

Press Release

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Harbor Hospice

Dignity for dying. Hope for living.

Muskegon, MI – Hospice of Muskegon County incorporated in 1982 and has served thousands of area families since that time. In 1993, Oceana County was added to the service area and the name. Today, Hospice of Muskegon-Oceana becomes Harbor Hospice.

The mission is unchanged: Bringing empathy, expertise and excellence to end of life caring. The reasons for the name change are related to geography and scope of services.

Hospice home care, grief support services, residential care, and palliative care are all programs of Harbor Hospice. And, all of the programs go beyond the borders of Muskegon and Oceana Counties. People in need of such services need to know that they are eligible and welcome to come into care with Harbor Hospice. Mary Anne Gorman, Executive Director, says, "On the eve of the 25th anniversary of our founding, it seems very appropriate to recommit to our mission of making quality end of life care accessible to all who need it. Our new name also signals our growth and commitment to serve more patients and families and to serve them earlier and in a broader geographic area."

Hospice of Muskegon County, Inc. began with a card table for an office and \$40 in the bank. The Community Foundation for Muskegon County was an early backer and Sue Wierengo, now a City Commissioner, was the first Director of the agency. Today, the agency employs more than 100 and cares for more patients than that on a daily basis.

Mary Anne Gorman, Executive Director, with more than twenty years of service with Harbor Hospice, has witnessed that growth. She remembers when the agency was teaching people the word hospice. In 2005, the community rallied around Harbor Hospice and completed a successful capital campaign to build the Poppen Hospice Residence near the Lakes Mall.

Visitors to the Harbor Hospice administrative offices in the Hartshorn Centre in Downtown Muskegon may think the inspiration for the name came from the view outside. In truth, the name was selected because it reflects what hospice offers – a place of shelter and calm.

Joy Nelson, Hospice Volunteer and former Board President, explains the name change in this way. "Our patients today come to us from a larger region than ever before. The new name better reflects the scope of our work."