



Since 1983 Regional Hospice and Palliative Care has been making people's dreams come true, enabling them to live out their final days in comfort and in the setting of their choice.

In 2015 we opened the Center for Comfort Care and Healing in Danbury, CT. It was Connecticut's first state-of-the-art, private suite hospice center offering patients and families a home away from home.

We continue to make our patient's dreams come true daily - in the comfort we provide them at the end of life, through a dedicated and highly skilled clinical team, with the support of friendly volunteers who visit them wherever they live and in the willingness of our agency to always go above and beyond for our patients and families.

This book captures some of the larger dreams we've helped come true; bucket list items we've helped people realize and family memories we've helped create in 2015 and 2016, exemplifying that hospice care is focused on LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST.



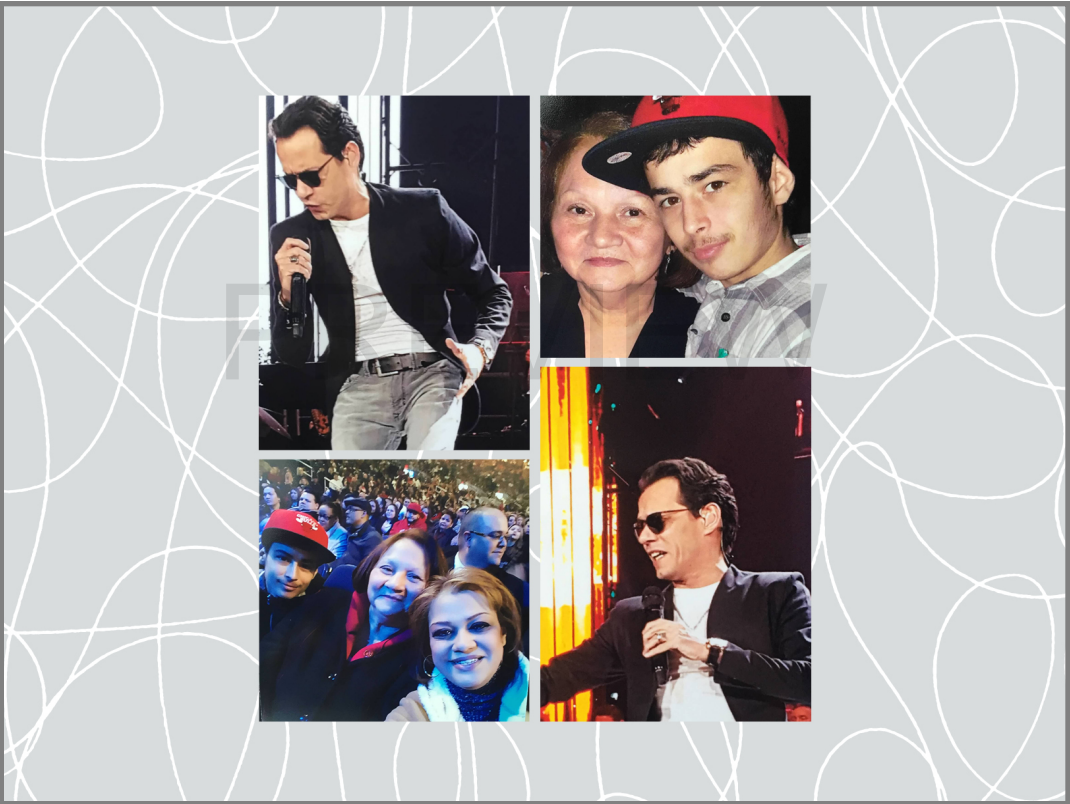
Tea Party

Patient John Skinner's wife wanted to thank all the wonderful community members that had provided support as John bravely battled illness. What better way to thank these friends and loved ones than with a tea party?

Friends and family gathered with John around the tables in the Center for Comfort Care & Healing's Family Kitchen to celebrate his life and spirit.

Decadent food and drinks were provided by the Center's in-house culinary team, making the day special for all in attendance.





Marc Anthony Concert

Cody Maldonado's clinical team at Regional Hospice couldn't think of anything that would mean more to their 21-year-old patient, who had been struggling with Ewing's Sarcoma for the past four years, than to send him to a concert of his idol, Marc Anthony.

Within days of sharing this hope with their colleagues, the generosity of Sony Music Corp. and Marc Anthony's own venture, Magnus Media, enabled Cody's dream to begin to materialize one caring person at a time. Cody was given three tickets to the show and Webster Bank Arena came onboard with VIP arrangements for his ease upon arrival and departure from the event in a chauffeured limousine.

