

# **Press Release**

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For Immediate Release

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## **Poppen Hospice Residence Opens**

### **Hospice of Muskegon-Oceana Expands Care**

Muskegon, MI – The Leila and Cyrus Poppen Hospice Residence is ready to begin caring for patients who need a home away from home. Fourteen private patient rooms anchor this new facility on nine acres in Fruitport Township near the Lakes Mall. It is estimated that more than two hundred patients and their families will use the facility each year.

The Poppen Hospice Residence is state of the art, new construction that has been built with a very large measure of community support. In addition to the patient rooms, there are two family rooms, a spa with therapeutic tub, a reflection room, and a screened porch. Karen Panozzo, RN, who is the Clinical Manager, explains the evolution of the building. “The residence was designed and built from the patient bed up. Every option was evaluated from the perspective of the patient’s comfort. Consider the views of the woods, windows up high as well as low, individual thermostats in each room, piped-in oxygen – and how every door in the building wide enough for a patient bed to pass through.”

Beginning in the late 1990s, volunteers from the Hospice Board and the community at large visited hospice residences across Michigan. They synthesized all the information learned with the national trends and conducted both a Feasibility Study and an analysis of the fundraising potential. Those same volunteers served as a Site Selection Committee and all of their due diligence led them to 2065 E. Mt. Garfield Road.

Very early in this process, Sherm Poppen called Mary Anne Gorman, Executive Director of Hospice of Muskegon-Oceana, to discuss the idea of a residence, having followed the agency’s growth and progress to move in that direction. Sherm Poppen of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, a former Board member and Muskegon industrialist and Leila Poppen

-1- Reynolds of Houston offered to make the lead gift to establish a hospice residence. The facility is named in memory of their parents, Leila and Cyrus Poppen. Their early commitment to see this happen was a giant step. A Capital Campaign was started with their gift leading the way.

Hospice of Muskegon-Oceana has been providing end of life care for terminally ill people since 1983 and the Poppen gift is directly related to the care given their family members. Another large gift came from the estate of Joan Porter whose husband, Reverend Phil Porter, Jr. had been in our care. And another, from Edith Anderson whose trust at the Community Foundation for the benefit of Hospice of Muskegon-Oceana provides the

Endowment Fund for the Poppen Hospice Residence. All of this generosity gave the organization a way to buy land and build a new, free-standing structure tailored to the comfort of our patients.

The Capital Campaign led by Rick Amidon, President of Baker College of Muskegon, and involving thirty community volunteers, set out to raise the remaining \$1.9 million. Today, the campaign is at 94% of goal and there are hundreds – literally, more than 700 – individuals, businesses, organizations, and foundations who have contributed to see this project happen. There is a Kresge Foundation Challenge Grant for \$150,000 – meaning if Hospice raises the remaining goal amount by January 1, 2006, less the \$150,000 challenge, then The Kresge Foundation puts in the final \$150,000. That is the work that continues; finishing the Capital Campaign and securing The Kresge Foundation dollars.

Hospice of Muskegon-Oceana plans to begin serving patients at the Poppen Hospice Residence just as soon as the community has an opportunity to visit. Believing that once the patients are there, it's their home, not ours, we have an invitation to extend. The public is invited to a Community Open House on Sunday, September 18th from noon until three. Trolley service will be provided from the JC Penney parking lot at the Lakes Mall.