

Reflections Newsletter

Spring 2019 | 888.823.8880 | gilchristcares.org



Teaming Up With You

In this Issue...

Whether you are facing a serious illness, caring for a loved one or grieving a loss, Gilchrist can help. Gilchrist was there for Sylvia Faust's son when he needed hospice. Now the same 'dream team' is back to take care of her. **Also in this issue:** Read how Gilchrist is giving patients more choices to pursue the care that's best for them; Grieving a loss before death; Pairing teens with patients; and the latest news and events.

Above: Social worker Maureen Hulse during a visit with hospice patient Sylvia Faust and her daughter-in-law, Patty Faust.



'Dream Team' Returns



Social worker Maureen Hulse during a visit with hospice patient Sylvia Faust.

When Sylvia Faust's doctor suggested she contact hospice for her worsening heart condition, her family knew exactly where to turn. They had experienced firsthand the compassion and care of Gilchrist the previous year when Sylvia's son, Jerry, was ill. Jerry's wife, Patty, recalled how much he looked forward to his Gilchrist team visiting, and how they always brought a smile to his face. So when the family found out the same 'dream team' would be taking care of Sylvia, they were thrilled.

Sylvia's team not only helps keep her comfortable and free of pain, but supports her with her goals. For Sylvia, who is 101, that means living each day to the fullest and continuing to go to church weekly for as long as she is able.

Her social worker, Maureen Hulse, provides emotional support and helps Sylvia reflect on past experiences, relationships and accomplishments. This reminiscing, called 'life review,' helps people find meaning and value in their lives. It's a chance to review treasured memories and explore any regrets or unresolved conflicts. In short, it offers the opportunity to celebrate one's life while making peace with impending death.

Sylvia relishes the chance to share stories about her life. Among her many accomplishments, she served as an air raid warden during WWII, preparing neighbors for possible air strikes and patrolling the neighborhood to ensure homes were pitch black during drills. Sylvia taught Sunday school for 75 years and was given a 'lifetime achievement award' by her church. She started a local food pantry that is still running after 40 years. She raised two loving children and has two grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

"It's such a help to have Gilchrist... We have an extra level of support that makes such a difference."

—Patty Faust, Sylvia's daughter-in-law

In addition to working with Sylvia, Maureen also provides emotional support to her family, including her daughter-in-law, Patty, and her granddaughter, Diana, who take turns caring for Sylvia. "It's such a help to have Gilchrist," says Patty. "We have an extra level of support that makes such a difference."

Sylvia Faust died peacefully at home on May 4, 2019, surrounded by her family.

To learn more about Gilchrist's Hospice Care programs, visit gilchristcares.org/hospice.



Sylvia's Gilchrist team: chaplain Marellen Mayers, nurse Kim Schonfeld and social worker Maureen Hulse. This same team took care of Sylvia's son when he was on hospice last year.

Grief Before Death

Grief is a natural response to death. But when a loved one is terminally ill, the grieving may begin long before death occurs. Families may mourn the loss of what once was and dwell on what might have been. Feelings of sadness, anger and powerlessness may come and go. Collectively, these feelings that occur while a loved one is dying are what grief counselors call 'anticipatory grief.'

Michelle Douglas and her children felt this grief acutely when her husband, Tom, was diagnosed with glioblastoma—an aggressive brain cancer. Gilchrist grief counselor Carol Hallinan worked with the family to help them cope while Tom was on hospice.

"You feel a lot of different things when you're [in this situation]," explains Heather, the oldest of the three teenaged children. "There's of course sadness and there's anger and frustration. Gilchrist has given us people to talk to about that. It's given us an opportunity to explain our feelings, and they've been able to tell us that what we're feeling is normal."

Carol and other Gilchrist grief counselors help families express whatever they may be feeling instead of bottling it up. Families often feel in limbo when a loved one is dying. Witnessing a loved one's prolonged struggle is painful, and each downturn or upswing can be emotionally exhausting.

It's common to feel a sense of ambivalence: wishing to stave off death while at the same time waiting for the inevitable so they can grieve and move forward—which may in turn cause feelings of guilt.

