

communitycircle

FALL 2026

When Music Becomes Medicine

It was a warm, summer afternoon in Mattawan, Michigan. The voices of former band member and Centrica Care Navigators hospice patient Phil Ollero and Centrica Music Therapist Tommy King filled the Ollero's dining room with sweet harmonies as sunlight beamed through the windows and birds chirped outside.

"How can the end of life be beautiful?"

Many ask this question. The answer isn't often clear.

For Phil, family, faith, and music have carried him through life's highs and lows and are a central part of who he is. Even in his final chapter, he and his wife, Nancy, are rediscovering what beauty and joy look like in the midst of a terminal illness.



L-R: Andrea, Centrica RN Case Manager, Phil, and Tommy, Centrica Music Therapist

Continued on page 3



A member of NorthStar Care Community

Expert care, **centered on you.**



A MESSAGE FROM PATRICK

Well, the leaves are starting to change to the beauty of their autumn color. My favorite are maple trees. The constant changing of seasons is something we are used to; yet ongoing change can be challenging for those facing the end of life. Being part of an organization that brings consistency and stability to our patients' journey is something I greatly value.

It has been more than 40 years since the first Centrica Care Navigators (formally known as Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan) patient was cared for. Over the years, we have learned that what sets our care apart is simple to say and hard to do well: we meet people exactly where they are. This kind of care, personalized around the patient and family, has always been central to what patients and families need, and what Centrica aims to provide. Your support in our mission is a simple gesture of gratitude but the partnership we share is profound. Thank you.

As Centrica navigates the opportunities and challenges of 2026, our commitment to serving this community remains stronger than ever. We are continually learning and finding new ways to meet people where they are. We are partnering with Schools of Nursing to bring newly-graduated nurses into our organization, and are investing in the training and resources needed to ensure

that these new nurses are fully supported, trained and prepared for the independence our community-centered care demands. We continue to explore new ways to innovate and leverage technology and AI to reduce charting and documentation time to allow our staff to spend more time where they do their best work: at the bedside.

Thank you for your partnership and support. You help us make sure that a daughter can hold her father's hand and be present as a daughter, not a clinical caregiver; that a parent can focus on their child's end of life journey without worrying about the complexity or the cost; that our clinical staff members can show up, fully present, comprehensively educated and solidly supported whenever and wherever they're needed.

To end, I want to share a quote from Jay Mahoney, former president of the National Hospice Organization and a leader who was central to the creation of the Medicare Hospice Benefit: "You will never be in pain, you will never be alone, and you will never be a burden." Thank you for helping us ensure that this will always be true. We look forward to seeing you in the community, at an event or at the office for a visit.

Patrick Miller, RN, MBA, MHSA, FACHE
President and CEO

When Music Becomes Medicine

Continued from page 1

Phil and “The Fabulous Group”

Originally from the Philippines, Phil and his three brothers were always a tight-knit group. He remembers his childhood fondly, recalling how they’d sit around the table passing a book of songs around to sing. When their mother died at a young age, they learned to rely on each other for support.

Phil, his brothers, and a classmate were looking for a way to make money in their teen years and saw an opportunity. After buying some instruments, they formed “The Fabulous Group” and started entertaining U.S. troops from Vietnam stationed in the Philippines. While performing at a show, they were discovered by a USO (United Service Organizations) agent and invited to come to the United States.



In 1971, they came to the U.S. with big plans and dreams. They toured the country for a few years before Phil settled down in Michigan and eventually met his wife, Nancy. But singing remained a part of his livelihood as he continued playing solo shows and even acted as an Elvis impersonator.

Music Remains Magical

Now, life looks a little different for Phil. One year ago, he was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of Parkinson’s disease, a progressive neurological disorder that affects movement and other physical and non-motor functions

Nancy, his wife of 41 years and caregiver, called Centrica Care Navigators when she saw his disease progress and realized she could get more help and support from a team of hospice experts.

“I don’t know what I’d do without them. They’re all so helpful and amazing at what they do, and it lessens the tasks on my shoulders so I can focus on being with him. We love everyone on the team, but Phil especially likes Tommy, his Music Therapist.”

Tommy provides music therapy every other week and is always learning new songs to play and sing with Phil. Phil likes challenging Tommy by requesting lesser-known songs, but at the end of the day, he enjoys all genres of music, especially rock-and-roll.

These visits not only give Nancy and Phil something to look forward to, but they provide an opportunity to reminisce about cherished memories, set aside the day’s worries, and celebrate a life filled with love.

