

Valued Volunteer

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Serenity
HOSPICE & HOME



Hello October

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WHATS BEEN HAPPENING



As each summer arrives, I find myself thinking, "Wow, we have a few months to regroup before the fall rush." Then, when fall comes, I wonder, "How did that go by so quickly?" The reality is, our responsibilities never seem to lighten, as we continually fill our plates with new projects.

As volunteers, you bring the heart and soul to everything you do. Your dedication remains unwavering, whether during busy times or quieter moments. In the last quarter, we focused heavily on ensuring our fundraisers were successful, while this quarter has seen us deeply engaged in community outreach.

- Our gatherer group has been crafting items for veterans.
- Our knitting and crocheting group has created beautiful pieces for patients and their loved ones.
- Volunteers have made a positive impact at community events, such as the fair and calling Bingo at local nursing homes.
- Some organized a veteran center and provided ice cream to veterans at a café.

Through all these efforts, our remarkable volunteers ensure that patients and their families feel a sense of peace during challenging times. Each week, they check in on patients to make sure their needs are met. They manage the front desk, shred and scan documents, assemble caregiver guidebooks, bake cookies, and provide meals for families in the Serenity Home. They even adorn the family room tree with beauty and thoughtfulness.

We are fortunate to have an incredible team dedicated to our Angel Treasure and Shed locations. Additionally, our volunteers participate in ongoing education to ensure they are following the best practices in hospice care. Recently, we underwent our Joint Commission survey, which evaluates our commitment to patient care. Although surveys can be nerve-racking, my portion was made significantly easier thanks to all of you. I truly appreciate your punctuality in volunteer hours, visit notes, education, and all requirements needed to be a volunteer at Serenity Hospice and Home. I wouldn't want to do this job without each of you!

Each of you has played a crucial role in creating a warm and welcoming environment that genuinely impacts the lives of those we serve. Because of your efforts, we have the finest volunteer group. As we look ahead to the coming months, I am excited about the opportunities that await us. Together, we will continue to inspire hope, spread kindness, and bring comfort to those who need it most.

Stephanie Wheeler





Remembering Nancy Tracy

On August 26, 2025, Serenity lost one of its most cherished members, Nancy Tracy. On that day, our organization lost a radiant light that illuminated the lives of everyone she encountered. It is a rare privilege in life to meet someone who transforms your perspective of the world—someone who genuinely cares for those around them, who thoughtfully considers every decision, and who uplifts your spirits simply by being present. That was Nancy. Every person who crossed her path felt as though they had discovered their next best friend. Interestingly, it is often through loss that we come to understand someone even more profoundly. The love that Nancy held for her family, friends, and veterans was nothing short of inspirational. Her compassion knew no bounds, and her commitment to the causes she cherished was steadfast. Nancy's kindness served as a guiding light for many during their darkest moments, providing comfort and warmth in a world that can sometimes seem cold and indifferent. She possessed a remarkable ability to listen with sincerity, making each individual feel truly heard and valued—a truly rare gift.

Nancy's legacy lives on in the countless lives she touched, in the stories shared around dinner tables, and in the hearts of those who had the fortune of knowing her. Her laughter, her wisdom, and her unwavering belief in the goodness of people continue to inspire us to strive for a better world, to be kinder, and to love more fiercely.

As we remember Nancy, let us carry forward her spirit of generosity and empathy. Let us honor her memory by living with the same grace and strength she showed each day. Though she may no longer walk among us, her spirit dances in the wind, whispers in the quiet moments, and lives on in the actions of those she inspired. Rest in peace, dear Nancy, knowing that you have left the world a better place than you found it.

Nancy's visitation is scheduled for Saturday, October 11th, at 9 a.m., followed by a memorial service at 11 a.m. The event will take place at Fitzgerald Funeral Home, located at 1860 S Mulford Rd, Rockford.

Meet our Staff



Terry Bunker

Terry is a new community nurse who is taking care of patients in Rockford and the surrounding areas. Before becoming a nurse, Terry was a stay-at-home mom while her children were in school. Terry worked with another hospice company before coming to Serenity. Terry has three children and five grandchildren. When Terry isn't working, she enjoys reading, playing with her dog Hank and spending time with her children and grandchildren.



Meet our Staff



Katie Peterson

Katie Peterson is one of our Community Nurses at Serenity Hospice and Home. She has been a nurse for 14 years, has 2 amazing daughters, and 2 golden retrievers. In her free time, Katie loves to garden, thrift, craft, eat, and collect houseplants. Being a part of the Serenity family and a hospice nurse is her true passion and calling.



