

Reflections Newsletter

Winter 2019 | 888.823.8880 | gilchristcares.org



Celebrating Every Day

In this Issue...

Gilchrist helped hospice patient Anne Berk, 100, get back to living the life she wanted. Learn how choosing hospice allowed her to achieve a richer, fuller life.

Also in this issue: an innovative program connects family caregivers with practical resources; specialized hospice care for Jewish patients; and finding a creative outlet after a loss. Don't miss Gilchrist 'Top Docs,' photos from the Gilchrist Ball, and upcoming events and support groups.

Above: Gilchrist music therapist Jillian Tolman plays keyboard and sings for patient Anne Berk at her assisted living facility in Howard County. Story on page 2.



Hospice Care and Music Therapy Give Centenarian a New Lease on Life

All her life, Anne Berk has loved music and dancing. A former Rockette, she taught dance well into her 80s, and despite her age—she turned 100 on Thanksgiving—she still remembers every step, kick and turn.

Some days Anne can be found choreographing ‘dance’ routines for the residents—more than a few of them in wheelchairs or walkers—at her assisted living facility. If you saw her, you might be surprised to learn she is on hospice. But before Gilchrist, she was so ill from congestive heart failure that she could barely move.

She was in and out of the hospital seven times. After being hospitalized for three weeks, she had had enough. This was not how she wanted to live, so she told her family, ‘No more hospitals’ and asked them to call Gilchrist.

That decision turned out to be a wise one. As she tells it, Gilchrist gave her a new lease on life. She receives frequent visits from a nurse to check up on her and take care of her medical needs, and in between visits, she and her family can call the 24-hour nurse line. A hospice aide, social worker and music therapist are also part of her care team.

“All these wonderful people were coming on a daily basis to get me better,” says Anne. “I just could not believe it...I was thinking, I’m not supposed to get better now—I’m supposed to go the other direction!” she jokes.

When Gilchrist music therapist Jillian Tolman visits Anne to play the keyboard and sing, the music takes Anne right back to her youth. The Sinatra classic “New York, New York” is one of her favorite songs.

“As soon as I started playing it, you could see a change on her face,” says Jillian. “She began to move and dance and tap her toes.”

*“I was in my old world again.
She made me want to
get up and dance.”*

—Anne Berk, Gilchrist patient

By choosing hospice instead of hospitalization, Anne is living her life to the fullest again—even at the age of 100. “To think I could live to see my grandchildren and great-grandchildren again...and not from a hospital bed,” Anne says tearing up. “I can’t thank [Gilchrist] enough.”

To learn more about Gilchrist Hospice Care, visit gilchristcares.org/hospice or call 1.888.823.8880.

Gilchrist music therapist Jillian Tolman, nurse Beth Talbot-Sanders, hospice patient Anne Berk and hospice aide Crystal Edwards.



Helping Family Caregivers Find Resources

Jacquelyn Howell invited her elderly mother, Eunice, to move in with her three years ago after she and her sisters grew increasingly worried about her multiple health problems. The three sisters now take turns caring for their mother, who receives care and support from Gilchrist's Elder Medical Care program.



Gilchrist Elder Medical Care resource coordinator Thelma Winn (left) with family caregivers Jacquelyn Howell, Angela Duke and Wanda Adams, and their mother, Eunice McGuire.

Gilchrist resource coordinator Thelma Winn has been working with the family for the past year. Thelma's job is to assist caregivers like Jacquelyn in finding services to help them care for their seriously ill loved ones at home. There are many community resources available that can help with transportation, meals, equipment and supplies, home care, adult day care and respite care. The problem is knowing how to find them.

Thelma has special training on available community resources and knowledge of who to contact and how to apply for services and financial assistance. She often helps families complete applications and make phone calls to secure services during her home visits.

Gilchrist's Elder Medical Care program assigns a resource coordinator to meet with families and connect them to helpful community resources.

This type of service coordination—made possible through a partnership with Catholic Charities—fills a critical need for caregivers. "What we have heard over and over from caregivers is how overwhelmed they feel attempting to locate resources," says Marlene Black, program manager of Elder Medical Care Home Services. "Thelma helps them locate programs that can benefit them and initiate the applications. Our resource coordinators fill an important role in navigating a complicated system."

In addition to kidney disease, glaucoma and other health problems, Eunice has dementia and cannot be left alone. So one of the family's biggest needs is help with day-to-day care for their mother. Because private home health agencies proved too costly, Thelma connected them with representatives from the Department of Social Services and the Department of Aging to explore the possibility of receiving a caregiver aide. Thelma is also helping them search for respite care options, which would give Jacquelyn and her sisters a break from caregiving to tend to their own medical and social needs.

The family also needed help getting their mother, who is in a wheelchair, to and from appointments with her eye doctor and other specialists.

With information shared by Thelma, the family was able to arrange for door-to-door transportation through the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) and Baltimore CountyRide. Thelma has also helped them secure medical supplies and equipment.

Though Thelma works hand-in-hand with the family's Gilchrist social worker, their roles are different. While Thelma provides practical assistance in navigating community services, the social worker provides emotional support and help working through challenges. Both the social work and resource coordination services are provided to families at no cost.

The Elder Medical Care program also provides medical care and volunteer support for the family, and should Eunice need hospice in the future, it will be an easy transition. "I am very grateful to Gilchrist for the services that are available," says Jacquelyn, "and very grateful I can have peace of mind."

To find out if Elder Medical Care is right for you or a loved one, call our care navigators at [1.888.823.8880](tel:1.888.823.8880).

Rituals of Jewish Hospice Care Bring Comfort

Leah Szmidt was a Holocaust survivor who lost an eye in the bombings of World War II. She loved to cook, loved to sing and loved her family. When Leah became seriously ill, she and her family turned to Gilchrist's Jewish Hospice, where they received care from a team of professionals with specialized training in Jewish values, rituals and customs.

Before finding Gilchrist's Jewish Hospice, Leah and her three daughters thought hospice meant giving up hope and dying in a few days. Leah didn't even want to hear the word 'hospice,' and her daughters didn't want their mom to know she was dying. But they soon came to realize how powerful hospice could be.

Care That Feels Personal

The family was comforted by their team's familiarity with the Jewish customs, values and community that their mother held dear. "The hospice team...took the time to understand our needs and made it personal," Leah's daughters recalled. "They treated Mom with respect until the end."

Gilchrist also provided respite care for Leah so the daughters could attend a family wedding, and a social work counselor made sure she received kosher food. The little things that were standard work made a big impression on Leah and her family.

Music therapy was the highlight of Leah's week. Her music therapist played Yiddish tunes as Leah sang along in her mother tongue. Her favorite song was "My Yiddishe Mama" (Jewish mother).

Coming to Terms With Hospice

When asked what was most important to her, Leah said her daughters. She confided to her Gilchrist rabbi that she felt guilty about her children caring for her because, as a mother, it was her job to care for them. Leah was the quintessential "Yiddishe Mama." The rabbi helped her see that she was giving her daughters an opportunity to teach their own children about caring for their parents with love, respect and admiration. After that Leah no longer felt like a burden to her family.



From top left to bottom right: Gilchrist Jewish Hospice program manager Chaya Lasson and social work counselor Karen Feldman, with Natalie Chason and Claire Bassan, daughters of hospice patient Leah Szmidt.

Comforting Rituals

Leah's last days were spent at Gilchrist Center Towson. On her final day, a rabbi visited and gave the family prayers to say at their mother's bedside. They then left the room so Leah's soul could 'depart.' They came back to find the door ajar, keeping with the custom of leaving a window open when a Jewish person dies. Gilchrist's compassion and respect left the family with treasured memories, for which they will always be grateful.

Leah died on July 29, 2017. Her great-granddaughter was born eight months later and named after Leah.

To learn more about Gilchrist's Jewish Hospice, visit gilchristcares.org/jewishhospice.

Finding Meaning After a Loss



Cheryl Venters and Gilchrist grief counselor Hilary Harrington, with a memory bear made by Cheryl and a photo of her late husband, Wynn.

When her husband, Wynn, died two years ago after a long illness, Cheryl Venters thought she would never get beyond the intense pain of her grief. "It felt like a knife through the heart," she recalls.

A Gilchrist social worker connected her to grief counselor Hilary Harrington, who over the next several months counseled Cheryl through her grief. Hilary reassured her that what she was feeling was normal and that it wouldn't last forever.

Though at times Cheryl still felt lost, little by little she began creating a new life for herself without her husband. She decided to retire, moved to an apartment and took up a new hobby: making hand-sewn memory bears for those who had experienced a loss.

Cheryl has made 100 bears for grieving individuals since she began a year ago. She makes the bears using the clothing of a family's loved one, creating a meaningful keepsake for those left behind. Hilary encouraged her, noting that finding a creative outlet to process grief can be therapeutic.

"When people come in, they feel broken. Yet I know in my heart that over time they will move forward from their deepest pain."

—Hilary Harrington, Gilchrist Grief Counselor

For her part, Hilary has seen a transformation in Cheryl—one that she knew would happen because of her experience counseling so many others through this same process. "When people come in, they feel broken," she says. "Yet I know in my heart that over time they will move forward from their deepest pain." Each time she helps a client through their grief, it brings validation to her work.

