



Living Every Moment with Care, Comfort and Hope



Kimberley Levine, Executive Director of Leadership Frederick County and Rick Weldon, President and CEO of the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, present Dana French (center) with a Leadership Frederick County's Distinguished Leader Award. Dana's lifelong contributions to the community fully illustrate the values and lasting impact of Leadership Frederick County since his participation in the Class of 1995.

Community Leader Chooses Early Hospice for Comfort and Peace

Dana French has a piece of advice that he says has brought him to a “comfortable” place even as he faces terminal illness: start early.

For Dana, this has applied both to living well and to his approach to hospice care, which he chose to enter not long after receiving a lung cancer diagnosis at the end of last year. Though he's still fairly active, free of pain, and in good shape, he feels a sense of security in the weekly check-ups from his hospice nurse and the knowledge that hospice is there to make his transition as peaceful and comfortable as possible. At 88, he says, he's lived a long and full life.

A longtime active member of the community, Dana received a Leadership Frederick County

Alumni Leadership Award from the Chamber of Commerce in June. He used the opportunity during his address to share about his diagnosis and what he wishes everyone pursuing a sense of peace in life would know. The idea was sparked by a New York Times article he read, entitled “Living to Die Well,” talking about the changes and attempts to live “authentically” that people experience after receiving a terminal diagnosis. “I realized,” Dana says, “that I was at peace with the prospect of dying because I had been living fully and authentically, as the article says, for a long time.”

Dana experienced two major chapters of his career which he used to develop his unique expertise: organizational development and systems optimization. During his time in

continued on page 2



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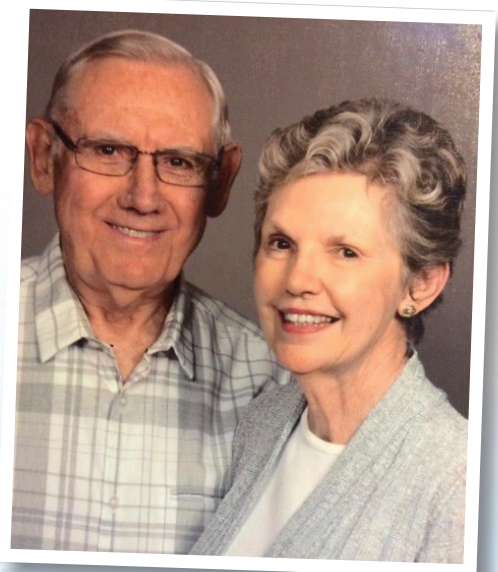
Dan Tipsord

the United States Navy, he helped to pioneer its leadership development program, including the model we now know as “core competencies,” and once he settled in Frederick, he continued as a consultant for many local organizations. Early on, in 1995, he went through the Chamber’s Leadership Frederick program, and afterward was brought on to design their opening two-day retreat. He has been invaluable to what he calls the “ecosystem” of Frederick’s community groups, and has found a lot of fulfillment in that.

Like many others, Dana at first thought that hospice was something he could only consider at the very end of his life – the last couple days or weeks. However, in meeting with hospice and finding out that wasn’t the case, his attitude toward the program changed.

“After I realized I wasn’t tolerating the treatment options, I saw that hospice could help me get the most from the time I had left.” He isn’t sure how long that is, but he does know that no matter what, he has his hospice team as a support. With that assurance, he has freedom to enjoy his friends and family, and to continue the habits of a life well-lived.

Dana and his wife, Margery, have been married for over 60 years and continue to enjoy the time they have left together with the help of the Hospice team.





The Power of Connection

A Message from Director, Korey Cobb

Connection is at the heart of hospice care. It guides how we show up for each family, how we support one another, and how we strengthen the community we proudly serve. In recent months we have reflected on the ways connection, personal stories, and shared experiences fuel our mission and deepen the impact of our work.

Our close presence within the Frederick community remains one of our greatest strengths. Each day I see the steady trust that anchors the relationship between our team and the families we serve. I see how a gentle conversation, a familiar face, or a moment of comfort becomes a lifeline during a family's hardest days. Our Kline House embodies that commitment in a profound and comforting way. It stands as a place built not only on clinical expertise but on a community that believes in dignity, comfort, and love at the end of life. That belief is carried into every room by our staff whose compassion is felt long after a family leaves our care.

