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- Ram Dass

The Circle of Care Award: Rebecca Sirois

11/16/2022

Aroostook House of Comfort

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Rebecca Sirois, RN
Northern Light Home Care & Hospice
Full-Time RN at the Aroostook House of Comfort

The Circle of Care Award recognizes a staff member who is dedicated to helping individuals and families on their journey through hospice care.

Why did you choose hospice care as a career path?

"My interest in hospice care began 10 years ago as I headed home from nursing school for Christmas break to join my family at my maternal grandfather's bedside. I cherish the memories, songs, laughter, and tears shared in the 24 hours before he died, with home hospice providing support through it all. This experience planted a seed in me. To this day, I believe it was a pivotal moment that inspired me to pursue hospice nursing. Ask any hospice nurse, and they will likely share a personal journey that opened the door to their providing hospice care. We are one of you."

How long have you worked at the Aroostook House of Comfort?

"I have worked at AHOC for almost 4 years and would be honored to work here for several more years."

How does your work help the patients, families, and your community?

"What a gift it is to be able to offer comfort for my patients in their final weeks, days, and hours of their lives. To be let in to their unique journey at such an intimate time of their life is an honor. If I can create one moment of light in their darkness while also preserving their dignity, then I feel I am making a difference for them and their families. It starts with establishing trust and mutual respect. As our community ages and we see a growing number of individuals being diagnosed with terminal illness, as well as hospitals and nursing homes reaching critical capacities, I feel my colleagues and I are prepared to continue our mission to provide care that focuses on quality of life in the remaining precious time of our patients' lives. Our community members deserve the option of hospice care."

What is special about the Aroostook House of Comfort?

"Whenever I set foot in the House of Comfort, I feel like I am HOME. From the peaceful chapel and great room to the magnificent sunsets to the sweet aroma of freshly-baked cookies, this beautiful environment is just as comforting for me as it is for our patients and their families. Within these walls, we are family. We can share in both our grief and our joy."

What is most rewarding about your job?

"How do I sum this up? When I tell others that I am a hospice nurse, I often get a brief response such as, "That must be hard." I will not deny that some days are more challenging than others, but I truly feel that my work is beyond a job. It is a vocation, a service that humbles me. To be able to experience laughter, tears, and even occasional chills with my patients and our hospice team – what could be more rewarding? It starts with a kind smile and a gentle presence – sometimes that's all it takes to warm my heart and theirs. I am beyond blessed."

- Rebecca Sirois, RN

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Donation from the Northern Maine Antique Tractor Club

10/28/2022

Aroostook House of Comfort

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The Aroostook Hospice Foundation, the owner of the Aroostook House of Comfort, was invited to participate in the Northern Maine Antique Tractor Club's Tractor Trek event in July of this year. This fundraising event supports a variety of charitable organizations in Aroostook County. Club President, Paul Folsom, presented the Aroostook Hospice Foundation with a \$500 check at their annual awards banquet Saturday, October 22nd. Donations like this help to ensure that the Aroostook House of Comfort can continue to serve community members with quality and compassionate hospice care, regardless of their ability to pay. Thank you to the Northern Maine Antique Tractor Club for your continued support of our mission.



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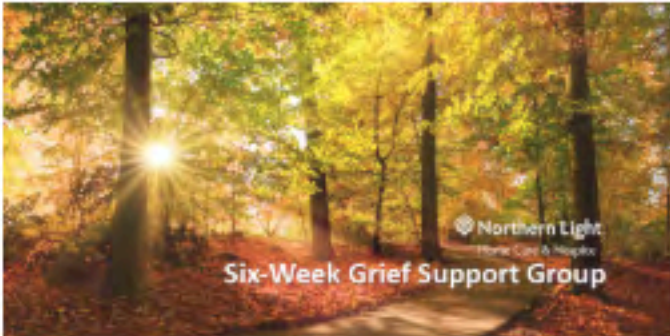
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AROOSTOOK
House of Comfort



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Executive Director: (207) 540-1080

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Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association Donation

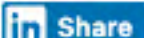
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 Aroostook House of Comfort

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The Aroostook Hospice Foundation, the owner of the Aroostook House of Comfort, was honored to have received a donation from the Men of Tyre, Northern Maine Chapter of the Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association. President Mark Cassidy presented Executive Director Abbey Clair with a \$3,000 check Friday, October 21st.

Each July, the Men of Tyre participate in a fundraising ride entitled the Northern Invasion, selecting a charitable organization for their collected proceeds. Donations like this help to ensure that the Aroostook House of Comfort can continue to serve community members with quality and compassionate hospice care, regardless of their ability to pay. It was a privilege to provide Mark with a tour of the facility and further discuss the unique and inspiring ways in which the Aroostook House of Comfort is impacting this community. Mark also shared the mission of the Masonic Organization and their civic investments. The Aroostook Hospice Foundation extends its sincere appreciation for the generosity demonstrated by the Men of Tyre, Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association.



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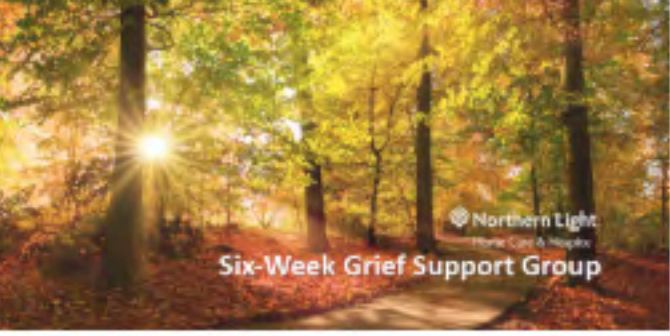
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Healing Hearts: Lahey Family

10/06/2022

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Prior to August 3, 2022, the Aroostook House of Comfort, to me and my family, was a place in Presque Isle that we knew as "The Hospice House." Having had family that had gone through hospice in the past, we knew what that word meant sorrow for the family, support from kind-hearted nurses and doctors to help the dying family member pass from this life to the next in as comfortable a way as possible, and ultimately death of our loved one, which in our family's case was usually not long after being put on hospice. The House of Comfort was a place that I played a golf tournament a couple of times to help support because it seemed like a great cause, and it was a place that a couple of people I knew served on the Board of Directors. Beyond that, it was somewhere that seemed like it would be a good place to have around, but not a place I thought a lot about. On August 3, our family would start looking at this place in a different light and will continue to do so for the rest of our lives. It would forever be known as one our goal to get my Dad, Mike Lahey to for however long he had left, and two the place that showed us and, most importantly, my Dad, the love, support, kindness, and compassion that only God Himself could provide to us through this amazing team as my Dad lived out his last four days or so on Earth.