Meet our Staff

Teresa Strum



Teresa Strum is a dedicated registered nurse with a Master's degree in Nursing Administration and a career spanning clinical practice, education, and healthcare leadership. With a strong foundation in patient education and staff development, Teresa has served as a Coordinator for the Community Training Center, overseeing life support certification programs, and Instructors, promoting critical emergency preparedness across healthcare teams.

Her passion for teaching is evident in her role as adjunct faculty, where she guided first-year Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) students through foundational clinical and theoretical coursework. Most recently, Teresa led regional health workforce initiatives as the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Director under a federal grant, supporting health career development across 13 counties in Northwest Illinois. Her work has helped bridge gaps in rural healthcare access and inspired the next generation of health professionals.

Teresa brings a collaborative spirit, expertise, and a commitment to lifelong learning to every role she undertakes. She also serves on several community committees, such as the Partnership for a Healthier Lee County, Connected Communities, and the Workforce Investment Board.

Meet our Volunteer

Pam Borla



My name is Pamela Borla (Pam). I am originally from Elmhurst Illinois . I went to college in Missouri to Culver Stockton and received a bachelor of Science in Administration of Criminal Justice. After graduation I went to work for the DuPage County Courthouse in Wheaton, Illinois. I was primarily in Data Processing, but then *became a part of a new department considered quality control and helped out in many other departments.* I am recently retired from the courthouse after 36 plus years. I now live in Dixon with my partner and our 3 dogs. They keep me busy, but I felt the need for outside interaction. Serenity was so welcoming after a volunteer recruitment that I called and started with Gathers, classes, then shadowing the front desk. Looking forward to being a helpful part of the Serenity family.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Book Club

Serenity Hospice and Home is thrilled to announce its very own book club! The Book Club gathers every other month at the **Village Bakery at 8:30 AM**. Join the cozy book nook for lively discussions about captivating reads. This month's meeting will take place on Thursday, **October 23rd**, where the featured book will be **"The Fallen Woman's Daughter" by Michelle Cox**.

Gatherer Group

Join us on **Wednesday, October 8th, at 11 a.m.** in the Serenity Conference Room for our monthly Gatherer Group! The Gatherer Group is a team of volunteers who unite each month to work on projects and crafts that benefit our patients, organization, and community. We welcome all volunteers, whether you're a seasoned crafter or simply looking to lend a helping hand. Here's what you can look forward to during our upcoming session:

- Project Overview:
 - We will begin the meeting with a brief introduction to the projects we'll be focusing on this month. This may involve creating care packages, crafting personalized cards, or designing seasonal decorations for our facilities.
- Collaboration:
 - This is a wonderful chance to meet others who share a passion for giving back. Be ready to collaborate, exchange ideas, and motivate each other as we join forces to make a difference.
- Light lunch:
 - To keep our energy levels high, we'll offer a light lunch and beverages. Feel free to bring along your favorite treat to share with the group!
- Feedback and Future Projects:
 - At the end of our session, we will dedicate some time to discuss future projects and gather your feedback on the types of activities you would like to see in upcoming Gatherer Group meetings.

Your involvement has a meaningful impact, and we can't wait to see you there! If you have any questions or wish to RSVP, please get in touch with us at 815-732-2499. Let's come together to create something beautiful for our community!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We have an amazing team of volunteers who create stunning lap blankets, prayer shawls, prayer squares, animals, and more through knitting and crocheting. While many individuals craft these beautiful pieces at home, there is a group that meets monthly at the Serenity Shed. Join us on **Friday, October 10th, at 10:00 AM** to knit and crochet with fellow volunteers. These gatherings provide a fantastic opportunity not only to produce lovely handmade items but also to connect with others who share a love for crafting.

So, bring your yarn and needles, and join us for a rewarding morning filled with creativity and companionship. We can't wait to see you there!

Knitter and Crochet Group



AOP

Autumn on Parade is an annual festival celebrated in Oregon during the first weekend of October. Serenity Hospice and Home is proud to join their staff, volunteers, and family members in the parade each year. It serves as a heartfelt tribute to our collective efforts in the community, especially when we see bystanders cheering us on as we pass by. It's truly moving to reflect on the lives we have been fortunate to impact in the community. There is still an opportunity to take part in the AOP parade. This year, our float will feature benches for those who are unable to walk in the parade. If you're interested, please reach out today!