Connection also comes from the people who choose to walk this journey with us. Over the years I have been shaped by leaders across Frederick whose insight has guided my own path. Rick Weldon, see his reflection on page 4, has been a mentor whose guidance has influenced my leadership in meaningful ways. When I invited him to speak at our annual department wide staff meeting, my hope was that he would inspire our team. He did much more. He shared a personal experience that filled the room with reflection, hope, and renewed purpose. Moments like this remind us that relationships grounded in authenticity create bridges that last.

My involvement throughout Frederick continues to shape my understanding of our community and the needs of our neighbors. That experience aligns closely with the mission of hospice, which is rooted in presence, compassion, and service. Through these connections we move forward together, supporting families with care that is heartfelt and enduring.



Loving Our Community Well

Frederick County Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Rick Weldon recently visited Hospice's all-staff meeting and delivered a message on how deeply meaningful hospice care has been to him – and Frederick Health Hospice's powerful impact in our community. A selection of what he shared, below:

"I've come to know through personal experience that hospice and palliative care are more than services. They're a community mission. You are the ones families trust when they need hope, clarity, and comfort. And that trust is not given lightly—it is earned through your compassion, your skill, and your presence.

Less than a year ago, my three siblings and I learned the lesson you teach every day. My mother's health declined rapidly, and as she was a resident of New Castle, DE, we connected with Delaware Hospice. Our first meeting with their team was nothing like what I anticipated. I expected a medical dialogue, but what we had was a deep, emotionally significant family conversation.

Toward the end of her life, as we gathered at my sister's house, a Delaware Hospice caregiver came out of Mom's room to where I was sitting, and said "Rick, I think you need to go and sit with her." With tear-filled eyes, I took the hand she offered and told her I wasn't sure what to say – though my mother and I often spoke on the phone, our relationship was more distant than I would have liked. She said, "Just have a conversation with her, like you've always had. Talk about anything, your job, your kids, your grandkids. Then tell her you're there, that you love her, and that whenever she's ready, you're ready, too." So I did.

Twenty minutes after that bedside chat, Mom took her last breath, and her hands, which my brother and I were holding, went limp. It was sad, it felt too soon, but it was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. And a stranger, an angel from Delaware Hospice, made that possible.

I say all this to underscore that the work you do here in Frederick County contributes to a larger legacy. Sometimes, it's easy to forget that you are part of something so much bigger, but your work sets a standard of care that says: **This is how we honor life. This is how we walk with one another through death. This is how we love a community well.**

I know, for instance, that Hospice is caring for my friend and fellow community builder Dana French. Dana has always been one of my most-valued mentors, especially when it comes to Leadership Frederick County. I love him for all he has so generously shared with me over the decades, and I am blessed to know that Hospice will care so well for someone who has taken such good care of us.

So take pride in this. Take pride in knowing you belong to something larger than any one individual. Together, you are part of something that is changing the world. You are part of a national and global movement in hospice and palliative medicine – reshaping how society understands dignity and compassion at the end of life."

Call for Donations: Veteran Blankets

Hospice's Veteran Liaisons are seeking donations of handmade blankets to present to each veteran during their annual recognition ceremony. The blankets are a highlight of the ceremony each year because they're practical, unique, and meaningful as gifts – and often stay as a beloved reminder with the family long after the veteran has passed away.

To donate your blanket, please leave the items behind the partially glass-enclosed reception desk in the main entrance lobby at Frederick Health Village. You may put them in or near the volunteer drop-off box located there.

See acceptance details below:

- We are looking for handmade, new items only, quilted, knitted, or crocheted
- 36"x40" (or close to that), with red / white / blue color scheme or service branch colors (Army, Navy, etc.)
- Tighter weaves are best, no coarse or scratchy materials
- Please avoid potential allergen materials such as wool, alpaca, or angora
- We cannot accept blankets with perfume or cigarette smoke odors, pet odors, or pet hair



In Memoriam

We are grateful to the individuals and families who designated contributions to Frederick Health Hospice in memory of their loved ones who are listed below:

Curtis J. Baird
Marcia M. Baker
Mary C. Bandanza
Stephen B. Braun
Thomas M. Broskey
Carol L. Buswell
Elise G. Campbell
Charlotte E. Canino
Mildred K. Cartee
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Robert A. Weber
Caroline M. Whitbeck
John M. Zell



If I Could Talk to My Brother

by Jessica Thornton,
LCSW-C, Grief Counselor

If I could talk to my brother today, I'd say: "Dear brother, it has been eighteen years since your memorial service, where I had over fifty people say 'Oh, your poor father,' and your daughter reached for my hand as the song Yesterday played in the room where we saw your casket.

Seventeen years of anniversaries where pictures of wolves or motorcycles and reminders of August weather has me noticing melancholy and hoping I'm helping my own kids learn how to not be jerks to each other. Sixteen years of me answering the question, "How many siblings do you have?" with measured responses."

Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted to express your experience to others, only for someone to say it was not important? When your lived experience is dismissed, ignored, and/or overlooked, our experience can feel disenfranchised.

Disenfranchised grief occurs when a person experiences a loss that others do not openly acknowledge or even actively avoid talking about the person who died and/or the circumstance of their death.

Sibling loss is wrought with disenfranchisement—from the focus being on parents who lost a child, to the feelings of confusion or shame that surface when a person is asked, "How many siblings do you have?" and learning who you are without your sibling and your shared history.

As part of a grief community, individuals who have lost a sibling, either in childhood or later in life, deserve to have time and space to address the grief of their specific loss.

We will be offering a Sibling Loss Support group starting in March 2026 to provide a safe environment for those individuals who have lost a sibling. This space will allow for individuals to express their grief, share their stories, and connect with others as they navigate life without their sibling.



**Sibling Loss
Support Group
this Spring**

**Tuesdays,
March 3 - April 28
(except April 7)
5:30 - 7:00 PM
Frederick Health
Village**

This special 8-week group, facilitated by Hospice Grief Counselor Jessica Thornton, LCSW-C, is for adults who have lost a sibling, whether recently or earlier in life.

Together, we'll share stories, support each other, and learn ways to cope —because you don't have to go through it alone.

**Please register for this group by February 25:
email griefsupport@frederick.health or call 240-566-3030.**



Volunteer Experience Spotlight

Yvonne ("Von") Hansche has found her "call" within the Hospice volunteer landscape as a Compassionate Presence Volunteer. It takes a unique and specially empathetic person to serve this way, but as Von says, you never know until you try.

She began volunteering before COVID with a group of friends from her church who were serving as Comfort Singers. She joined them in visiting patients and singing at Kline House.

Later on, however, she received a volunteer call-out from Volunteer Coordinator Dianne Elizabeth for a patient who was actively dying, and needed simple bedside presence. Von accepted. "It felt like a privilege and an honor," she says. "And it seemed to come naturally to me."

Von says that as a shy introvert she feels comfortable many times with non-responsive patients. "When I'm with patients in transition, I may just sit with them – sometimes I sing, sometimes I read a book they have sitting nearby... sometimes I just let them rest," she says. Hospice's Compassionate Presence Volunteers are critical to ensure that at the moment of transition, no patient is alone. This can be especially important for patients who don't have family nearby, or whose family needs to take a break.

Von has served as a Companionship Volunteer for patients who are still alert and active, but she says that being a presence for dying patients has been "the most worthwhile thing she's ever done with Hospice." She began working with Hospice, she says, because hospice programs served both her sister and her father before they passed.

As an Army veteran, she has also volunteered with Hospice's Veteran Liaisons, to help connect veteran hospice patients with services they may not know about. She has visited other veterans in the hospital and participated with recognition and award programs that Hospice organizes for veteran patients.

"People might feel intimidated by the idea of volunteering for hospice, at first," she says, "but it has been such a blessing to me and added so much to my life."

Hospice is currently seeking more compassionate and courageous volunteers like Von. If you'd like to learn more about serving Frederick's hospice patients and families, contact Volunteer Coordinator Dianne Elizabeth at delizabeth@frederick.health or call 240-566-3038.



“The most important thing to know,” Dr. McDonald says, “is that a palliative care team works to relieve the worst of symptoms, often from chronic illness, and improve a patient’s quality of life. Palliative care is also well-versed in hospice eligibility, and is well-equipped to help facilitate that conversation when it’s time.”

Ask Dr. McDonald: What’s the Difference Between Hospice and Palliative Care?

One question Hospice frequently encounters in the community and with new patients is about the difference between hospice and palliative care. This is a fair question, says Dr. Mary McDonald, Hospice’s Medical Director, because the two in fact do have core similarities.

“Both palliative care and hospice are focused on managing symptoms and maximizing quality of life,” she says. “Both are patient-centered and tailored to each individual’s treatment goals.”

However, the main difference between palliative care and hospice is that palliative care allows for patients to continue curative interventions.