At 6:00 pm on Valentines Day, Cody, his mom, Gloria and his sister, Vanessa, stepped into the limo and the excitement and anticipation of the past several days became reality. They were escorted to their seats fifth row center, barely twenty feet from Cody's idol!

Cody and his family laughed until their stomachs hurt when opening act comedian, Joey Vega performed, joking about Donald Trump and Latinos. "We laughed so hard the whole time he was on stage, and it felt so good!" recalled Gloria. Vega met with the family and took pictures with Cody and Vanessa.

Then Marc Anthony hit the stage to thunderous cheers and applause - it was sheer happiness for them. Even Cody couldn't stay seated. The hour and a half performance flew by as Anthony performed one hit after another to a packed house of 10,000. All reveled in the joy of Anthony's music, dance moves and Latino pride that captured hearts and pumped up joyful adrenaline powering Cody through the evening of a lifetime.

Gloria was filled with emotion as she talked about Cody having the energy to enjoy every moment of his dream come true - from the anticipation of the planning to the memories they now savor. "Cody was so happy; we were all so happy; I didn't think we could be that happy anymore, and I am so appreciative for this special gift for Cody. We will never forget this night together!"

Rocketman

When he couldn't give his dad the moon and the stars, one patient's son gave him the next best thing: a rocket ship named after him. The 13-foot rocket, built by this devoted son, an artist and contractor by trade, was delivered and assembled outside the patient's hospice room at the Center for Comfort Care and Healing.

Days before his dad died, the doors to his private balcony were opened to reveal this special rocket ship, erected just for him, bringing him and his family much joy and peace.





*Fabergé Eggs
at
The Met*



Tom Kamber, Executive Director of Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) and Crispin Baynes, of Finale Consulting met Sara while visiting Regional Hospice to learn more about legacy journaling and end-of-life decision-making. In speaking with her they learned that she desperately wanted to see the Fabergé eggs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Although her health was rapidly declining, with the assistance of a family member, along with Kamber and Baynes, Sara was able to realize her dream to visit New York City to see this one-of-a-kind exhibit. It was her final trip, as Sara Samaha passed away peacefully six days later.



Stephen Bergeron was beginning the 2nd semester of his junior year at Champlain College in Vermont when he got the devastating cancer diagnosis. While it may have derailed his plans, 20-year-old Stephen Bergeron didn't let it dim his spirit. Stephen continues to embrace life, living by the philosophy, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why its called the present."

When Stephen told his Regional Hospice Social Worker, Ed Schwartz, that he always wanted to go skydiving, Regional Hospice quickly mobilized to make that dream a reality. On a clear day in September, Stephen experienced the world from 10,000 feet. From that breathtaking vantage point, he could see as far as Providence and Boston.

Bergeron's eyes lit up as he explained the rush of being able to skydive. "I had always wanted to do it my entire life." "Still," he admitted, "I was terrified." Contrary to what he imagined, it got easier the closer he came to jumping. "I was most calm right before the jump. The feeling of falling is just indescribable. Everything was so fast. You wear goggles. So I was just trying to look around and see as much as I could. Everything looked so small. It was incredible," Stephen recalled with great joy. "At the landing you keep your feet out and you slide a bit. When we were on land again I thought, 'I'm alive. That was awesome!'"

Stephen, his dad, and close friend are forever grateful to Regional Hospice for helping to make this dream a reality.

Regional Hospice, in partnership with OATS (Older Adults Technology Services) and Finale Consulting, enabled Nancy Stevenson, a Regional Hospice patient, to experience the first-ever robotic tour of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City - all from the comfort of her hospice bed! Nancy is an artist and illustrator who had lived in NYC before her progressing cancer led her to choose hospice care from the Center for Comfort Care & Healing.

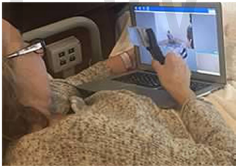
When Stevenson, who has been sharing her hospice experience on her blog hopeandcourage.com, expressed her wish to view Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection, Regional Hospice worked its magic to make that a reality. The Whitney, whose mission is to feature American artists through an eclectic array of collections, graciously accommodated the request on a day when the museum was closed to the public.

In anticipation of the event, Nancy emailed Regional Hospice staff to express her gratitude. "I'm looking forward to my personal tour of the Whitney Portrait Show! Its a miracle you could set this up and I feel I've won a Make a Wish moment."

The opportunity was so meaningful to Stevenson because, as she wrote, "I have always been a figurative painter. I did my undergraduate work at Syracuse University with one of the worlds most foremost figurative portrait painters, Jerome Witkin. And, I also studied with masters at The Art Students League in NYC."