We got news on August 3 from the Palliative Care team in Bangor that after fighting several chronic diseases for a long time and a lengthy period of watching Dad's health slowly decline for several years, Dad's life was coming to an end because there was nothing that modern medicine could do for him anymore. As we struggled to come to terms with how long he may have and what Palliative Care meant, within 24 hours, the family was heading quickly for Bangor because Dad was calling for us and saying he was ready to be done with all treatments. Knowing it wouldn't be long, we got to Bangor as quickly as we could to find him sitting up and talking to our Pastor like he was feeling on top of the world, which was not the picture we had in our heads of what we would find in Bangor. We knew we had received a gift from above of more time with Dad, not knowing how long that would be, but what we didn't know then was that we were also receiving a gift of being able to witness firsthand the amazing care that Dad would receive from The House of Comfort. Later that day, the Hospice Team came to talk to us, and we all agreed that what would be best for all of us, especially Dad, was to get him to PI to the Aroostook House of Comfort. Within a few hours, we were following an ambulance to PI as Dad was moved to the House.



We had heard nothing but good things about the House, but we really didn't know what to expect. My sister met my Mom, my niece, and me at the door when we arrived behind the ambulance that afternoon, and she looked to be in awe and told us how beautiful the place was. When we drove up, the first thing we noticed was the beautiful landscaping, the peaceful aura of the place itself, and the warm, inviting atmosphere of the building. We had been told that we would meet with Dr. Jones when we arrived, but honestly, I thought that meant we would see him for 5 minutes at some point after we got there when it was convenient for him. What impressed me the most was the second we walked in. As the team was getting Dad settled in his new room, we were greeted by an extremely friendly volunteer who welcomed us and ushered us into a room where Dr. Jones was waiting for us. He had been briefed on Dad's condition, had read through his chart, and was ready to meet with us upon arrival. It was almost as if he was on our time and our family and Dad were his highest priority at that moment. He took the time to tell us what had happened with Dad to get him to this point, what we could expect, and answered any and all questions we had. That set the stage amazingly for the rest of Dad's stay there.

The night Dad arrived, either by coincidence or by the providence of God above, the supper they were serving was what Dad had told us in Bangor he wanted for lunch but didn't get because he left too early. The volunteer added specific sodas and snacks he wanted to her grocery list for the next day, which, as it turned out, Dad ended up not enjoying because his health started to decline after that first day. When we left him that night, we knew he was in the best place possible for him, and we left with an appreciation and comfort, knowing that he would be taken care of in the best way possible for however long he had left with us. Throughout the next few days, the staff and volunteers showed time and time again what huge hearts and compassion they have for the patient and their families, which we cannot thank them enough for. On August 8, the staff told my Mom that Dad's time was growing short and that if he had family that was away, they should probably think of coming home. So, my wife, children, and I headed home from a quick trip downstate, and we arrived at the House at 4:00 pm. We stayed until 8:00, knowing my mother would spend the night with Dad that night since time was growing short and that she would call us if anything changed, and we needed to come back. On that evening, we got to meet a very special nurse named Rebecca Sirois, who in talking to, I realized we had a connection through her boyfriend, whom I used to work with in a former job. She was a very kind-hearted and sweet young lady that talked to us, tried to comfort us, and just be with us. In the midst of a conversation with her, Dad needed to have his lips moistened because he couldn't drink at that point, so she had moistened a swab with water and wet his mouth for him. My mother jokingly made a comment about how much Dad loved Moxie when he used to drink soda and it was too bad that she used water instead of Moxie. Fast forward about an hour or so, Rebecca was leaving for the night after her shift. Shortly after she left, she returned with a bottle of Moxie in hand.

She had left the House after her shift ended, bought Dad a Moxie out of her own money, and brought it back, and gave Dad a taste of it. We were so touched and thankful for this young lady that words couldn't and still can't express how grateful we still are for that small act of kindness. To know that one of the last sensations Dad consciously enjoyed was the simple taste of his favorite drink brings a smile to my face and tears to my eyes. And it's all because of this one act from this kind, selfless, generous young lady that we met a couple of hours before. Dad passed away later that night, and when our family gathered at his bedside afterwards to say goodbye, the House staff was so amazing and so incredibly kind. They didn't try to rush us out. They all expressed their condolences with words and hugs and showed the kindness and grace we had come to see from them over the prior several days.



Our experience with the House was nothing short of amazing. I can't say enough good things about the place itself, the staff that works and volunteers there, or the amazing mission of the organization. As a way of saying thank you, we donated some of Dad's assistive devices to them, we asked for donations in his memory to be sent there, and we plan on getting a stone in his memory for the Memorial Path on the grounds there. If anyone asks me anything about Dad's last few days, whether they ask specifically or not, I talk up the House of Comfort as much as I can, which I will continue to do.

I plan on continuing to play in their annual tournament and do what I can to spread the word about them and their mission. They were such a light for us in a hard and difficult time. I like to think of The Aroostook House of Comfort as the most amazing and wonderful place a person hopes to never have to use, but you sure are grateful for them if and when you do need them.