Beautiful Life

So again, we pose the question, “How can the end of life be beautiful?”

Thanks to Phil, we’re reminded that beauty at the end of life isn’t found in the absence of illness. It’s found in moments of connection, in rediscovering who you are beyond your diagnosis and in holding close

the people and passions that have always defined you. This is where peace, meaning and even joy can still be found.



Phil (bottom left) poses with “The Fabulous Group”

Experience the joy of music with Phil and Tommy



Your Dollars at Work

Each day of care is filled with dignity, comfort, and peace thanks to caring people like you. Thank you for supporting this work!

..... IN 2025

PATIENT CARE

2,956

TOTAL PATIENTS

649

ROSE ARBOR PLACE
PATIENTS

202,115

TOTAL PATIENT
DAYS

PEDIATRIC
CARE

11

PEDIATRIC
PATIENTS

VETERAN
CARE

335

VETERAN
PATIENTS

See more of your
impact here:



[centricacare.org/
news/your-dollars-
at-work-2025/](https://centricacare.org/news/your-dollars-at-work-2025/)

Support this work today
and into the future:



[centricacare.org/
FallGiving](https://centricacare.org/FallGiving)

The Power of Pet Visits

The Pet Visit program is just one of the many complimentary services offered at Centrica Care Navigators. Thanks to amazing pet volunteers and handlers who go through thorough interviews and training, patients can experience the joyful companionship of dogs, cats and other friendly animals.

This type of non-medical treatment can have an incredible effect on patients and loved ones at the end-of-life. Here's what a few volunteers have witnessed:

- An unresponsive patient suddenly becoming alert after petting a dog
- A high blood pressure lasting 5 days coming down during a pet visit
- A bereaved spouse feeling a sense of healing after talking with and hugging a pet

Meet Baylee, Pet Volunteer



Meet Baylee, a sweet and outgoing 3-year-old Goldendoodle! Since she was a puppy, she's been a friend to all. From riding in the grocery carts at dog-friendly stores to visiting hospice patients at residential facilities, she brings smiles to faces everywhere she goes. During her visits, patients love petting her soft coat and talking to her, and many affectionately refer to her as "Fluffy."

When she is not visiting patients, she loves going for walks, cuddling, and eating steak treats.

If you're interested in volunteering, please visit: centricacare.org/volunteer/ for more information.

The NorthStar Institute, one of the nation's few dedicated end-of-life education and training programs, exists to ensure every Centrica Care Navigators clinician can be equipped to deliver extraordinary, compassionate end-of-life care to our community.

Your support strengthens and sustains the following initiatives for education at Centrica:

- Dementia Training
- Research
- Virtual Reality Platform
- Humane Prison Hospice Project Partnership

In this edition of *Community Circle*, let's take a closer look at Dementia Training.

Dementia Training: Empowering Clinicians and Caregivers

Dementia is a general term used to describe the decline in mental ability severe enough to impact daily life, including memory loss, poor judgment, and confusion. It affects more than six million Americans and accounts for more than 100,000 deaths each year (National Institutes of Health).

Because dementia affects every person differently, providing compassionate, individualized care requires specialized knowledge and skills. Centrica recognizes the importance of equipping clinicians with the tools they need to confidently care for their patients and support their families through every stage of the disease.

With the help of donor and community support, the NorthStar Institute can provide hospice clinicians, caregivers, partner facilities, and community organizations with nationally recognized educational tools and evidence-based dementia care practices through the Positive Approach to Care® (PAC) dementia training.

This hands-on training equips participants with practical skills to better understand brain changes, communicate more effectively, and care for changing behaviors with compassion. Through demonstrations, guided practice and mentor feedback, participants gain techniques they can immediately implement to improve care and quality of life for patients or loved ones living with dementia.



This initiative will also strengthen partnerships across our communities by extending dementia education to family caregivers and community organizations. Your support helps ensure that people living with dementia receive compassionate, knowledgeable care wherever they are.

Your investment in dementia education has a powerful ripple effect throughout our communities—improving clinician education, empowering caregivers, and improving the quality of life for those living with dementia.

“ This was the BEST dementia training I have ever been in. It helped me understand the disease, sensory changes and how to approach care. During the training, there is so much discussion amongst the group, and I saw lightbulbs going on everywhere. Including my own lightbulbs! Thank you for investing in our people and our patients.”