The first-of-its-kind tour of the Whitney utilized a telepresence robot connected to software on Nancy's laptop which allowed her to virtually explore the museum. She and her Regional Hospice Social Worker Amy Bauer shared this amazing experience together. An educator from the museum was on hand for questions, allowing Stevenson to be fully immersed in the experience.

Robotic Tour of the Whitney Museum





Edwin Alward grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania. It was there that he met the love of his life, Katherine, with whom he enjoyed 61 beautiful years of marriage. With a chuckle that beams with pride, Edwin explained how together the couple raised four children who, "are the smartest, best looking children ever born." Although Edwin admits, "I have a lot of problems - Parkinson's, diabetes, cancer and a few other things in between," his steadfast sense-of-humor and infectious love of life make him seem invincible. Still, at 83 years of age Edwin understands that his life is nearing an end, and he embraces the additional joy that hospice care brings to his final days.



^

New Forever Friends

One hospice service that has been particularly rewarding to Alward is the friendship he has received from his Family Support Volunteer, Bob Sweeney. The feeling is mutual as Bob indicates, "We have a real bond. Its been great. When asked what they do during their time together," both men said with an air of mischief in their voices, "We sit and tell each other lies." Truth is, the two friends banter as though they have known each other for years. They are both quick-witted and well-read with an ability to talk freely on any topic from sports to politics. One of their favorite activities is to sit on a bench in Kent where they watch the world go by.



Unexpected Gifts

They have met a variety of interesting people from that post including hikers making their way to Maine via the Appalachian Trail. One afternoon they started chatting with a woman who turned out to be a local artist. Edwin mentioned that he had hoped to have a replica of Katherine's engagement photo created. Much to his surprise his new acquaintance completed the request as a gift - proof not only of the kindness of strangers, but also of Alward's ability to inspire such acts.

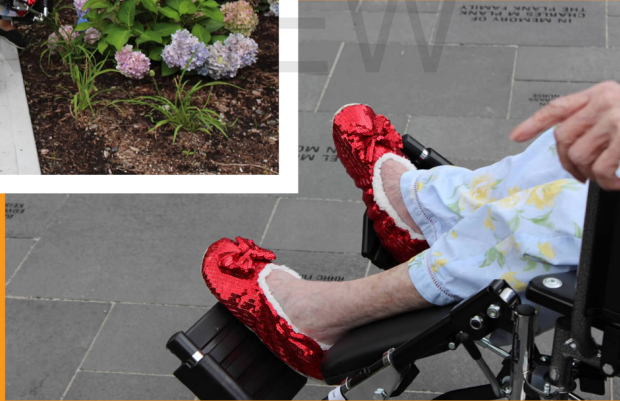
Praise for Hospice

Edwin greatly appreciates the care he has received from Regional Hospice stating, "I have nothing but praise. I have a fond feeling for everyone I have been associated with," further emphasizing, "and I have never been more pleased to be associated with an organization." When asked what he would tell anyone considering hospice care, he said, "Anyone who has any feeling for themselves and their family needs to take advantage of the opportunity [of hospice]. They need to understand how lovely and accommodating they are. The facility is wonderful."

Ruby Red Slippers

Dorothy famously said, "There's no place like home," as she clicked the heels of her ruby red slippers together three times. Those magic slippers had the power to transport her to the place in her mind where she felt the most comfortable and safe - her home. Like those ruby slippers, the staff and volunteers of the Center for Comfort Care and Healing aim to give patients peace of mind in a cozy home away from home. Due to the generosity of a kind donor, ruby red slippers support that goal, empowering patients to feel safe, warm and even a bit glamorous.

After losing his wife, Ken Libby wanted to give as many women as possible - wives, mothers, daughters, friends - the joy of a sparkling pair of cozy red slippers. The slippers he donates to the patients at Regional Hospice honor the memory of his beloved wife, Margo, her friend Kay, and all those who recognize that home is a place in the heart that can be accessed with the click of a heel or the wiggle of a sparkly toe.



A Final Family Vacation



PREVIEW

One of our hospice families was struggling with the stress and grief of a young child (a twin) who was battling a life-limiting illness. The family, the mom & dad and their 5 children wanted one last family vacation together at a family-friendly hotel close to home. But, with the looming medical bills the expense was just too great.

When members of our Southbury Giving Circle got word of the family's need, they sprang into action. Sitting outside a local grocery store one one of the hottest weekends of the summer, the group raised enough money for the family to spend that final quality time together.



PREVIEW