Cheryl says that although she still feels a sense of emptiness without her husband, the gut-wrenching emotional pain is no longer there. She has learned to laugh again, move forward and heal. "I couldn't have done it without the support of Hilary," says Cheryl. "She's always there—just knowing that has helped me...I am very grateful to her and to Gilchrist."

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

New Development Leader Joins Gilchrist



We are pleased to welcome Shannon Wollman, Senior Director of Development, to Gilchrist. She will lead all fundraising efforts for the programmatic and capital needs of the organization.

Wollman brings over 19 years of development experience for community hospitals and academic medical centers within the Greater Baltimore area. Her extensive background includes major gifts, annual and planned giving programs, special events, donor concierge services, staff development and management.

To contact Shannon, call 443.849.8263 or email swollman@gilchristcares.org.

Gilchrist Physicians Make “Top Docs” List

Baltimore magazine has surveyed the region’s doctors and published its coveted 2018 “Top Docs” list. Three Gilchrist physicians have been endorsed by their peers as Baltimore’s best physicians. The metro area’s roughly 13,000 physicians told *Baltimore* magazine to whom they would send a member of their family. Only about five percent of all the MDs in the area received the overwhelming peer support needed to make this prestigious list.



Marian C. Alessandrini, MD
Hospice & Palliative Medicine



Aaron J. Charles, MD
Geriatric Medicine



Philip E. Shaheen, MD
Hospice & Palliative Medicine

Gilchrist Launches Integrative Medicine Program

Gilchrist’s Integrated Medicine program, available to patients of the Sandra & Malcolm Berman Cancer Institute at GBMC, uses proven treatment interventions to alleviate the symptoms and stress of cancer and its treatment and improve quality of life. Integrative medicine treatment may help with symptoms such as sleep problems, anxiety, depression, pain, nausea, fatigue and stress.

To learn more, visit gilchristcares.org/integrativemedicine.

Gilchrist Partners With Home Care Agency

Gilchrist recently partnered with the private nursing agency Avila to offer home care services such as personal care and companionship. You may benefit from Avila services if your loved one needs assistance with bathing and dressing, shows signs of forgetfulness that make it difficult to leave them alone, or needs extra care and support. Avila’s services are paid privately by the patient or family. Long-term care insurance is also accepted.

If you are interested in home care services, call Avila at 443.846.0511, email info@avilahomecare.com or learn more at avilahomecare.com.



Join us for dinner and a “cabaret-style” performance by Gilchrist music therapists and special guests benefiting the Music Therapy program at Gilchrist.

Saturday, February 16, 2019

Doors open at 6:00 p.m., show starts at 7:30 p.m.

Matthew’s 1600, Catonsville

Tickets: \$100 per person. Must be purchased in advance. Includes show, buffet-style dinner, dessert and prize drawings. Excludes 50/50 raffle and cash bar.

To purchase tickets, visit gilchristcares.org/allyouneedislove

Gilchrist Ball: Sparkle, Shimmer and Shine!



Co-chairs Mark Schapiro, Lorraine Schapiro, Jana Burch, and Richard Burch

The Gilchrist Ball, held on December 1, 2018, was an overwhelming success, hosting 750 guests and raising \$732,000 in support of Gilchrist Center Towson.



Brooke Buppert (top left), Theresa Evans, Todd Evans and Kari Kelly



Bill Benson and Cathy Hamel



Michelle Douglas, Michelle Cummings, Corinne Heiliger



Dan and Brandie D'Orazio



Tom O'Neil, Pam O'Neil, Suzy Price and John Messmore



Raquel Maynes, David Maynes, Mary Mullan, Tim Mullan, Erin Mullan, John Kannapell



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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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Gregg Harrow	Creative Manager



**Gilchrist's 2nd Annual
Welcome Home Vietnam
Veterans Day Celebration**

March 30, 2019

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Doors open at 9:00 a.m.
Program begins at 10:45 a.m.

Register Now:
gilchristcares.org/whvv2019

Martin's West
6817 Dogwood Road
Baltimore, MD 21244

**Contact WeHonorVeterans@gilchristcares.org
or call 443.849.8306 for more information.**

Background art by Nicole Hogan, 12, North Harford Middle School



Spring Jazz Brunch
to benefit Gilchrist Center Baltimore

Join the cool cats on
Sunday, April 28, 2019
from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Museum
1417 Thames St., Baltimore, MD 21231

*For more information &
to purchase tickets*
gilchristcares.org/jazz-brunch

thank you to our event chairs
Ann Croom and Cathy McClelland