornament or picture on the Christmas tree or next to the Menorah.**



**Play your loved one's favorite music or favorite game.**



**Plan a meal with your loved ones' favorite foods.**

The most important thing to remember is there is no right or wrong way to celebrate the holiday season after the death of a loved one, and that the best way to cope with that first holiday season is to plan ahead and get support from others. ♥



# 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GOLF INVITATIONAL

More than 100 business, community leaders and supporters participated in Hospice of Westchester's 22nd Annual Golf Invitational, which was held at Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains on Tuesday, June 4. This year's event honored Bill and Debbie Flocks, longtime supporters of the organization.

It was the nonprofit's most successful Golf Invitational to date, and proceeds from the event will support HOW's commitment to providing compassionate end-of-life care and support to patients and their families.

IN APPRECIATION

The Grand Sponsors for this year's event were Atlantic; Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, Inc.; Hildegard D. Becher Foundation, Inc.; Manhattan Beer Distributors, LLC; Next Level Private, LLC; PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP and The Blue Sandstone Group at Morgan Stanley. Additional Sponsors included: Peter A. Camilli & Sons, Inc.; Empress EMS; Envipco; E.W.G. Glass Recovery and Recycle Corp.; Grassy Sprain Pharmacy; TOMRA of North America, Inc.; and Zanzarella Marketing. The hole-in-one contest was sponsored by PEPE CADILLAC. ♡



Hospice of Westchester Golf Invitational Sponsors and Co-Chairmen. From left: William F. Flocks, Jr. (Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, Inc., HOW board chair and event honoree); Jack Geoghegan (Hildegard D. Becher Foundation Inc.); Barry P. Mitchell, Jr. (Next Level Private LLC and HOW board member); Mary K. Spengler, RN, MS, LNHA (Chief Executive Officer of HOW); John Zanzarella (Zanzarella Marketing and event coordinator); Jim O'Connor (Empress EMS and HOW board member); Karen Zanzarella (Zanzarella Marketing and event coordinator)



Hospice of Westchester Golf Invitational Sponsors and Co-Chairmen. From left: Barry Cominsky and Tom Phillips, (TOMRA of North America); John James, Corinne James and Mary Gibbons Gardiner (The Blue Sandstone Group at Morgan Stanley and HOW board member); Tina Bergers (Envipco); Christa Puccio-Gallo (Atlantic); Joseph Kahl (Manhattan Beer Distributors, LLC)



Hospice of Westchester was thrilled to honor Debbie and Bill Flocks (Grand Sponsor, Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, Inc., and HOW board chair) at the 22nd Annual Golf Invitational.

# Tree of Life



SAVE THE DATE

December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

We are thrilled to host an in-person reception for our Tree of Life this year! You are invited to remember a loved one by purchasing a gold star in their memory. The star will be placed on our Tree of Life. As a thank you for your donation, we cordially invite you to attend an evening of light refreshments and entertainment.

WESTCHESTER HILLS GOLF CLUB  
5:00-6:30pm

For further information about the event or to make a required reservation, please contact Holly Benedict at 914-682-1484 ext. 122 by November 25th.

**GRAND SPONSORS** – Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, Inc., Co-Communications, Inc., Michele Fraser Geller, Grassy Sprain Pharmacy, Next Level Private, LLC, PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP, Polchinski Memorials. The Hildegard D. Becher Foundation, Inc., Valley Bank. **SPONSORS** – Cuddy & Feder LLP, Graphic Management Partners, Ross Mailing Services, Inc., The Kensico Cemetery, Westchester Hills Golf Club

## Fall Fête at Sam's of Gedney Way



L-R: Karen and Peter Herrero, owners, Sam's of Gedney Way; William F. Flocks Jr., HOW board chair and Holly K. Benedict, HOW Director of Development and Public Affairs.

More than 90 community members, board members, staff and friends came together on Wednesday, October 23 for our second Fall Fête at Sam's of Gedney Way in White Plains. It was a lovely evening and there was wonderful energy in the sold-out restaurant. We thank Karen and Peter Herrero, owners of Sam's, who donated ten percent of the revenue generated throughout the evening to our organization. The funds have been earmarked to support our vital programs and compassionate services. ♡



# Red Carpet Reception

On Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> Hospice of Westchester (HOW) staff, volunteers and patients families gathered at Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains for a “Red Carpet Reception” celebrating milestones for HOW staff and volunteers and the participating stars of our new marketing videos! A wonderful evening was had by all.



## Become a Hospice Volunteer!

Hospice volunteers are essential members of the care team. Opportunities include visiting patients and/or provide office support.

What you can do:

- ♡ **Patient visits** - Offer comfort and companionship to hospice patients and families. Volunteers read to patients, facilitate life review or provide a quiet presence and more.
- ♡ **Flowers for Life** - Pick-up, arrange and deliver flower arrangements to our patients.
- ♡ **Office Support** - Assist with filing, mailings, reception desk and other business related jobs.

**We would love to hear from you to explore the possibility of you joining our volunteer team.**

**Please call Joan Jacobus, Director of Volunteers at 914-682-1484 ext. 185, or e-mail [jjacobus@hospiceofwestchester.com](mailto:jjacobus@hospiceofwestchester.com)**



*Rochelle E. Shereff & Don Laufer*

Appreciation is extended to Rochelle Shereff for sponsoring the production of the new HOW videos.



MESSAGE FROM

# The Chief Executive Officer



Founded in 1992, Hospice of Westchester’s mission is to provide exceptional end-of-life care that emphasizes compassion, dignity and respect. Over the years, we’ve served thousands of patients and their families across the County, and we take pride in our legacy as a trusted member of Westchester’s healthcare community.

This year has been particularly dynamic for us, as we’ve enriched and expanded our programs to better address the needs of our patients. We’ve held several successful annual events and are looking forward to our upcoming Tree of Life reception on December 3 at Westchester Hills Golf Club. We are pleased to announce that we have once again met all 20 standards of charitable accountability set by the Better Business Bureau, earning our designation as an accredited nonprofit. Additionally, we are proud to have achieved CHAP Accreditation under the CHAP Hospice Standards of Excellence for the 15th year, affirming that we meet Medicare Conditions of Participation as a certified Medicare provider.

Operating for over three decades is no small accomplishment, especially in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape at the national, state, and local levels. These shifts impact how hospice care is delivered. As the number of patients relying on our services continues to grow, so too do the costs associated with their care. Despite the rising demand, we’ve faced significant cuts in reimbursement rates.

It’s important to emphasize that we remain committed to providing exceptional clinical expertise and compassionate care to our patients and their families, and these financial challenges have not compromised our service quality.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past 32 years—and those yet to come—we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated Board of Directors, our Hospice of Westchester staff and volunteers, the Westchester community, and our generous donors and supporters for their crucial roles in our ongoing success. We take pride in our history and look forward to continuing to serve as the model for excellence in end-of-life care.

Thank you for your continued generosity. Our best wishes to you and your family for a peaceful and healthy holiday season.

Mary K. Spengler, RN, MS, LNHA  
CEO

Visit our website  
[www.HospiceofWestchester.org](http://www.HospiceofWestchester.org)

*Hospice of Westchester is a private not-for-profit, tax exempt agency that is certified by the federal government, licensed by the New York State Department of Health, as well as accredited by the Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP).*



IN MEMORIAM

## Mark A. Fialk, MD, FACP

Dr. Mark Fialk was a valued member of the Hospice of Westchester (HOW) organization from its inception in 1992, serving as Medical Director until his retirement in 2022. Dr. Fialk worked closely with all members of the Hospice team to ensure all HOW patients and families received exceptional care. Often, he would visit patients in their homes or at the Skilled Nursing Facility to see first-hand that the plans developed were providing compassionate end-of-life care.

Dr. Fialk was a trusted resource for all involved in Hospice. In the words of a patient’s family, “We are ever appreciative of Dr. Fialk’s visits. He brings us great comfort.”

HOW extends our condolences to his family. He will be missed.

BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

## Winter Bereavement Support Groups & Workshops

- ♡ Spouse/Partner Loss
- ♡ Adult Parent Loss
- ♡ Flying Solo

(spousal loss after a year for women)

**Please contact our Bereavement Department for more information. Groups are held on a regular basis.**

## Individual Grief Counseling

Short-term, one-on-one counseling is available to members of the community and our patient family members. Please contact our Bereavement Department for more information about groups or individual services. Individual Counseling and Support Groups are held in person in our office.

**Kim Gordon, LMHC-FT**  
Bereavement Coordinator  
914-682-1484 ext. 163

**Joan Jacobus, LCSW, MBA**  
Volunteer Director/Bereavement Coordinator  
914-682-1484 ext. 185

# In Celebration

HOW hosted its annual “In Celebration” Gala Cocktail Reception at the Westchester Country Club in Rye on Thursday, September 26. The event honored Stacey Ross Cohen and Co-Communications, Inc., and George A. Whitehead and PKF O’Connor Davies LLP. A special recognition was also given to longtime supporter and Grand Sponsor of the event, Rochelle E. Shereff.

