

Journey

A Publication of Hospice of the Western Reserve



**HOSPICE
OF THE
WESTERN
RESERVE**

In This Issue

- 2 Anyone Can Be a Hospice Hero
Friends young and old support our mission in memorable ways.
- 3 Annual Meeting Inspires Call to Serve
Doug Sterner and guests honor their heroes.
- 4 Dealing with Holiday Grief
Navigate the special days and remember loved ones.
- 5 Annual Appeal Story
Pause. Reflect. Remember.

In Every Issue

- 2 Letter from the CEO

OUR MISSION

Hospice of the Western Reserve provides palliative and end-of-life care, caregiver support, and bereavement services throughout Northern Ohio. In celebration of the individual worth of each life, we strive to relieve suffering, enhance comfort, promote quality of life, foster choice in end-of-life care, and support effective grieving.

The Man Behind The Lens

George Weidinger donates his photographs to Hospice of the Western Reserve, but his personal story goes beyond a thousand words.

It was a mystery involving top-secret military work that lasted six decades, and a Mayfield Heights man was in the midst of it: Exactly what went on behind the fences of Fort Hunt in Fairfax County, VA, a secret military intelligence facility, that operated during World War II, was so confidential the outfit remained unknown until 1978.

It was so secret, it was not even given an official name and so confidential, the workers could not even tell their spouses about it.

“We went only by the name ‘P.O. Box 1142.’ Everybody had to sign a paper to never talk about what went on there,” World War II veteran and former P.O. Box 1142 monitor George Weidinger, says. “We didn’t say a word, even to the wives. I was only married for six months; we had other things to talk about.”

The unit’s name was designed to avoid detection.



Its mission? Help end WWII by gathering information from German prisoners.

The now-defunct facility, once part of George Washington’s farmlands—and the secret military intelligence operations that occurred there—remained a secret until 2007, when documents were released and the significance of the P.O. Box 1142’s work was publicly acknowledged. Living members

of the team reunited in 2007 for a formal dedication.

Weidinger’s path to Fort Hunt was a winding one that began half a world away and eventually led him to Cleveland and the love of his life, his wife Nina.

Born in 1923, he was raised Protestant in Vienna, Austria by his two parents who had converted from Judaism. He was forced to quit school at 15 and his family fled the country, fearing for their lives.

“In 1938 Hitler took over Austria,” he says. “His troops threatened to take

my parents to a concentration camp. I was told the next day I couldn’t go to school because I was Jewish.”

His father’s work connections brought the family to Cleveland and the German speaking Weidinger, who never finished high school, began working for a lamp manufacturer on Euclid Avenue.

He tried to join the Marines,
continued on page 4

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Letter from the CEO

Heroism through Humility

When we think of heroism, we conjure up images of someone rushing into harm's way to save another's life. But, in reality, true heroism is usually quieter than that.

One of the most heroic acts I recently witnessed unfolded at one of our hospice houses. An infant who had been born with a severe birth defect was admitted. Although the family kept him at home for as long as possible, as the end drew closer, they grew more exhausted and needed more help. They finally came to our in-patient unit where we cared for the baby for the last days of his life.

The staff and volunteers completely embraced the baby and his family. The entire time the child was in our care, he was never put down in the crib. Instead he was passed from loving hands to loving hands. He was rocked and carried so that he rested against a beating heart for the remainder of his life.

The men and women who cared for that baby and the family are heroes of mine. Each one gave an incredible emotional gift each time they cradled him in their arms.

George Weidinger is a hero of a different kind. He literally served in a top secret capacity during WWII. Today at 91-years-old, he has become a hospice hero,

raising funds to help support our programs in tribute to his wife, Nina. Hospice of the Western Reserve has become his mission.

We recognized many kinds of heroes during our annual meeting by inviting attendees to participate in a community art project. The Wall of Heroes gave participants an opportunity to remember mothers and fathers, famous heroes, teachers, clergy and friends. It was fascinating to read the messages and to see the variety of personal heroes.

Finally, I am humbled by the heroism demonstrated time and again by our patients and families. By the time we meet them, they have often faced significant adversity and yet, they are still ready to live each moment they are given. To live life as well as you can is heroic. I am grateful to be reminded of that by the families we are privileged to serve.

Best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous 2015!

Bill

William E. Finn
Chief Executive Officer



Anyone Can Be A Hospice Hero

It can be as simple as a lemonade stand. Or an afternoon in a rocking chair. Young or old, we appreciate the Hospice Heroes who help us provide ideal patient care. Over the summer, Laurel Holshuer honored the memory of her grandmother Susan A. Evans by offering refreshments and collecting donations at a family garage sale. Laurel was excited to raise money for those who helped take care of her grandmother.

Meanwhile, members and supporters of the Perry Village Amvets Ladies Auxiliary recently took to their rocking chairs for its annual Rock-A-Thon. In the past 18 years, the auxiliary has raised more than \$65,000 for Hospice of the Western Reserve programs, including the Peaceful & Proud initiative.

Hospice Heroes are people like you. They are companies, organizations, schools and community groups that organize fundraising events to honor a loved one and give back to Hospice of the Western Reserve. However you can imagine raising money, we're here to help. To learn more about the Hospice Heroes program, please contact Bridget Murphy at 216.383.3715 or b Murphy@hospicewr.org.



Annual Meeting Inspires *the Call to Serve*

ON OCTOBER 30, NEARLY 750 GUESTS, VOLUNTEERS, TEAM MEMBERS AND FRIENDS of Hospice of the Western Reserve attended the 36th Annual Meeting, held in the grand ballroom at the Cleveland Convention Center. This year's event honored the hundreds of volunteers and veterans in attendance. Throughout the evening, guests were encouraged and inspired by real-life stories of heroism. Bronze Star Recipient Doug Sterner, a national expert on military awards for heroism, shared stories of real-life heroes, in and out of uniform. The agency debuted a new film detailing a patient's call to serve and the love story that accompanied it. Guests were also called to post the names of their personal heroes on the 24-foot wide "Wall of Heroes" in the Convention Center atrium. The event was generously supported by AdvaCare Systems, Inc., The AdCom Group, Ciuni & Panichi, GMS – Group Management Services, Hanson Services, Inc., HW & Co., and The Sherwin Williams Company.



1. Doug Sterner addresses the crowd with his keynote speech, "The Defining Qualities of a True Hero." **2.** Guests post their hero tributes onto the "Wall of Heroes" community art project. **3.** Hospice of the Western Reserve CEO Bill Finn and Dwight Clark, senior vice president of new business development at FirstMerit. **4.** Guests Lindsay Marciniak and Lurlene-Kay Johnson. **5.** Hospice of the Western Reserve chairman of the board Jim Rogerson gives opening remarks. **6.** Chuck Wellman, Hospice of the Western Reserve chief medical officer with board member H. Clark Harvey. **7.** Constance W. Sallee, honorary member, board of directors and Shareefah Sabur, chief quality and education officer enjoy the pre-event reception. **8.** Ames Family Hospice House therapy dog Mojo (accompanied by his owner, volunteer Jim Tishman) dressed for the occasion. **9.** Buffalo Soldiers Honor and Color Guard from American Legion Post #315, Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center initiated the evening's program.



On the Web View the photo gallery of the 36th Annual Meeting: hospicewr.org/photos-of-the-36th-annual-meeting

Behind the Lens

continued from p. 1

but was denied since he was not a United States citizen at the time. Weidinger was eventually drafted and through connections, put his knowledge of the Germans and his German language skills to work at Fort Hunt.

“I desperately wanted to get into military intelligence,” he says. A friend from Vienna who came over a year earlier and had become an intelligence officer, helped him.

At Fort Hunt, where more than 4,000 prisoners of war were housed from 1942 through 1946, members of P.O. Box 1142 interrogated prisoners, listened in on conversations and read their correspondence. Weidinger says the work was mundane and says he didn't realize its importance until years later.

“I stayed in the room the size of a closet and used a recording device,” he says. “I was assigned three cells to listen to. Some (prisoners) would sleep, some would talk. If a conversation took place of importance, I would record it.”

Those prisoners included high-ranking enemy officers and scientists of the Third Reich including rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, Heinz Schlicke, inventor of infrared detection and top German spy Reinhard Gehlen. His work resulted in several advances for the United States.

“We found out Peenemünde (a town in Germany) was building V-2 rockets. We bombed the hell out of it,” Weidinger says.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORIES

While Weidinger's work at Fort Hunt remained quiet, his life since has been anything but. He and his wife traveled the world extensively before she died in 2011, collecting memories and taking thousands of photographs along the way.

“It was love at first sight,” he says of their meeting in 1939. “I was working at a lamp factory called Railley Corp. on Euclid Avenue assembling lamps and there were two young ladies worked in the shipping department,” George recalled. “One turned to the other and says: ‘See this guy over there? I will marry him.’ True story.” They had three children.

Mementos and photographs from their



George Weidinger has collected artifacts from his military career and world travels.

travels to 79 countries (including two trips on the Concorde and almost two dozen trips back to Vienna) are purposefully placed throughout his Mayfield Heights house. He has meticulously categorized and digitally saved those photos, framing and giving them away.

“I never sell my photos,” Weidinger says. “I give them to people and ask them to make a donation to Hospice of the Western Reserve.” It's his way of paying back to the organization that cared for his Nina.

To date, he has donated 1,018 framed photographs since Nina's death, and raised more than \$8,400 in memory of the woman he was married to for 69 years. Many of the framed photographs were donated to Hospice of the Western Reserve facilities, adorning hallways and meeting rooms.

Gratitude for the care that Nina received moved George to make this donation. “After she was admitted to Hospice our whole family came to see her. My granddaughter asked ‘how are they treating you?’ The answer of my wife, ‘Wonderful.’ Knowing what Hospice did for her gives me the incentive to give back something meaningful. I know that giving them something beautiful to look at will help them. And the fact that her name is mentioned is very important to me.”

Dealing with Holiday Grief

We experience many intense feelings after the death of a loved one. These feelings are heightened on days that we are accustomed to celebrating, such as holidays, birthdays and anniversaries. The thought and anticipation of their arrival leads to holiday grief or holiday blues. These are defined as extreme feelings of sadness, loneliness, and anxiety. Your life has changed, and when you grieve you are in essence adjusting to a life without your loved one. Adjusting means trying different things to help heal the pain and cope with your loss.

In recognizing these days we may initially think of them as commemorations rather than celebrations. You can take this time to honor your loved one. Reflect on special traditions you created and don't be afraid to create new traditions and memories.

The following are some suggestions on navigating the special days of grief and ways that others have found helpful.



Light a candle in memory of your loved one or have a candle lighting ceremony.



Buy or make special ornaments.



Donate a tree or gift in your loved one's memory



Read faith-based poems/prayers before the holiday meal.



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Three Words, One Powerful Reminder

Community generosity fulfills our mission.

PAUSE. REFLECT. REMEMBER.

Three simple words that carry a powerful message. We chose these words as the theme for the year-end appeal because all of us need to deliberately slow down a little during the frantic days that mark the end of the year. Pause for a moment. Reflect on the season. Remember those you love.

At our two residential care facilities, Ames Family Hospice House and David Simpson Hospice House, staff and volunteers always work hard to make the patients and families feel at home. During the holidays, it is even more difficult to live with serious illness. It is even more exhausting to be a caregiver. Our staff and volunteers understand that and do everything they can to relieve the burden and to make the holidays pleasant and celebratory. The houses and grounds are decorated, special meals are offered to visitors, teas and wine tastings are held and musicians entertain in the great rooms.

Through the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center, we serve hospice families and individuals who are working through grief. The holidays are bittersweet for those who are grieving and we have many resources that offer solace and community.

No matter the day of the year, our clinical staff continues to work 24/7 to meet the needs of home care patients, to visit nursing homes and hospitals and to ensure that admissions are prompt. If a patient's symptoms

become acute on Christmas Eve or New Year's Day, we won't wait until after the holiday to admit, we will answer their need immediately.

As our commitment to our patients and families never wavers, the community's support of Hospice of the Western Reserve has remained strong for 36 years. The features that distinguish us from others that offer hospice care—two full-time pharmacists; more physicians on staff than any other hospice in the region; two residential units offering specialized care; therapeutic gardens; the first and most comprehensive pediatric palliative and hospice care program in Ohio—are all possible because we receive generous community support.

By the end of 2014, we will have raised and spent approximately \$3.5 million on unreimbursed programs and services. Some, like charity care, are essential medical services. Others, like our patient enrichment programs, are not "essential" but they give joy to patients.

None of these exceptional efforts would be possible without the generosity of individuals, foundations, corporations and organizations. Every donation is key to our ability to care for your (and our) neighbors, friends, coworkers and loved ones.

Please consider making a gift to the year-end appeal today. You can make a genuine difference by visiting hospicewr.org/pause or calling 855.475.0245.



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Honoring Our Veterans

At Hospice of the Western Reserve, we honor our veterans every day. Through our **Peaceful & Proud** initiative, hospice veterans can receive care from staff members trained on how the unique life experiences of veterans shape end-of-life preferences. Through specialized, quality care, we can help patients and families live their lives with dignity. Learn more at hospicewr.org/serve-our-veterans.



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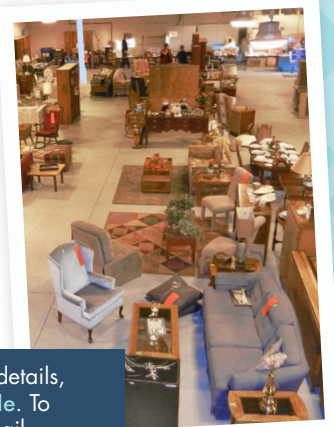
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DONATIONS NEEDED. For more details, visit hospicewr.org/warehousesale. To donate, call 216.486.6881 or email warehousesale@hospicewr.org.