- Written by Tony Lahey

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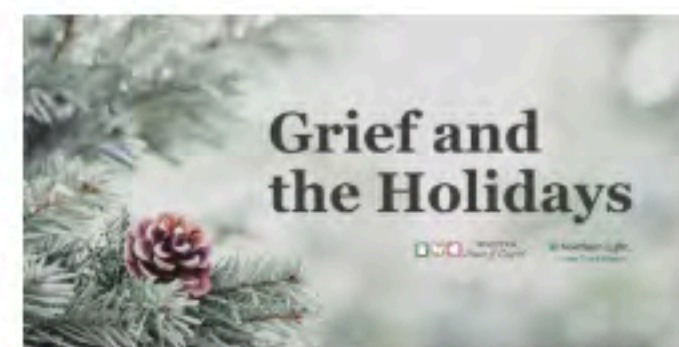
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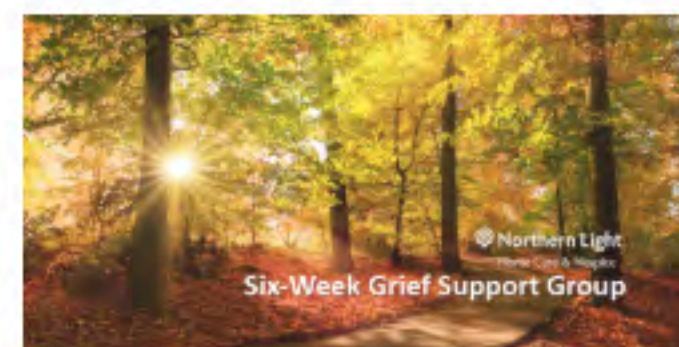
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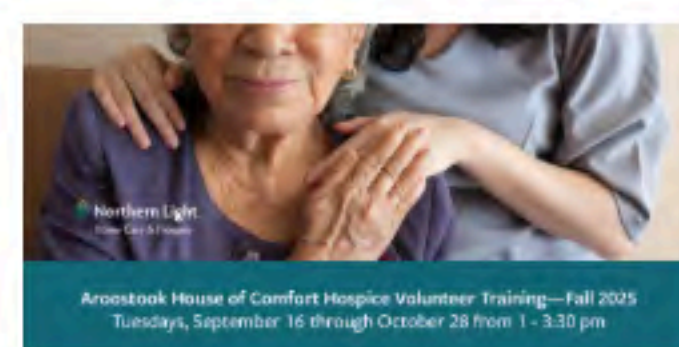
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Senator Angus King Visits the Aroostook House of Comfort

09/22/2022

Aroostook House of Comfort

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The Aroostook House of Comfort (Aroostook Hospice Foundation) and Northern Light Home Care & Hospice team members recently welcomed Senator King for a tour and discussion around the needs of those facing the final stage of their lives. The medical staff of Northern Light Home Care & Hospice, along with Aroostook Hospice Foundation Board members and volunteers, gave Senator King valuable input regarding Medicare and the hospice benefit, as well as workforce concerns. The unique relationship between Northern Light Home Care & Hospice and The Aroostook Hospice Foundation was also discussed. The Aroostook House of Comfort, owned by the Aroostook Hospice Foundation, is the only freestanding inpatient hospice and respite facility north of Lewiston/Auburn.

Dr. David Jones, Medical Director for Northern Light Home Care & Hospice, led a discussion with Senator King concerning the need for Medicare to consider amending the hospice benefit. Proposed changes would allow an inpatient or home hospice patient who has had their symptoms controlled but are within 2-4 weeks of death to remain or enter into an inpatient hospice facility. The current benefit considers control of symptoms as representing stability, even if a patient is dying. This definition of stability necessitates discharge from an inpatient hospice unit or the inability to be admitted to a hospice facility from home other than a five-day respite. America is aging, Maine is the oldest state in the country, and families often do not have the physical or emotional ability to care for loved ones at the end of life.

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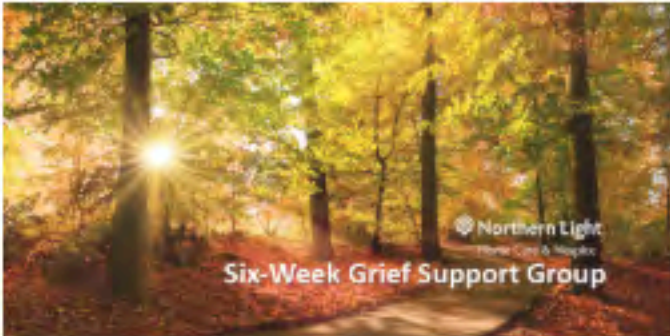
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Healing Hearts: Testimonials From Families & Loved Ones

09/09/2022

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My sister's health declined during the COVID lockdown. Yet, the Aroostook House of Comfort and their wonderful staff made an incredibly trying time as peaceful as it could have possibly been. I appreciated the staff's elevated level of kindness to my 93-year-old mom when I brought her in to see her firstborn on the last day of her life. They not only showed dedication and wonderful level of care to my sister as her health declined and she slipped away from us but also with each and everyone in the family. The House of Comfort was where my sister had hoped to be when cancer robbed her of the ability to do for herself. I am very grateful that it was where we were able to say our final goodbye to her.

Two years later, when old age really started to take hold of my mom's body, she hoped that she would be able to be at the House of Comfort when it all came to be too much for her to endure. A week after a fall, she wound up in the hospital on a Saturday night and placed on end-of-life care. The Aroostook House of Comfort was amazing at getting Mom transferred into the house on Monday morning. As soon as they had her settled into her room, they walked my brother and I down the hall to be with her. We immediately realized that she was in the same room that my sister had been in two years prior. When I was able to communicate to Mom that not only was she at the House of Comfort (where she had hoped she would be), she was also in the room that her eldest daughter had been. At that moment, peace enveloped her and stayed with her to the end.

The building, with its comfortable rooms, lovely common spaces, and beautiful grounds, brings a level of elegance and peace into very dark and sad times. The staff is not only very skilled at the level of care the patient needs but very compassionate and comforting with family. My personal experience with the staff and house is one of deep gratitude. Two people that I love immensely and dearly were able to quietly and peacefully slip away right where they wanted to.