Volunteer Support Chat

Serenity Hospice and Home is fortunate to have a remarkable group of dedicated volunteers who devote their time to patients and their families. Each month, we invite these volunteers to participate in our Volunteer Support Group. This gathering allows them to discuss effective visiting practices, share experiences, and provide mutual support. By nurturing a supportive community among our volunteers, we aim to create an environment that enhances the lives of those we serve while also enriching the experiences of those who selflessly contribute their time. We sincerely appreciate every volunteer's dedication and eagerly anticipate continuing this vital work together. We invite you to join us on **Wednesday, October 29th, at 10:45 AM** in the Serenity Conference Room.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Each year, our veterans have the honor of sharing military-themed books with the students of Oregon Elementary School. We invite our veteran volunteers to join us at 9 a.m. on Monday, November 10th.

This is a wonderful chance for veterans to share their experiences and connect with the younger generation, inspiring them with stories of courage, resilience, and service. If you are a veteran interested in participating, please sign up by reaching out!

We encourage volunteers to bring their favorite military-themed books, or we can provide a selection for reading. Let's make this a memorable event for both students and veterans alike.

Veterans Reading at OES

Online Education

Take a moment to check out this month's online education session on YouTube, titled "Dementia Challenging Behaviors Q&A." You can watch it by visiting the following link:

(<https://www.youtube.com/live/xLOEkkUlehg?si=OYb0hh7djdYMRy9>).

- Don't forget to record your hours on your timesheet for your volunteer continuing education.
- Please include the title in your notes.



Veteran Stand Down

One of our most cherished events is approaching fast! The Veteran Stand Down is set for the end of October, and we will be collecting supplies for at-risk veterans to distribute during this event. We would greatly appreciate donations of the following items:

- Soft snacks (as many veterans have difficulty chewing nuts)
- Lip balm
- Drink packets and hot cocoa
- Wet wipes
- First aid kits
- Flashlights and batteries
- Q-tips
- Razors
- Kleenex
- Alcohol-free mouthwash
- Cough drops



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Front Desk Greeters serve as the welcoming face of Serenity Home. These volunteers warmly greet patients and their families upon arrival, guiding them to their designated areas. They play a vital role in fostering a friendly environment, ensuring that everyone feels valued and cared for from the moment they enter. The duties of Front Desk Greeters go beyond just offering a friendly welcome.

Open volunteer opportunities:

- Sunday:
 - October 19th from 8-1230 & 1230-430
 - October 26th from 8-1230 & 1230-430
- Monday October 6th from 430-8PM
- Tuesdays from 430-8PM
- Wednesday October 8th from 430-8PM
- Thursdays from 430-8PM
 - October 23rd from 8-1230
 - October 30th from 8-1230
- Friday October 10th from 430-8PM
- Saturdays
 - October 18th from 8-1230 & 1230-430
 - October 25th from 8-1230 & 1230-430



Front Desk Greeter

Volunteer Education

Each year, we take the time to educate our hospice volunteers about the significance of infection control. We warmly invite you to participate in an informative volunteer in-service, where we will cover key topics vital for maintaining the safety and well-being of both our volunteers and patients. This in-service will take place on **Wednesday, October 22nd at 10:45 AM** in the Serenity conference room. Your participation is vital in helping us maintain high standards of care within our hospice. Together, we can ensure our patients receive optimal support in a safe and healthy environment. We look forward to seeing you at the in-service!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Angel Treasures - Dixon

To better serve our customers, the Angel Treasure Dixon Location has changed their Saturday Hours: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

The Shed

Check out The Serenity Sheds facebook place for updates on upcoming events, grief groups, and community gatherings that offer support and companionship. Stay connected with us to learn more about our special workshops and volunteer opportunities that make a positive impact in our community.

Flu Clinic

Serenity Hospice and Home provides flu shots for our valued volunteers. According to CMS guidelines, volunteers involved with patients or in administrative roles are required to receive a flu shot or present a medical/religious exemption. Flu shots (or exemptions) must be completed by November 15th. Serenity will host flu clinics on the following dates:

- Wednesday October 15th
 - 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 - 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
- Friday October 17th
 - 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM
- Monday October 20th
 - 7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
- Wednesday October 22nd
 - 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM
 - 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
- Wednesday October 29th
 - 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM
 - 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
- Tuesday November 11th
 - 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM

