

THE  
**Companion**  
Winter 2021

The Newsletter of Blue Ridge Hospice



Going the Extra Miles  
to Bring Quality Hospice  
Care to Rural Virginia pg. 6

2021 Community  
Benefit Report



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## From Our President & CEO



Dear Friends and Supporters of Blue Ridge Hospice,

Blue Ridge Hospice benefits from the generous support of the communities we're privileged to serve.

And we're proud that we, in turn, have been able to benefit the communities that have supported us throughout our 40 years of community service. Not just through the end-of-life care and grief support we provide – which is a given. But also through the positive impact Blue Ridge Hospice has in terms of contributing to the health of the local economy, providing quality and rewarding jobs, bettering the quality of life for all, and helping keep our environment a little greener.

That's what part of this publication is about – a report to you on the benefits we deliver that go far beyond our stated mission.

That mission – *brightening life's journey with quality and compassionate care for all whom we are privileged to serve* – of course is at the heart of who we are and what we do.

As I reflect upon the journey we've been on since last January, when I was given the opportunity to lead Blue Ridge Hospice, I continue to marvel at the incredible strength, resiliency, generosity and tenacity of our staff, volunteers, healthcare partners and friends across our service area.

So much of our mission, in fact, goes well beyond what we are required to do by Medicare and Medicaid to ensure that we provide that extra level of care that brightens life's journey. Our extra level of care encompasses music therapy, pet therapy, grief and loss counseling, spiritual counseling, equine therapy, programs for children and teenagers struggling to understand and work through the loss of a loved one, parents struggling to understand and work through the loss of child, and special programs to honor and recognize the veterans among us for the sacrifices they've made. Our extra level of care also includes our Inpatient Care Center in Winchester, where no one is ever turned away for lack of funding.

What can you do to help make all that possible? Please consider making a generous gift to the Blue Ridge Hospice Patient Fund so that no one goes without the care they deserve. Support our auxiliary therapy and counseling programs, support our new Paws & Purrs program to care for patient's canine and feline companions when no one else is available, support the work of our We Honor Veterans volunteers.

Your timely support can make all the difference to a senior who's outlived all of her kin, a child trying to make sense of a sudden loss, a family hoping to make one more lasting memory and even a beloved pet whose owner has a limited time left to live.

Your support can brighten many a life's journey.

With gratitude,

Cheryl Hamilton Fried  
President & CEO



# Pause to Remember Marks a Year of Grief and Loss

How to remember those we've lost during a year marked by grief and loss? And how to recognize the current hurt while also honoring the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and the loss of more than 3,000 lives in a single day?

The Blue Ridge Hospice grief and loss counselors knew how, hosting a community-wide Pause to Remember on September 9 to comfort all those in our community who have lost a loved one in the past year and to remember and honor all those our nation lost 20 years ago on September 11<sup>th</sup>. It was a beautiful, clear evening wrapped in the embrace of a rainbow and uplifted by the grace of those sharing in this pause of remembrance.

In addition to a traditional memorial candle-lighting, our Music Therapists serenaded participants with poignant a-cappella music, both spiritual and secular. Blue Ridge Hospice team members offered words of strength and support, helping to uplift and cradle those in attendance.

President and CEO Cheryl Hamilton Fried said, "Blue Ridge is committed to supporting families through the entire grief process, including our Kaleidoscope Project for children of all ages and our Walking Through Grief support group, which encourages people to come together and socialize during their grief journey." During the remembrance portion of the program, Cheryl spoke the name of her husband, Ron, who died several years ago under the care of hospice.

Chaplain Kenneth Patrick spoke of the importance of love and acceptance during times of loss and advised mourners to remember to leave space for grief.



*The Stickel family attended Pause to Remember to honor and celebrate the life of their beloved husband and father.*

"Since we weren't able to hold this annual event in 2020 because of the pandemic, it was important for us to create a warm and inviting atmosphere – even with social distancing – where anyone who suffered a loss in the past year could remember a life well lived and a person well loved," said Susana Calley, LCSW.

"We're here to honor our husband and father," said Linda Stickel. "It was important to us to come as a family, to celebrate his life and all he did to provide for us. We miss him so much, and found healing in this beautiful music and these meaningful words. Thank you for providing this service." The Stickel family said they attended the 2021 Pause to Remember not just to celebrate their loved one's life in person, but to do so with others who had suffered a similar loss.

