



Hildegard House

dignity has a home

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Issue 11
Summer 2024



A FINAL Blessing

On a brisk Saturday morning in April, almost 24 family members, Compassionate Companions, and Hildegard House staff gathered in the Courtyard Garden to celebrate the life of Kathy. She lived at Hildegard on Story for almost four months. In that time, we were honored to serve as her family.

Kathy was a nurse, who graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Nursing. She served many people in her professional life. In her fifties, she experienced early dementia and a series of life circumstances that left her without housing. She came to us from Norton Audubon hospital after living in her car for several years.

Kathy rarely said a word, but she could communicate with her big brown eyes. Most of Kathy's family lived in Florida and in northern Indiana and visits were rare. The Compassionate Companions got to know her likes and dislikes. She would light up when she heard "You Are My Sunshine." And she was mesmerized by Bob Ross's painting on television.

That Saturday morning, as we gathered with Kathy's relatives, we felt like one big family remembering her. Our memorial service included a Nightingale Honor Guard, who gave a nurse's prayer. Kathy's sister, Karen, from Florida, shared memories of growing up with her. Compassionate Companions told sweet stories of how Kathy had touched their lives or made them smile.

At the end of our gathering, relatives scattered ashes at the foot of the angel. A nurse had been laid to rest with dignity. A family member had been memorialized with love. This is what we do at Hildegard House. We provide a home and compassionate care for individuals at the end of life who have no home or loved ones to care for them so that they may die with dignity. It was a blessing for all of us.



*Compassionate Companion
Annie Behymer shares a story*



*Kathy's sister Karen
shares a memory*



*Spreading ashes
under the angel*





A Word from our Executive Director

Dear Friends of Hildegard House,

We just celebrated a special group of Compassionate Companions who have spent at least 1000 hours serving our residents at Hildegard House. ONE. THOUSAND. HOURS.

We honored them for their dedication. We are blessed to have a compassionate community of people that make up this place called Hildegard House.

Hildegard House has been open for eight years. I reflect on what a unique nonprofit we are.....

- Open twenty-four hours a day. How many other small nonprofits do you know that keep these hours?
- 85% of our day-to-day service to residents is provided by volunteers. (At the volunteer approved IRS rate, that is over \$1.3 million dollars in service this year alone.) What does a 24-hour caregiver cost?
- We have no dedicated "revenue stream." We are the home and family for the residents that live here. Hosparus Health provides the medical care and bills Medicare. We rely totally on the goodness and generosity of donors and supporters like you! We don't charge our residents a fee (they are lucky if they have Social Security to pay burial expenses.)

Recently, we admitted a young woman from the Kentucky State Reformatory for Women. I went to visit her in the prison and she was at the end of her life, dying in a bed in the prison. Hosparus would provide care to her if we could get her to Hildegard House. A generous donor helped us pay the ambulance bill. We were honored to be her home and family.

It takes a caring community to keep this mission going. Big thanks for being a part of it!

Blessings,

Karen

Karen Cassidy
Executive Director

Barbara Smith, Carol Conaway, Christopher Munford, Mary Jo Ellis, Marie Mills, Dawn Haydon, Donnie Ruark, Martha Elmers, Rosella Rudd, Al Mitchell, Rente Fish, Susie Buchanan. Not pictured, Sr. Eval Kowalski, Alison Ewart.



Compassionate Companions Rosella Rudd and Christopher Ann Munford

The Call to Compassionate Companionship

On almost any Friday night between the hours of 5PM - 10 PM, you will find Compassionate Companions Rosella Rudd and Christopher Ann Munford serving the residents of Hildegard House. Rosella has been serving on Friday nights at the Motherhouse since we opened in 2016. Christopher joined her in 2019. Both women will tell you that while the experience is not what they expected when they first heard about Hildegard House - there is no place they would rather be on a Friday night.

Rosella is a clinical social worker. In 2016, she was working full time. Because she worked a half day on Friday "it just made sense" to spend Friday nights at Hildegard House. "I imagined I would have deep intimate conversations with residents," she recalled. "Sometimes that happens. But it is really more physical than I imagined. There is an intimacy - a physical intimacy - in caring for someone." Christopher adds, "I feel so honored to be part of that."

Christopher moved to Louisville after a career as a medical social worker. She shadowed the Friday night Compassionate Companions and liked the team. "I had another motivation," she says, "I had had a good - but painful - experience with death. And as I saw myself getting closer to my own, I really wanted to demystify death. To normalize it."

While Rosella and Christopher both felt called to Hildegard House in different ways, they agree on the thing that keeps them here; community. "I decided to try it out," Rosella remembers, "And then I went to the first training and I was in this room full of people. I was drawn to what everyone was saying." Christopher agrees. "[It's] the sense of community with the other Compassionate Companions - even though you don't always work together. The values that put you here in the first place are shared. The people are so kind and nice and sympatico."

Working together over the years, Rosella and Christopher have answered a call to serve. They've found community and they have become friends. And something deeper has happened. Rosella reflects that "when I die, I won't be dying alone. I will have all these people I've met here." Christopher agrees saying that she's learning not to be afraid, "You normalize death, make friends with it."



Save the Date

THURSDAY
September 26, 2024

5:30 - 8 PM

WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL GARDENS

COCKTAILS *for* COMPASSION



Join our honorary chairs
Dr. Chuck and Denise Anderson
for a community event to support
Hildegard House



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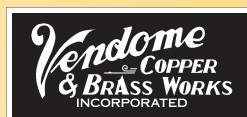


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Thank you to these sponsors who joined us by May 10. To be a sponsor call Jane Walsh 502-653-1482.



Compassionate Care Circle

The Compassionate Care Circle is a group of monthly donors who provide support we can count on!
We are so grateful to these members of the Compassionate Care Circle and their monthly commitment.

The following people have made monthly gifts in the last 12 months.

Kristie L. Abney
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Ralph and Toni Zehnder
Joseph A. Zimlich

To learn more about joining the Compassionate Care Circle, contact
Jane Walsh at jane@hildegardhouse.org or (502)653-1482 or scan the QR Code.



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Dr. Chuck Anderson, *Hildegard House Medical Director*

Our Staff

Karen Cassidy, *Executive Director*

Jane Walsh, *Assistant Director*

Sky Yeasayer, *Volunteer Manager*

Judy Noble, *House Manager*

www.hildegardhouse.org
502-581-8267

Ways to Give:



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or MAIL using the enclosed envelope

- Join the Compassionate Care Circle by committing to a monthly gift
- Make a gift in memory or in honor of someone special
- Consider a legacy gift by making arrangements with your financial planner
- Give a Kroger Card, canned soft drinks, or Ensure



Hildegard House
dignity has a home



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We provide a home and compassionate care for individuals at the end of life who have no home or loved ones to care for them so that they may die with dignity.

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEART OF HILDEGARD HOUSE

Compassionate Companions provide the day-to-day care for our residents just as a family member would at home – making toast, doing laundry, and reading. We'd love to have you join us! Call Sky Yeasayer, Volunteer Manager, 502-653-1488 or email sky@hildegardhouse.org or scan the QR Code for more information. The next volunteer training is **Thursday, June 27th from 9 AM - 4 PM.**

*Come Join a
Compassionate
Community!*



Moments at Hildegard House

In March, we celebrated a wedding for the first time when Albert married his long-time partner Donna in the Motherhouse. Their pastor performed the simple ceremony and Compassionate Companions Betsy Burgin and Mike Meffert served as witnesses.