"Carol has been a lifesaver for my children and me... we will forever be grateful to Gilchrist."

-Michelle Douglas, Gilchrist grief counseling client

Each grieving family member may feel something different. At the same time, the roles and relationships of each member may change—especially if a parent is dying—setting up a roller coaster of emotions as everyone tries to adjust. Carol says it's important that families know that all of these feelings are normal.

Carol and other Gilchrist grief counselors encourage family members and their loved one to reminisce about their memories together and say what they feel needs to be said to each other while they still have the chance. While these conversations may be painful, they often become cherished memories that will sustain them later through their grief—something that families who lost a loved one suddenly often wish they had.

"We all grieve uniquely, which can be challenging when the whole family lives together," Carol says. "It is important to first give each other space and understanding to heal on their own, and then when they are able, to pull together to heal as a family."



Michelle Douglas works with Gilchrist grief counselor Carol Hallinan to make sense of her feelings of grief.

For the Douglas family, grief counseling helped them learn to cope through Tom's illness, and Carol continued to be there for them after Tom died. "Carol has been a lifesaver for my children and me," Michelle says. "We will forever be grateful to Gilchrist."

To learn more about our Counseling & Support programs, visit gilchristcares.org/counseling-support.

To watch a video about Michelle and Tom's story, visit gilchristcares.org/video.

Volunteer Program Pairs Teens with Patients



Gilchrist volunteer Eve Chase shares conversation and laughter with hospice patient George Perry at Sunrise of Columbia assisted living center.

Loneliness is common in seniors, and even more so when they have a serious illness. The problem is not just limited to those who live alone. Even when surrounded by others, as in a long-term care facility, seniors may feel socially isolated if they lack close connections. Gilchrist's Volun-teen program helps ease this loneliness by matching hospice patients with teens who love helping others.

Eve Chase, 18, has been volunteering with the program since January. Each week, she spends about an hour visiting Gilchrist patients living in a nearby skilled nursing or long-term care facility. Patients are grateful to have someone to talk to about their family or their past. At the same time, teens receive the satisfaction of helping others while fulfilling community service hours.

"We are seeing the power of intergenerational volunteering firsthand, and we are hearing from both patients and volunteers how much they value this experience," says Mary Antonucci, Gilchrist Volunteer Program manager.

Before her first visit, Eve was a bit nervous about working with hospice patients—she thought it might

"Our Volun-teens are gaining insight into the generations that came before them and the seniors are learning just as much, like how to FaceTime with their family or use an iPad."

—Mary Antonucci, Gilchrist Volunteer Program manager

be sad. But she says her experience has been the opposite. "Hospice may sound scary, but I learned there can be happiness and laughter. I enjoy seeing how happy I can make patients."

The Volun-teen program is open to teens ages 14 to 18. Before meeting with patients, the applicant must undergo 16 hours of in-person training and be willing to make a six-month commitment to volunteer at least six hours per month.

To learn more about the Gilchrist Volun-teen program, visit gilchristcares.org/volun-teen-program.

Treatment and Hospice: The Best of Both Worlds



Gilchrist Care Choices & Hospice patient John Richardson and wife, Marge, during a visit with Gilchrist social worker Bonnie Weissberg.

People with a terminal illness have traditionally had to make an agonizing choice: pursue curative treatment or receive the care and support of hospice. But with Gilchrist's Care Choices & Hospice program, patients can have both.

The diagnosis came as a shock to John Richardson. He hadn't even known he was ill and suddenly he was faced with Stage IV esophageal cancer—along with a set of difficult decisions to make. Soon after, he and his wife, Marge, met with Gilchrist Palliative Care physician Marian Alessandrone, MD, who explained the likely progression of his illness and his options for care.

Although eligible for hospice, John was reluctant to give up the chance to seek treatment, especially after he found out a targeted therapy was available for his cancer. Then he learned about the Gilchrist Care Choices program.

Unlike traditional hospice programs in which Medicare does not pay for curative treatments, Gilchrist Care Choices allows patients to continue treatment with their own doctors while receiving the support and safety net of hospice services.

