

FALL 2021 THIS IS YOUR HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS

## THE HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS CELEBRATION COURTYARD: A PLACE TO CELEBRATE LIVES AND MEMORIES



Ann Minton Lake

Later this year, Hospice of East Texas will begin construction on a new addition to the Hospice campus in Tyler.

The Celebration Courtyard will be constructed at the entrance to the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center. Bordered by low walls and centered with brick walkways, the courtyard will feature a garden with all new plantings and trees, creating a beautiful and welcoming entrance.

The Celebration Courtyard will be dedicated to the memory of Ann Minton Lake, long-time volunteer, supporter, board member and friend to

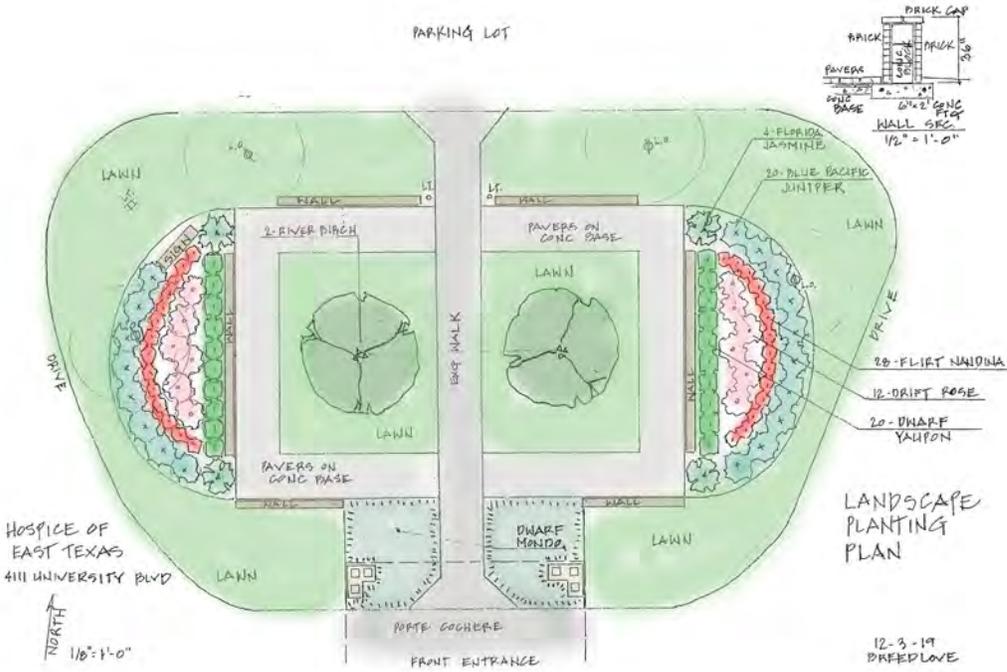
Hospice of East Texas. "It is fitting that this new entrance to our facility be dedicated to Ann Lake," said Marjorie Ream, Hospice of East Texas President and CEO. "Ann was always gracious and welcoming, as the new entrance will be, and she herself was the creator of beautiful gardens, both public and private. There could be no more fitting tribute to Ann than this."

The Celebration Courtyard will be a place of tribute, inspiring all who enter the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center – staff, volunteers, board members, and most importantly patients and their families. It will also create a fundraising opportunity for Hospice of East Texas by offering the opportunity to celebrate the life of someone held dear with the donation of a wall plaque or walkway paver.

"The fundraising aspect of this project also fits Ann," said Ms. Ream. "She was immensely practical and always attentive to Hospice's bottom line."

Construction of the Celebration Courtyard has been funded by private donations. Funds raised from the sale of bricks and plaques will go to support the mission of Hospice of East Texas and our commitment to serve all who seek our care, regardless of their financial circumstances.

For information on the purchase of plaques and bricks in the Celebration Courtyard, visit our website at [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org) or call Kristen Seeber, Vice President of Development at 903-266-3402.





