

**EveryStep**   
care & support services

Formerly HCI Care Services and Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa  
Home of Amanda the Panda



## EveryStep Steps Up



### *In this Issue:*

*Coping with COVID-19*

*Good Grief Golf Open*

*40 Years for  
Amanda the Panda  
Program*

*Embracing Diversity  
and Inclusion*

*Community Garden  
is Growing*

*Decade of EveryStep  
Giving Tree*

*October 8 "Homestyle"  
Art of Compassion*

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*carematters* is published three times per year for friends of EveryStep. Please send us your comments, suggestions and story ideas.

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## Behind the Care

*with Tray Wade, President and CEO*



It's no secret that the past five months have been an exercise in the unknown for our communities, staff and services. In the 100+ year history of our organization, I doubt there has been another time when so many people stepped up so brilliantly to embrace challenges like the ones presented by the novel COVID-19 virus. In this issue, you'll find many examples of selflessness, courage, creativity and compassion on the part of EveryStep staff, volunteers and donors as they identified how to best serve patients and clients and fulfill our mission.

One thing has remained constant: EveryStep's presence is unflinching. The organization did not miss a beat in doing important work to empower individuals, support families and strengthen communities. Many of our 30-plus programs currently look a bit different than they did early in 2020. But perseverance and dedication have been everywhere as staff adapted their vital care and reached out to provide support to those we serve as well as other organizations in this time of need.

EveryStep is made up of many amazingly flexible and talented people, and they've truly shown their commitment to the organization by undertaking whatever was necessary to perform their jobs — and then some — under adverse conditions. I could not be more proud.

— **Tray Wade, President and CEO, EveryStep**

## About Our Care

EveryStep is a non-profit health care and support services organization offering compassion and guidance during life's most challenging moments. We were formerly known as HCI Care Services & Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa. EveryStep is also the home of Amanda the Panda. Our programs serve more than 65,000 people and every county in Iowa from our offices in Des Moines, Centerville Council Bluffs, Creston, Knoxville, Mount Ayr, Mount Pleasant, Osceola, Perry, West Des Moines, Winterset, and hospice houses in Des Moines and Creston. More than 32 programs offer services such as prenatal education, home visits, home health care, hospice care, grief support, flu immunizations, family support, connection to community resources and other services for infants, children, young mothers, immigrants and refugees, families and seniors.





# Pandemic Perfect Good Grief Golf Open

With safety and social distancing in mind, the fourth Good Grief Golf Open was held July 16 to support the hope and healing programs of EveryStep Grief and Loss Services. Some 140 golfers took part in the annual event at Echo Valley Country Club in Norwalk.

“Throughout the spring and summer months, golf courses have been places for outdoor escape, physical activity and safely connecting with others,” said Brandon Foldes, EveryStep Foundation trustee and event chair. “We felt this was one setting in which we could bring people together safely to raise funds.”

EveryStep’s grief and loss services are free and include grief support groups, grief camps and other special activities that assist children, adults and families across the state through the organization’s Amanda the Panda program and EveryStep Hospice’s bereavement services.

**1** Genevieve Dean, Kelly Caldbeck, Ted Thoms and Ross Dean get ready to enjoy a picture perfect day of golf.



**2** Congratulations to the 2020 championship flight: Ryan Hannam, Jake Stevens, Scott Anderson and Tom Hannam.

*EveryStep thanks this year’s golfers, volunteers and sponsors who raised nearly \$45,000 for programs that assist those on a grief journey:*

**Principal Sponsors**

- Mary Kay and Doug Bruce
- SHYFT Collective
- Merchant’s Bonding Company

**Hope Sponsors**

- Casey’s General Store
- Bankers Trust

**And 15 other sponsors!**

*Mark your calendar for the next Good Grief Golf June 17, 2021*

# Names in the News

## New Regional Directors



**Kim Endecott** was named regional director of EveryStep Hospice in southeast Iowa. She joined the organization nearly 15 years ago as a registered nurse and most recently was Mount Pleasant team director for six years. Kim will direct the organization's hospice, home care, grief and loss, and palliative care programs in southeast, central and southern Iowa.

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**Jessica Hellwege**, new regional director of EveryStep Hospice in southwest Iowa will oversee growth of the organization's hospice, home care and palliative care programs serving Adams, Adair, Audubon, Cass, Clarke, Decatur, Fremont, Harrison, Madison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Taylor and Union counties.

Jessica Hellwege, new regional director of EveryStep Hospice in southwest Iowa will oversee growth of the organization's hospice, home care and palliative care programs serving Adams, Adair, Audubon, Cass, Clarke, Decatur, Fremont, Harrison, Madison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Taylor and Union counties.



**Leann Uhlenhopp** was promoted to regional director of EveryStep Hospice in central Iowa and will oversee growth of the organization's hospice programs serving Adair, Boone, Clarke, Dallas, Greene, Guthrie, Hamilton, Madison, Marshall, Polk, Story and Webster counties. She previously served for two years as team director for hospice care in the Des Moines and Perry areas.

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**Mike Breese** was named team director for EveryStep Hospice in southeast Iowa. Breese has served EveryStep as a nurse in the Mt. Pleasant area for six years. That team provides care to patients and families in eight southeast Iowa counties, including Des Moines, Keokuk, Jefferson, Henry, Lee, Louisa, Van Buren and Washington.

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**Lori Carlyle**, an EveryStep Hospice nurse in Des Moines, was named one of 100 Great Iowa Nurses for 2020. Known for her desire to make a difference in the lives of others, Lori served as an activity director and supervisor in an adult daycare center before her nursing career. When she began her nursing prerequisites in 2000 and took a public health and hospice rotation, she soon knew where she wanted to serve. She's been a hospice nurse for a decade.

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**Maggie Mathiasen** has joined EveryStep Foundation as events coordinator. A recent business administration graduate of the University of Northern Iowa, Maggie was a donor relations intern active in event planning for the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation. As a marketing and membership intern for Winnebago Industries she planned the company's annual WIT Grand National Rally for more than 2,000 guests.

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**Megan Mondt** has become the first volunteer resources director at EveryStep. She will continue her volunteer coordinator duties for the Amanda the Panda program while now supporting all leaders, volunteer coordinators and other staff who supervise EveryStep's 700-plus volunteers. She'll lead the organization's new volunteer resources team.

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**Tray Wade**, president and CEO, has received the 2020 Alumni of the Year Award from Des Moines University's College of Health Sciences. Tray received his Master of Health Care Administration (M.H.A.) degree in 2008 from the university. He chairs the Dallas County Hospital Board of Trustees, and serves on the DMU Master of Health Care Administration Advisory Board, the Greater Des Moines Partnership Government Policy Council and the United Way of Central Iowa Agency Director's Advisory Council.



**EveryStep Hospice in Mount Pleasant** has been recognized by Strategic Healthcare Programs (SHP) as a "Superior Performer" for achieving an overall caregiver and family satisfaction score that ranked in the top 20 percent of more than 1,400 eligible SHP clients for the 2019 calendar year. Pictured with the award are Mike Breese, EveryStep Hospice director in Mount Pleasant and Kim Endecott, EveryStep Hospice regional director.





## EveryStep Nursing Serves Released Offenders

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Supporting the health of previously incarcerated individuals who are released to residential facilities is vital to their successful integration into the community and the prevention of reincarceration.

In Des Moines, through EveryStep's Fifth Judicial District Correction Facilities program, community health nurses work with two major residential facilities, one men's and one women's. EveryStep nurses advise employees on medication management, do on-site nursing assessments of personal health conditions, provide tuberculosis skin testing and work with 5th Judicial staff to make referrals to physicians for health and dental needs. Nurses frequently find issues relating to skin conditions and musculoskeletal limitations such as back and joint pain. "Even those clients without significant health issues need to feel that they have a support system relating to their wellbeing," says Jeanette Luthringer, EveryStep community health director.

In the most recent 12 months, EveryStep nurses served 276 released offenders. Most initial intake assessments are completed within 24 to 48 hours of notification of the new resident.

"When offenders are sent to residential facilities through work release and probation programs, they're frequently provided with less than one day of prescription medications," says Luthringer. "A high percentage of released offenders have a history of substance abuse and/or a mental health diagnoses. Obtaining prescription medications — especially those relating to mental health — is the biggest challenge. Yet maintaining a consistent therapeutic level of these medications is vital."

Because most released offenders do not have health insurance, obtaining health services is a challenge. The nurse's role is to identify health risks and help facilitate priority health services, especially prescription medications.



## Continuing Our Care During COVID-19

At EveryStep, two things have been at the forefront in dealing with the novel COVID-19 virus. One is keeping patients, clients, employees and volunteers safe. The second is continuing to provide needed services. From mid-March until July 13, EveryStep offices were closed to the public. However, EveryStep staff have been available by phone, telehealth, fax and email, and for deliveries of critical supplies. As the situation with COVID-19 changes, EveryStep has taken daily steps to make sure our workforce is informed, healthy and prepared to respond. The challenges continue for all of us, but so does the spirit and tenacity of EveryStep.



*EveryStep employees made sure that moms and babies in the Stork's Nest program received emergency items.*

### **Hospice and Home Care**

Equipped with personal protective equipment, hospice and home care nurses and aides continued to make visits to patients, including those with COVID-19. Other services provided to patients and their families were largely conducted via phone calls, telehealth and new e-fax technology, unless a family requested an onsite visit or hands-on patient care was needed.

In-person volunteer services were put on hold to minimize exposure and safeguard volunteers' health. As a result, patient care staff took on many tasks previously handled by volunteers.

At Kavanagh House on 56<sup>th</sup> in Des Moines and Greater Regional Hospice Home in Creston, two visitors per patient



were allowed, and every visitor's temperature was taken at the door. Visitors were asked to remain in patient rooms as much as possible. Prepackaged family treats — not volunteer-baked goods — were available.

"I've always said we couldn't provide the care and compassion required of hospice work without volunteers," says Rob Paulus, Kavanagh House on 56<sup>th</sup> Street team director. "The pandemic has been very stressful for staff and their families, and then they're dealing with new requirements in the workplace and taking on tasks that volunteers typically fill. So in addition to caring for patients, they're doing laundry, answering more call lights, sitting with patients, running meal trays, distributing flowers, and helping to keep things picked up."

To address the possibility of medical center overload in Iowa and because the organization is responsive to community need, EveryStep equipped a wing of the Bright Kavanagh Center to serve COVID-19 hospice patients, complete with an area for donning personal protective equipment (PPE) and a station for decontamination. A dozen staff members stepped up to be trained for positions there. While a surge in hospitalizations never came, a handful of patients were served in the five weeks the unit was open. Sufficient PPE was available for patients to have two visitors once a day. The unit remains available for reopening should an emergency situation present itself.



## Cheering Up Patients

EveryStep volunteer visits were suspended in mid-March, but that didn't keep pet therapy dog Chance the Corgi from cheering up hospice patient Verl Wynn of Greater Regional Hospice Home in Creston. The pair had bonded so much that volunteer Pat Teply found a new way for Chance to bring a smile to Verl's face. Taking photos of Chance helped ease the separation. And when visitation restrictions were implemented at Kavanagh House on 56<sup>th</sup> Street in Des Moines and Greater Regional Hospice Home in Creston, visitor parades became a new option.



**1** Receiving photos of beloved pet therapy dog Chance brightened the days of a hospice patient.

**2** A car parade of friends greeted hospice patient Todd Elverson and wished his daughter a happy birthday, too.



*Helping where most needed in their communities, staffers delivered Meals on Wheels in central Iowa.*

### **Caring for Childcare Centers**

Because childcare has been recognized as a critical service throughout this public health crisis, EveryStep’s Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) program has been functioning in super-drive! From March to June the program managed 852 phone calls and emails to assist 231 Polk and Dallas county childcare providers. As their health and safety advisor in central Iowa, CCNC has been counseling providers on frequently changing recommendations and best practices for infection control during the COVID-19 crisis. As each situation was unique, childcare providers looked to the CCNC repeatedly to determine the best course of action when deciding when to exclude children and staff or temporarily close the childcare practice due to potential spread.

### **Stork’s Nest**

Babies don’t wait! Throughout the past several months, participants have been able to continue accumulating points for healthy behaviors through EveryStep’s Stork’s Nest, an educational incentive program for pregnant and parenting moms. However, the use of points to acquire baby supplies and equipment was temporarily waived. Without using already accumulated points, families’ needs were taken care of when emergency items such as cribs, mattresses, portable play yards, car seats, diapers and wipes were requested. Weekly doorstep deliveries to program participant homes were carried out by EveryStep staff.



*Des Moines artist and EveryStep Hospice volunteer Amy Putnam Koenig developed this custom drawing to thank the hand-working staff at EveryStep.*





## *Thank you, O'Donnell family!*

The O'Donnell family donated N95 masks that could have been sold at O'Donnell Ace Hardware stores and also selected EveryStep Foundation to receive \$20,000 from the the 27th O'Donnell & Friends Open, an annual charitable golf fundraiser in central Iowa. COVID-19 caused the cancellation of their summer event, but O'Donnell & Friends Charities is still honoring their donations to the four charities chosen to receive funds.

### **Grief & Loss Services**

Face-to-face support groups were suspended, but virtual groups were created for all ages! Age-appropriate materials and activities were sent to participants before the groups started. Amanda the Panda Camp was cancelled in the spring, but virtual camp became reality the week of July 13. Through its Facebook support group for adults, the Amanda the Panda program provided information regarding videos, coping tips and activities, phone-in options and other grief resources for children, teens and adults.

### **Senior Companions Keep in Touch**

In the Des Moines area, EveryStep is the organization that matches senior volunteers (55 years and older) with home-bound older adults as part of the nationwide Senior Companion program. The suspension of face-to-face visits for support and friendship has not kept EveryStep's 56 Senior Companion volunteers from making phone calls, sending cards, writing letters, and even using FaceTime to stay in touch with 311 seniors. "As you get older the social interaction is important or depression can creep in," says one Senior Companion volunteer, Debbie Wisecup, 66. "Some clients don't have any family. I do my best. All I can do is continue to call them and give them my support."



## A Win-Win with Amish Community

Tammy Stapp, EveryStep vice president and chief compliance officer, connected with Delbert Beechy of Lone Oak Sewing and a member of a community of 300 Amish families near Bloomfield. They donated labor and supplies to create hundreds of fabric masks for everyday use by employees during the COVID-19 crisis. She brought a folder full of educational handouts for distribution in the community, and she urged them to ask questions. “I knew that it was possible that the Amish community had limited information about this public health crisis and we could share what we knew to help keep them more prepared and safe. Reaching out seemed like an opportunity to work together for the greater good.”



## No Furloughs: Maximizing Staff Utilization

EveryStep did not furlough its greatest resource — its people — but changes in the way the organization delivers services left many employees with opportunities to serve others in new ways. In central Iowa, EveryStep staff began delivering food for WesleyLife’s Meals on Wheels program. To assist Healthy Start staff in New York during the peak of that state’s COVID-19 crisis, EveryStep’s Des Moines Healthy Start team volunteered for overload calls and telehealth visits. Nationwide, state directors of Healthy Start continue to work together to determine best practices in re-entry to program delivery while keeping staff and participants safe.

Staff members also made masks at home, compiled and distributed a resource list of updated COVID-19 procedures and processes for food and pantry items, set up and worked in the laundry and kitchen of the COVID-19 hospice unit, helped with front desk responsibilities at Bright Kavanagh Center and the COVID-19 unit, did filing and data entry for various departments and programs, delivered PPE to other EveryStep offices, and performed needed tasks at EveryStep Giving Tree and in the organization’s community garden.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

EveryStep scrambled to find vital personal protection equipment for staff members to utilize during nationwide shortages. Building a stock of vital PPE and supplies was critical to our work. Help came from many varied people and places, and the response was amazing. No donation was too small!



**1** Brooke Wright and Maurice Hill of EveryStep’s materials management and facilities department found themselves quickly building and painting stands to elevate TVs placed in the COVID unit of the Bright Kavanagh Center.

**2** Mike Breese, team director for EveryStep Hospice in southeast Iowa, gives a thumbs-up to his protective gear.



*We thank so many generous community partners, and our sincere apologies if we've missed anyone:*

- Area515: The Des Moines Maker Space. In the earliest days of the crisis, this community of artists and hobbyists provided 60 3D-printed face shields for our staff at no cost
- Beeline + Blue, a printing vendor in Des Moines, donated custom-made face shields
- Cinda Long donated 50 protective gowns to EveryStep Home Care in Creston
- Kem Green, EveryStep Hospice volunteer, stitched hundreds of fabric masks for the organization
- Landon Stull, 12, made 3D printed “ear savers” for staff as they utilized masks with elastic bands
- Amish Community near Bloomfield — 750 fabric barrier masks for staff to use in public and office work, with the remaining masks going to families we served for their needs for going out into the community
- Habitat for Humanity donated 250 respirator masks.
- Graham Construction donated 31 respirator masks
- St. Francis of Assisi parish donated four boxes of gloves
- O'Donnell Ace Hardware Stores donated N95 masks
- Plaza Dental provided four boxes of gloves



3



4

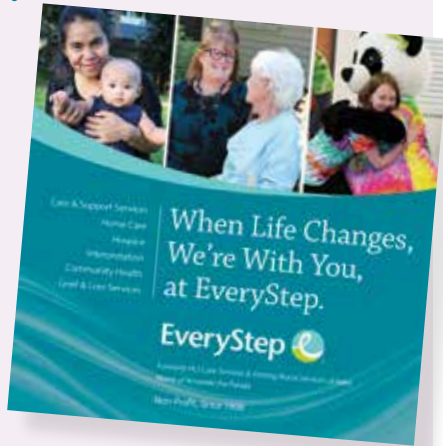
**3** Lynn Michl, vice president and chief financial officer at EveryStep, with N95 and N100 masks donated by Habitat for Humanity.

**4** Thank you, Cinda Long, for the donation of PPE gowns, modeled here by Creston nurses Leigh Smith and Katlyn Whirrett with Tyra Stull, EveryStep Home Care Director in Creston.

## EveryStep Program Guide Available

Want to get acquainted with all that EveryStep offers? This spring, EveryStep published a 28-page guide to the 30+ programs and services the organization provides to Iowa communities.

EveryStep has at least one program available in each of Iowa's 99 counties, with a concentration of services in 46 counties. In addition to an overview of each program and information on how to reach out for more information about it, the colorful guide tells what counties are served by each program. A copy of the guide can be found online at [everystep.org/programguide](http://everystep.org/programguide). A printed copy, current at the May publishing date, can be secured by calling (515) 274-3400 or sending an email to [info@everystep.org](mailto:info@everystep.org).



## EveryStep Giving Tree Celebrates 10th Anniversary

In 2020, EveryStep Giving Tree in Urbandale is celebrating 10 years of generating funds to support hospice care, grief support and services for children and families served by EveryStep. The upscale thrift store, which opened October 2, 2010, sells gently used furniture, home décor, housewares, men's and women's clothing, accessories and collectibles. Since its opening, the store's showroom has expanded twice to accommodate the growing amount of donations from supporters. In the past year, nearly \$442,000 in sales and donations helped support EveryStep's programs, patients and clients.

Each day dedicated volunteers assist a three-person staff in receiving donations from the public and preparing items for merchandising on the showroom floor, managing the cash register, assisting customers, and setting up displays. Inventory is continually changing, offering a unique shopping experience with each visit.

The store is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Donations are received at the store's back door. EveryStep also picks up large furniture items being donated for sale. Call the store for details at (515) 270-2414.

**!** To learn more about our store, visit [everystepgivingtree.org](http://everystepgivingtree.org).

**You'll find a list of items we can accept, store hours and a sign-up form to receive our newsletter. You can also**

**connect with us on Facebook (@EveryStepGivingTree) to stay up to date on new merchandise and anniversary announcements.**





EveryStep provides a wide range of free grief and loss services for individuals and families of all ages. Events and support groups are hosted at EveryStep Hospice locations in eight Iowa communities and at the EveryStep Grief & Loss Services office (home of Amanda the Panda) in West Des Moines. To learn what services are available in your area, visit [everystep.org](http://everystep.org) or call an EveryStep location near you.

**• EveryStep Hospice offices:**

- Centerville: (641) 856-5502
- Council Bluffs: (712) 325-6802
- Des Moines: (515) 333-5810
- Knoxville: (641) 842-4312
- Mount Ayr: (641) 464-2088
- Mount Pleasant: (319) 385-4472
- Osceola: (641) 342-2888
- Perry: (515) 465-4705
- Winterset: (515) 462-5205

- **EveryStep Grief & Loss Services** (home of Amanda the Panda),  
West Des Moines: (515) 223-4847

**Support Groups**

**ON HOLD UNTIL AT LEAST SEPTEMBER Touching Our Grief** is an ongoing, monthly grief support group hosted at or near EveryStep Hospice locations, led by expert bereavement counselors. Open to adults who have suffered the loss of a family member or friend and are seeking support, education and a safe place to give and receive support from others. Join at any time to talk about your grief or listen. Call an EveryStep Hospice office near you for upcoming dates and locations, or search for meetings at [everystep.org/about/events](http://everystep.org/about/events).

**ON HOLD UNTIL AT LEAST SEPTEMBER Understanding Your Grief** is an eight-week educational program hosted at or near EveryStep Hospice locations. Led by expert bereavement counselors, the program helps people learn how to use grief as an opportunity for growth. Participants receive a free copy of Alan Wolfelt’s book “Understanding Your Grief” and learn about the 10 essential touchstones for finding hope and healing through loss. Call an EveryStep Hospice office near you for upcoming dates and locations, or search for upcoming meetings at [everystep.org/about/events](http://everystep.org/about/events).

**Amanda the Panda Grief & Loss Camp** is for children and adults. Oct. 3–4 at Pilgrim Heights Campgrounds in Montour, Iowa. Call EveryStep Grief & Loss Services at (515) 223-4847 for details, or visit [everystep.org/services/grief-loss](http://everystep.org/services/grief-loss).

**VIRTUAL OFFERING Living with Loss Dinner Club** is a group of guests enjoying their dinner over Microsoft Team application. Participants are guided by a trained facilitator through discussions that will foster connection in an atmosphere free of stigma and silence. A fall dinner will be scheduled in which participants pick up their dinner at Amanda the Panda Grief & Loss Center in West Des Moines and then join virtually, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Call EveryStep Grief & Loss Services at (515) 223-4847 for details, or visit [everystep.org/about/events](http://everystep.org/about/events).