In 2020, Blue Ridge Hospice grief and loss counselors served nearly 200 bereaved individuals across our service area. We provided approximately 600 counseling visits (mostly virtual due to the pandemic) and our volunteers made more than 2,500 calls to the recently bereaved.

All of Blue Ridge Hospice's grief and bereavement services are available to anyone in the community who has suffered a loss, regardless of whether that loss involved a hospice patient. All services are provided at no cost to participants and are made possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters and donors.







## Butterfly Run Raises \$20,000 for Unfunded Services

On a picture-perfect fall day, nearly 200 runners and walkers gathered at University of Virginia’s Blandy Experimental Farm (a part of the State Arboretum of Virginia) for the 19th Annual Butterfly Run 5K/10K as a remembrance of loved ones lost and to raise funds in support of Blue Ridge Hospice. The two races wound through the beautiful Virginia countryside, including historic Long Branch farm. The October 2, 2021, event raised nearly \$20,000, which will help provide charity care and funding for Blue Ridge Hospice unfunded services such as grief counseling and music therapy.

Due to the pandemic, the Butterfly Run was conducted virtually in 2020.

In addition to walking the 5K, Sherry Welsh (of Cross Junction) was a champion fundraiser, raising \$1,250 on her own, which her employer, Monoflo International, matched! She walked and secured her pledges to support what she described as Blue Ridge Hospice’s “much needed services to families in our community.”

President and CEO Cheryl Hamilton Fried competed in the 5K herself and later thanked everyone involved with the event. “Your support will help ensure no patient in need will ever be turned away based on the inability to pay,” she said, “and thanks to support like this, Blue Ridge Hospice will be able to continue providing care and support to the entire community, which allowed us to provide nearly \$850,000 of unfunded and underfunded care last year.”

Top finishers in the 5K included men’s champion **Chance Crosen** (of Winchester), with the blazing-fast time of 17:17, and women’s champion **Danielle Blank** (of Front Royal), who finished at 24:15. In the 10K, **Zanny Arey** (of Bridgewater) won the women’s division and finished first overall with a time of 41:12. **Jesse Bixler** (of Berryville) finished first in the men’s division with a time of 43:15.





# Music Therapy Partnership with Shenandoah University Brings Comfort to Patients

Thanks to a long-term, rewarding partnership between Blue Ridge Hospice and Shenandoah University, Blue Ridge Hospice offers patients a comprehensive, meaningful music therapy program and students at the world-renowned Shenandoah Conservatory gain valuable, hands-on clinical experience on their way to a music therapy degree.

“It’s a win-win-win for Blue Ridge Hospice, Shenandoah University, and the community that both organizations are privileged to serve,” observed Jennifer Martin, RN, CHPN, Chief Clinical Officer at Blue Ridge Hospice.

Music therapists provide support and healing to patients and their families through the universal language of music. Blue Ridge Hospice’s team uses a patient’s preferred music to address physical, social, emotional and spiritual goals with the intention of increasing quality of life, decreasing pain, alleviating spiritual suffering, and promoting relaxation, according to Leigh Jenks, MT-BC, one of three full-time music therapists at Blue Ridge Hospice. “This unique form of therapy can either be active (in which the patient plays an important role in creating music), or passive (in which the patient responds or listens as the therapist plays),” says Leigh, who also is a music therapy professor at Shenandoah University.

As a result of the long-standing partnership with both the undergraduate and graduate music therapy programs at Shenandoah University, Blue Ridge Hospice has been able to provide both practicum experience for current students, and internships for recent graduates. The Blue Ridge Hospice-Shenandoah University affiliation has helped launch the careers of seven (soon to be eight!)



Katalina Diller

post-graduate interns. For the fall 2021 semester, Blue Ridge Hospice is hosting three music therapy practicum students from Shenandoah University who work under the direction of our music therapists while gaining valuable hands-on experience working with seriously ill patients. Practicing in a hospice environment gives music therapy students a valuable opportunity to consider continuing to work with a hospice provider after graduation and certification as a music therapist.

“I am excited to work with Blue Ridge Hospice because you get to be there for people when they really need it. It is a different side of music therapy that I have not experienced before,” explains Katalina Diller, when asked why she chose Blue Ridge Hospice to fulfill her practicum requirement. “I chose to go into music therapy because I want to help people with my passion for music.”

Some of the techniques Katalina and the rest of the music therapy team utilize are:

- Heartbeat music – using the patient’s heartbeat as the rhythmic base for music
- Live or recorded music listening
- Singing
- Playing instruments
- Creating a musical timeline

Blue Ridge Hospice’s music therapy program is unfunded by Medicare or Medicaid, and is made possible by both the generous support of our donors and our superb working relationship with Shenandoah University.