## BUTTERFLY RELEASE

The butterfly symbolizes many things: rebirth, growth, transformation, and hope. There is a lot about the symbol of the butterfly that resonates through what we do here at Hospice of East Texas. For that reason, our Bereavement Department was glad to have the opportunity to hold a Butterfly Release Ceremony for our community this past June. The event was held outdoors, at the Flag Court of our inpatient facility, HomePlace. We were overwhelmed at the amazing turnout! Though, as happy as we were to gather with our friends and neighbors, there was, of course, a common thread between all in attendance that day – loss.



After hearing of butterfly releases done in other areas, our Bereavement Team knew this was something our community could benefit from as well. "We were glad to hold this event because it's truly for everyone! A fully inclusive event for anyone, of any age, who wanted to be there," Bereavement Administrative Assistant Courtney Waggener said. "People were so ready to gather again, and to celebrate the lives of those loved ones they had lost. And having the hands-on representation of that person's life in the form of a butterfly to release into the world, was the perfect way for them to do just that."



Stacy Sanders, Director of Chaplains and Bereavement Services, mentioned that one of his favorite aspects of the event was how everyone simply, "came as they were" with their friends, families and even their pets, to share in the experience together. Over 100 gathered at the HomePlace Flag Court that morning.



Hope was truly "in the air" as attendees of all ages, from near and far, gathered to celebrate the lives of those they loved and lost. One group in particular stood out to the Bereavement Team... A group of individuals who had never officially met but were far from strangers. These men and women who'd been attending the virtual support group sessions through HOET, were able to meet face-to-face for the first time, and stood together as a "family" for the Butterfly Release Ceremony. Needless to say, the magic of the butterfly release was felt by all.

Our Bereavement Department is constantly adapting their grief support offerings to meet the needs of our patients' families and our community. Last year, we had our first virtual grief support groups, which we quickly realized were not only safer for the attendees, but more convenient as well. Our team has enhanced the bereavement resources on our website to better accommodate families who are not comfortable coming into the office to receive them. Though we all hope to return to in-person support groups, seminars, and other events soon, we are glad to offer services that can be accessed from anywhere! Please visit [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org/support](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org/support) for a list of upcoming Grief Support Offerings from our Bereavement Department, and know that you are always welcome, and never alone.

**Pre-Registration for Grief Support Offerings Required: 903-266-3400, extension 127 (Covid-19 guidelines will be observed in group settings.)**

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

"Always live life loving," says Wes Bynum, who began volunteering for Hospice of East Texas in 1995 and retired 25 years later as Director of Care Support Services. An ordained minister and chaplain, Wes currently serves as a consultant for HOET and specializes in bereavement/grief education.

"I'm here to tell you there's nothing wrong with you," said Wes when leading a recent Hospice of East Texas grief seminar. "You are just grieving." Those words struck home for Mrs. B. who was starting to feel like she was going crazy. She and her husband had a favorite hamburger place in their hometown and went there often. After her husband's death, Mrs. B. went to get a hamburger and found she couldn't get through the door. "My feet felt like they were in cement," she said. "I literally froze on the spot and had to turn around and leave." She tried again a few days later and the same thing happened. A waitress she knew well came outside and found her and offered her a to-go box, which she accepted. In the grief seminar Wes shared that for the longest time after his wife died, he couldn't go into a Cracker Barrel restaurant. He had shared many a meal there with his wife and family, and it was just too

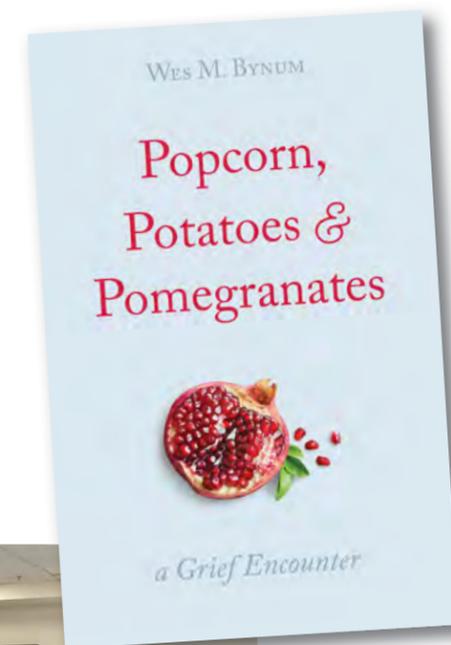
hard. "When I heard that, I almost stood up and screamed!" said Mrs. B. "That right there was enough to make me feel better."