**VIRTUAL OFFERING Peer Support Groups** are offered free online by EveryStep Grief & Loss Services and are open to children (kindergarten and above), teens and adults. The focus is on finding personal strength, forming deeper relationships, sharing your story, discovering more meaning in life and seeing new possibilities. The six-week summer group begins the week of August 3rd and all sessions start at 6 p.m. Elementary Youth: Thursdays; Middle School/High School Youth: Wednesdays, 30 to 45 minutes. Adults: Mondays (Except Sept. 7 for Labor Day; adults end September 14), 1 hour. A trained facilitator will guide our small group of guests through discussions that will foster connection in an atmosphere free of stigma and silence. Enjoy this dinner over Microsoft Teams! To register contact [griefandloss@everystep.org](mailto:griefandloss@everystep.org) or call (515) 223-4847.

*Because of You,  
the Answer was “Yes”*

**Your donation to EveryStep**

**Foundation made this possible:**

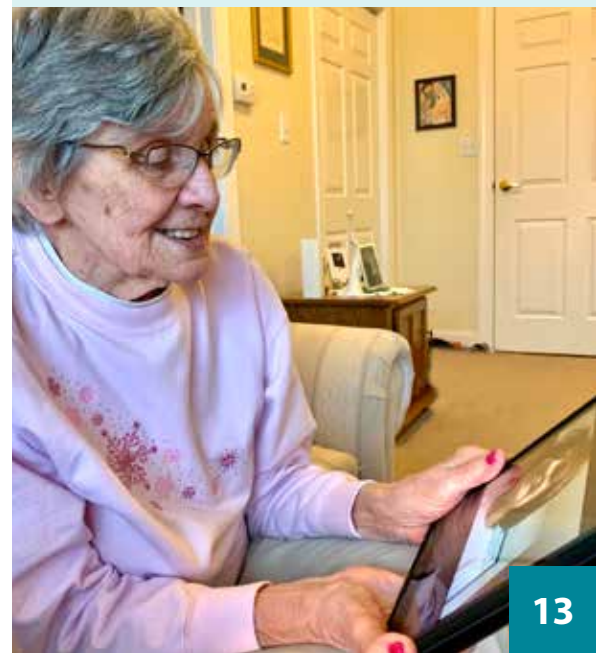
- A hospice patient’s faithful and constant companion, his dog, received updates shots, flea treatment and grooming
- An crucial car payment was made when a daughter’s medical emergency depleted a young family’s funds and threatened the loss of their essential transportation
- An iPad was purchased for a hospice patient to connect her to her church and family to lessen her isolation
- A young mom was able to reconnect with her stored belongings when storage settlement funds were provided

**Your donations to the EveryStep**

**Foundation enable us to grant patient and client wishes and enhance the quality of**

**life for those in our care.** EveryStep counts on support from its generous donors to continue to provide the compassionate care for which we are known in the communities we serve. Please consider making a gift today to the EveryStep Foundation so that we can continue our important work at life’s most vulnerable times.

**Donate at [everystep.org/donate](http://everystep.org/donate).**



## Marilyn Shaw: 40 Years of Volunteering

Because COVID-19 caused the canceling of annual recognition gatherings for EveryStep Hospice volunteers, Marilyn Shay didn't receive a roomful of applause this spring in Des Moines when she hung up her EveryStep volunteer lanyard for the final time.

"I'm 85 and my body is telling me that I'm 85 now," Marilyn said of her decision. "Up until the last couple of years I kind of forgot how old I was."

In the late 1970s, Marilyn was working as a nurse in the hospital setting when she learned hospice care was coming to the Des Moines area. "When I read that Sister Eve Kavanagh was starting hospice here, I thought, 'that's a good idea,'" she said. She didn't volunteer immediately, but she was able to learn more about end-of-life care from Sister Eve.

After Marilyn signed up to visit with patients in the metro area, her husband followed suit a few years later. For Marilyn, hospice care was the kind of nursing she was trained to do. While her nursing educators had emphasized that you need to spend time with the patient, Marilyn says, "Once you get into the hospital, when you have 10 to 12 patients, you don't have that time to spend with them."

During her four decades with EveryStep, Marilyn primarily visited with patients in their own homes. She continually made meaningful connections with them and their families.

"There were so many really interesting patients," says Marilyn, who had cut back to one to three patients a year in recent years. "I was always so sorry when they passed away because I enjoyed being with them and helping when I could. So often people that are dying feel lonely, and it can be hard for family and friends to visit them. We were just kind of there to help them know they weren't forgotten and their families were thinking of them, too."