John and Marge say they are grateful for this option. "The support we have received from Gilchrist has been amazing," John says. "I can't believe how many people are right there," referring to his nurse, social worker and chaplain, who visit him regularly at home. A nurse is also available any time day or night, helping him avoid visits to the hospital.

Though the side effects of chemotherapy are difficult to handle, John believes pursuing treatment was the right choice. His latest scans show that his tumor has decreased significantly. And with treatment for his pain and other side effects, he can still do things he enjoys, like writing poetry and going for car rides.

"It is amazing to see the fear melt away when people realize they don't have to let go of treatment—and hope—in order to receive the benefits hospice offers."

-René Mayo, program manager of Gilchrist Care Choices

There have even been some unexpected blessings, like growing closer to his daughter and grandchildren, and reconnecting with a friend from long ago. John and Marge recently celebrated their 50th anniversary and are making plans to renew their vows.

If John decides to stop treatment for his illness, his Gilchrist team will continue caring for him. Knowing people are waiting in the wings to help has taken a huge weight off, he says. "Cancer is a terrible thing to go through, but if you have to go through it, there just isn't a more supportive team than Gilchrist."

To learn more about Gilchrist Care Choices & Hospice, visit gilchristcares.org/care-choices or call 1.888.823.8880.

Gilchrist Receives 2019 Health Care Hero Award



Gilchrist was awarded the 2019 Health Care Hero Award for “Advancements and Innovation in Health Care” by *The Daily Record*.

The award honors organizations and individuals who have made an impact on the quality of health care within our state. The winners were selected by *The Daily Record* and business and health care leaders. Gilchrist was recognized for its professional achievements, community involvement and inspiring change.

“This year’s Health Care Heroes work tirelessly to provide exceptional care to those in need. They dedicate themselves to making a positive impact on the lives of others,” said Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, publisher of *The Daily Record*. “We at *The Daily Record* are pleased to honor these organizations and individuals who are advancing medicine, patient care and treatment through creative ideas, innovative thinking and meeting the needs of the community.”

Gilchrist was nominated for its innovative patient care programs that address the unmet needs of the seriously ill in our community—such as home-based elder medical care for those who have difficulty traveling to doctors’ appointments. These programs not only meet the needs of patients in our community but also lead to significant savings for hospitals and the overall health system.

“We are honored to receive *The Daily Record*’s Health Care Heroes Award in recognition of Gilchrist’s innovations in patient care for people with serious illness,” said Cathy Hamel, president of Gilchrist. “This award is a validation of the impact of our work on the lives of patients in our community and on the overall quality of health care.”



Bringing Back Joy



Jane Maher balances a keyboard on her bed rails and plays her favorite songs while Emily sings.

When Jane Maher, 91, first started hospice care last year, she had little to look forward to. She had difficulty getting out of bed and not much to fill her time. A lifelong pianist who performed professionally, she missed the joy of playing. After she became seriously ill with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) that left her completely bedbound, she accepted that her playing days were behind her.

Her Gilchrist team offered music therapy, but she was reluctant. She thought it involved merely listening to someone else perform, and she didn't see how that would help. Once she finally gave it a try, though, she realized all that music therapy can do.

Gilchrist music therapist Emily Mahoney now visits regularly. Jane's sons bought her a keyboard, which she balances on her bed rails and plays her favorite songs while Emily sings. She moves her toes to the beat and seems transported to another time and place. Jane chooses the playlist, and often transitions from one song to another with a story from her past—like

playing her first song at age 3 while a group of musicians were there to pick up her trumpet player uncle for a gig. Or later when she performed for soldiers after the war and received citations from a general at Fort Meade Special Services.

What Jane enjoys most about these sessions is that rather than just listening, she is a participant. She is making music once again—a part of her life she thought was long over. "Being a part of music therapy makes me feel alive again," says Jane. "It gives me something to look forward to." Music therapy has been a savior to her, she says, and her only regret is not starting it sooner.

Emily says there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to music therapy because everyone's relationship to music is unique. "For many patients, music therapy is a supportive addition to their care—it helps relieve pain or anxiety, lifts their mood, or engages them in a way that's meaningful," she explains. "But for others, particularly those like Jane whose lives have revolved around music, music therapy may be the key component of their care."

