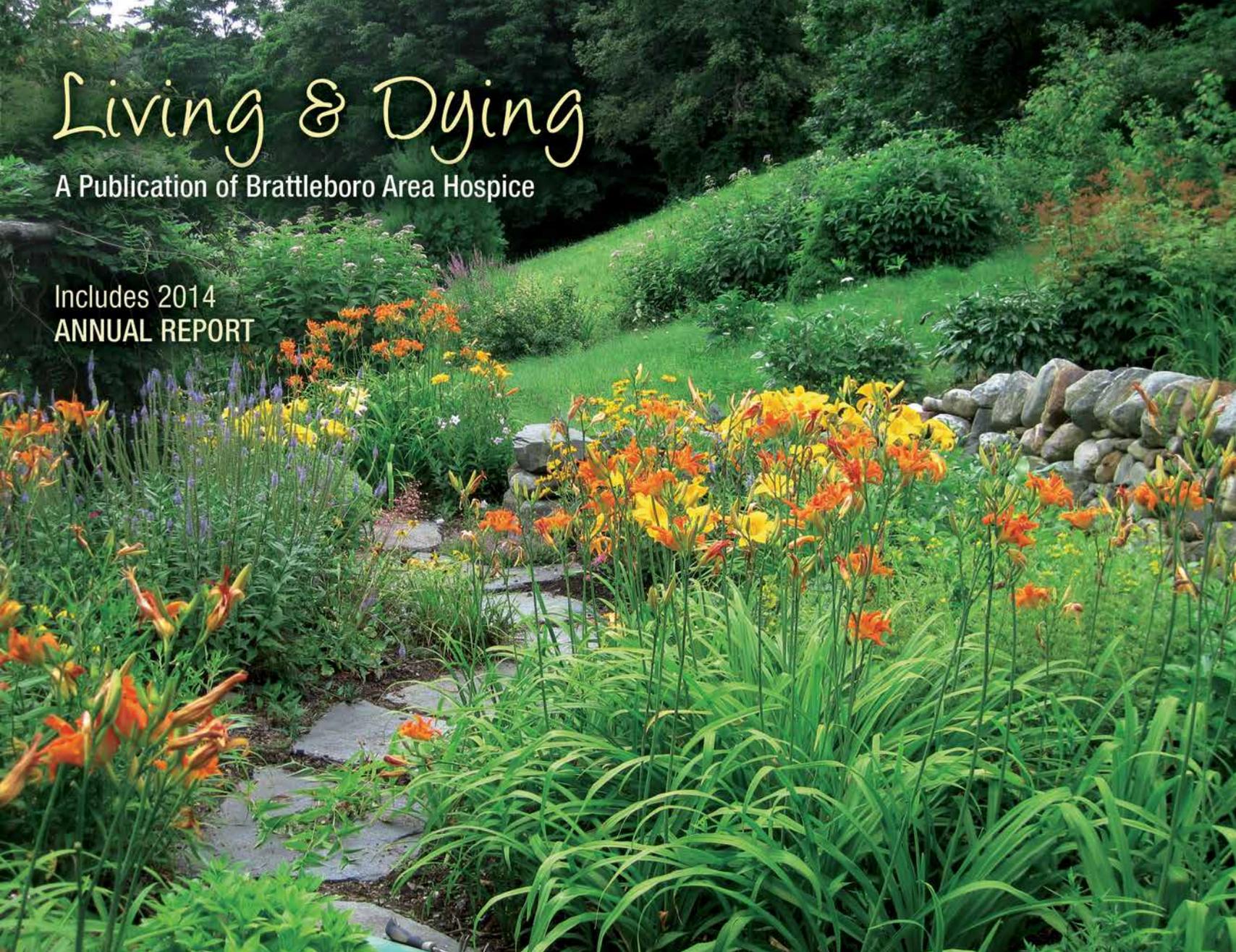


Living & Dying

A Publication of Brattleboro Area Hospice

Includes 2014
ANNUAL REPORT



"What is joy without sorrow? What is success without failure? What is a win without a loss? What is health without illness? You have to experience each if you are to appreciate the other." ~Mark Twain





Our journey holds both beauty and sorrow, and as Mark Twain believed these contrasts can give our lives meaning. At Brattleboro Area Hospice, we have come to know that the path of love and healing is to be fully present and supportive during not only the light but the dark moments in life.

When the path turns toward the final months of an illness for you or someone you love, or when your journey is to move through grief and feel the profound love and loss after the death of someone dear, you are not alone. We are your companions.

In this, our 35th Anniversary, we hold in our hearts the many lives our work has touched: families struggling with a new diagnosis and the volunteers who traveled winding dirt roads to visit; groups who started as strangers and became each others' strength by sharing their grief stories; a grandmother, asleep in her bed surrounded by Hallowell's sweet voices.

This is the essence of our work: to reach out and connect with those who are suffering—to provide comfort and to be comforted. We at Brattleboro Area Hospice are the instrument through which the beautiful music of compassion is played.

We stand in awe of our incredible volunteers, who give so much to our neighbors and communities. We are humbled by the generosity of our donors, who give with such open hearts. We are deeply grateful for the community's abundant support. Together we are truly making a difference as companions to everyone on their life journey of both beauty and sorrow.

Ann Fielder

Ann Fielder
President, Board of Directors

Susan Parris

Susan Parris
Executive Director

Living and Dying

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Brattleboro Area Hospice is an independent, community-based, nonprofit volunteer hospice organization. We are funded by our thrift store, individual donations and memorials, United Way of Windham County, grants and local towns.

Financial contributions of any size to Brattleboro Area Hospice are appreciated and are tax deductible. By establishing memorial gifts in honor of a loved one, remembering us in your will, or making a stock donation, you can help further our work. Please contact us at 802-257-0775 or 1-800-579-7300 for more information on the many ways you can donate to Hospice.

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Brattleboro Area Hospice



Hallowell Singers

Our mission is to provide non-medical assistance to the terminally ill and their loved ones; to provide bereavement services to Hospice families and the community; and to educate others about the issues of death and dying. All our services are free of charge.

Hospice Care Program

Trained volunteers and staff work with patients and their families to address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs that are associated with death and dying. Our Hospice Program serves patients who have a prognosis of one year or less; the EarlyCare Program is for patients with a two years or less prognosis who may choose to receive curative therapies.

Bereavement Care Program

Adjusting to life without a loved one is difficult. Bereavement services are an important part of hospice care and help people understand grief as a normal process. Support groups, limited individual support and our bereavement newsletter Seasons are available to surviving Hospice family members as well as anyone in our community.

Community Education

We are a community resource on the issues of death, dying and grieving. Hospice and bereavement trainings are open to everyone whether or not they choose to volunteer. We are available to speak to local groups and businesses, and offer trainings and inservices to medical professionals. Our lending library is open to the public and includes books, CDs, audiotapes, DVDs and videos.

Grief & Loss

Expression through Writing

The power of words to move grief through us is real and available to all. Recent brain science studies have shown that naming emotional experiences, and describing them with written words, alters their intensity in the direction of release. In our annual report this year we are honored to share with you several pieces of writing about grief, along with an in-depth interview with a bereaved mother and father. These offerings come from members of our community, and we are deeply grateful to these individuals for their generosity in allowing us to use them. We hope they will inspire you to find your own words to express what may lie hidden in your heart. ~ Connie Baxter, Bereavement Care Coordinator

A Grieving Journey

Alan Andrew Young-Bryant

February 29, 1980 - December 5, 2012

Bereaved Parents Judy & Peter van Wageningen
interviewed by Cheryl Richards, Bereavement Counselor

Cheryl: Tell me a bit about what you found supportive about going through this grieving journey, and both as individuals, as a couple and then as a family.

Judy: For me, what's been most supportive has been the enduring support of friends and family. Peter and I have been really fortunate in that we've lived in this community and worked here for 30 or 40 years and many of our friends knew both of our children Noelle and Alan. They've been able to just sit with us and just be present early on when we were just racked with agony and pain and tears and grief. I would say that they've been able to help us bear our pain. Members of our spiritual community St. Michael's Episcopal also supported us with food and meals and prayers, even though we hadn't been particularly active, we were not forgotten by this group of people who supported us with meals for months.

Our family has also done a number of events together, meaning Alexis, Alan's best beloved, and Noelle, Alan's only sibling, and we have participated in a number of rituals over the past two and a half years since Al's death, so whether it was going to see a shaman in a high desert of California or participating in an Aye Despatcho, a native ceremony, or going to the site of his death in the gorge at Ithaca on the first anniversary of his death. The fact that we've all done it together and walked it together has been really helpful.

Peter and I have certain rituals at home that we follow, not just at home because I take them with me also. We have a couple of altars that have evolved around the house in areas where we spend most of our time as a family, one of which is the kitchen. And it's kind of a living altar in that there are photos on it, but things are updated on it, or there are pictures, flowers, there are different small statues from different traditions, every night around 4:30 or so we light candles and that's been supportive.

Another aspect of what's been supportive for me is all of us, that means Alexis, Noelle, Peter and I have all participated in hospice groups in three different geographic areas in the country, California, Brattleboro and Ellsworth, Maine and we have all shared poetry, readings, handouts that we have each received in our respective groups. We've also shared books, music, anything that we've come across having to do with loss of a son or a sibling or a partner.

The support of our several hospice groups that we've been in has been amazing. The facilitators are excellent and the compassionate people in the group and we have met, in particular our parent loss group which just started up last year, have been really helpful. It's very, very intense but it's also profoundly meaningful and a very important part of our weekly life.

Cheryl: Judy, what does it feel like is the most effective part of being able to talk with other people who have similar experiences and can hear you in a certain way, why is it so powerful?

Judy: Well there is nothing that I can say that those parents haven't felt and there is nothing I believe that other parents can say that I also haven't felt and because it is such an event that is so unexpected, something that we never ever considered or thought about, it's out of the natural order, nothing that we prepared for, something that it seems always happened to other people but somehow I don't know why we naively thought that we were insulated from something like an accident, especially after your child is an adult and launched. Listening to the experiences of other parents and their very deep thoughts, fears, deep strong feelings, anger, grief, rage, betrayal, just so many feelings that are so strong that need to be let out, I feel it's really important, the group's really important.

When we've met other parents whose children have died 15 years ago, 20 years ago, they've been really helpful to us. I see them in



some ways as a role model in that they are still standing, they're breathing, they've survived, and they've found some joy in their lives. I feel that knowing that other parents have survived this gives me hope that somehow, I don't know how, but somehow, we will survive this. I don't know how we'll do that but we'll see as we go, with a lot of support from hospice which is great at facilitating it.

Peter: A lot of what Judy said as it resonates with me as well. I remember the day that we got the news that Alan fell into the gorge at Ithaca, the first thing we did was we called local friends and then family and but we don't have any family near us, so the immediate reaction came in help from friends who are our age and were there immediately. I think I'll carry that with me forever. Family was there too but not geographically and I think knowing that we have friends who will be there regardless was very moving and touching to me.

I think our support groups have served as a community where you can share and say things very intensively that maybe even with friends you can't. The friends are for support period but the groups are for complete understanding, like *we've been there too*.

Cheryl: You know what strikes me listening to both of you is that in my experience many times families are absolutely torn apart from each other when something like this happens. Sometimes that's temporary, sometimes it's permanent and yet from listening to the two of you over time, as individuals and a couple and a family with Noelle who is not in the area, that somehow you've been able to figure out how to make space for everyone's way of dealing with it and stay connected as a group. Do you want to say anything about that?

Judy: Nobody ever expects anything like this to happen, and so I felt as a mother that first of all that I needed also to still be present for the two adult women Noelle and Alexis, both who had a different relationship with Alan. And I had no experience with even my own role in what it felt like to be a parent who has lost a child. So I felt like we were all just going minute to minute, hour to hour, day by day. We all read as much as we could about how loss impacts different relationships and we've shared that with each other. Peter and I try to be really aware from our reading and groups and also there is a lot available online like Compassionate Friends and through private individual therapy, being aware how loss affects siblings and that

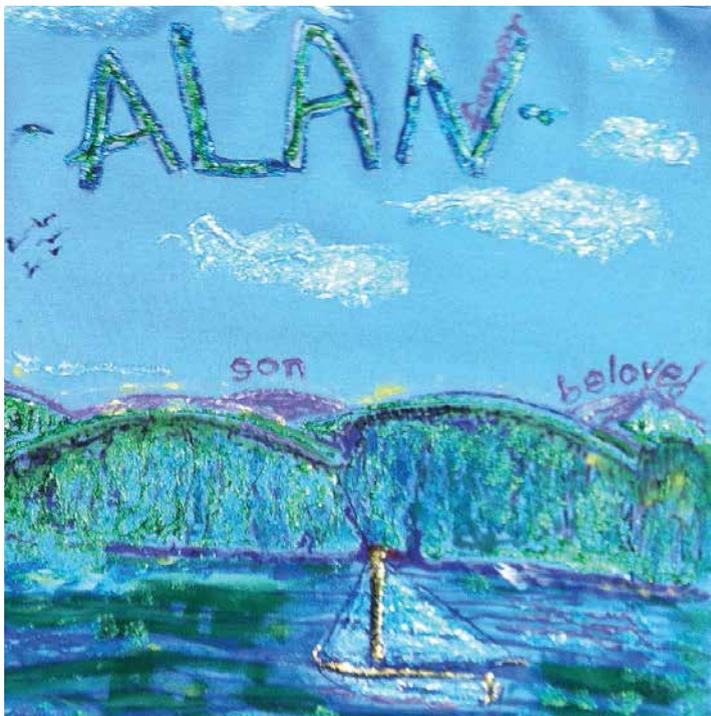
we want to be present for Noelle. So we want to be moving ahead and working with our grief so that we are fully present for Noelle and for the grandchildren and we are also aware that Alexis, through this tragedy, has a different trajectory of her own. She has had to restart her life again while dealing with this tremendous tragedy. So we worked really hard to respect her journey and to stay in touch with her.

Peter: One thing that we do with each other is we give each other space when we need to. Being two separate people we don't always melt down at the exact same time, but I feel that we are aware of that and we've supported each other in terms of that.

Cheryl: You both said the word *presence* and alluded to how important it was that your friends be present with your deep grief. What does that mean, what was their presence?

Judy: They weren't afraid to come by or call or sit with us early on when we were sobbing. They were just willing to be here and sit, to be with us. There is nothing anyone can say to change the situation, nobody can fix it, you can't make it right, can't bring Alan or anyone's loved-one back again, but they weren't afraid, that was my sense, maybe they were, but they nevertheless were here with us, and some days a friend would come by and climb under the covers and sit there and we would talk and cry. They were just willing to meet me kind of wherever I was and whatever shape I was in. People have said to me this experience is entirely uncharted territory for both of us. People have said our willingness to talk about our feelings, talk about Alan, has made it easy for them. I think that's great, I think that's wonderful. In our culture we deal with death and loss very differently than many other cultures.

And one other thing is that I have learned since Alan's death and doing more reading on death is that there are many different ways to view death and loss in the world. Our friends have been open to being with that, a willingness to understand you just don't get



over it in 6 months or a year or 2 years or ever. We've had really open conversations like one of our dearest friends said "Is it okay for me to talk about our boys, our sons, our adult sons and our grandchildren in front of you? I don't want to say something in front of you that would hurt your feelings or make you feel sad." There is nothing anyone can say that will make us feel sad because we feel that all the time and our challenge is for us to live with it. And of course, we want to hear about our friends' children and what's happening in their lives. There's so much awareness of pain and love in the world simultaneously it feels like we've entered a secret ground and our friends have helped us to survive and they're open to hearing what we may want to share. Some things that are really

painful, like an autopsy report, a certain trigger of a memory or something that just makes you fall apart in the middle of what might be a normal day, you never know. Our friends have been willing to communicate in a lot of ways, emailing, texting, letters, flowers, gifts, phone calls, food, hugs, hugs, hugs, tears.

Peter: Just one thing for me is with guys it is sometimes hard to talk about these kinds of things, but the friends that I have, guy friends that I meet with on a regular basis sometimes one of them will say - *so, how are you doing* - and of course the natural thing for most Americans is to say - *I'm doing great* - or then he'll say, - *no, how are you really doing*, and this is on a regular basis - *how are you really doing?* It means a lot to me to be able to say to another friend what is going on with me. Outside of the home, outside of family or whatever, this is just another male friend who is asking me this - that sort of thing means a lot to me.

Cheryl: Have there been things that have *not* been helpful to you, perhaps things you thought would be helpful and they turned out not to be, and this could be people's reactions, it could be circumstances in moving through this journey that you found yourself on?

Peter: I find for me sometimes the day to day can be a little overwhelming. When Al died I was still working, Judy had retired and I know I could have continued the work but at some point, that spring in that first 6 months was rather devastating, and I just couldn't do it anymore. I remember sometimes just going into my office and just sitting and looking out the window. So I told my colleague that I just can't do this anymore, my heart's not in it, that was difficult. One of the things I did, I made a conscious effort to surround myself with the people who I knew supported me and were friends. The downside is I didn't venture out much to the world. Our lives became more circumscribed, we narrowed things down and kept things simple. Now, I don't know if that's a positive or a negative, it could be both.

Judy: From my vantage point, I would say that the impact of grief on one's body is physically, mentally and emotionally so draining that often I really had no idea. Your level of physical energy, and even emotional energy is so diminished so I would never know from day to day what I would be able to do, so I had to give up a lot of expectations, it was all new territory. Some days it was overwhelming even thinking of waking up and realizing what our new world was. Thinking I could do more than I reasonably could do, feeling disappointed in what I wasn't able to accomplish was something—I had to learn to let go of those expectations. Sometimes going out and doing something out of the house would be great, but then being out for an hour, I'd feel like I had to come home and retreat, curl up in a little ball and have some quiet time.

Things that have been unhelpful - I think I haven't focused much or really thought about that much. I've tried to take whatever gestures people have offered, pretty much whatever people have offered from a place of love, so I am thankful for any comment, support gesture from people. I kind of just see it all as this new world that we live in now. We're all here trying to do our best. What's not helpful are things we can't control, like a trigger, you're in the midst of doing something, or you're watching something, or you're with people and something comes on TV or somebody says something - it's a trigger and you have no idea it was coming and you're sideswiped by it, those are the sort of things that all people who have lost a loved one experience, those triggers, and some of those can really set me back for a day or so. I have to sleep and return to whatever level of even keel I might have been on. So, I would say there are some ways that I would try and protect myself. If there's a movie that's about something related or tied into a young person's death or accident or fall, I would choose not to expose myself to that during this time, so that's a great question about what hasn't been helpful.

Peter: I've used my time, my day as an opportunity, fortunately I like to get out and food shop and do things, because I see people

who know about my situation and will be very supportive in several places that I go, so in that sense, yes, it's good that we're all different because we need to do things on a different basis, like me not wanting to go out on a particular day, but I'll go out because I want to see people and talk with them, maybe not about anything particular, but just to get out.

Cheryl: Was there ever a time that either of you wouldn't do people at all? Curl in away from them?

Peter: Some days.

Judy: Especially going to some event. They're having a party and even if there were people there we know, sometimes the thought of being in a crowd, that kind of energy, even as well-meaning as the people are, it would be too much. I could take maybe 10 minutes of that. Other times I don't know. Sometimes I just need a lot of down quiet time, down time with plants, animals, our dog.... downtime to recharge, like looking out at nature around the house, the sky, the trees, the woods, spending just one on one time with our animals, I find really comforting. Our dog and our 2 cats that are always present and they're just there. I find those things soothing. Those are ways I think of time alone or maybe reading, escaping that way.

Cheryl: This final question, when either of you, and I'm not talking about people who would be in your support group because you already have that connection, but you came across someone who's newly in a similar situation to what you're going through, do you have things that you'd want them to be aware of?

Judy: Breath, keep breathing, remember to breathe. Really remember to breathe. And as a beloved hospice staff person once told us, we needed to keep hydrated too because tears dehydrate you and that is really true. I would say that you don't believe it now, you don't know how, you can't imagine it and you don't want to

but you will survive, you will survive and that gifts will come to you from places...gifts, not necessarily tangible objects at all, but people and words and music will come to you in ways that you've never expected and will help you find solace and that if you are willing to reach out, or even if you don't have energy to reach out, there are people who have walked this path before and who are there to offer their presence and their love and their compassion. And to just be willing to sit with you.

Hospice has facilitated a lot of our healing through their groups and activities: through quiet time, meditations, relaxation, writing, individual and group activities like remembrance flags and the remembrance at the garden, all these different activities. Hospice has been a place where we've always felt comfortable and we've made friends with people whose paths we would never have crossed but we've made deep, deep lifelong connections with people. I guess that what I'd like to share, that there are loving people and forces in the world who will support you and who can help you through this most painful journey.

Peter: I missed a high school reunion because I was moving Alexis back across the country, and so I wrote to the group of high school people, who I haven't seen in 50 years, why I wasn't at the high school reunion and I got all these responses, not just people in the reunion, but people in the reunion who had also lost children. The kind of support I got from them was so meaningful, so I think it's important to reach out regardless.

Right after Al died we received a note from someone we didn't even know in the Brattleboro area who had lost a son and it was a number of months before and was responding to us. So I think it's those random acts of kindness that really count.

Judy: One aspect which I haven't talked about in our conversation today, is that everyone comes from different places spiritually,

different traditions that they're comfortable with. For me as a parent I've learned that there is so much more in the world than what we see in the physical world and that I absolutely need to stay connected to Alan, to our child, for as long as I'm on this earth. It means that I've opened my mind to an awareness of all different ways of being in the world and different thoughts about energy so that what I've been able to do, sometimes more successfully than others, is to look at the world in a very different way, in terms of energy and light. It's not always visible in the way we see but it leads me to feel more and more like I'm always going to feel that Al is with us and will always be with us. To be present with that. I'd like parents to know that it's possible to feel that, out of this incredibly deep loss.

Peter: Your child is with you always.

Judy: Yes, and always accessible for talking and sharing, and within you and it sounds like it's easy and it's not easy and I realize we are only 2 1/2 years into this and I have no idea and I'm curious about what will be in the future because it seems to evolve.

Peter: I think it's important for people who have lost someone like this to always allow time for that presence to be there in your life, like we've said that we do on a daily basis in a very conscious way. And I think that's important. Maybe it's easier for us now that we're not working, but certainly under any circumstances, it is important to allow time for that presence.

Judy: Thank you Cheryl for this opportunity to reflect and share.

Cheryl: And I'm very grateful for you for entering into this wholeheartedly. Thank you.

Alan Young-Bryant

February 29, 1980 – December 5, 2012

“Grief, after all, is the price we pay for love.”

David Malham, “Memento Mori”, New York Times, March 11, 2015

Life is normal. It is December 5, 2012. Judy’s home; I get up to go to work. This weekend we are going to meet Al, our 32 year old son and his fiancée Alexis in New York to celebrate the defense of Alexis’ dissertation, Al having finished his Ph.D. in English (Victorian Lyric Poetry) at Cornell in 2011. Yesterday was the defense. Last evening we got a call from them, they were so excited. Mom, what’s it like to have two doctors in the family. Now they can finally move along with their life together. We too are so excited.

As a teacher, I go to work, often to listen to the stories of the lives of my teenage students. It is late morning, in my office, I get a call from Judy. The police are here. They are telling me that Al has died. He fell into the gorge in Ithaca. I say What?! I’ll be right home. Stunned, numb, I go out into the main office area and tell my colleague, “There’s been an accident in Ithaca, something bad has happened, I have to go.” And I left.

I remember nothing until I get home. I see the police car in the drive. I go in, disbelieving. Judy is sitting on the loveseat, distressed. He died in a fall in the gorge. He was found this morning. Can we talk Alexis? Eventually we do. She’s in shock, devastated. Even hearing this, I don’t believe it, can’t comprehend it. Life just goes blank, numb, and gray.

Friends arrive. How do you inflict pain on your own children?

We call our daughter Noelle, who lives with her family in Maine and is in the local library working on a grad school paper. We collapse. Word is sent to my workplace, relatives are notified, other friends, as well. Finally everyone leaves and we scream, howl at life. We collapse again.

Later friends drive us to Ithaca. Cornell puts us up in the Statler Hotel. Where are we? Why are we here? Where’s Al?

Police reports, cremation, the mortuary, their friends begin to arrive from everywhere. It is like being in a situation which is completely out of control, you don’t want it to happen, but it moves along relentlessly.

There is a gathering at Cornell attended by many of their friends who have come from far away.

Eventually, we leave, other friends driving us back. It is dark and cold and mid December.

Days pass and I remember nothing. We cry a lot, friends come by with food and comfort. There is no comfort at this time. Christmas comes and goes. January comes and in the middle of the month we have a memorial service in the chapel at Northfield Mount Hermon, where Al and his sister Noelle went to school. Like the gathering in Ithaca friends and relatives arrive from all over. The day of the service is dark and cloudy. It is very sad, lots of tears. It is hard to celebrate a life which shouldn’t have ended. There is no joy in this celebration.

Alan had moved to Los Angeles upon completion of his Ph.D. to work for a financial company; writing, researching, and editing. We went out to visit him in February of 2012 to celebrate his leap year birthday. We went to Angelini Osteria, a gathering spot

for other leap year babies. That same week we went to Joshua Tree, which has become a spiritual home for us all. The three of us went into the National Park and, in particular, Hidden Valley. A bird flew overhead and it was so quiet we could hear the flapping of wings in the air. Alan said, "You know, it would be impossible to spend a week in the high desert and not emerge without having had a spiritual experience." It was a trip I will remember forever. Easter came around. Alan and Alexis came east, and Noelle and her family came down from Maine. It was the last time we saw AI alive. Looking back is bittersweet, but we were all together.

Alan. We call him AI, but his adult name is Alan. Alan was always very attentive to us. Wanted us to visit. Wanted us to meet his friends, which we did, and have them visit us in New Hampshire. It is years later near the end of his time in the east, late one evening he told me, "I'm going to take care of you and Mom some day." Another time, later in LA, he said to Judy, "Mom, how would you like to live in LA with us part of year?" Always thinking of us in the future.

What's gone is our future with Alan. What's gone is our life with Alan. What we are left with of AI are memories and the stuff of memories – photos, emails, texts, his books, writings, but no Alan. We have met with a shaman in Joshua Tree and a medium at Kripalu. They have each told us things in Alan's voice, things which only he could know and say, but it's hard. ALAN isn't here.

Judy, Noelle, Alexis and I are left to carry his memory, to carry the grief of his death, to bear witness to his life. To share with friends and family and with others who too have lost a child. We are left to sleep late, or not at all. To be with friends who know and love us well. To learn to love life again, even with

this unfathomable hole in the heart. To go into the day trying to understand that Alan is with us still, in the breeze through the trees, a coin found on the street, in birds (AI is a raven, or a crow), music when there is no music playing, a voice when there is no one around, in the snow, the rain, in the clouds, the sky. Each day is another day; each month is another month. Memory triggers abound daily, but with time the grief becomes less sharp, more rounded, so it fits inside, becomes another part of who we are.

At the NMH memorial service in January of 2013, that dark and cloudy day, I somehow managed to write something for AI. At the end is a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke which sums it all up.

Here it is:

Gestures

It's taken all these years, and it breaks my heart to say I never told you - you were never timid.

Your stories in second grade, long and intertwined with plot and characters.

Swiss Army knives in Switzerland, not one but many, and you'd go to the bank for money, your own, to pay for them.

Throw the ball as hard as you can.

How can we neuter Danser, our beautiful and beloved Golden puppy, you said with outrage and indignation, as if it were you we were taking to the vet.

You never liked to share the sofa. Picture you on Swan's Island, papers, books, all spread out on the sofa. This is where you belonged.

Let's go swimming, you'd say, by the water of some unknown, reed-filled pond, the rest of us shrinking away.

When you'd walk through the woods, it was long strides, over logs, through branches, while the rest of us played catch-up. Come on, you'd say impatiently.

You and Alexis arriving after dark in the New Hampshire winter with poussins, raw and ready to cook. Two hands, sometimes four, or six. Alexis and I always the prep cooks. We eat at midnight. The image of you, just turning away from the stove in an instant, image blurred in motion, in action. Alive, so vibrant, in your element. Always the OCCASION.

Alan, you are so present in our lives, so alive, so physically alive, it is inconceivable that you won't just walk through the door with provisions for dinner tonight for us all.

How, how can you not be here now?

A friend said to us, It's never okay not to have the physical presence. We may see a rainbow, a raven, hear Saint Saens' Organ Symphony, Gram Parsons' In My Hour of Darkness. A UFO may cross the sky in the desert at Joshua Tree. But we want YOU, ALAN, HERE, NOW!

But Alan, we will never see you again, talk, eat, listen to music, anything, anything, but you will be forever zero to thirty two. Gone, but you remain.

This, from Rainer Maria Rilke:

WHAT SURVIVES

*Who says that all must vanish?
Who knows, perhaps the flight
of the bird you wound remains,
and perhaps flowers survive
caresses in us, in their ground.*

*It isn't the gesture that lasts,
but it dresses you again in gold
armor – from breast to knees –
and the battle was so pure
an Angel wears it after you.*

Peter van Wageningen

March 16, 2015



December Visit

by Edith Mas

Brilliant snow and ice on all the branches, every little twig coated in a shroud of ice almost an inch thick, a frosting of light snow on top. The trees are weighed down, just bending, letting it happen, and bearing up, like weeping women. Suffering I think, but very patient. Do they know how beautiful they are?

It has also been absolutely still, no wind. No noise, no movement. Almost like time has stopped. The light is late afternoon, sun slanting across the field, catching the crystalline, sparkling snow. Ted would have been out in it all day on skis, taking pictures to try to capture the moment, disappointed because they never do.

Suddenly I see a low-flying big-winged bird soaring right across the space between the house and barn, about fifteen feet away from the window where I am looking out at the light. It is an owl, I know, a barred owl. I have never seen one before, only heard them. He slowly glides by in a gentle arc, it seems for an eternity of beauty, and comes to rest on a low branch very near Ted's swing. Just sits there, looking away down the field at the setting sun. I think, another Ted-sign. Moments pass.

Then he flies off, gliding down towards the golden setting sun and deep, dark forest. So sad he didn't stay longer, but such is life, only a glimpse of something transcendental and then it's gone.

A gift. Tears come. Thank you Ted.

In a Jail

I am in a jail where there are no bars, with the exception of emotional bars, barriers, that keep me locked up.

I am in a jail where there are no heavy locks, with the exception of a lock on my heart and I cannot find the key – although I continue to look.

I am in a jail where I have a small, single cell, with no cellmate – but it does have a comfortable bed and pillow. I spend a majority of my time in the cell.

I am in a jail where I get visitors about once a week – on Sundays usually – and that is nice.

I am in a jail and I don't really understand why. The charges that brought me here are still unclear – something about a death. The sentence itself is also unclear – there doesn't seem to be a release date – and I don't know why, I ask myself often “when will I be released?”

I have demonstrated good behavior – keeping appointments, being pleasant with visitors, pretty much keeping to myself to avoid talking about my “crime” (whatever that may be) or my undefined sentence of incarceration.

I do all that is asked of me and I have taken advantage of all the counseling and therapy offered. I am trying to make the best of this incomprehensible situation.

Somehow I know that someone is watching – taking notes on my behavior and perhaps reconsidering the incarceration with no end date – perhaps someday giving me a time and place for release.

I am in a jail.

by **Karen DeSerres**

What's Not Here

“What's not here, emptiness, I only know what's not here.” ~ Rumi

Emptiness, that word arrives again
Like the word Loneliness
It contains so much,
Claiming to hold so little.

Remnants of people & things
Memories held in motion
Held in pages that turn
Our past so alive I can touch it.

Two birds dart thru the rain
By this window
Landing in a whirl of gold
As the trees dance once again
In costume
Before all falls to earth.

Julia Ferrari
October 15, 2014

Kibkubess

Dear Mom

February 9, 2015

Dear Mom,

I didn't fully realize just what you really meant to me until you passed away.

I now feel this strong connectedness to you. I wish I had realized this when you were still alive. We could have had a better relationship. I could have opened up to you - let you in my heart.

Maybe your death is allowing me to be close to you, kind of like your death gave me purpose. A sense of self-evaluation. A time for me to step back and examine my true identity; my failures and successes, my flaws and accomplishments.

Also, a time for me to give you permission to enter my comfort zone--my soul. Reach for me, mom. I am here to take your loving hand. We can both rhythmically walk down this truly blessed path of righteousness together.

Love, your daughter,

Roxanne

when you took your leave
for your next great adventure
(death didn't scare you)

the wild places mourned
for the loss of such spirit
from their earthly plane

the ancient mountains
(steadfast and unmoved by the
fiercest elements)

small rocks loosed upon
their stone-faced countenance
and
tumbled down like tears

venerable trees
the noble alders wise oaks
proud maples bowed in

quiet reverence
their leaves drifted like feathers
on shafts of sunlight

to the forest floor
heavy with moss and the smell
of pine and sadness

from plumbless oceans
slithering tentacled limbs
surfaced like regrets

and shipwrecked our un-
spoken words fathoms beneath
the rippling surface

songbirds sang laments
feral dogs gave up their bones
winter found my heart

penetrating cold
in a colorless landscape
grief's unyielding soil

but in the spring my
fallow heart dormant but still
fertile (even if

i don't believe it)
seeded with sweet memories
and nourished by warm

rains of forgiveness
will bear tender shoots trembling
and reaching for life

by Audrey Garfield

A Moment In The Disintegrating Mind of a Grieving Mother

I am alone today.
Time stretches out in front of me.

Brilliant sunshine on the mountains of snow outside the
window.

I don't want to go out there.

I am listless and frantic, my mind a rubber ball bouncing
inside my skull with no way out.
So full of shoulds I could vomit.

Drugs and alcohol? I would but I hate throwing up.

I'll just go back to bed and never get up.

Damn body! I have to pee. Hips ache from lying down.
Thirsty. Hungry.

Eat?? How can I eat? How can I want to eat?

My son is dead. Nic is dead.

I should not be able to eat! He can't.

How can I sleep, think, walk, talk, breathe?? Nic can't.

Here comes the panic!

Brain goes screwy!

I can still do something to stop his dying!

If I could just get there on time!

If I had not let him get on that train by himself...

If I had gone and stayed with his Papa John through his sickness
and dying...

If I had never left John... taken Nic and Sarah with me to VT...

If I had never met John...

If I had died all the times I wished I had...

If my Dad hadn't died before I was born...

If I had never been born...

Maybe Nic would still be alive.

Will the "If Onlies" claim me for their own and the days no longer
stretch out endlessly in front of me?

M. Beverly Miller



A Puerto Rican In Memoriam

(Inspired by We Remember Them from Gates of Prayer)

by **Evangelina Holvino**

In the rooster's song at sunrise and as the immense ball of fire sinks into the sea,
We remember them;
In the bluest sky with spots of white and the myriad tones of the ocean's aquamarine,
We remember them;
In the sound of the surf and the lights and shadows of the sand in the beach,
We remember them;
In the magenta bougainvilleas and fire-red flamboyán trees,
and the salt tasting sea-breeze and furious hurricane winds,
We remember them;
In the sparkling full-moon nights and the star-bright moonless ones,
and the merry dances of December and the sad wakes any time of the year,
We remember them;
In the mended pants and new dresses made from scratch,
and the rice and beans and fresh plantains bought in the market square,
We remember them;
In the opened children's books, boleros from Los Panchos and Beethoven's Fifth,
in the noisy New Year festivities and the penitence and devotion of Holy Week,
We remember them;
In nights of tears and mornings of hope,
in days of depression and of small human triumphs;
In the intimate silences and joys to be shared,
and the stories known and unknown, told and to be told,
We remember them;
So long as I live, you too shall live because you live in me,
and beyond what any one of us remembers.

In 2014 Brattleboro Area Hospice Expanded our Horizons!



In 2014 Brattleboro Area Hospice served more people in more places in more ways. We couldn't do it without our volunteers

350

dying and grieving people in 21 Windham County towns were directly served by volunteers in 2014 (an additional 83 people in surrounding towns were also served)

429

assigned volunteers
completed 1146 volunteer
visits during the year.

11,039

Total volunteer hours donated to
support Brattleboro Area Hospice
programs and operations in 2014



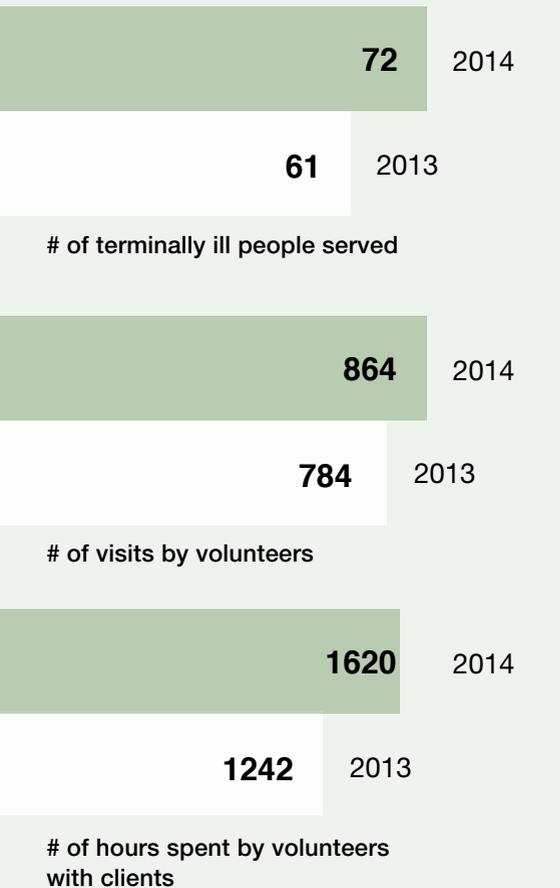
Total goodwill contributed = immeasurable.

1) The Hospice Care Program provided volunteer services offering companionship and practical support to terminally ill people and their families.

2) The Bereavement Care Program supported the families of Hospice clients and other members of the community to heal following the loss of loved ones.

3) Bereavement Groups took place throughout the year in increased numbers. Some groups are time limited. Some groups are ongoing. All groups are provided free of charge to all members of the community.

* Note: A strategic shift was implemented to focus on group support in 2014.



4) We expanded our reach into the community at large offering a wide range of ways to think about end of life, plan for it and reflect on the choices we have about how we live our lives daily.

61 varied community-based events were delivered by Brattleboro Area Hospice in 2014

Events presented included:

Act 39: Public Education Program

Advance Care Planning: The Basics

Advanced Care Planning: Digging into the Details

Alive Inside: Film shown in collaboration with
Brattleboro Film Festival

Annual Memorial Planting Service at Hospice
Memorial Garden

BCTV Living & Dying programs on the issues of dying
and grieving

Bereavement Volunteer Training

Caregivers Support Group at BMH, twice monthly

Choices: Possibilities at End Of Life with Joanna Rueter

Creating a Legacy from our Everyday Lives: Writing
workshop with Claire Willis

Death & Dying for Beginners in Bellows Falls

Death Cafes in Townshend, Guilford and Bellows Falls

Death Over Dinner Event

Dia de los Muertos Community Altar : 12th Annual
Celebration and Art Exhibit Opening

Facing Life's Losses at Bradley House

Grief Support for staff at Putney Grammar School

Grief Support for staff at Guilford Central School

Creating and Hanging Remembrance Flags at
Hospice Memorial Garden

Hospice Foundation of America Teleconference:
Helping Adolescents Cope with Loss

Hospice Care Volunteer Training, 2 sessions

How to Talk About the End of Life, sessions for public
and clinicians

Remembrance Circle at BAMS

Remembrance Circle at Samuel Elliot Apartments

Rest in Peace: Collaboration with
Friends of Music at Guilford

Support for Families First Staff

Vesta: Staged Reading at River Garden

Volunteer Appreciation Party at the Gathering Place

Word & Image Workshops (4 sessions)

Community Collaborators

Alzheimer's Association
Atamaniuk Funeral Home
Bayada Hospice & Home Health Care
Bellows Falls Senior Center
Bradley House
Brattleboro Area Middle School
Brattleboro Area Interfaith Clergy Association
Brattleboro Community Television/BCTV
Brattleboro Film Festival
Brattleboro Master Gardeners
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
Brattleboro Retreat
Brattleboro Union High School
Compassion & Choices
Compassionate Friends
The Dam Diner, Townshend
Dot's Restaurant, Wilmington
FACT-TV
Fletcher Allen Healthcare Palliative Care
Friends of Music at Guilford
The Gathering Place
The Grammar School
Guilford Cares
Grace Cottage Hospital
Grafton Cares
Greater Rockingham Area Services
Guilford Community Church
Guilford Country Store
HCRS
Holton Home
Hospice & Palliative Care Council of Vermont
Hospice Care Services of Keene

Hospice Foundation of America
Hospice of Franklin County
Hospice Volunteer Services of Addison County
Ker Westerlund Funeral Home
Kurn-Hattin
Latchis Theater
Leland & Gray Union Middle & High School
The Manitou Project
Marlboro College Graduate Center
Norris Cotton Cancer Center, Lebanon, NH
Parks Place, Bellows Falls
Phoenix House, Tapestry & RISE
women's programs
Pine Heights of Brattleboro
Putney Cares
River Gallery School of Art
Rockingham Arts and Museum Project
RSVP
Samaritans, Inc. of Keene, NH
Senior Solutions Senior Meals
Strolling of the Heifers
Sustainable Aging
Thompson House
Town Nurse, Wilmington
Town of Brattleboro Parks and Recreation
United Way of Windham County
VA Community Outpatient Clinic, Brattleboro
Valley Cafe, Bellows Falls
Valley Cares
Vermont Ethics Network
Vermont Funeral Consumers Alliance
Vernon Green Nursing Home

Vernon Hall
Veterans Administration Medical Center, WRJ
Visiting Nurse & Hospice of VT & NH
VNA & Hospice of SVHC, Bennington, VT
West River Assisted Living - Valley Cares
Westminster Cares



"The opportunity to partner with the Brattleboro Film Festival to present "Alive Inside," 2014 Sundance Audience Award Winner, to the community at large, as a part of our 35th Anniversary Celebration, "Love Lives On," offered us a tremendous opportunity. The Film Festival benefited from our recommendation of the film, our specific publicity to our friends and supporters, from the knowledge and experience of Hospice staff, and the Hallowell Singers who spoke to the crowd of close to 400 people who turned out to hear about end of life, the value of music and to see the award winning film. When organizations are willing to collaborate, the end product is always stronger, the cost of production is generally lower and the benefit to all greater! Hospice firmly believes in collaboration whenever it is possible!"

2014 Annual
Service of
Remembrance
At the Hospice
Memorial Garden



Our Memorial Garden, located in Brattleboro's Living Memorial Park, is a source of contemplation, remembrance and beauty, and is one of the few gardens open to the general public in our community.

You are welcome to plant flowers to honor your loved ones who have died, either during our annual Service of Remembrance in early June or with the assistance of our garden volunteers.



2014 Volunteers

"When it all is said and done, we're all just walking each other home" ~Ram Dass

Bereavement Volunteers

Diana Abath
Eve Baker
Jessica Barnes
Katherine Barratt
Suzanne Belleci
Bettina Berg
Lisa Blake
Bev Bowen
Betty Chamberlin
Elizabeth Christie
Joanne Clark
Nikki Demers
Natalie Donovan
Jesse Einermann
Hilary Farquar
Robyn Flatley
Laury Greening
Claudette Hollenbeck
J. Parker Huber
Cindy Hutcheson
Flynn Johnson

Carolyn Kasper
Kathy Leo
Lerna
Ed LeSage
Edie Mas
Kris McDermet
Stewart McDermet
Hollis Melton
Lauri Miner
Petey Mitchell
Ann Newsmith
Jane Noyes
Loretta Palazzo
Coni Richards
Sara Ryan
Bill Schmidt
Ann Stockwell
Elizabeth Ungerleider
Elsa Waxman
Suzanne Weinberg
Muriel Winter Wolf
Cheryl Wilfong

Hospice Care Volunteers

Diana Abath
iishana Artra
Margaret Barletta
Betsy Bates
Richard Beach
Cara Benedetto
Joan Benneyan
Bettina Berg
Susan Botelho
Jan Bouch
Bev Bowen
Jean Bristol
Sandra Brodsky
Debbie Brookes
Patricia Burleson
Kathy Burris
Kathy Carr
Betty Chamberlin
Michelle Cherrier
Penfield Chester
Julie Chickering
Elizabeth Christie

Helen Cornman
Tim Cowles
Lori Daniels
Nikki Demers
Lois Diorio
Natalie Donovan
Cassandra Ehrlich
Richard Ewald
Michael Fannon
Ann Fielder
Jennifer Fitzgerald
Trudi Flannery
Robyn Flatley
Mike Fleming
Susie Fletcher
Neil Flynn
Ananda Forest
Doug Franz
Samantha Freda
Troy Gangle
Ciri Gillespie
Marshall Glickman
Ginny Grabowski
Lucy Gratwick

Connie Green
Elizabeth Harlow
Helen Hawes
Melissa Hays
Susan Hebson
Virginia Heger
Fred Heger
Cal Heile
Dan Heller
Rob Hinrichs
Claudette Hollenbeck
J. Parker Huber
Cindy Hutcheson
Susan Jacobowitz
Claudia Jacobs
Michael Jaro
Flynn Johnson
Carolyn Kasper
Aylanah Katz
Gail Kennedy-Haines
Ruth Kibby
Wendy Killian
Judith Kinley
Gloria Klein

Kathy Korb
Robbie Kresch
Lerna
George Lagro
Brenda Lawrence
Kathleen Leo
Andrea Livermore
Kathryn Longbotham
Ed Maloney
Linda Manning
Krista Marshall
Greg McAllister
Kris McDermet
Stewart McDermet
Larry McIntosh
Hollis Melton
Margaret Miller
Lauri Miner
Petey Mitchell
Lorna Mitchell
Greg Moschetti
Janet Murano
Ryan Murphy
Bob Murray



Ursula Nadolny
Ruth Nangeroni
Beth Newman
John Nopper, Jr.
Jane Noyes
John Oberling
Karolina Oleksiw
Sandie Page
Galen Pinkham
Elizabeth Pittman
Bradley Poster
Sandra Powers
Karen Pratt
Toby Price
Mary Quinn
Coni Richards
Lauri Richardson
Laura Robertson
Joanna Rueter
Sara Ryan
Paula Sagerman
Jane Sbardella
Monica Scherman
Bill Schmidt
Rebecca Seymour
Daniel Sicken
Shirley S. Squires
Ann Stockwell

Lee Stookey
Eaddy Sutton
Ann Switzer
Burt Tepfer
Jan Terk
Hanna Thurber
Chris Toles
Margie Toles
Chris Triebert
Francine Vallario
Carrie Walker
Steven Walton
Elsa Waxman
Suzanne Weinberg
Gabriel Weiss
Cheryl Wilfong
Phillip Wilson
Susan Wilson
Jayne Wood
Mary Wright

Shop Volunteers

Karen Abel
Jodi Adams
Suzie Anderson
Denise Ashworth
Jane Ashworth

Tamika Bacon
Katherine Barratt
Pam Bostwick
Odell Bouchard
Veronica Brelsford
Kat Brown-Goode
Jamie Cansler
John Case
Sarah Cassell
Kay Champoli
Brandy Clogston
Amy Cole
Jackie Connors
Kelly Cook
Adam Crocier
Evan Cross
Thad Cross
Shirley Cutler
Anwyn Darrow
Kristie Devost
Chantele Dewey
Ryan Diamondstone
Kaylee Dulmaine
Sharon Dunn
Lynne Filonowski
Lori Flathers
Greer Gallant
Miriabi Grzywacz

Michael
Hannaberry
Sue Haskins
Diane Hill
Linda Huebner
Patti Huntley
Ella Ingraham
Eddie Jablonski-
Bileow
Claudia Jacobs
Connie Kimball
Nevada Kohler
Laurie Kwader
George Lagro
Cassie LaVallee
Matt Lavoy
Sue Lederer
Stewart
McDermet
Devin Moore
Colby Nelson-Betz
Jan Ori
Wesley Pittman
Tyler Putnam
Shannon Roush
Stacia Savasuk
Neil Senior
Mary Siano

Deborah Silver
Rebecca Smith
Jane Southworth
Tom Stinnett
Amy Stout
Amanda Stuart
Roxanne Tetreault
Hilary Turco
Hilly Van Loon
Joan Wells
Brian White
Amanda Wrublewski

Special Project Volunteers

Diana Abath
Susie Belleci
Cara Benedetto
Bettina Berg
Lisa Blake
Jan Bouch
Jane Buckingham
Betty Chamberlin
Nikki Demers
Natalie Donovan
Lucy Gratwick
Hallowell Singers

Rob Hinrichs
Linda Huebner
Cindy Hutcheson
Flynn Johnson
George Lagro
Kathy Leo
Lerna
Stewart McDermet
Greg MacAlister
Krista Marshall
Edie Mas
Kris McDermet
Greg Moscetti
Bob Murray
Ann Newsmith
Jane Noyes
Elizabeth Pittman
Mary Quinn
Coni Richards
Joanna Rueter
Sara Ryan
Bill Schmidt
Jeanne Seymour
Burt Tepfer
Elizabeth Ungerleider
Carrie Walker
Suzanne Weinberg
Cheryl Wilfong



A Place for Grief to Rest

by Kathy Leo

When Hallowell sings in a room where someone is dying, grief is likely to show up. We have described our singing as “a place for grief to rest.” But what do we mean by these words? What does it mean to “give grief a place to rest?” Grief is not a thing with a shape and form you can hold in your hands or lay down on a bed and cover with a blanket. It changes shape. It changes color and strength. It moves in with certain smells or light, with words or melodies, and fills a room with its presence. And though it is not a physical thing we can pick up or put down, we all know that we do, somehow, carry it—in our hearts, on our shoulders, in our spirits, throughout our lives. We know “the weight of grief,” and the heaviness that accompanies it. We also know the lightness that can follow the expression and release of it. It is a constant companion beside us as we walk through our life. No one on this earth does not make its acquaintance at some time.

When Hallowell enters a home where someone is at the end of their life, we step into the well of a family’s grief. For the last two years of his life, we visited Greg on Sunday afternoons. We sang with him and around him and for him. And we sang for his family and many caretakers, people who had shown up to learn how to care for him as his disease progressed and he would need more and more help. His wife Marie was, first of all, his primary caretaker. She was also the organizer of everything; family life, her work outside the house and of the helper’s rotating schedules. She organized household chores, meals, and the children’s social lives. She held everything together, including herself. Until we would come to sing. During those hours of singing, Marie would let herself be still. She would stand behind Greg with her hands on his shoulders, or sit beside him holding a hand, gazing into his soulful eyes, and she would cry, openly and freely. The tears would start to flow with the first song and they would stop with the last. Then the warm hostess smile would reappear and she would thank us and see us out. We grew

In 2014 Hallowell delivered 65 gifts of bedside song. Volunteers donated 509 hours of their time not only singing at bedsides but driving 2408 miles in and around Windham County to reach people where they were.

to expect Marie’s tears, even to welcome them. We understood something about this time. We understood that our songs were an invitation for feelings to emerge and be welcomed into the loving circle of family and friends. Emotions became a presence we could wrap in the sounds of our singing, the poetry of words sung, the way we “held a space” through our quiet acceptance and witnessing of this family’s grief. It was as if our songs helped to speak the truth of what would be a huge hole left in the heart of this family.

A year after Greg’s death, Marie and I spent some time together. She told me then that the only time she ever cried over the long journey of years of Greg’s illness, was when the singers would come. This was when she would allow herself to be fully with her feelings, her exhaustion, her deepest sorrow that her beloved husband with whom she had made a family and shared so much of her life, was no longer physically able. And of course, that he would die soon, and be gone from her world forever. Marie thanked us for giving her that place to invite her heart—a much needed place for her to allow herself to fully feel her pain. Her tears were a release. Our singing offered her grief a “place to rest.”

And what about our own stories, our personal emotions, the tender places in our own hearts? What do we do, as a visitor, as a bedside singer, when we are standing in a bedroom where someone else’s grandpa is dying? What do we do when we watch the granddaughter take his hand in hers and lift it to her lips while we are singing the words, “no one stands alone,” and suddenly we are back in our minds to the bedside of our own dying father and we see his hand and his eyes and hear his voice and feel that lump that grows in the throat. We feel the ache in the heart that misses someone we love every day. Maybe the song will stop coming out of our mouth. Maybe we will feel tears slide

down the cheek. Maybe we'll miss a beat, a note, until we find a way to speak all of our own grief/love into the song so that it finds a place to rest here too. This grief, now, in this room, at this bedside, is not ours. We are witness to it. We come here to sing in the face of it. But our own griefs are remembered and they remind us that we are not alone. And that we all share and all experience this intangible thing we can't hold onto called grief. It informs our love. We would not know grief without first knowing love. Doesn't the heart breaking open teach us how to love better?

Bev laid on the couch across the room, her back to her mother, face turned away from where we stood in a half circle around her dying mother's bed. We had offered for her to come over and sit beside her mom, but she refused and her body language told us to leave her alone. There was something here between this mother and daughter that we couldn't know, nor did we need to. I positioned myself to be able to see Bev. We sang our first song. The energy shimmered in the room. The voices were pure and blended. The song spoke of sorrow and love. Bev sat up and faced us with her head held in her hands in a gesture of surrender. As the singers eased into the next song, I walked over to Bev and offered her my arm and gently led her over to her mother's bed. She climbed in and lay down beside her mother. She wrapped her arms around her and let herself weep into her shoulder, her hair. Her mother's eyes never opened again. Her chest rose and fell with labored breathing while we sang and sang and Bev held her mother and cried. Grief had entered this space and offered itself to the heart.

Months later I met Bev on the street in town and she told me that our sing had been an epiphany for her and her mother. Grief did that. She allowed it in as the music held a space for it to take shape and make a bridge between her and her mother as she died.

When grief comes and walks beside you, welcome it. When its weight becomes too heavy to carry, offer your grief a place to rest, and maybe your heart will grow just a little bit lighter and you will remember that the source of your sorrow is the love you have known.