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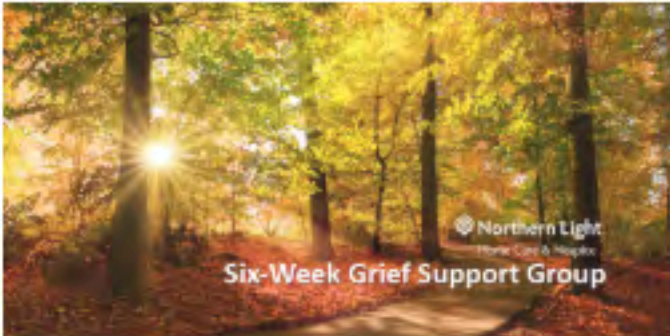
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Aroostook Hospice Foundation Welcomes Executive Director

08/08/2022

Aroostook House of Comfort

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The Aroostook Hospice Foundation, owner of the Aroostook House of Comfort, is pleased to announce that Abigail Clair, LCSW, will take on the new position of Executive Director of AHF beginning September 1, 2022.

Abbey is grateful to Northern Light AR Gould Hospital for its support of her education and career development during her ten-year tenure as clinician and care manager. "I have a strong passion for the philosophy of hospice care," Clair states.

Her previous frontline hospice experience will allow a natural transition into her new role and guarantee a continued collaboration with Northern Light Home Care & Hospice. "I am honored to be asked to join and carry on the mission initiated by the Aroostook Hospice Foundation."

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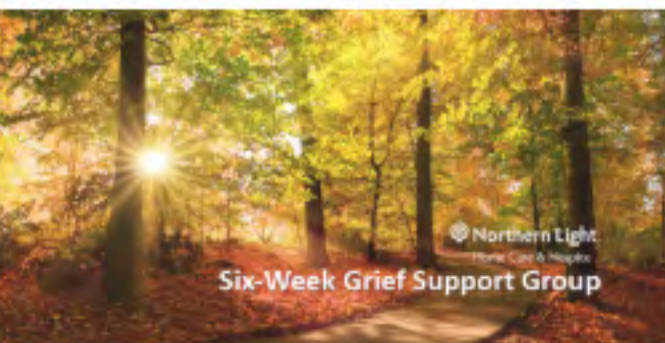
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Congratulations Paul Harris Fellow: Mike MacPherson

07/01/2022

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The Paul Harris Fellow is named for Paul Harris, who founded Rotary in Chicago in 1905. The Fellowship was established in Harris' honor in 1957 to express appreciation for a contribution of \$1,000 to the humanitarian and educational programs of The Rotary Foundation. Those programs include an array of projects that save and invigorate the lives of people around the world and enhance international friendship and understanding. The largest of these programs is the Polio Plus Immunization Program which is Rotary's effort to eradicate Polio.

Rotary Clubs and Rotarians designate a Paul Harris Fellow as a tribute to a person whose life demonstrates a shared purpose with the objectives of the Rotary Foundation. On June 23rd, the Presque Isle Rotary Club recognized four such individuals Clinton Deschene, Jan Lucas, Michael MacPherson, and Scott Violette.



The presentation of Paul Harris Fellow recognition is The Rotary Foundation's way of expressing its appreciation for a substantial contribution to its humanitarian and educational programs. It is named for Rotary's founder, a Chicago lawyer, who started our organization with three business associates in 1905.

A world of peace and goodwill comes closer to reality today as Mike MacPherson is recognized again as a Paul Harris Fellow. His contributions to The Rotary Foundation's educational and humanitarian programs are a commitment to peace and to a better life for people of the world and for whom the membership of this Club will likely never meet.

It is because of gifts such as this that The Rotary Foundation can carry out an array of programs that achieve beneficial changes in our world: improved living conditions, increased food production, better education, wider availability of treatment and rehabilitation for the sick and disabled, new channels for the flow of international understanding, and brighter hopes for peace.

Speech given by Ray Hews:

We are honoring Mike this evening after more than 41 years of service to this club. He has served our club as a past Director, Past President, and Past District Governor of District 7810, which covers New Brunswick, parts of Maine and parts of Quebec.

There is much I could tell you about Mike's very distinguished career. I could tell you about the many successful businesses he has developed, his involvement in the healthcare industry, various boards and committees for the City of Presque Isle, the Mark and Emily Turner Foundation, many Maine State boards and commissions, not to mention his involvement over the years with his church, Grant Memorial United Methodist Church. Mike has been an influential business owner and community leader throughout his career and is a distinguished U.S. Army veteran.

But tonight, I would like to focus on two organizations that Mike has made significant contributions to over the more recent years.

First is MMG Insurance Company. Mike served as a director of MMG for 24 years from 1997 to his retirement from the Board in 2021. He served as MMG's Vice Chairman from 2011 to 2017 and as Board Chairman from 2017 to 2021.

During Mike's tenure on MMG's Board, the MMG grew from \$50 million in annual premium in 1997 to \$230 million in 2021. The Board also oversaw significant changes through that time period with expansion to new States, new products, technology advancements, and significant growth of the Presque Isle Home Office staff. Throughout, Mike was a highly respected, active, and engaged Board member. In addition to serving as Chair, Mike was also part of several Board Committees including the IT Committee which oversaw many multi-million-dollar investments in technology that will launch MMG to the forefront of their industry and insure future growth.

Matt McHatten, EVP, and Chief Operating Officer of MMG had this to say about Mike.

"Personally, Mike has always been very supportive. Our relationship dates back over 30 years. My initial introduction to Mike was through Rotary. Between Mike and Owen Smith, they were great mentors and got me involved quickly. I always remembered how much I appreciated that individuals of their stature gave me the time of day back then."

"One of my most distinct early memories was sitting in his dining room establishing the committee assignment for the Rotary auction. He had a system that I still can't figure out today! Mike has a mathematical and engineering mind that is incredible."