*Marilyn Shaw's recognition for 40 years of service took place in her own garden this summer.*

## Volunteer Opportunities will Return!

EveryStep's hospice teams offer volunteer orientations several times annually. For more information, visit [everystep.org/volunteer](http://everystep.org/volunteer), email [info@everystep.org](mailto:info@everystep.org) or contact an office near you.

EveryStep's Amanda the Panda program seeks volunteers to help facilitate support groups, provide childcare or cook meals for a support group, help in the office and assist at camp. Call (515) 223-4847 or visit [everystep.org/services/grief-loss](http://everystep.org/services/grief-loss) for details.



# EveryStep Steps Up to Diversity Discussion

As individuals and organizations around the world look deeper into issues of racism, EveryStep's mission is more relevant than ever: We empower individuals, support families and strengthen communities.

As a non-profit health care and human services organization, we are compelled to take action and do good work every day that helps people we serve feel safe, supported and cared for physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The death of George Floyd — and so many before him — and the protests that followed demonstrate that there is much more to learn and more work to be done to advocate for those who need us most.

EveryStep is stepping up to:

- **Establish a diversity committee.** We pride ourselves on the diversity of cultures and ideas our staff represent. It's that mix of perspectives and a common empathetic approach that enable EveryStep staff to collaborate effectively and address complex problems. We are excited to channel that energy into a group of passionate employees who will help us identify ways we can become better employees and better people.
- **Strengthen staff training and education.** We will identify and add new types of educational experiences for our staff on topics such as cultural diversity and implicit bias. We will offer different ways for people to learn, including online experiences, forums and discussions.
- **Facilitate conversation.** We want to do more to encourage open and respectful conversation, and we are inviting ideas from our staff. Some ideas include offering a book club exploring race relations, offering activities exploring privilege through staff online meetings or at our employee retreat, facilitating story-sharing from people of color we employ, and providing opportunities for staff to explore their own biases and be vulnerable to candid conversations.
- **Show our support.** We are identifying opportunities to align EveryStep's non-profit mission with public shows of support — whether it's through our time, presence, legislative support, or lending our voice.

This is just a start, so look for more from EveryStep as we seek opportunities to improve for the people we serve, the people we employ and our communities.

Open Dialogue.  
Open Minds.  
Open Hearts.

## Making a Gift of Grain: As Easy as 1, 2,3!

For farm operators, gifting grain (or any other commodity) can provide a larger tax benefit than selling the grain and making a gift of the proceeds. Contributing grain may allow you to avoid the sale of the commodity as income while still deducting production costs, thus reducing taxable income and supporting EveryStep.

1. Contact Heather Stuyvesant at EveryStep Foundation at (515) 344-8096. This will ensure the proper steps are taken to correctly make your gift.
2. Deliver the grain to your elevator or co-op and tell them you wish to transfer ownership to EveryStep. Request a grain storage receipt to show that EveryStep is the owner. The elevator should refrain from selling the grain or issuing a check to EveryStep without specific instructions from EveryStep.
3. Notify EveryStep when the transfer is made, indicating where the grain is being stored. EveryStep will order the sale of the grain, and following the sale, EveryStep will acknowledge your gift.

Please consult your tax professional for advice applicable to your particular tax situation prior to making a gift of grain commodities.

## EveryStep

*Your donations work in four priority areas within our organization:*

### 1 Innovative Aging

Providing home and community-based care for the aging

### 2 Emotional Well-Being

Building resiliency in trauma, grief and loss services

### 3 Family Empowerment

Creating strong, healthy and thriving families

### 4 Community & Family Advocacy

Offering education, access and support



## 40 Years of Amanda the Panda

1



2

**1** *Amanda the Panda campers Bridget Jaegers and children Ian and Kelsey paint encouraging messages on kindness rocks to hide in their community.*

**2** *Participating in parades helped create awareness of the Amanda the Panda program.*

It all began in 1980 when JoAnn Zimmerman brought her vision to life with a costumed and cuddly panda bear dispensing hugs as a special friend to children living with cancer. Over the next decade, the Amanda the Panda program evolved to focus its purpose on offering comfort, hope and healing to grieving families. Through the years some 35,000 children, teens and adults across the state have participated in Amanda the Panda's grief support services.

The first fall weekend grief camp in 1982 was created for children experiencing the death of a loved one. In 1989 the first adult camp was held. Amanda the Panda camp now is the longest running camp in the United States for grieving children (ages 5 to 17) and adults.