Hallowell Singers 2014

Mary Alice Amidon	Larry Crockett	Valerie Kosednar	Julie Peterson
Peter Amidon	Robin Davis	Bonnie Kraft	Bob Reuter
Helen Anglos	Jamie Eckley	Kathleen Leo	Joan Shimer
Susan Barduhn	Hans Estrin	Beth Lukin	Walter Slowinski
Margaret Dale Barrand	Linda Evans	Cathy MacDonald	Beth Spicer
Tony Barrand	Calvin Farwell	Manny Mansbach	Terry Sylvester
Susan Bell	Leslie Goldman	Mike Mayer	Harriet Tepfer
Mary Cay Brass	Tom Goldschmid	Kathy Michel	Burt Tepfer
Fred Breunig	Mark Grieco	Jonathon Morse	Cindy Tolman
Ellen Crockett	Annie Guion	Patrice Murray	Gill Truslow
	Amy Harlow	Karolina Oleksiw	Connie Woodberry
	Tom Jamison	Susan Owings	



How Do We Heal

by Philip Hamilton

I attended a funeral for a three year old girl at a Unitarian church recently and I realized how poorly our society prepares us for grief. The ceremony was by far the most powerful I have ever attended—the eulogy and songs affirming life over and over again, honestly describing the intensity of the pain and the importance of saying yes to life. Having experienced a lot of death as a child, this service was like covering my entire body with a healing salve- the clear unapologetic message that life is worth living and should be joyously celebrated amidst the pain.

I realized how I had assumed that grieving meant killing a part of myself and sending it off with the person who had died; that to celebrate life was disrespectful of the dead. As I sat sobbing in the pew while a soulful friend sang “Time After Time,” I realized that, on some level, I had been saying no to life ever since my mother died. I felt as if I were waking up after a long drugged sleep and it felt so good to feel the pain and the joy walking arm in arm. If they can be friends with each other, then perhaps I could be friends with both of them.

They say that time heals all wounds, but for me, it has been almost the opposite. An acute wound is something that my body and soul responds to- sending blood, antibodies, energy to heal it. It is the chronic wounds—the old grief that has not been channeled but rather has been swallowed like holding your breath- time feeds this type of grief. For with each passing day that it remains bottled, the body becomes familiar with it,

comes to recognize it not as something that needs to be healed, but rather as part of the body itself; something to be protected, supported, nurtured. And so this chronic wound, this unvoiced grief, continues year after year—not growing and not subsiding.

How does one heal? How does one tell their body and soul to wake up, to breathe deep, to say yes to life? Where did I get the message that dying with the departed is the only way to grieve? How I would like to shake that message bearer and slap them until they came to their senses. When I die, the last thing I want is for those I love most to let a piece of themselves die too. How counter intuitive it is that to *feel* the pain is the best way to heal, not to dull it by swallowing it and let it slowly try to eat its way out from the inside. And how ironic that many of the medical treatments revolve around dulling the pain and suppressing the symptoms.

For me, I say pull off the bandage and let the sore, angry wound howl into the fresh air. Let it cry its puss tears, form its sturdy protective scab, and then let that scab *fall off* as it should. Don't hide the wound or coddle it—treat it like the strong healthy response it is meant to be. Let that wound live a strong, bright, short life and then fade away leaving only healthy, unmarred skin behind.

Philip is a whale biologist, naturalist, and homesteader living in Westminster West, VT.

Death Cafes

Brattleboro Area Hospice brought the first Death Café to the State of Vermont, and in 2014 we expanded out into Windham County, allowing a wide variety of people to take part in this international movement, holding cafes at the **Townshend Dam Diner**, the **Valley Café in Bellows Falls** and the **Guilford Country Store**.

We are deeply grateful to these three wonderful businesses for supporting our work and their communities by sponsoring death cafes!

According our Hospice Education Coordinator Cheryl Richards, “holding Death Cafes seems to have struck a reverberating emotional chord in people. A chance to drink deeply from a well of longing most of them weren’t aware they were experiencing – the longing to share and engage in rich, meaningful conversation with others (strangers, family members, friends) about topics previously considered taboo. The magic of Death Cafes is that this opportunity is offered without agenda, objectives or themes. Participants are invited to bring their wonder, questions, curiosity and willingness to learn and share dialog. The only expectation is that the conversations center around any aspect of death, loss and grief.”

We encourage you to attend a Death Café and explore your thoughts and feelings in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere. Check out our website to see when the next one will be happening near you.



Dia de los Muertos Community Altar

Each year we create a Day of the Dead Community Altar to remember those who have died, following in the tradition of the Mexican holiday *Día de los Muertos*. On November 7, 2014 we gathered to place offerings (a picture, a favorite food, a poem) to honor family and friends who have passed on and to listen to the Hospice singing group Hallowell, who gather each year and sing songs of love and remembrance at the altar. Throughout the month, the altar graced Main Street in the Latchis Gallery inviting our clients and all community members to leave messages in memory of their loved ones.



Love Lives On

35th Anniversary ~ Founded in 1979

Art can be a meaningful way to explore the feelings we experience due to illness, loss or grief. In 2014 Brattleboro Area Hospice celebrated its 35th Anniversary with a series of art workshops and events—music, film, theater and visual art—to explore life's bittersweet gifts, recognizing that despite our losses, *Love Lives On*.

Word + Image: Art Classes & An Exhibit

In collaboration with *River Gallery School of Art*, in September 2014 we held a bookmaking workshop along with a series of three Word + Image workshops led by Helen Schmidt and Jodi Paloni for forty-one clients, volunteers and staff. On Friday, November 7th, an exhibition of participants' work opened at the Latchis 4 Gallery; the art exhibit was open to the community through November 24th. Gallery participants included: Judy van Wageningen, Julia Ferrari, Kathy Carr, Beverly Miller, Andrea Livermore, Evangelina Holvino, Susan Parris, Elizabeth Pittman, Cindy Holden and Judith Dickerman Nelson. Witnessing the striking words and visceral images created by workshop participants was a moving experience for visitors, who saw singular expressions of grief and loss in this art.

Rest in Peace: A Concert

On Sunday, November 2 we joined with the *Friends of Music* at Guilford at the Guilford Community Church for a concert for All Souls Day. The program included music from composers Tom Baehr (*Rest in Peace: The Gravestone Epitaph Project*) and Bruce Randall (*An Untimely Frost: Songs from the Old Antrim Center Cemetery*) and were performed by a group of regional voices gathered specially for this concert, as well as both composers. Musical interludes to suit the theme were performed by an ensemble of Guilford Chamber Players,

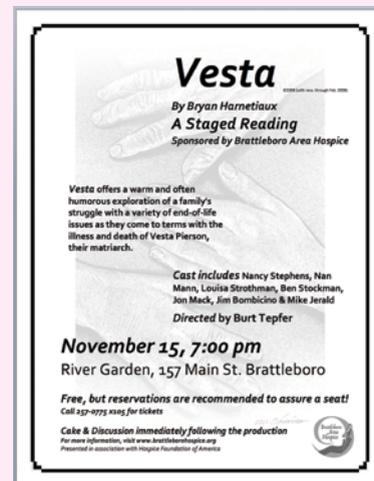
including Amy Cann, Jenny Holan, and Linda Hecker. It was a delight to hear the always lovely FOMAG recite the poignant and occasional humorous renditions of epitaphs from our ancestors in Vermont and New England.

Alive Inside: Film Screening

On Saturday November 8 in collaboration with the *Brattleboro Film Festival* we brought *Alive Inside*, a moving documentary revealing how music unlocks joy and memory in people with dementia, to the Latchis Theater. Over 400 people attended this uplifting cinematic exploration of music and the mind, which won the Audience at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival. After the film, the energy in the theater was palpable, as we all realized just how powerful music can be to awaken those we thought were possibly unreachable.

Vesta: Staged Reading

On Saturday, November 15, we brought the end of life drama *Vesta* to the River Garden in downtown Brattleboro as a staged reading. *Vesta* offers a warm and often funny exploration of a family's struggle with a variety of end-of-life issues as they come to terms with the illness and death of Vesta Pierson, their matriarch. *Vesta* is a 90-minute, seven-character play about the last five years of the title character's life. Directed by Burt Tepper, the cast included: Nancy Stephens, Nan Mann, Louisa Strothman, Ben Stockman, Jon Mack, Jim Bombicino, and Mike Jerald. The incredible acting, along with thoughtful directing, made the evening a rich experience, thoughtful for all who bore witness to this affecting story. Following the performance, the audience discussed the play over cake and coffee.



Vesta
A Staged Reading
By Bryan Harnetiaux
Sponsored by Brattleboro Area Hospice

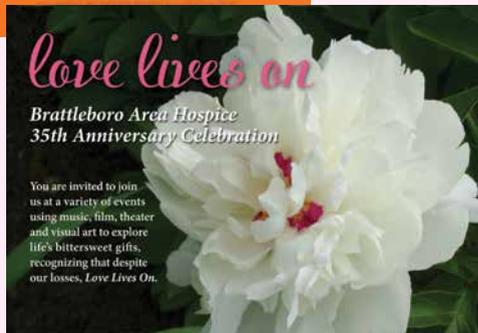
Vesta offers a warm and often humorous exploration of a family's struggle with a variety of end-of-life issues as they come to terms with the illness and death of Vesta Pierson, their matriarch.

Cast includes Nancy Stephens, Nan Mann, Louisa Strothman, Ben Stockman, Jon Mack, Jim Bombicino & Mike Jerald
Directed by Burt Tepper

November 15, 7:00 pm
River Garden, 157 Main St. Brattleboro

Free, but reservations are recommended to assure a seat!
Call 827-0725 x145 for tickets

Cake & Discussion immediately following the production
For more information, visit www.brattleborohospice.org
Presented in association with Hospice Foundation of Vermont



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 3:00 PM - GUILDFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH - Rest in Peace

A concert for All Souls Day in collaboration with the Friends of Music at Guilford. Music from composers Tom Bushe and Bruce Randall, songs performed by a group of regional voices gathered specially for this concert, as well as both composers. A feature reception follows the performance. Admission is \$10 on the door.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 8:00 PM - LATCHIN GALLERY, 50 MAIN ST. - Art Exhibit & Día de los Muertos Altar

In collaboration with River Gallery School of Art, Hospice held a series of workshops in September for clients and volunteers. Art of workshop participants will be shown in the Gallery, along with a special Day of the Dead Community Altar. The exhibit and altar will remain until November 24th. Free.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 6:30 PM - LATCHIN THEATER, 50 MAIN ST. - Alive Inside

A moving documentary revealing how music unlocks joy and memory in people with dementia, shown in collaboration with the Brattleboro Film Festival. An uplifting cinematic exploration of music and the mind, Alive Inside's inspirational and emotional story left audiences learning, laughing and cheering at the 2014 Brattleboro Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award. Admission \$8 at the door.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2:00 PM - RIVER GARDENS, 157 MAIN ST. - Vespa

Staged Reading. Directed by Rust Topley, the play Vespa combines dreams and humor to explore the last months in the life of an independent grandmother. Written by Bryan Hartsman, the play examines illness and family at this poignant time. Following the play, there will be cake and coffee, with an opportunity to discuss the play with the cast, director and fellow attendees. Free, but ticket required, call 252-8775, ext. 105 for a ticket.