Commenting on the unique resource that Shenandoah University provides, Blue Ridge Hospice President and CEO Cheryl Hamilton Fried said, “We’re so grateful to have such a qualified and talented pool in our immediate vicinity to work with. These students’ contribution to our clinical program is unmatched in our area, and we consider ourselves lucky to have such a mutually beneficial relationship with Shenandoah University.”





# Blue Ridge Hospice Goes the Extra Miles to Bring Quality Hospice Care to Rural Virginia

Others may see serving patients in rural areas as a challenge. Blue Ridge Hospice sees it as an opportunity.

Blue Ridge Hospice Chief Clinical Officer Jennifer Martin, RN, CHPN, states, “Some would say the long distance between visits is a barrier. For me it was a benefit. I didn’t have to sit in traffic, I knew every back road, and the scenery was absolutely beautiful. The drive provided me with time to reflect on my last visit and plan for the next.”

Much like the United States Postal Service, “neither snow nor rain nor heat” are obstacles to the ability of Blue Ridge Hospice to reach those we care for. For those care providers who put excessive mileage on their vehicles in providing in-home care to patients, Blue Ridge Hospice gives employees the option to utilize a leased vehicle. “For those who regularly travel back roads through hills and valleys in all kinds of weather,

that, of course, is a four-wheel drive vehicle,” Jennifer explains. “We know we are needed and we take the necessary steps to ensure we are there.”

Beautiful Northern Virginia, with its diverse terrain of mountains and valleys, is largely comprised of rural areas, where the geography can make access to the right medical care at the right time anything but easy. With our mission to brighten life’s journey with quality and compassionate care for all whom we are privileged to serve, Blue Ridge Hospice goes the extra miles to ensure that everyone who needs our services is provided with the best-possible support that we can provide.

“There are many challenges to providing hospice care in rural service areas, such as lack of adequate access to local resources and financial concerns,” observes Miranda Ritter, BSW, a Blue Ridge Hospice medical social worker who provides care to patients and families residing in rural Northern Virginia. “Blue Ridge Hospice has a wide-reaching network of resources available to our team to share with our patients and their families. From our medical care and spiritual support to our music therapy and grief and bereavement programs, Blue Ridge Hospice staff thrives on our ability to go the extra miles to ensure those we care for have everything they need. Regardless of where a patient lives, the Blue Ridge Hospice staff serving rural Northern Virginia are committed to providing excellent service and education with integrity and while upholding the dignity and worth of every patient and family.







“To meet these key values and ethics,” Miranda continued, “we provide our team members with training and continuous hands-on experience to keep members well knowledgeable in what they do.”

The rewards of providing care in under-served areas are diverse and countless. Seeing the joy on a patient’s face when a music therapist visits and plays their favorite song. Seeing tense muscles relax as a patient reminisces about the memories associated with the music. Feeling the patient’s caregivers take a deep breath and a moment to share in that joy, a moment to let the many responsibilities of caregiving go and be fully present with their loved one. Understanding the relief that family members feel when they have the support available to provide them with training and education on how to properly care for their loved one. The love and release that our patients feel when our chaplains visit and comfort them with conversations around their faith.

These rewards are intangible, and the reason why Blue Ridge Hospice takes on the challenges of serving such a vast rural area. Having the resources necessary to provide these services and reap these rewards – no matter how remote the location – is how we fulfill our mission.



Jennifer Martin



Miranda Ritter



## Mission Statement

Brightening life's journey with quality and compassionate care for all whom we are privileged to serve.

## Vision Statement

To be the leading not-for-profit provider of comprehensive care to enhance the life and autonomy of those we serve.

## Values

- Dignity
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Diversity
- Excellence

## Blue Ridge Hospice

- Offers quality end-of-life care to those facing serious illness.
- Helps patients remain as independent as possible in making decisions.
- Honors patient and family choices and addresses the individual needs of those we serve.
- Treats every patient with the utmost respect and dignity.
- Manages pain and symptoms so patients live as fully and comfortably as possible.
- Supports anyone in our community affected by death, dying, and loss
- Focuses on the quality of each person's life by addressing the mind, body, and spirit.



In 2020, Blue Ridge Hospice  
provided more than  
**\$850,000**  
in unfunded services!



# Unfunded Programs Make Our Hospice Care Special

When most people are asked what comes to mind when they think of the Northern Shenandoah Valley's 40-year-old, not-for-profit hospice provider, the most common answers are either the Thrift Shops ... or Blue Ridge Hospice's reputation for providing charity care – for welcoming every patient, regardless of his/her ability to pay.

Blue Ridge Hospice's mission-fulfillment work, the essence of what it means for Blue Ridge Hospice to be a not-for-profit provider, encompasses so much more than care for patients who lack the funding to pay for care they receive.

Each year, Blue Ridge Hospice dedicates a little more than 1 percent of its total spending to charity care – \$230,418 in 2020. That figure is on par with comparable not-for-profit hospices all across the country. With approximately 95 percent of hospice patients covered by Medicare or Medicaid, charity care in hospice is much different from charity care in the hospital sector, for example.

“What truly makes a not-for-profit provider like Blue Ridge Hospice different then is what we spend on what we call ‘unfunded care,’” states Cheryl Hamilton Fried, President and CEO. Medicare requires every hospice to provide certain basic services like medical care, spiritual care, the support of social workers and trained volunteers, grief and bereavement services for the survivors of our patients, prescription medications and medical equipment, and more. These are all reimbursed as part of the daily payment hospices receive for caring for Medicare- or Medicaid-funded patients.

“But there are many other programs and services Blue Ridge Hospice provides that are not required by Medicare and Medicaid and specifically not part of the reimbursement we receive. They are, in fact, ‘unfunded,’” Cheryl notes. “And, although Blue Ridge Hospice receives no reimbursement for these services, we believe they are essential to ensuring patient comfort and dignity, helping families build lasting memories of their loved one and enhancing the quality of life for all who have a limited time left to live.”

In 2020, Blue Ridge Hospice spent almost \$850,000 – three times as much – on unfunded services as on charity care, according to Chief Financial Officer Cheryl Ringer, CPA, CGMA.

Elsewhere in this report you'll read about Blue Ridge Hospice's music therapy program, which benefits tremendously from a long-term partnership with Shenandoah University. That's just one example of an unfunded service. Pet therapy and Reiki therapy

bring peace, contentment and joy to so many of our patients. The education and outreach we do across the communities we serve to help people make important decisions about the care they'd like to receive should they become seriously ill is vital to the well-being of so many of our friends and neighbors. The grief and bereavement work our grief counselors and trained volunteers do to support anyone in the community who has suffered a loss ensures that people remain active, productive, and healthy even as they mourn. The programs our grief counselors bring to the schools help teachers, counselors, and administrators identify children and teens struggling with any kind of a loss at home and help them work through it.



“In hospice, quality of life is as important as quality medical care,” says Chief Medical Officer Brendan Flynn, DO, FAAHPM, HMD. “Knowing Blue Ridge Hospice has such a rich menu of unfunded services is a great complement to the work of our hands-on caregivers.”

If these services are truly unfunded, then how is Blue Ridge Hospice able to provide them every day, year after year? It's entirely thanks to the support of donors and volunteers who support the Blue Ridge Hospice mission of “Brightening life's journey with quality and compassionate care for all whom we are privileged to serve.”

If that mission appeals to you, if you believe that providing unfunded care is essential to fulfilling that mission, then please consider making a donation to Blue Ridge Hospice. Every day, our patients and families will be richer for it.





## Volunteers Determined to Fulfill Our Hospice Mission

Like many not-for-profit hospice providers, Blue Ridge Hospice started out as an all-volunteer operation. There were no paid staff – everyone from nurses and physicians to administrators were volunteers. And there was no Medicare funding – those early volunteers relied entirely on the support of the community to purchase the supplies they needed to care for the terminally ill.

While Blue Ridge Hospice boasts a staff of approximately 250 and receives reimbursement for many of the services it provides to patients, volunteers remain an essential part of the work Blue Ridge Hospice does and its mission of “Brightening life’s journey with quality and compassionate care for all whom we are privileged to serve.”

“In 2020, even with the pandemic, 145 volunteers provided more than 15,000 hours of service to Blue Ridge Hospice, work that is valued at nearly \$430,000,” reports Tonia Sweeney, Blue Ridge Hospice Director of Volunteer Services.

Blue Ridge Hospice volunteers work in four general areas:

- Care for patients and their loved ones,
- Administrative help in the office,
- We Honor Veterans, and
- Thrift Shops (retail outlets, warehouse and e-recycling).

“People in the community know Blue Ridge Hospice has tremendous opportunities for those with some time and a desire to give something back,” Tonia adds. “Our volunteers can put a lifetime of experience to work doing something they love, or they can do something entirely new.

“As a result, I think we offer a real benefit to the community through a rewarding volunteer program that has such broad appeal.”

Some of the more interesting positions volunteers currently fill include:



# Thrift Shops Benefit the Community on Many Levels

No matter how you look at the Blue Ridge Hospice Thrift Shops, they provide an incredible benefit to all of the communities that we serve.

The eight stores are not just bargain outlets offering gently used goods for sale to bargain hunters and individuals and families managing limited budgets.

“They do so much more than that for the community,” notes Cheryl S. Ringer, CPA, CGMA, Blue Ridge Hospice’s Chief Financial Officer. “Our well-run shops, and the warehouse and pick-up services that support the shops, provide quality jobs. The shops bring in local customers as well as those visiting the area, which in turn supports the ‘shop local’ concept while helping reduce the impact on our landfills. Our impressive e-recycling program keeps older electronic items from going to waste and generates scrap metal like gold and other metals that we can re-sell. Our responsible handling of clothing that cannot be sold helps keep even more items out of local landfills.”

Our thrift shops provide rewarding volunteer opportunities across our service area. And, of course, our thrift shops generate much-appreciated funds that support the charity care and unfunded care programs of Blue Ridge Hospice – almost \$850,000 in 2020 alone.”



## **Winchester**

116 Featherbed Lane  
Winchester, VA 22601  
(540) 542-0202

## **Purcellville**

609 East Main Street  
Purcellville, VA 20132  
(540) 751-1680

## **Winchester East**

822 Berryville Avenue  
Winchester, VA 22601  
(540) 722-7183

## **Leesburg**

57 Catocin Circle NE  
Leesburg, VA 20176  
(540) 703-687-3120

## **Stephens City**

760 Warrior Drive, Suite 4  
Stephens City, VA 22655  
(540) 868-0392

## **Front Royal**

425 South Street  
Front Royal, VA 22630  
(540) 635-2268

## **Berryville**

115 West Main Street  
Berryville, VA 22611  
(540) 955-2840

## **Strasburg**

390 East King Street  
Strasburg, VA 22657  
(540) 465-1344

**Pet Therapy.** Trained volunteers and their certified pets visit patients and families in nursing homes, assisted living communities, the Blue Ridge Hospice Inpatient Care Center and private homes to provide the unconditional love and companionship of a loving, four-legged friend.



**Reiki Therapy.** Reiki masters, working as volunteers with hospice and palliative care patients, use gentle hand movements to guide the flow of healthy energy, which helps reduce stress, control pain and create positive energy.

**We Honor Veterans.** Active-duty and retired service members provide companionship and support to hospice patients who served. We Honor Veterans volunteers also present recognition ceremonies

for patients, honoring them with a service pin, certificate of appreciation, formal salute and often a small service memento.

**E-Recyclers.** Volunteers with professional or hobbyist experience with electronics help refurbish, repair or salvage parts and valuable metals from all types of electronic products donated to the Blue Ridge Hospice Thrift Shops.

“No matter what they do in their role, Blue Ridge Hospice volunteers provide a community benefit that goes well beyond hours worked,” says Blue Ridge Hospice President and CEO Cheryl Hamilton Fried. “They make Blue Ridge Hospice a better provider. They improve the lives of all of our patients and their families. They make the entire region a better place to live and work. We can’t thank them enough.”





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**Receive 25% OFF Selected Items,  
These Days In Decemeber:**

13 Ladies' Clothing	19 Furniture
14 Children's Clothing	20 Outerwear
15 Shoes & Accessories	21 Linens & Electronics
16 Men's Clothing	22 Ladies' Clothing
17 Handbags & Wallets	23 Jewelry
18 Home Decor	24 Children's Toys

### 50% Off All Holiday Items

#### Daily Door Prizes

Find "Sparkle" the Christmas Elf  
and YOU could be a winner!

### Celebrate the holidays with us!



### The Companion | Winter 2021

Created by the Blue Ridge Hospice Marketing Department

Anthony Crosen, Chief Business & Development Officer

Rachel Williams, Communications & Outreach Specialist

Richard Gowdy, Director of Philanthropy

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Proudly serving Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Shenandoah, Page, Northern Fauquier, Western Loudoun, Rappahannock, and the City of Winchester.

▼ Inpatient Care Center