“Palliative care focuses on increasing the comfort of patients who may still be fighting an illness and seeking to extend or preserve length of life,” Dr. McDonald says. “Hospice enters the conversation when there is a clear life-limiting illness, and the patient and practitioners transition the focus to comfortable and peaceful end-of-life care.”

McDonald emphasizes that palliative care is often an on-ramp to hospice, but that it’s ideal to have in place an advanced medical directive, which names a health care agent and general treatment wishes, and a Maryland Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST), which provides instructions for a worst-case medical scenario. That way key family members and loved ones involved in an individual’s treatment are properly authorized and can make care decisions accordingly.

September's Bucket List Book Club Hosts Local Author Karen Justice

You're not required to read the book in order to attend the Bucket List Book Club – but most of the time, participants are glad they did.

Melissa Gordon, a Book Club member for about a year and a half, said that as soon as she started reading September's selection, she got out highlighters and began to mark passages that spoke to her. She found the book, *Widows Among Us* by Karen Justice, Karen Smith-Racicot, and Rebecca LaChance, to be "really relatable."

Melissa herself has been a widow for two years, and although her husband was not a Hospice patient, friends encouraged her to make use of Hospice's grief support services. She began attending the Book Club shortly afterward. She says that the September book has given her "a lot of information I wished I had known earlier, as well as great advice from women further along in the grieving process than I am."

Best of all, Book Club members got the chance to meet one of the authors, Karen Justice, at September's session. Melissa says it was an uplifting experience where Justice was "at ease and open" with the group, validated many participants' experiences of grief, and spent a lot of time talking about things the book hadn't covered.

"She stayed after for a while and talked to several of us individually," Melissa says. "She was very generous with her time."

Jim Bryant, a Book Club member who's been with the group from the start, says that the book and the session with Justice were helpful to a lot of members because they focused around "pragmatic"



(Top) Our November Bucket List Book Club drew participants looking forward to connecting with local author Karen Justice. (Bottom) Hospice Bereavement Supervisor Chloe Bishop with Karen Justice and Hospice Grief Counselor Jessica Thornton.

information on the transition to widowhood. Jim also emphasizes that one of the great things about the Bucket List Book Club is its variety of selections – covering several forms of grief and loss, across fiction and nonfiction. The entire year's selections in advance are available on Hospice's website. Each session includes a prize drawing to win a copy of next month's book.

Jim and Melissa both value the Book Club because, first and foremost, it's a "safe space." "Our Hospice moderator, Chloe, always makes clear that we're free to open up about sensitive things, and that what's discussed in Book Club stays there," Jim says. With trust established, Melissa says, Book Club serves for many as a "space of healing." And whether you've read the book or not, discussion questions are inclusive to all.

Upcoming Bucket List Book Club Dates:

January 26, February 23 and March 30
from 2-4 pm at Frederick Health Village
1 Frederick Health Way, Frederick, MD

Your Gift Matters

Your loyal support and belief in our mission helps to ensure that the needs of our patients, families and community always come first. We are grateful to you for sharing your compassion for what hospice does, what we represent and most importantly, those we serve.



Hospice volunteers plant flowers on the newly renovated deck at the Kline House.

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Community Grief Support Resources



The grief support team hosts several support groups, workshops, and events throughout the year. These are for adults only and are held in-person.

If you are looking for a support group for a specific type of loss, please don't hesitate to contact us about your needs. Call 240-566-3030 or email griefsupport@frederick.health. There is no charge for these events.

Join Us for The Bucket List Book Club

Held Monthly, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Frederick Health Village

1 Frederick Health Way, Frederick MD 21702
(use West Entrance)



Stay up-to-date
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Grief Camps for Children, Teens, and Families

**Teen Grief Retreat - Spring
for Students in Grades 9-12
March 14, 2026**

Thorpewood
Thurmont, MD

**Overnight Camp
for Students in Grades 1-8
May 15-17, 2026**

Skycroft Conference Center
Middletown, MD

There is no cost for these events. Space is limited and preregistration is required. For more information or to register contact us at 240-566-3030 or FrederickHealthHospice.org/CampJamie

frederickhealthhospice.org

1 Frederick Health Way | Frederick, MD 21701 | ph 240-566-3030

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Honor a Loved One, Support Hospice

Give one of these angel ornaments as a gift in memory or in honor of a loved one, or place it on your own tree. These beautiful hand-blown glass ornaments have 22K gold-tipped wings and halo. The arms of the angel hold a personalized name, date, or a special message.

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Find our Amazon Wish List at
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