Brattleboro Area Hospice
191 Canal Street, Brattleboro, VT
802-257-8775 | info@brattleboohospice.org
www.brattleboohospice.org



Living & Dying: Our Video/TV program

In 2014, Brattleboro Area Hospice continued to offer a monthly television program filmed in the studio of the Brattleboro Community Television (BCTV). Each new program was available on cable via BCTV Channel 8 during the month it was filmed, and remains permanently online via our website and YouTube page. Each month Hospice staff, volunteers and community members joined hospice volunteer and program host Rich Ewald to discuss topics such as end of life conversations and vigil volunteering at the bedside.

In September 2014, program director and editor Greg McAllister and host Rich Ewald accepted 'Nonprofit Member of the Year' award for our program at the BCTV Annual Meeting. At the same meeting, Greg also won 'Producer of the Year'. Congratulations to both these wonderful volunteers—we are grateful for the commitment and expertise they gave to this program, offering the community such a diverse and interesting conversation on television about Hospice.



A Terribly Important Tea Party!

2014 Volunteer Appreciation Party

What is more fun than a tea party? One with the Mad Hatter and Alice and our volunteers of course! Our intrepid volunteer coordinators—Eric Cutler (Experienced Goods), Connie Baxter (Bereavement) and Patty Dunn (Hospice) along with design help from Shop staff Ellen Graham and Jennie Reichman put together a tea party extravaganza at the Gathering Place to honor our beloved volunteers.

Six different kinds of tea in delicate china pots, plates of tiny sandwiches and sweet delicacies—a lovely feast, decorated thematically for Alice in Wonderland.

When the idea of modern-day hospice care came to the United States in the 1970s, volunteers were the first 'hospice' staff and at Brattleboro Area Hospice they remain indispensable core personnel. In our 35 years we have helped thousands of dying and grieving community members, and we could not have done so without the many volunteers who so generously give their time and love.

Cherished Goods Auction

There's nothing like getting a great deal that also benefits your favorite charity! On Saturday, October 25, 2014 our annual **Cherished Goods Auction** once again featured high quality items such as furniture, china, art and travel expertly and entertainingly auctioned off by expert Kit Martin. Bidding was fast and furious also over at the silent auction, which included city vacation rentals, Italian leather goods, fine jewelry and more. Board Vice President and Head Chef Bobbe Ragouzeos led a team of volunteers in creating a delectable spread to keep guests satiated.

We are grateful for the support from many sponsors, donors and volunteers who made the auction such a success. **Mark your calendars—the next Cherished Goods Auction will be Saturday, October 17, 2015!**



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2015 Hospice Staff, 191 Canal Street

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2015 Experienced Goods Staff, 77 Flat Street

Karen Abel *Housewares*
Gemma Champoli *Special Projects*
Eric Cutler *Volunteer Coordinator*
Ellen Graham *Assistant Manager*
Christopher John *Clothing Manager*
Jennie Reichman *Housewares*
Karen Zamojski *Store Manager*



Experienced Goods Thrift Shop

77 Flat Street, Downtown Brattleboro
Open Tuesday – Saturday, 10am to 5:30pm
802-254-5200

Donations gratefully accepted every day except Wednesday!

100% of the net proceeds of Experienced Goods Sales directly supported Brattleboro Area Hospice in 2014.

Experienced Goods Thrift Shop is not *just* the heart and soul of the downtown Brattleboro retail world, as it is considered by many. In addition it serves as the fuel that stokes operations support for Brattleboro Area Hospice. Without the successful business model of the “shop” as it is fondly referred, the invaluable volunteers who staff the shop, the community members who donate to the shop and finally the customers who frequent the shop, Hospice would find it fiscally challenging to offer the in-depth, mission-driven services free of charge to all who need or want it.

Proceeds of Experienced Goods Thrift Shop have made it possible for BAH to expand its offerings in keeping with the needs of the times. The shop serves three important purposes. Its bottom line is threefold:

- It reliably provides the base support for hospice operations
- It serves as a resource for recycling gently used clothing and house wares, offering them an extended life and keeping them out of the land fill.
- It supplies a source for affordable, good quality, gently used clothing and housewares for those who need it.

Hospice deeply appreciates all who made 2014 at Experienced Goods Thrift Shop a banner year! Thanks to our donors who took the time to set aside and deliver those items they no longer could use, to our volunteers who gave their time and expertise decreasing operations expense so more of the dollars raised could support Hospice and Bereavement Programs and finally to our customers. We couldn't do it without you!

Experienced Goods Thrift Store

The Passion Behind The Pile

by **Jennie Reichman**

“This whole place is a work of art!” I remember hearing a customer make that comment one day as I was rushing through Experienced Goods, intent on some task or other. In fact, no higher compliment can be paid to our hard working core staff, because each of us brings a unique form of artistic expression to our beloved store, nurtured by what we are passionate about in our lives. These passions make this place what it is: Quirky, enlivening, inspiring, a feast for the eyes. Without fail, the people who have worked here over the years have been creative risk takers, defining and shaping the look and feel of Experienced Goods in their own ever-evolving ways.

Entering the store through the front door or walking by on Flat Street, one may be captured by the fantastical displays in our two front windows. This is the genius of Ellen Graham, our Assistant Manager. Each window grows out of her lively imagination and sense of humor, her delight in the strange and ironic. She gathers and stores myriad bits and pieces over time and then using some combination of sweat and fairy dust, masterminds a universe in a 10X3 foot rectangle of space. Ellen began participating in the Southern New England art scene 8-10 years ago and defines her style as Found Object Mixed Media. Although she is not as involved in making and showing her artwork as she used to be, each window she creates reflects her skill and artistry. “I’m really focused on my family right now”, she says of her husband and 4 year-old son. “They are what I’m really passionate about”.

Clothing Manager Chris John is our bon a fide, on-the-path-to-fame-and-fortune fixer and builder of vintage and one-of-a-kind motorcycles. On any given summer week day you can hear him roaring to work

on his 1976 Triumph that he restored himself to its original glory. He and his business partner Josh Steele co-own Vintage Steele, custom building motorcycles to order and getting a fair amount of media attention for it, including a recent article in Yankee Magazine and an upcoming television spot on Made From America on The Great American Country Channel. Chris inspires all of us to give our dreams a try: 5 years ago he had just purchased his first motorcycle from Josh and was learning to repair it. In the process he discovered the work he loves and hopes to turn into a career.

And how, you may ask, does Experienced Goods run so smoothly, as if industrious elves are constantly sweeping and straightening and stocking the shelves and racks? Because they are! Well, not elves, but the next best thing: Volunteers! The head elf is Eric Cutler, our Volunteer Coordinator. Eric knows that retail is a kind of huge, ongoing theater production, which draws on his experience and education as an actor. A mainstay of the local theater scene for many years, Eric moved to New York City in 2009 to test the theatrical waters there and in the process became disenchanted with acting and enchanted with blacksmithing. Drawn to the primal nature of working with metal, he hopes to someday have a studio space where he can produce handmade cutlery. “We are essentially beings of intention”, he says; part of being an artist is “letting go of fervor” and allowing the art to take its own shape. In so many ways this is how Eric gives shape to our wonderfully diverse crew of volunteers, helping them find the niche and work that best suits them here.

“Creating beauty drives me; I am like a Buddhist making a sand painting, getting satisfaction out of the creation.” So says Gemma Champoli, in charge of special projects. Gemma’s art has taken many forms throughout her life, from jewelry making to collage to sculpting with fabrics. Her sharp eye for quality and understanding of aesthetics allow her to discern a special item’s value, assisted by internet research and consultations with other experts on antiques and collectibles. Everything

from beautiful jewelry to vintage books, textiles to ceramics land on her desk and become part of the exquisite displays she creates. These little vignettes of beauty draw the eye and fire the imagination; that Buddhist impermanence is evident as customers quickly snap up the lovely items she has so artfully arranged.

A store as unique and complex as Experienced Goods can only succeed with the sure handed guidance of a great leader; Karen Zamojski is our captain extraordinaire. "I'm not an artist", she insists, "but I'm passionate about communication, helping people to have conversations with each other and compassion for another's circumstances. People often misunderstand each other, and I've always been able to see all perspectives of a situation and aid the flow of thoughts and words." Karen describes herself as "sporty spice", loving and playing many forms of team sports in her life. Her understanding of good team dynamics allows each of us to be ourselves and bring our best gifts to the thrift store game.

And then there's me, Jennie Reichman. I've been involved with Experienced Goods as both a volunteer and staff member for almost 17 years, a fact that makes me shake my head in disbelief at how fast time goes by. I'm a musician and a cook, a seamstress and a jewelry maker and a writer. I am passionate about beauty and anything that makes the senses sing. I've been told that I am a steadying force here, not too noisy, not too flashy, but always here keeping both oars in the water and the ship moving forward. I like to think that I am also the water under the keel, creativity bubbling away, occasionally sending up a wave or two.

Almost every town I've been to, in this country and abroad, has at least one thrift store. Recycling and bargain hunting are a part of human nature, it seems. It is no exaggeration, however, to say that I have never come across a thrift store as exciting, creative and diverse as our own Experienced Goods. A work of art, indeed, made by many talented hands and hearts.



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Ed & Jane Sbardella	Matt & Fannie Speno	Joan Thorndike	Michiel Verkaik	Nancy Wittler	Linda Heimerdinger
Deidre Scherer & Steve Levine	John & Targ Spicer	Hanna Thurber	Elizabeth Vigeon	Robert Wolanske	Lisa Holabird
Erik Schickedanz & Ruth Allard	Shirley Squires	Felicia & Jim Tober	Ken Vitalie & Jane Rossner	Muriel Winter Wolf	Mike Jerald
Bill & Mary Lou Schmidt	Barbara H. St. John	Christopher & Margie Toles	Mariquita Vitzthum	James Wood	Mary King
Arthur & Elizabeth Schmidt	William & Florence Staats	Margaret Torrey	Elizabeth Vigeon	Kenneth Wood	Daniel Kinoy
Katherine Schreiber	Helen Stapenhorst	Bob & Karen Tortolani	Ken Vitalie & Jane Rossner	Connie Woodberry	Mary Kobera
Linda Schroeder	Devin Starlanyl & Richard P. Gerdus	Town of Brattleboro	Jane Dewey	James Woodberry & Laura Pratt	Carol Lechthaler
Abe & Faith Schuster		Town of Dummerston	Wesley Ward	Carlotta Woodruff	Chris Lyons
		Town of Guilford		Barbara Woods	Jon Mack
		Town of Halifax		Stanton W. Yardley	Nann Mann
		Town of Hinsdale			Gay Maxwell
					Larry McIntosh
					Agnes Mikyaniec
					Nancy Miller

Susan Murray
 Joelle Nay
 Coni Richards
 Joanna Rueter
 Lisa Sparrow
 Nancy Sprague
 Nancy Stephens
 Ben Stockman
 Julie Strothman
 Louisa Strothman
 Family of Cielle
 Tewksbury
 Judy Van Wageningen
 Darrel Williams
 Dwight Zeiger