Camps were the foundation, but today activities include peer support groups, online activities, social gatherings, school support and community events. The program's annual holiday Cheer Box deliveries of 12 family friendly gifts of comfort and remembrance reached a record 430 households across the state in 2019. While many of the program's services are based from the Amanda the Panda Grief & Loss Center in West Des Moines, staff often travel to other communities to provide support and education when needed. The program served 1,818 people last year.





*Who could resist smiling with a marshmallow on one's nose during fun activities at Amanda the Panda camp.*

“In addition to the grief caused by a death, an individual’s grief can come from loss created by divorce, the incarceration of a family member or special friend, or even the relocation of a loved one to another town or state,” says Ashley Mori, Amanda the Panda director. “Sometimes an entire community or workplace needs support with grief after a tragedy has taken place.”

In November 2014, Amanda the Panda became a program within EveryStep Grief & Loss Services and it naturally aligned with the bereavement services offered by EveryStep that address children’s health and mental well-being. In recent years, EveryStep Grief & Loss Services has launched specialized support groups like Traumatic Loss, Little Footprints: Perinatal and Infant Loss, and its Living With Loss dinner group. While the 2020 pandemic has impacted how activities and services are delivered, technology has enabled the four staff members to continue their efforts to serve those in the midst of a grief journey.

**! EveryStep Grief & Loss Services/Home of Amanda the Panda relies on community generosity to continue its legacy of offering free, compassionate support services. Please give toward its mission at [everystep.org/donate](http://everystep.org/donate), learn about its programs at [www.everystep.org/services/grief-loss](http://www.everystep.org/services/grief-loss) or call (515) 223-4847.**

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## Community Garden Grows

It's flourishing! EveryStep's community garden provides fresh and nutritious food for clients and their families, employees and volunteers. It's where a diverse group of individuals can gather to work together for a common good. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing season of 2020 consists of managing a small vegetable (tomatoes, peppers, carrots, green beans, green onions, lettuce, kale, potatoes and cucumbers) and herb garden (basil, thyme, chives, rosemary and mint) where routine help is needed for weeding, watering, harvesting and distributing product to clients throughout the Des Moines Metro area. For information, to volunteer or to share your gardening knowledge with EveryStep, please contact Sammantha Ruiz-Yager, [Sruiz-yager@everystep.org](mailto:Sruiz-yager@everystep.org).





# Compassion Starts at Home on October 8

With the 2020 theme of “Compassion Starts at Home,” EveryStep’s annual Art of Compassion fundraising event gathers the community together — at home — to celebrate and support programs that positively impact people at life’s most vulnerable times.



This year, creating unique, interactive virtual house party experiences on October 8 has replaced bringing together more than 400 people for the organization’s signature fundraising event. Just chose your home or business as the location for a catered dinner from a central Iowa restaurant for one to 15 friends. You get to decide how casual or formal your party will be! On the evening of October 8, dine with your guests, view a special presentation about EveryStep, and individually compete for online silent auction items and raffle prizes. Other fun activities to connect the house parties are being planned, including some good spirited competitions!

Small party prices range from \$300 for an intimate two-person gathering to an exclusive \$10,000 sponsor who will receive a 16-person private party at a local art gallery and first choice of their restaurant partner for catering. When you sponsor at the \$1,250 table sponsor level (eight people) or above, you receive the assistance of an EveryStep staff member for the evening who can share more details about the organization’s programs that are supported by the event. Every house party of eight or more people gets an Art of Compassion party kit to support its gathering!



**Start planning your Art of Compassion house party for October 8.**

**For more information and sponsorship details, please contact**

**EveryStep Foundation at (515) 238-0898 or [events@everystep.org](mailto:events@everystep.org).**

## Do We Have Your Email Address?

As a cost-saving measure in printing and postage, and as a way to communicate important information in a timely fashion, we need your email address. Please send an email message to [info@everystep.org](mailto:info@everystep.org) to share your email address.

## Notes of Thanks

To all EveryStep hospice staff,

Thank you so much for the kindness, care, advocacy, and dedication you all gave to our dad in the final months of his life. You far exceeded our expectations and we will be forever grateful to you for all you did for him and our family.

God bless you all,

**Family of Merlin  
Scritchfield**

Lovilla, Iowa

We can never say enough good things about hospice. Because of your care, compassion and help, we were able to keep our loved one at home.

With much love,

**Darlene Stamps**

Creston, Iowa



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One of Iowa's  
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## When Life Changes, We're With You at EveryStep

If you or a loved one need more help at home following an illness, injury or hospitalization, our health care experts are here to help. Our staff can provide skilled nursing, therapy services and much more. **Call today to receive a free in-home visit and to see what services you may qualify for.**

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*Drop off your gently used items at the back entrance of our store, or call us to come pick up large donations!*