Wes has a way of helping us understand that when we lose that which we love, we grieve. Grief is an extension of our love. The stronger our love is, the stronger our grief reaction will be. Hospice of East Texas is here to help with the healing process. Bereavement support opportunities are not only available to the patients and families who receive our care but also to the entire community – including grieving children – all offered free of charge.



Wes Bynum

Wes Bynum is also the author of a new book – *Popcorn, Potatoes & Pomegranates* – published earlier this year. Through his unvarnished writing, Wes reaches the reader through an intimate sharing of his own personal experience of love and loss. Copies are available for purchase (\$10 each) at the Hospice of East Texas, 4111 University Blvd in Tyler, or by order through Amazon.



LIGHT UP A *Life*

The holiday season is approaching – a time of light & love, a time to give...  
 In memory of someone you cherish  
 In honor of someone who gives light to your life  
 A gift to family, friends, or business associates

A meaningful way to give is through our annual signature fundraiser. Your special support of Light Up A Life ensures that our staff and volunteers are equipped to serve every patient and family who needs our extraordinary care and compassion at a very tender time. Please be watching your mailbox for Light Up A Life materials to arrive in late October or visit our website [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org) for more information. THANK YOU!

The HOSPICE of East Texas Foundation



Wes leading a recent grief seminar.



## I CAN DO HARD THINGS.

Amy Arndt, Austin Texas

### In November of 2020, my stepfather James Wilkins was one of the 500K Americans to die of Covid-19.

Several years prior, James, my mother Judy, and my stepsister Melissa had the conversation we all hope to avoid. Across the desk from a beloved family doctor, they sat in silence as they heard the word “Alzheimer’s.” The diagnosis brought a cloud of dread that spread across our large family. James had four children from his first marriage, and two bonus children from his marriage to Judy. An expert local historian, well-respected advertising artist and avid reader, James lived a life of gleeful curiosity. It was devastating to imagine that incredibly sharp brain slowly fading away.

We kept the news of James’ diagnosis within a small number of family and friends. His condition progressed slowly at first, but by the summer of 2020, the demands of James’ diagnosis became more than Judy could manage. With Covid-19 making face-to-face meetings impossible, the siblings met virtually to support Judy in making the decision to place James in a long-term care facility.

James moved into a Tyler nursing home in October. Because of Covid-19 precautions, we learned to navigate visits through thick glass windows. Judy created flipcharts with large print messages that read “I love you,” drawing pictures of her face with hearts around it to remind James of her love for him. We learned how to “hold hands” through the window to create some semblance of human touch - a vital need for our most vulnerable. Each visit

---

*“Hospice of East Texas does God’s work, giving families strength to manage the transition from life to death. They do it with extraordinary care and compassion. We’ll be forever thankful for our rich and meaningful experience there.”*

---

brought more sadness and more frustration, but we were thankful that at that point, there were zero Covid cases in the facility where James lived.

We were lucky. Until we weren’t.

Just weeks after moving into the nursing facility, James was diagnosed with Covid-19. Due to his frailty and age it was unclear if he would survive. We began making calls to inquire about moving James into Hospice care. Emotions and expectations were high on our side, but each conversation with a Hospice of East Texas team member gave us immediate comfort. We made the easy decision to move James to The Hospice of East Texas.

The first step was to meet with Mike Pace, Homecare Staff RN, who came to Judy and James’ home, following the Covid-19 precautions of mask-wearing and social distancing. Beneath the mask that might make one feel less connected, Mike’s compassion and genuine concern for our family was evident from the start. He led our most difficult conversations with compassion, humor, and empathy.