Matt concludes by saying, "Mike has led a life of 'Service Above Self'. Though the list is long, as you know, it doesn't capture nearly all of what he was involved in behind the scenes. Much of what's happened in our community over the last 40 years included Mike (and Carol!). They define what it means to be a 'solid citizen' and we should all be thankful for their efforts."

The second organization I will focus on is the Aroostook Hospice Foundation, owner of the Aroostook House of Comfort.

The dream for a hospice house in Aroostook County had its start in the spring of 2009 (13 years ago). An in-patient hospice house was a very lofty dream and one that would require special people with special talents, perseverance to stick with the journey through all the obstacles while keeping true to the vision and most importantly a compassionate and humble heart for others. Mike did not hesitate when Rick and Nancy Duncan asked if he and Carol would like to help make this possible for families. They had traveled the hospice road with a loved one at the Androscoggin Hospice House, the closest hospice facility, at that time, for families in the County. They understood why an in-patient hospice care facility would be so beneficial to Aroostook County families.



From the beginning Mike was a significant and key member of the board. Mike's methodical brain, wisdom, discerning intellect, business experience, planning abilities, dedication, and the ability to focus on, or to do what was needed, were invaluable attributes that kept the dream alive (there are pictures of Mike balancing on the top of a streetlamp pole attaching security cameras in below freezing temperatures). Mike's negotiating skills were instrumental in helping to bring the Aroostook House of Comfort to fruition. He was instrumental in helping to secure USDA financing, the building purchase after many failed attempts at trying to secure land, helping to secure the Aroostook Federal Savings & Loan interim financing, the Machias Bank construction interim financing, negotiations with VNA, now Northern Light Home Care & Hospice, to lease not only office space, but to provide Medicare reimbursed hospice care for loved ones and their families at the Aroostook House of Comfort. Without Mike's expertise, this project may not have come to fruition.

Whenever a door closed on some aspect of the project, Mike remained optimistic, encouraging, always providing a helping hand when needed. Mike methodically found a different alternative, never losing his enthusiasm for the dream. Mike's fingerprints can be found on every detail of the project, from the initial business plan to the construction of the hospice house and to this very day making sure the facility provides the best care available for families in Central Aroostook, the County and in fact the State of Maine who are traveling their end-of-life journey.

Rick Duncan says of Mike, "he gives freely of his time and talents, never asking for any type of recognition. His thoughtful, humble, and willing heart has always been an amazing testimony to who he is. Mike exemplifies the true definition of a Rotarian. I would be remiss if we didn't mention Carol. They are a team and an important part of the Aroostook House of Comfort family."

Tonight, I have the privilege of recognizing Mike MacPherson, a member of the Presque Isle Rotary Club, for his continuing support of The Rotary Foundation and his contributions to our community.



Mike, your contributions to The Foundation of Rotary International are alleviating suffering, improving living conditions, and providing educational opportunities for young people somewhere in the world. Your gifts are truly selfless and demonstrate your commitment to our common goals of world understanding and peace. Your contributions to our community have benefited us all.

Therefore, on behalf of Rotary International and the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation, it gives me great pleasure to present to you a multiple Paul Harris Fellow lapel pin containing 5 sapphires in appreciation of your generous contributions to the Rotary Foundation and, on its behalf, I extend to you a sincere word of thanks.

Paul Harris said:

"He who tries to find the good in others will be rewarded, for others will surely find the good in him. Of all the earth's sad and lonesome creatures, the most helpless is he who loves not his fellowmen."

Please rise and join me in recognizing Mike MacPherson.

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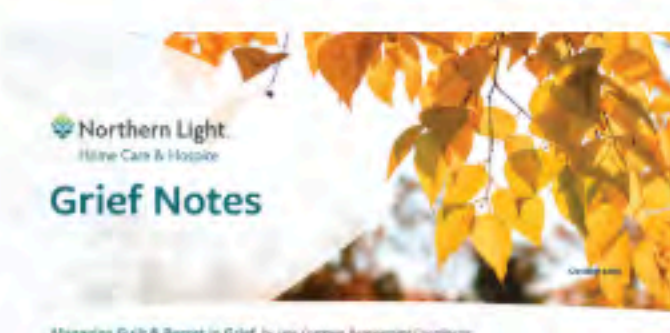
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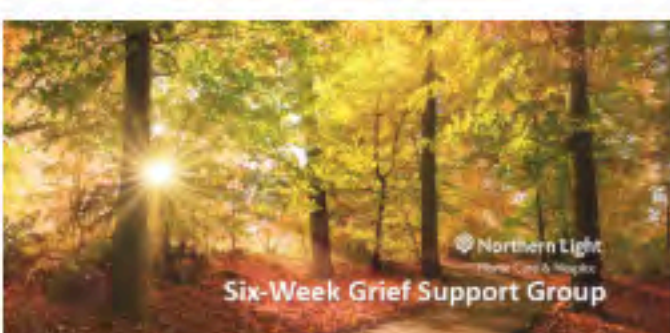
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Now Hiring: Executive Director

05/04/2022

Aroostook House of Comfort

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Executive Director

The Aroostook Hospice Foundation, owner of the Aroostook House of Comfort, in partnership with the community, provides individuals and families compassionate care, comfort, dignity, and support on their journey through hospice.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is the primary spokesperson and will promote awareness of, and support for, the mission of the Foundation and exemplify its core values. The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Foundation and will have overall strategic and operational responsibility for the Foundation's programs, expansion, and execution of its mission.

Leadership & Management

- Ensure consistent quality of finance and administration, fundraising, communications, and systems; recommend timelines and resources needed to achieve the Foundation's goals and fulfill the Foundation's Vision.
- Actively engage and energize the Foundation's volunteers, board members, event committees, donors, and partnering organizations.
- Develop, maintain, and support a strong Board of Directors; serve as ex-officio of each committee; seek and build board involvement with the Foundation's activities.
- Ensure effective systems to track operations of the Foundation and regularly evaluate activities of the Foundation, so as to measure successes that can be effectively communicated to the board, donors, and other constituents.