In Memory of

Jessie & Harlan Allbee
 Anne
 Ken Austin
 Art Avery
 Jane Baker
 Jack & Gloria Nixon
 Barrett
 Ella & Robert Bayliss
 Lyle W. Bemis
 Donferd Berg
 Edie Brighams' mother
 Jim Brooks
 David A. Bruce
 Irvin Bruneau
 Nancy S. Buckingham
 Tom Burdo
 Ted Castine

Alice Chapman
 Nancy Chard
 R. Keith Clark, MD
 Harry Kenneth
 Conklin
 Luella Conklin
 Gail K. Cooper
 Jill Cooperman
 Jesse Corum
 Catherine Eastman
 Nora Ellis
 Richard Gavoni
 Ted & Claire Gordon
 Barbara Bishop
 Greenwood
 Bernice Halladay
 Amelia Hancock
 Tom Hannan
 Joel Hill
 Roberto Holvino-
 Torre
 Edward Hurley
 Donald Jadowski
 Pamela L. Johnson
 Betty Karg
 Marcia Clark
 Kelley
 George & Mary
 Lamoureux
 Ruth Lamprey
 Eugene C. Lane
 Richard K. Lane
 Dr. William "Bill"
 Leons
 Lou Lesch

Nora Ellis &
 Jeanne Mansur
 Nancy Mayhew
 Mabel & Kenneth
 Maynard
 Eva Merryman
 Eleanor Meyer
 Gladys B. Miller
 Verne Moberly
 Merle Morrison
 my mother Priscilla &
 cousin Wendy
 Russell & Eleanor
 ONeal
 Thomas Phelan
 Ralph Price
 Margaret Riley
 Robert & Laura
 Janice Robertson
 Akumal Rueter
 Ruth and Martin
 Blanche Shea
 Geoffrey "Jeff" Benson
 Shields
 Donald Short
 Janie Skibniowsky
 Deb Smith
 Mary Smith
 Max Smith
 Ron, Maynard & Kevin
 Squires
 Cathy Stockman
 Eric L. Swanson
 Patty Szostak
 Cielle Tewksbury

Ruth Thompson, MSW
 Doris Eaton
 Trelewic
 Beatrice Ward
 Lyn Warrin
 Debbie Wood
 Margaret Woods
 Chichita Wozniak
 Ronald Wyckoff
 Lou Zopf

In Honor of

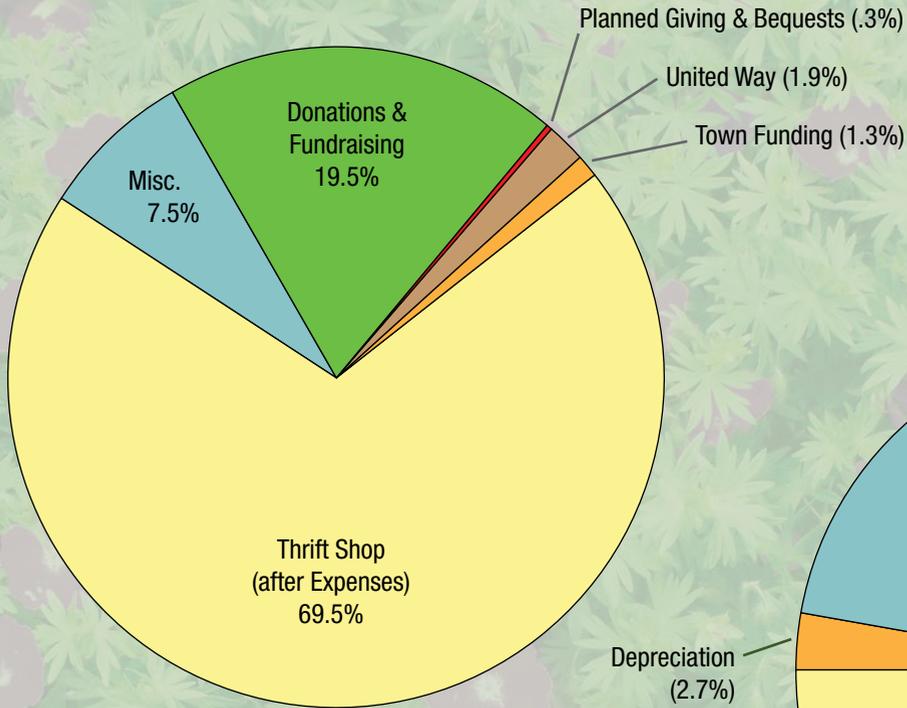
All those being treated
 by Hospice
 Frankie Benedetto
 Bettina Berg
 Joyce Drew
 John J. Dusavitch
 Ann Fielder
 Lorraine Theresa
 Fleming
 Jerry Greenberg
 Oncology Dept Workers
 at BMH
 Tammy Sauve
 The staff at BAH
 Betsy Swift
 Beatrice Ward
 Vanda Warner



*Brattleboro Area Hospice
 Lending Library*

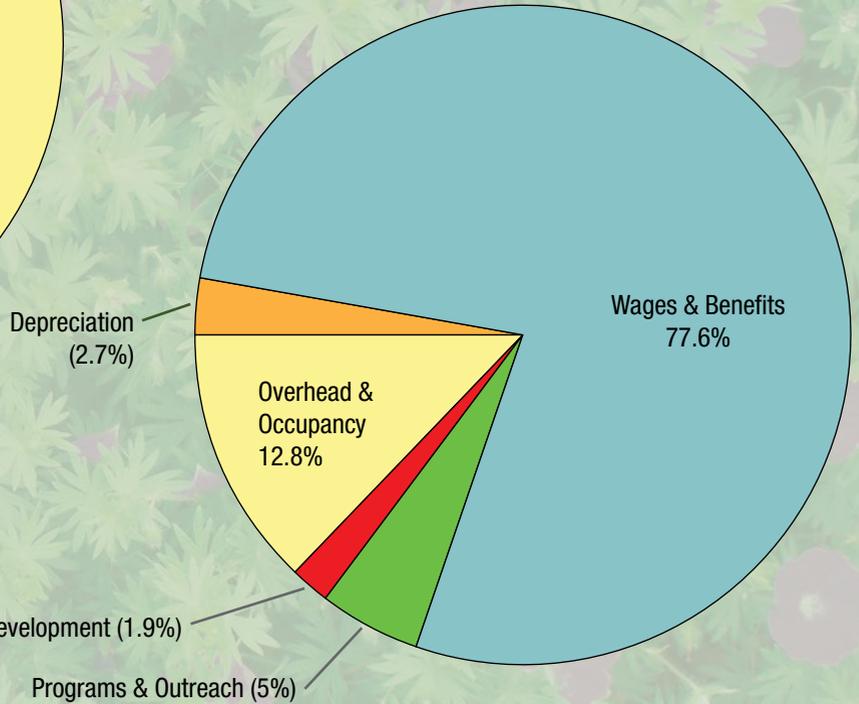
Our library contains books, CDs, audiotapes, DVDs and videos on dying, death and grieving. We encourage you to stop by and borrow from this wonderful source of information and support. Donations of books or funds to our Lending Library are always welcome!

2014 Income and Expenses

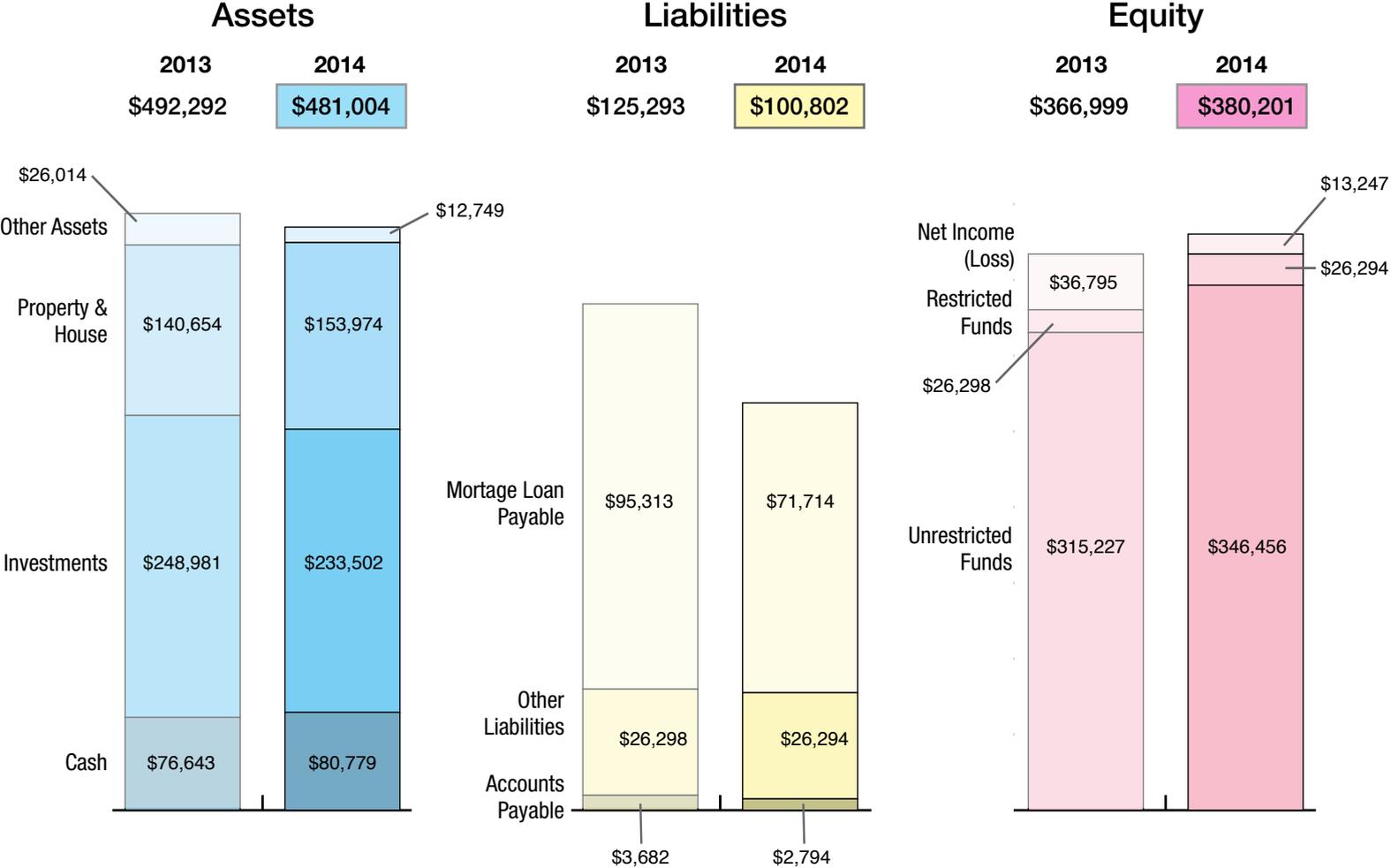


Income
\$410,546

Expenses
\$397,299



2014 Assets, Liabilities and Equity



*Audit is available upon request

Brattleboro Area Hospice
191 Canal Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301
A United Way Agency

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