Not only was Mike an expert at handling our vocal and opinionated family, he was also incredibly diligent in helping make the transition smooth. Due to the urgency of the matter, time wasn’t on our hands. Mike worked magic by getting the necessary approvals taken care of so that James was transported to Hospice expeditiously despite administrative red tape on the nursing facility side. Mike was so dedicated that he made a second home visit after hours on the weekend to check in on us. Over late night Mexican food,

more tears and laughter, Mike comforted us in our time of pending grief.

At the intake interview, because of the complications of Covid-19, our intake nurse Johnny Justis had to inform us that there might be circumstances in which we wouldn’t be able to go into James’ room. The painful reality was that if James were to show the signs of dying, we would be able to see him, but if he were to appear to improve, we would not be allowed inside. While this policy was difficult to navigate, Johnny masterfully helped manage our emotions, helping us understand the reasons behind the policy. We connected with Johnny on a human level because of his skill and sensitivity to our situation.

From there, we met Dr. Andrew O’Kelley who was supervising the patients in the Covid-19 area. I found an opportunity to go into his office, where I walked in and said, “I need you to tell me how much time James has.” I explained Judy’s children needed to help prepare her for what came next.

Dr. O’Kelley explained that based on James’ health and his Covid-19 diagnosis, he believed that he would pass in a matter of days. I kept a brave face, trying to be “all business.” Dr. O’Kelley smiled.

“Every time a family member asks me how long a patient has, and I give them an answer, I can hear God laughing.”

His words were a gentle reminder that although James was facing the end of his life, the timing was in God’s hands.

That afternoon, with James’ condition worsening, Mom and I suited up in the proper safety gear to visit. As I watched Mom pass through the plastic barrier to the Covid-19 area, I let go of being “all business” as a wave of emotion hit me. Nurse Johnny was with me, and effortlessly gave me the strength to follow Mom into James’ room. My step sister and brother-in-law sat outside the window as we spent our final moments with James. Mom and I held James’ hand through gloves, stroked his face, told him that his family loved him, and said our goodbyes.

Outside, as we prepared to go home and rest, Chaplain Tim Wade met with us and offered a prayer, giving comfort to a family facing unbearable grief.

James passed peacefully in the night under the loving care of the nursing staff. When we received the phone call, I went back into “all business” mode and drove to Hospice to handle the practical matters. In the car on the way to Hospice, I repeated a mantra quoted by a well-known motivational author: “I can do hard things.” As I entered the front doors, a woman walked in front of me, wiping away tears. I noticed the back of her shirt, which quoted Philippians 4:13: “I can do this through him who gives me strength.” In the midst of my grief, I smiled, imagining God laughing.

Hospice of East Texas does God’s work, giving families strength to manage the transition from life to death. They do it with extraordinary care and compassion. We’ll be forever thankful for our rich and meaningful experience there.



## A PATH FORWARD FOR THOSE LIVING WITH ADVANCED OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

Sometimes people fall into the “black hole” of the healthcare system.

They have one or more chronic medical issues for which a cure is not possible. Maybe it's heart disease or lung issues or a combination of conditions. The healthcare team has done everything possible, but they are not going to get well. They are managing, but their quality of life is not great. They aren't yet ready, physically or psychologically, for hospice care. They are looking for other answers, other resources.

Perhaps PATHWAYS is the answer. It was for Mr. R.

Mr. R. had suffered from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) for several years. He made frequent trips to the emergency room by ambulance when he just couldn't breathe, and the ER physicians discovered he was not taking his medicines as prescribed. They referred him to PATHWAYS, a program of Hospice of East Texas which provides educational and supportive care for those living with chronic illness.

At her first visit with Mr. R., the PATHWAYS coordinator discovered that he had no primary physician, no resources to buy the medicines he was prescribed, and no transportation to get to the doctor. Mr. R. just waited until things got bad and then went to the emergency room. The PATHWAYS staff was able to help Mr. R. access a primary care physician, find a resource to help pay for his medicine and get access to medical transportation services.