Fundraising & Communications

- Expand local revenue generating and fundraising activities to support existing operations of the Foundation while simultaneously retiring building debt.
- Work with media coordinator to deepen and refine all aspects of communications—from web presence to external relations with the goal of meeting the values of the Foundation.
- Build a growing, enthusiastic circle of individual and community supporters.
- Solicit and expand foundation, public agency, and business support.
- Oversee the development of a fundraising and financial sustainability plan that expands the organization's current level of traditional fundraising activities.
- Identify and develop relationships with funders, both within Maine and outside.

Operations

- Develop and implement effective systems to improve the operations of the Foundation.
- Maintain awareness of all operations and committee work and provide leadership as required to keep the progress moving.
- Oversees the maintenance and operations of the facilities.
- Maintain a record of detailed procedures regarding the permits, licensing and other regulatory requirements of the Foundation.

Program Development and Evaluation

- Provide leadership for the development of compelling educational content and opportunities.
- Work with committees of the Board to create and implement a schedule of education and hospice awareness programs.

Financial Management

- Provide financial oversight, particularly compliance with fund restrictions, interest allocation, and financial policies.
- Provide financial oversight of events and revenue generating activities.
- Develop an annual budget and prepare budget reports for submission to the board that accurately reflect the financial condition of the Foundation.
- Identify and maintain compliance for competitive grants and funds.

Administration, Policy, & Planning

- Board - schedule and prepare for regular meetings of the Board, provide support to the board regarding board member recruitment, keep board informed of major issues and serve as non-voting ex-officio member of each committee
- Staff and Volunteer Capacity - ensure board compliance with all internal policies and procedures, legal requirements, and financial standards, develop annual Executive Director goals and objectives with the Executive Committee, and develop, for board review and approval, the annual work plan and budget for the multi-year strategic plan. Work with board and committees on the implementation of plans and policies.

Community

- Establish and maintain strong, positive working relationships with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, including volunteers, government agencies and officials, community leaders, and other non-profits.
- Build partnerships and collaboration.
- Serve as a spokesperson for the Foundation.

Professional Qualifications

- Significant educational and/or work experience leading and growing a small non-profit foundation.
- Commitment to the ideals of hospice.
- Compassion, integrity, professionalism and discretion in discourse.
- Excellent communication skills
- Effective writing skills, including grant application experience
- Skill in public speaking
- Ability to represent the Foundation in a public forum.
- Ability to interact well with diverse communities, government officials, the press, donors, the public, and a disparate Board of Directors.
- Technical proficiency in computer office management platforms and communication programs such as Zoom.
- Ability to combine sound business sense and judgment with a strong commitment to the mission of the Foundation.
- Skilled with budgeting, fundraising, grant writing and management of a non-profit organization, its board members and volunteers.
- Seeks ongoing educational opportunities and professional development.
- Willingness to adhere to CDC guidelines for Covid-19 and other pandemic diseases with full vaccination, booster and masking.

Compensation

The Executive Director is a full-time, salaried position, with the possibility of some remote work. Compensation is commensurate with relevant experience, within the framework of the Foundation's annual budget, and in the approximate starting range of \$52,000-60,000. Employee benefits package to be negotiated.

We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability status, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

~~The post date is September 4, 2022. Archived.~~

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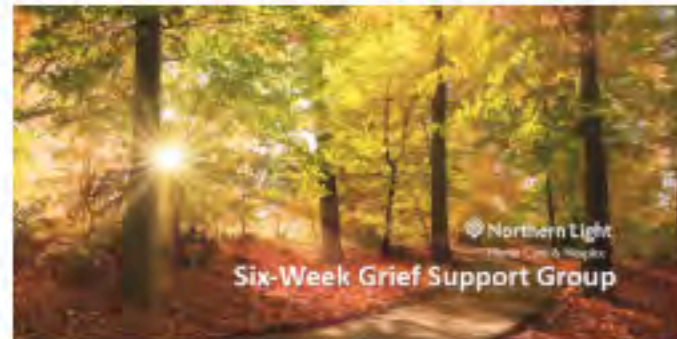
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- Ram Dass

Remembering Janet Durgin

04/18/2022

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Tribute to Janet Durgin:

I would like to take this opportunity to remember the woman who had the vision and the drive to develop the hospice program in Aroostook County, Janet Durgin. I interviewed Janet a few years ago, and I would like to share her story with you.

Janet grew up in the Baltimore suburbs as an only child. During her sophomore year of high school, her father insisted she attend a private girl's school to prepare her for college. Her father's concern was she was spending too much time socializing in public school and that it had become a social event. Janet did not agree, but lost that battle and found herself enrolled at the Bryn Mawr School for girls. NO BOYS, ugly cotton uniform with white socks and saddle shoes. Gym class and sports were required-what a drag and a ruination of fun social life.

It took one trip to the headmistress's office to realize this would be three years of very hard work to even graduate with passing grades. In addition, she was in class with girls who had years of German, Latin, French and Greek languages as well as advanced core curriculum behind them. They were also competent in sports and played lacrosse, soccer, and basketball as fierce competitors.

By some miracle and a lot of hard work, Janet did graduate with passing grades. As time went on, Janet became aware and appreciative of her father's decision to send her to Bryn Mawr. She also became aware of how much her school experiences shaped her life and her decisions. She realized that she had become a life-long learner, even completing her master's degree in nursing at age 67, and was a nationally certified nurse executive and licensed social worker.

There was one social opportunity available at Bryn Mawr, and that was an invitation to attend afternoon tea dances at the United States Naval Academy. Finally, a chance to meet boys and midshipmen at those events. She later married an Academy graduate, and they had three amazing children, although she could have told you some stories about them being a little less than amazing at times. The family moved often and lived in many different states. Even though it enriched her knowledge of different cultures, and she gained wisdom in life experiences, it took a toll on her marriage. After 20 years, she became a single mom with three children to care for.