— Marcella B., Manager of Clinical Support Services at Centrica Care Navigators

Centrica Care Navigators Legacy Society

The Centrica Care Navigators Legacy Society recognizes individuals who have named Centrica Care Navigators as a beneficiary in their estate plans, trusts or wills. These individuals share in the vision of leaving a legacy for the future of end-of-life care in Southwest Michigan and ensuring compassionate, not-for-profit care remains accessible to all.

For more information about remembering Centrica in your estate planning or how to become a member of this Society, please contact Susan Rink at susan.rink@centricacare.org or 734.794.5114.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS & ORGANIZATIONS

Bernard E. Albright, Jr.*

Carolyn Ash*

Hazel Blocker Avery*

Harold and Josephine Baker*

Reata Ballinger*

Clifford and Laurel Barrick*

Barb Beal*

Laurence Benton*

Vernene Blake*

Charles W. Bonbardie*

Marinus and Anna Booden*

Irmgard A. Borst*

Evelyn Boven*

Juel Brown*

Richard and Janet Buck*

Eleanor Buelke*

Peter Caliman*

Edward and Claire Callan*

Loring Janes* and Suzanne Campbell*

Fredricka Canavan*

Dolores Carney*

Anne Carroll*

Betty Cavanaugh*

Rose Christof*

Mary Collins*

Dr. Phyllis Janes DeLano*

Elliott DeMeyer*

Helen D. Earl*

Joseph Elder*

Joseph and Nancy Ellin*

Donald and Ann Elzinga*

Gordon Eriksen*

Clarence Esseltine*

Richard Filarski*

Walter L. Fuller*

Ila Geren*

Lycan Goodwin*

Richard Griffith*

Rexford E. Hall*

Stanley Hall*

Mary Harding*

Maribeth Heersink*

Henry F. Henke*

Shirley Henry*

Thayer and Jean Hoekstra*

John Howard*

Gordon and Loyse Hueschen*

Charlotte Hyman*

John G. Jochem*

Albert Kahn*

Marcia Kidder*

Roger Klettke*

Walter Klettke*

John Koppy*

Karen M. Kott*

Josephine Joy Lawton*

David and Betty Lou Levene*

Mabel Lutes*

Betty Marr*

Susan McClees*

Edward and Beverly McMahon*

Edwin and Mary Meader*

Daniel Harry Miller*

Elsie Miller*

L. Morrissey*

Winnie Muffley*

Melody Nedrud*

David Nyman*

Leonard and Ina Obermeyer

Marjorie Van Overloop*

Joseph Papierz*

Norman Peterson*

Mary Pomeroy*

Margaret Randall*

Edyth Root*

Freeman and Frances Russell*

Edith E. Ruster*

Henry Schipper*

Mary Ann Schneider*

Charles L. Scott*

Rosemary Small*

Charles W. and Majorie Ewald Smith*

Merrill and Mildred Speeter*

Dorothy Starkweather*

Basil Stewart*

Mary Jane Sutton*

Kathryn Tindall*

Genevieve Tolfree*

Marie I. Tyler*

Carol Voytas*

Lila Waanders*

Karyn A. Walker*

Jack and Jane Wallner*

Mary Weibel*

Virginia Wight*

Virginia Wilcox*

Eliza Wolfe*

Frances Wrightsman*

Emily Yokom*

Adriana Yonkers*

**In memory of*



A Legacy of Giving Back

A dedicated teacher in Portage School District, Karen Kott dedicated her life to serving others in the classroom and in the community. She was passionate about many things: teaching hearing-impaired students, bridging communication gaps through sign language, supporting the local arts, and helping families navigate their end-of-life journey.

Karen was one of the longest-serving volunteers of what was formerly Hospice of Southwest Michigan, now Centrica Care Navigators. Through years of volunteering, she offered families the same care, compassion, and kindness that defined so much of her life. But her impact did not end with her years of service. After all she had already given to Centrica and the families served, it was deeply touching to discover that Karen had left one final gift. Following her passing in 2025, a \$200,000 estate gift was given to support Centrica Care Navigators' not-for-profit mission and help provide compassionate care for years to come.

"Karen was a truly delightful, caring and compassionate person whose kindness touched so many lives," another long-time volunteer shares.

“ She brought warmth, cheerfulness, and grace to all she did, never allowing health challenges to dim her spirit.”



Centrica Care Navigators is deeply grateful for Karen's years of service, her generosity and the lasting legacy she leaves to help families in the community receive the compassionate care they deserve.

Legacy giving is one powerful way you can carry your values forward and ensure others can receive compassionate care regardless of age, diagnosis, or financial circumstances.

Leave an enduring sign of care and compassion by making a legacy gift to Centrica Care Navigators.

LEARN MORE:



Memorial Butterfly Release

Held in Paw Paw and Battle Creek, Centrica's two Memorial Butterfly Release events provided space and reflection for more than 150 attendees to honor the memory of loved ones and release a butterfly. Centrica's grief counselors, volunteers, music therapists, and spiritual care chaplains all provided comfort and support as participants shared stories and memories. \$4,320 was raised to support Centrica's Grief Support programs, which are available free for anyone in southwest Michigan.

Helping patients and families navigate grief is a key part of how Centrica helps support our community. The symbolic act of releasing a butterfly serves as a poignant metaphor for transformation, renewal, and the natural cycle of life. The act of releasing butterflies can also symbolize the release of grief and the setting free of a departed loved one's spirit.



JUMANJI OPEN WORLD

The Game Continues

Jumanji: Open World Exclusive Screening to Benefit Pediatric Hospice

Join Centrica Care Navigators at an exclusive screening of the new *Jumanji: Open World* film this December to benefit Centrica Pediatric Hospice Care.

Coming December 21, 2026 to Celebration! Cinema Portage

To Benefit Centrica Pediatric Hospice

Admission for this cinematic sneak-peek will include one ticket to the film, along with a soft drink, popcorn and access to the "Jumanji Jubilee", a pre-movie reception. All funds raised support the pediatric patients and families in our community that need essential resources and support as they navigate terminal illness.



2026 Golf 'Fore' Hospice

Thank you to everyone who came out to Binder Park Golf Course for the annual Golf 'Fore' Hospice! It was a beautiful day of golfing and gathering with community to raise essential funds for Centrica Care Navigators' Open Access Fund, ensuring everyone can receive compassionate, expert care.

This year, 41 teams, 164 participants, and numerous community partners generously raised an incredible \$55,800, funding over 150 days of hospice care! Thank you to each golfer, donor, sponsor, volunteer and hospice champion for your support.

Be on the lookout for more information about the 2027 Golf 'Fore' Hospice outing, taking place Friday, June 18, 2027. We hope to see you there!



Film Preview

Jumanji returns to screens for the final installment of the series, featuring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, Kevin Hart, Jack Black, and Karen Gillan. The film will continue the story from *Jumanji: The Next Level* where the players had to brave the unknown and unexplored. But this time, the game breaks free of its console, unleashing chaos into our world unlike anything that's been seen before.



centricacare.org/jumanji/

This exclusive screening is made possible through a longtime friendship with Jumanji's world-renowned children's author and illustrator Chris Van Allsburg. Along with his wife, Lisa, both Michigan natives, the Van Allsburgs have long supported pediatric care initiatives in Michigan such as the Jo Elyn Nyman Anchors Programs for Children. Centrica is honored to host this event to benefit the families in the greater Kalamazoo region.



Pediatric Respite Care at Rose Arbor Place



Jo Elyn Nyman
**Programs
for Children**

Navigating a terminal illness can come with many challenges, regardless of age. But for pediatric patients and their families, there can be even more unknowns, including a lack of specialized support and resources.

That's why in the last few months, Centrica Care Navigators has expanded their pediatric hospice program and joined with Jo Elyn Nyman Anchors Programs for Children, NorthStar Care Community's dedicated pediatric hospice services, to care for terminally ill children and their families in the Kalamazoo region. Thanks to vital resources granted by the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Centrica clinical staff and volunteers have received advanced training and education in pediatric hospice care evidence-based practices. Additionally, these same grant resources provided seed funding for the start of the Centrica Pediatric Gestures of Grace Fund.

Specifically, Rose Arbor Place, Centrica's dedicated patient care site, has been fundamental in providing pediatric patients with the specialized care they need while offering parents much-needed respite care. Volunteers have continually stepped in to offer comfort and support at all hours of the day, and staff have shown compassion and dedication in incredible ways.



As Centrica continues to serve the needs in our community, your partnership in our non-profit mission allows:

- Specialized pediatric palliative and hospice clinicians focused on our youngest patients
- Clinicians to receive more specialized education
- Covers non-reimbursed expenses at Rose Arbor Place

...so that every patient and family can receive the care they need and deserve regardless of age, diagnosis, or financial circumstances.

Thank you again to the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, and all those that support this essential care.

Learn more about Jo Elyn Nyman Anchors Programs for Children at Centrica and throughout the state



Online Caregiver Resources

Caring for a loved one with a serious illness can be one of life's most important, yet challenging, responsibilities.

But you don't have to carry the responsibility alone.

Centrica Care Navigators has a variety of resources online to help answer questions, guide you along the caregiving process, and provide additional support when you need the advice of experts.

LEARN MORE:



Support in the Community

Third-party events are one meaningful way families choose to honor their loved one's legacy while helping ensure other families can receive the compassionate hospice care and end-of-life support they experienced.

This past July, the 8th Annual Par 3 Red Tee Challenge – Chris Simmons Hospice Fundraiser took place to benefit Centrica Care Navigators and honor Chris' life and legacy. Organized by Kellie Simmons, this memorable day was filled with family, friends, community, reflection, and lots of laughter. Thanks to the generosity of participants and sponsors, over \$2,800 was raised to support comprehensive end-of-life care for patients and families like Chris and his loved ones.

Centrica is deeply grateful to all those that choose to partner with us in the mission to ensure compassionate end-of-life care is accessible to all. Thank you!

Do you want to learn more about hosting a third-party event? Contact Tonya Collins at tcollins@centricacare.org or 269.488.0886.

KELLIE'S STORY

Hear Kellie's story about navigating caregiving alongside Centrica's hospice care team and prioritizing her husband's quality of life in his final months.

VIEW HERE:



Honoring a Lifetime of Giving



DOLORES BOS
CRYSTAL ROSE SOCIETY
for
Lifetime Giving

Centrica Care Navigators is honored to include so many faithful donors in the *Dolores Bos Crystal Rose Society for Lifetime Giving*. This society honors individuals, foundations and companies whose generosity has exceeded a lifetime total of \$50,000.

To recognize members of the *Dolores Bos Society for Lifetime Giving*, an ornate rose pin - inspired by Dolores' artwork - is given to each new member of the society at an annual pinning ceremony to thank them for their legacy of giving.

Thank you, members of this prestigious society, for your unwavering support and for the vital resources you have generously given.

Bronson Healthcare Group	Stella Manski*
The Burdick-Thorne Foundation	Edwin and Mary Meader*
Robert and Rhea Corrion	Michigan Health Endowment Fund
Dorothy U. Dalton Foundation Inc	The George and Amy Monroe Foundation
Eagles Lodge 3531	Donald and Ann Parfet
Eaton Corporation	The Ravitz Foundation
Fetzer Institute	Norman and Joan Ryan*
Dale and Sandra Frizzell*	Glen and Gail Smith*
John and Sharon Garside	Sharon Soltesz
Irving S. Gilmore Foundation	W. Soule
Geoffrey and Beverly Grambeau	St. Denys Foundation
Havirmill Foundation	Jon L. Stryker
James and Dorothy Imus*	Eugene and Marjorie Sumney*
Si and Shirley Johnson	Gerard and Margery Thomas*
Kalamazoo Community Foundation	Thome Foundation
Kalamazoo County Health Plan Corporation	Harold and Grace Upjohn Foundation Inc
Timothy and Joy Light	William and Katherin VanDomelen Foundation
LVM Capital Management Ltd	W. W. Grainger Inc

**In Memory Of*



- HOSPICE CARE
- ROSE ARBOR PLACE
- PALLIATIVE CARE
- GRIEF SUPPORT
- JOURNEYS

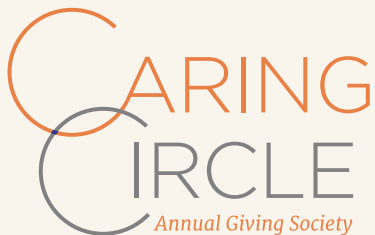
A member of NorthStar Care Community

7100 Stadium Drive • Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Serving Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph & Van Buren Counties

CentricaCare.org

Expert care, **centered on you.**



LEARN MORE:



- Give the gift of compassionate care and join the Centrica Care Navigators Caring Circle Annual Giving Society by making cumulative annual gifts of \$1,000 or more within a calendar year.
- As a Caring Circle member, your steadfast support allows Centrica to provide patients in our community with the comfort, dignity and quality of life they need and deserve, and sustains comprehensive programs and services for future care.
- Thank you for your partnership in our non-profit mission!
- Caring Circle members will be recognized in Centrica's Community Circle Newsletter Spring edition.

24/7 CONTACT CENTER

 **269.345.0273**

If you wish to remove your name from future fundraising solicitations, contact the Donation Processing Center: 800.669.9335 or email: info@centricacare.org