“We like to describe ourselves as ‘friends’”, says July Johnson-Minnick, PATHWAYS Program Coordinator. “We walk alongside our patients, seeking resources and answers together. Maybe they need practical help, like finding someone to sit with them or help with VA or Social Security benefits. Maybe they want to talk through the emotional



Pathways Team: Lana Flannery, BSNRN, Donna Owen, July Johnson-Minnick, LMSW

issues they are facing. Living with advanced or chronic illness can be challenging, knowing there is nothing else medically that can be done for them.”

PATHWAYS is a program of Hospice of East Texas, but according to the PATHWAYS team, “hospice care is not always the first right answer.” Although PATHWAYS patients are “terminal” in the sense that there is nothing else that can be done for their medical condition, for most it is not time for hospice care. “We can often help them find resources, practical resources and emotional and supportive resources, that improve their quality of life,” says

Ms. Johnson-Minnick. “If and when it's time for hospice care, Hospice of East Texas will be there for them if they choose.”

Anyone can make a referral to the PATHWAYS program, and there is no charge for its services. “This is just another way Hospice of East Texas gives back to our community,” says Lana Flannery, RN, BSN. “We have medical knowledge, knowledge of community resources, knowledge of the stress that living with chronic illness can cause. We want to share that!”

Donna Owen, PATHWAYS team support specialist, has served at Hospice of East Texas in a variety of capacities for almost thirty years, and finds this program among the most rewarding of her career. “Just calling to check on people can mean so much to them,” she says. “Many of our patients, before PATHWAYS, had little social contact. That alone can be so hard. I check in regularly, see how they're doing, what they need, what else we can do. And you know what? They ask me, ‘Donna, how are YOU doing?’ Those relationships are important to us both!”

For more information on the PATHWAYS program, contact July Johnson-Minnick at 903-903-266-3400 ext. 409.



Marji Ream  
President/CEO

## A MESSAGE FROM MARJI

HOPE...a beautiful word, a feeling of expectation, a sense of trust.

At the Hospice of East Texas, we believe in hope. We see it every day – in the eyes of the patients and families we serve. We hear it every day – in the voices of our dedicated staff and volunteers. And, together, we hold on to it – every day.

Truly, HOPE BLOOMS here and in our community through the goodness and generosity of YOU – our dearest friends and supporters, including our gracious sponsors and a devoted committee for an event which sadly was canceled due to a resurgence of new COVID cases and our responsibility to keep those we love protected. Nevertheless, they (and you!) stand with us, recognizing our sacred work continues.

We have traveled many miles together, through the pandemic and other challenges, and we look forward to many more miles, caring for our neighbors through our mission. Thank you for your loyalty. Thank you for your hope. You allow us to put our patients first, no matter what happens next...



We can't say **thank you** enough to these steadfast supporters... a dedicated committee, the best of friends, our faithful community partners. Though our September 8th event was canceled, these heroes continue to uplift the heart of our mission and make the love possible!

Proceeds from Hope Blooms will benefit HomePlace, Hospice of East Texas' in-patient facility – a place like no other, a place where extraordinary care and compassion are given and received.

**This is us. This is your Hospice of East Texas.**

### Rose Sponsor

Joyce Buford

### Invitation Sponsor

Austin Bank

### Centerpiece Sponsor

Bea Schroeder

### Azalea Sponsors

Anonymous  
Christina and Garnett Brookshire  
CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances  
Health System  
Johnna Fullen and Kaela Young  
Jasper Ventures  
Cathy Shipp & Associates Realty, LLC  
Penny K. Stephens  
Dolly and Stephen Wolf

### Sunflower Sponsors

Nancy Abernathy  
Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County  
Anonymous  
Paula and Joe Bates  
Evelyn Bochow  
Derrith and Bob Bondurant  
Vicki and Lindsey Bradley