It was in her 30s that she entered nursing school while working as a volunteer EMT at the local fire department in Dayton, Ohio. She went on to complete the newly developed paramedic education and national certification courses and testing in Ohio, making her class some of the first nationally certified paramedics.

Upon graduation from nursing school, her father gave her a nurse figurine that played "A Spoonful of Sugar Make the Medicine Go Down," which inspired her to start her collection of nurses. Over the years, the collection has grown and includes some interesting old medical items and books.

While in Ohio, Janet met Ed Durgin, who was in the air force and recently back from Vietnam. Ed loved northern Maine, having had the opportunity over the years to visit the area with friends to hunt and fish. At that time, he had the opportunity to be stationed at Loring Air Force Base. And that is how Janet landed in northern Maine.

She worked at A.R. Gould in the emergency department, then at ACAP Family Planning Clinic as clinical coordinator, developing a much-needed sexually transmitted disease clinic. She turned down an opportunity to attend NP school and decided to complete her bachelor's degree in nursing at the University of Southern Maine. When Janet moved to Portland, she never expected to end up back in the "County," but as fate would have it, Ed was offered a job back here after she completed graduate school.

At that time, Aroostook Home Care Agency was interviewing for the clinical director's position. They were looking for a master's prepared nurse but decided to take a chance on Janet. When she was hired, there was only the acute care program. Janet developed and obtained licensing for the long-term care program, wrote grants, and developed many programs, including a cardiac post-op visit program, a hypertension-cholesterol screening, and education program, and a maternal-child health program in conjunction with public health nursing and, of course, the hospice program. In the early 80s, Janet had been reading about hospice and the philosophy of care. It really caught her attention and planted a seed in her heart and mind that this was a way of care that should be made available to the people of Aroostook County.

She then began promoting this idea with co-workers, doctors, clergy, and community members. Soon meetings were being held, and the thought became a plan. A volunteer program began developing and growing until the program became Medicare certified in 1991.

It took several years of dedication and countless volunteer hours, but we are all here today because of the work and grit that one woman had to make it a reality. Hospice of Aroostook blossomed into an organization because of that seed that was planted in her mind. The program has now become part of Northern Light Home Care & Hospice and now also includes the first hospice house in Aroostook County.

It is my hope that the hospice philosophy and program will continue to evolve and grow and that each of us that represent hospice, will proudly carry on with Janet's legacy.

George McLaughlin, Bereavement Coordinator & Chaplain
Northern Light Home Care & Hospice

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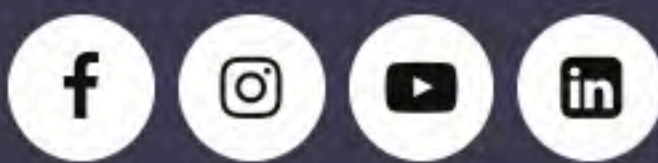
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AROOSTOOK
House of Comfort'



18 Green Hill Drive
PO Box 867
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Aroostook House of Comfort (nurse's station): (207) 764-9406
Billing Questions: 1-800-757-3326
Executive Director: (207) 540-1080

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The Circle of Care Award: Elizabeth “Bethie” Walsh

03/11/2022

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Elizabeth “Bethie” Walsh, RN
Northern Light Home Care & Hospice
Full-Time RN at the Aroostook House of Comfort

The Circle of Care Award recognizes a staff member who is dedicated to helping individuals and families on their journey through hospice care.

Why did you choose hospice care as a career path?

"I have always wanted to work with hospice patients. I feel how you die is as important as how you come into this world. Death is a part of life. We fear the unknown, so with hospice we can educate about the dying process and the interventions we use when there are symptoms."

How long have you worked at AHOC?

Since we opened the door in 2018.

How does your work help the patients, families, and your community?

"Everyone deserves to die with dignity and peace, and I feel we do that."

What is special about AHOC?

"The feeling of home and warmth. We are a small facility and make it a point to get to know our patients and their families. I think that makes a difference."

What is most rewarding about your job?

"It's about taking some of the burden of caregiving off the husband, wife, or child so they can just be present with their loved one. I feel honored to be trusted to care for the dying."

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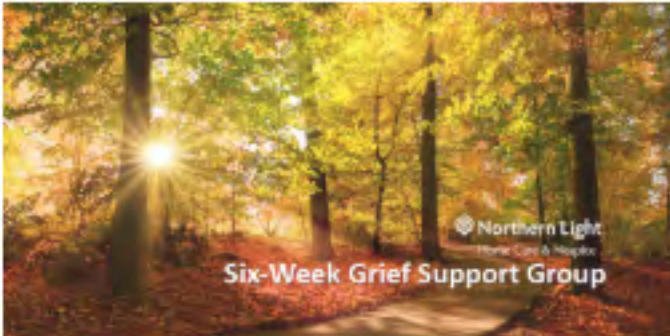
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Healing Hearts: Goughan Family

 03/07/2022

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"Our family wants to thank you for the care you gave our mother, Sarah Jane Goughan. Our heart still aches at the loss of her. I remember the day so clearly when my brother Chip and I met with Dr. Jones, Gail, and Jenny. By the end of our conversation, it became clear that my brother and I would be pursuing possible nursing home care.

Even though I did not want to admit it, it was true; her care had come to a point that could not be managed by family anymore. The day of our meeting, as we were making our way to the door, Dr. Jones appeared to share with us that they would accept my mother. We just stood in amazement with much sense of relief. An answer to prayer. The day prior, my mom had said to me almost in desperation, "Lele, you have got to get me to the House of Comfort." All I could say to give her hope was, "We are working on it." She knew she was entering a stage that our family was unable to provide for her the care she needed.