The “In Celebration” event co-chairs included William F. Flocks Jr., Michele and Terry Geller, DDS, and James P. O’Toole. Premier sponsors were Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, Inc.; Co-Communications, Inc.; Michele and Terry Geller, DDS; Grassy Sprain Pharmacy; Hildegard D. Becher Foundation Inc.; Barbara and Paul T. Khoury, MD; Next Level Private, LLC; PKF O’Connor Davies, LLP; and White Plains Hospital. ❤️

IN APPRECIATION



Front row (L-R): George A. Whitehead, Hospice of Westchester vice chair, board of directors, event honoree, and premier sponsor, PKF O’Connor Davis, LLP; Grand Sponsor Rochelle E. Shereff; Stacey Cohen, event honoree and premier sponsor, Co-Communications, Inc. | Back row (L-R): Premier sponsors Dr. Paul T. Khoury and Barbara Khoury; Jack Geoghegan, premier sponsor, Hildegard D. Becher Foundation Inc.; Terry Geller, DDS and HOW board member Michele Geller, event co-chairs and premier sponsors; William F. Flocks, Jr., Hospice of Westchester board chair, event co-chair and premier sponsor, Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, Inc.; Mary K. Spengler, RN, MS, LNHA, CEO, Hospice of Westchester; and Anthony Ciarletta RPh, premier sponsor, Grassy Sprain Pharmacy



From left: Frances Bordani, Executive Vice President for Ambulatory and Physician Services and Business Development, Susan Fox, President & CEO, and Diane Woolley, Senior Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, from premier sponsor White Plains Hospital.



John Kenney and Russ Baker from premier sponsor Next Level Private LLC with Holly K. Benedict, Director of Development and Public Affairs, Hospice of Westchester

## APPRECIATION TO FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF HOSPICE OF WESTCHESTER

Hospice of Westchester (HOW) is proud to celebrate our 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary in 2024. HOW remains committed to providing extraordinary end-of-life care to Westchester County residents diagnosed with any life-limiting illness. Our professional team continues to provide exceptional medical expertise and compassionate care to all those requiring our services.

At the core of every decision we make, it is our relationships with our patients and families that matters most. We value this bond and truly believe it is very unique in today’s world. This relationship defines who we are and it is an honor to be invited into our patients’ homes to help them and their families along their most important journey.

Funds raised throughout the year have been allocated to support the heart of our operations, Hospice Home Care,

and to help us fulfill our mission. We invite you to be our partner in this great endeavor. Throughout our history your generosity has helped us manage through financially challenging times. Your tangible gifts allow for adequate staffing and technology and ensure that our patients costs are covered. It is important to note that no one is denied service provided they meet medical eligibility criteria.

We know that without your help, we would not have been able to accomplish all that we have. Please continue this tradition of giving by making a year-end, tax-deductible gift using the enclosed envelope, online at [hospiceofwestchester.org](http://hospiceofwestchester.org) or by calling Holly Benedict at 914-682-1484 ext. 122.

**All of us at HOW are eternally grateful to you for the essential role you play in our continued success.** ❤️



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William F. Flooks, Jr., - **Chairman**  
George Whitehead, - **Vice Chair**  
Joanne Ciaramella, Esq., - **Secretary**  
Mary Frances Barrett - **Treasurer**

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Michael Palumbo, MD  
Beverly Thornhill, MD

Hospice of Westchester is a private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt agency.  
If this was received in error, please call 914-682-1484 ext 122.

## OUR MISSION

Hospice of Westchester is committed to providing compassionate end-of-life care. We combine the highest level of quality medical care with emotional and spiritual support enabling individuals and their loved ones to make the most of each day.

## HAPPENINGS & GATHERINGS



## Celebrating Our Partnership with Trader Joe's

At the end of April, Hospice of Westchester's CEO Mary Spengler and Director of Development and Public Affairs Holly Benedict stopped by Trader Joe's of Hartsdale and presented them with a plaque acknowledging their generous floral donations to our Flowers for Life program. For years, HOW volunteers arrange and deliver these beautiful flower arrangements each week to our patients and their families. Hospice of Westchester is so appreciative of this amazing partnership!

*Pictured L-R: Holly Benedict, Luis Garcia, Blanca Almacan, Mary K. Spengler*

**NATIONAL CARE AT HOME MONTH** – November is designated as National Care at Home Month, designed to help unify and elevate the voice of the care-at-home community. Hospice of Westchester is thrilled to present, in conjunction with the Music Conservatory of Westchester, a concert series to patients in various nursing homes during the month of November. This has been made possible through the generosity of the Anna & Louis H. Shereff Caregiver, Complementary Care and Bereavement Program. ♡