Randall Childress - Edward Jones  
Beryl Cobb and Kathie Mack  
Kelly Eltife  
A.S. Genecov Foundation  
Gollob Morgan Peddy PC  
Health Science Center at UT Tyler  
Higginbotham - Linda Sellers &  
David Zamora  
Mary Irwin  
Prothro Wilhelmi & Co /  
Nancy and Bob Roseman  
Ross & Shoalmire Elder Law  
Attorneys, P.L.L.C  
Southside Bank  
Texas Bank and Trust  
UT Health East Texas / Vicki Briggs  
Sherilyn Willis

### Magnolia Sponsors

Kathy and Wayne Babin  
Bosworth & Associates  
Betty and Wes Bynum  
Shannon Dacus  
Twinkle Duncan  
Sherry and Ken Dunn  
East Texas Communities Foundation  
Mary Lauren Faulkner

Sharon Kay Howell / Travel Masters  
Charlotte and Tommy Hyde  
Pam Lisner  
Meela and Juan Mejia / TJC  
Ellen and John Musselman  
Dr. Julie V. Philley  
Marji Ream  
Stephenie and Randy Roberts  
Sandy Shepard  
Suzie and David Teegarden  
Visiting Angels  
Jennifer Walsh

### Camellia Sponsors

Betsy Ellis  
Express Employment Professionals  
Loreita and Reginald Garrett  
Henry & Peters PC  
Leigh Hunt Goodson  
Kristi Johnson Photography  
Nancy Lamar  
Sheryl Rogers Palmer  
Deborah Race  
Laurie Rossman  
Marie Starling  
Stewart Family Funeral Home

### Media In-Kind Sponsor

KLTV

### Supporters

Jana Autry  
DeeDee Bufe  
Diana Koop  
Marilyn Lockett  
Nita Meads  
Lisa Mueller  
Debbie Roosth  
Kelley Uzzell  
Agnes Ward  
Carrie Wolf

### Committee

Jennifer Walsh, Chair  
Andrea Barron  
Ashley Fettig  
Elizabeth Hutcheson  
Frances Jackson  
Renee Porter  
Debbie Roosth



4111 University Blvd  
Tyler, Texas 75701  
903-266-3400 | 800-777-9860

Non Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Tyler, Texas  
Permit No. 130

## GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

*Some tips for giving to Hospice of East Texas that could be beneficial to you as well:*

### Take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover

If you own an IRA and are at least 72 years of age (70 ½ if you turned 70 ½ before January 1, 2020) the law requires you to take a minimum distribution from your IRA each year and pay income tax on the distribution. You can give all or part of the distribution from your IRA to Hospice of East Texas, tax-free, and have it count as all or part of your required minimum distribution for the year.

Consult with your professional advisor or call us at Hospice of East Texas to see if these benefits might be helpful to you:

- The amount of your gift is counted towards your required minimum distribution for the year
- The amount of your gift is excluded from your reported income for federal tax purposes – your gift is 100% tax free!
- Most importantly – your gift may be used immediately to support Hospice of East Texas' patients and their families.

To benefit from the tax advantages of this giving strategy, you must make the gift from your IRA directly to Hospice.

### Plan for the future

Often families express their desire to “give back” to Hospice of East Texas in a meaningful way. A simple bequest to Hospice of East Texas in your will is a wonderful way to do that and could be the most important charitable gift you ever make. You may designate a specific dollar amount, a particular asset such as securities or real estate, a fixed percentage of your entire estate, or leave your residuary estate after you have provided for loved ones.

We encourage you to speak with your attorney, accountant or estate planning advisor about ways to take care of your family and meet your individual goals while helping to support a cause you care about – the mission of Hospice of East Texas.

If you would like information on any of these giving opportunities, visit our website ([www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org)), email ([nlamar@hospiceofeasttexas.org](mailto:nlamar@hospiceofeasttexas.org)) or call us at 903-266-3402.

## OUR MISSION

Hospice of East Texas seeks to enhance the quality of life for individuals and families dealing with life-limiting illness and to assist bereaved family members by providing compassionate, comprehensive, coordinated care and support.