From the moment the Aroostook House of Comfort hospice team got involved, we felt such a load lifted from our shoulders. So many people were involved in so many helpful ways. Her medications, personal care, pain control. All the things that we could not adequately do anymore. She now had qualified, competent, caring, and gifted people to care for her. We are still so moved and touched by the kindness and compassion of everyone involved. The very first day she arrived, we felt like she was in such a peaceful, beautiful environment. Like a home away from home. It was so nice just to be able to enjoy our time with her. Talking, sharing pictures from family, holding her hand, kissing her, telling her how much we loved her. It was such a relief, being able to lay our heads down at night without a worry about how she was cared for—whether she was safe, whether she was in pain, whether she felt scared or alone. That was such a gift for a family.

To have her family by her side as she passed was what she wanted—feeling our love and presence. Only God could have answered such a prayer. He took her on a journey that started with oncology to palliative care to hospice.

In keeping with our parents' faith and desire to help those less fortunate, we are making this gift with a high degree of confidence that it is done with their approval and wishes. It would be our hope that with this gift, the services of Aroostook House of Comfort could be made available to another family so that they too could be comforted in a time of need and experience the love and compassion which you showed our mother." - Lillian Goughan



Donald and Sarah Goughan with Alfred "Chip", Lillian Ouellette, and Mark Goughan



Parents Donald and Sarah Jane Goughan, Mark and Gloria Goughan, Alfred "Chip" and Teresa Goughan, and Lillian and Lionel Ouellette, Jr.

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Bringing Warmth & Comfort to the House

02/18/2022

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In 2014, Ruth Gahagan was contemplating how she could bring comfort and warmth to those living through difficult periods in their lives. As an alternative to both time-consuming and labor-intensive quilts, she thought no-sew, easy to make, fleece blankets would be very warm and comforting. She recruited volunteers, and the non-denominational Holy Rosary Church Blanket Ministry was founded.



The fourteen active members meet at the Holy Rosary Parish Center every Monday from 11-2. The work year is divided into two parts. They create from January until mid-June and again from September until mid-December. If a special need or request arises, the ladies will meet during the summer. All blankets are blessed before they are personally delivered by a member of the Blanket Ministry.

Since 2014, 1,200+ blankets have been created and donated throughout the County. Recipients include the Aroostook House of Comfort, Hope and Justice Project, the Homeless Shelter, Maine Veterans' Home, Caribou Fire and Ambulance, Cary Cancer Care Clinic, Bread of Life Soup Kitchen, Life by Design, The Farm of Hope, and DHHS.



Despite the COVID pandemic forcing the closure of the Parish Center, the ladies continued making blankets in the basement of one member's home. Over 100 blankets were produced in 2020-2021 then donated to the residents at the Rising Hill Assisted Living Facility in Limestone, the Aroostook House of Comfort, the Maine Veterans' Home, children attending the ACAP Head Start Program in Caribou, as well as to other individuals and families in need.

A non-profit ministry, Holy Rosary Blanket Ministry relies solely on donations from individuals, church and civic organizations, and businesses.

"We feel blessed and are thankful for the tremendous support we have received these past seven years."

For more information, please contact Judy Bougie judybougie@hotmail.com

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Volunteer Spotlight



02/11/2022



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Many Aroostook House of Comfort volunteers have been touched personally by hospice care. They were moved by the compassionate care their loved ones received and wanted to give back through volunteering. Their perspective makes our volunteers so valuable to patients and their families.

Hospice volunteers go through a seven-week training provided by Northern Light Home Care & Hospice. NLHCH recently redeveloped a slightly different take on “in-person” training to meet CDC guidelines during the pandemic, allowing applicants to train via Zoom. Despite Covid-19, caring and compassionate people participated in new hospice volunteer training. These pioneers are the first to attend the 30-hour hospice volunteer training virtually. Volunteers who successfully complete the training program become Direct Care volunteers, which allows them to make home hospice visits and phone calls with patients and family members. They can also volunteer at the Aroostook House of Comfort, provide bereavement support, and participate in any Northern Light Home Care & Hospice event or function.



New volunteers for Aroostook County are Bruce Alexander, Karen Kerr, Crystal Laster, Heidi Thompson, and Darren West.

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice new hospice volunteer trainees participating via ZOOM throughout the State of Maine.



Row 1: Gloria Carter, Robin Haynes, VC-Aroostook, Ron Eby, and Suzanne Gauthier
Row 2: Sarah Cote, VC-Bangor, Bruce Alexander, Judith Murphy, and Bill Lagerstrom
Row 3: Gary MacDonald, Juliette Sutherland, Eigen Heald, and Heidi Thompson
Row 4: Crystal Laster; no picture available for Lee White

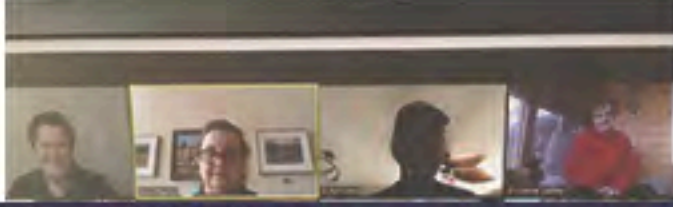
If you are interested in becoming a hospice voluteer, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

Northern Light Home Care & Hospice function.



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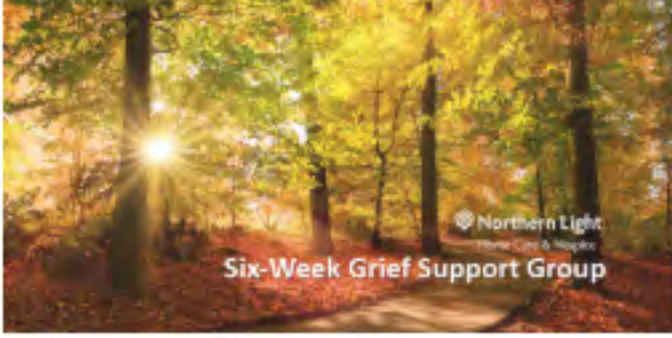
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