"Being a part of music therapy makes me feel alive again."

— Jane Maher, Gilchrist hospice patient

Jane may be on hospice, but music therapy is helping her to thrive. There is no question that music therapy is improving her quality of life and allowing her to make the most of the time she has left. And for that, she is grateful.

To learn more about Gilchrist's Music Therapy program, visit gilchristcares.org/music-therapy.

Gilchrist Nursing Staff Receive Art of Nursing Honors

Congratulations to Kimberly Ross, CNA, who won the 2019 Art of Nursing Award in the category of Clinical Assistant Support Award – Outpatient. Kimberly was honored along with nine other Gilchrist staff members at the Art of Nursing Awards ceremony on May 9. The awards recognize nursing staff who exemplify and embody the fundamental elements of the art of nursing in seven categories.

Congratulations to Gilchrist's 2019 nominees for the Art of Nursing Awards:

- Jennifer Babcock, BSN, RN
- Soosan Babu, RN
- Maria Baxter, MSN, CRNP
- Angela Buttiglieri, RN
- Elizabeth Lane, BSN, RN
- Katie Robbins, BSN, RN
- Susan Ryland, RN, CHPN
- Kimberly Schonfeld, RN, CHPN
- Angela Tutt, CNA

Congratulations to Kimberly Ross, CNA, Gilchrist's 2019 Art of Nursing Award winner in the category of Clinical Assistant Support!



Gilchrist hospice aide Kimberly Ross with GBMC President Dr. John Chessare and JoAnn Ioannou, GBMC Senior Vice President of Patient Care and Chief Nursing Officer.

Gilchrist Once Again Named 'Great Place to Work'

For the second year in a row, Gilchrist was certified as a great workplace by the independent analysts at Great Place to Work®. Gilchrist earned this credential based on extensive ratings provided by employees in anonymous surveys.

Employees rated their workplace in areas ranging from atmosphere, pride, communication, leadership, camaraderie and fairness.

Highlights from the survey include:

- **96%** of Gilchrist employees say they feel good about the ways they contribute to the community
- **96%** say their work has special meaning: it's not "just a job"
- **93%** say they are proud to tell others where they work
- **93%** say they were made to feel welcome when joining the organization
- **92%** say customers would rate the service they deliver as "excellent"



What to Ask Your Doctor When You Have a Serious Illness

Anthony Riley, MD, Gilchrist Chief Medical Officer

If you have a serious illness, making decisions about your medical care can be tricky, especially if you are older. Treatments that may be safe and effective for younger patients may have different risks and benefits for you. It's important to take a few minutes at each of your medical visits to strengthen your understanding of your condition and the decisions you may have ahead of you. Bring a friend or family member with you to appointments, as most of us have difficulty recalling everything we hear at a busy office visit. Here are a few things to ask your doctor to help you make wise, informed choices about your care.

What should I expect as my illness progresses?

Before your next medical visit, review what you have been told about your condition and how it might progress. Focus on the next couple of years. Ask what symptoms you are likely to experience and which ones you should be most concerned about. How might your condition affect your family, home or work life as it progresses?

What treatment and care decisions lie ahead?

Ask your doctor what decisions you will need to consider going forward, such as medications, surgery or adjustments to your living situation. If you are an elderly patient with a serious illness or a family member, talk with the doctor about hospitalization and whether alternatives might exist. For example, some patients may be treated comfortably at home for shortness of breath or some types of infections, avoiding complications such as weakness and confusion that can occur during a hospital stay. Knowing what might happen in the not too distant future will give you the time and space to consider these decisions in light of what is most important to you.



Ask your doctor how likely it is that a particular treatment will deliver the benefits you want and what the risks of the treatment are for a patient like you.

What Are the Benefits and Downsides of Each Treatment?

The benefits and risks of treatments may be unique to each patient. It's important to also consider the burdens of a treatment. The term "burdens" refers to the work required to be a patient or to pursue a treatment. For example, a treatment may modestly improve your lung disease, but may require weekly visits to a clinic or adhering to an intensive medication schedule. If getting out of the house on weekdays is a major challenge for you and your family, you might ask your doctor about how the alternatives compare on effectiveness, safety and burdens. Ideally, you and your doctor will consider together which treatment is most compatible with your goals and lifestyle.

To learn more about advance care planning and find helpful resources, visit gilchristcares.org/hospice-resources.

Capital Campaign Underway for Gilchrist Center Baltimore



Gilchrist is undertaking a \$15M capital campaign to build a state-of-the-art inpatient hospice center at Stadium Place, the former site of Memorial Stadium, which will be the new home of Gilchrist Center Baltimore.

For 30 years, the center, originally founded by the Sisters of the Poor as the Joseph Richey House, has provided compassionate end-of-life care to thousands of terminally ill Baltimore City residents. The center provides care to those who are medically underserved, ensuring that all individuals have access to hospice care and a place to stay, regardless of background or ability to pay.

Building a new hospice center will ensure that our ability to care for Baltimore's underserved continues for years to come. The new Gilchrist Center Baltimore will house 18 beds for adults and 4 beds for pediatric care. It will remain the only adult residential inpatient hospice in Baltimore and the only inpatient pediatric hospice in Maryland.

To learn more about our campaign, please contact Shannon Wollman, Sr. Director of Development, at 443.849.8263 or swollman@gilchristcares.org.



Spring Jazz Brunch

to benefit Gilchrist Center Baltimore

On Sunday, April 28, the 3rd Annual Spring Jazz Brunch raised \$68,000 in support of Gilchrist Center Baltimore.

As the city's only residential inpatient hospice, Gilchrist Center Baltimore is a remarkable place that serves hundreds of people in Baltimore every year, regardless of their ability to pay.

A large, highly trained team comprising doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, hospice aides, social workers, music therapists, chaplains and volunteers works in concert to serve the needs of everyone who needs care. Counselors attuned to cultural and religious beliefs are on hand to support all the patients and their families.

Gilchrist Center Baltimore provides vital services to many who could otherwise die alone on city streets or in the emergency room. For this under- and uninsured population, medical reimbursements do not cover the full cost of care. As a nonprofit, Gilchrist must rely on fundraising events like the Spring Jazz Brunch and the support of generous donors to make up the difference.

Thank you to the many donors and friends who joined us for this special occasion!



Co-chairs Cathy McClelland and Ann Croom with Gilchrist President Cathy Hamel



State Senator Mary Washington talks with Gilchrist President Cathy Hamel and her husband, Bill Benson

Tanzania Hospice Staff Visit Gilchrist

On the 10th anniversary of Gilchrist's partnership with Nkoaranga Lutheran Hospital's Palliative Care program in Tanzania, medical staff from our sister hospice visited Gilchrist for an educational exchange. The Tanzania visitors offered a glimpse of the daily obstacles they face caring for over 1,000 patients with only five staff members—such as access to medication, limited resources and traveling long distances over rugged, unpaved roads. For their part, Gilchrist brought the Tanzania team on visits with hospice patients and families and shared information about our bereavement services, pediatric hospice and volunteer program.

Since the partnership began, Gilchrist employees have raised over \$625,000 for our partners in Tanzania to help them better care for patients. To learn more about Gilchrist's partnership with Tanzania, visit gilchristcares.org/Tanzania.



Clinicians from our partner hospice in Tanzania: nurse manager Asifiwe Nnko, social worker Devotha Elibariki, and physician Dr. Bartholomew Bakari



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Gilchrist provides services without regard to race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion, ability to pay or national origin.

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*Healing & Remembering
Honoring Our Losses*

Saturday, June 15, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
The Zeta Center
4501 Reisterstown Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21215

RSVP encouraged. Walk-ins welcome.

Learn more at
gilchristcares.org/honor-losses-event.

To register, please call 443.849.8251 or email
cbroderick@gilchristcares.org.

 *This event is generously supported by:* 



Sunday, October 20, 2019
Turf Valley ♦ 5 p.m.

*Event Chairs: Sherri Collins-Witzke & Gus Carky
Vice Chair: Linda Ostovitz*

**GO ALL IN FOR
GILCHRIST CENTER HOWARD COUNTY**

Blackjack, craps, roulette and more!

gilchristcares.org/Taste