

# FRANCIS HOUSE

1991

2016



*Praise and  
Thanksgiving*

*Celebrating 25 years of caring  
for those with terminal illnesses  
in our community.*



1991 ~ 2016  
Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary

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- Beth Lynn Hoey
- Nancy Light

#### NEWS FROM OUR HOUSE

is published three times a year by Francis House. The newsletter is distributed free to friends of Francis House.

For more information, comments or address changes contact:

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# A Journey of Caring



“As strangers, broken, pained they come... Looking for that welcome wherein one’s name is Friend, and one’s story, precious. When we become family, this becomes home.” Those words, penned by Sr. Joette Ebert, OSF in 1991 on the opening of Francis House, embody the mission, vision and values of our ministry. For the past 25 years, we have welcomed into our home, persons who were possessed of infinite courage and strength. Persons who, at perhaps the most vulnerable time in their lives, chose to put their trust in us and our ministry. As strangers to us, our residents have no direct knowledge that the trust they place in us is well-founded.

That they place that trust without such knowledge is a sign of great courage. It becomes then, not only our duty, but indeed our sacred duty to uphold that trust, ministering to needs with compassion, competence, joy and the unconditional love of God.

Joy may seem a word out of context for so serious a mission as caring for persons who are dying. However, for 25 years we have experienced the joy of welcoming into our

home 2,503 people, not dwelling on when the “time” might come, but living every day to the fullest. We have been part of the joy of family reunion and reconciliation, weddings, First Communion, prom night, and so many other joy-filled family events. Even in the midst of intense sorrow and grief at the hour of death, we have known the joy of family and of having been given the privilege of being a part of the blessed, special moment when our residents transitioned from this world into the next. It is a privilege reserved to the very few and we are greatly blessed for being counted in that number.

As we begin our year of celebration, we call on all our brothers and sisters who have entered into the next life from Francis House to intercede for us. We ask them to walk with us as we continue forward on our journey of caring for the strangers who enter our door seeking comfort, peace and care. And we ask God to continue to bless and guide Francis House, the caregivers, volunteers, staff, and our benefactors, that we may always be present to those most in need at the end of their lives.

In thanksgiving, peace and deep gratitude,

Nancy Light, Executive Director

*“As strangers, broken, pained  
they come...  
Looking for that welcome  
wherein one’s name is Friend,  
and one’s story, precious.  
When we become family,  
this becomes home.”*

—written by Sr. Joette Ebert in 1991  
when Francis House opened.



The stages of the butterfly depicted on the cover are the stained glass windows in the chapel of our 114 Michaels Avenue home.

# 2016, A Year of Celebration

January 26	25th Anniversary Mass (Holy Cross Church, DeWitt)
March 9	Unforgettable, An Evening with Scott Simon
March 10	Symposium: Living the Final Chapter: Compassionate Care for Persons at the End of Life (LeMoyne College)
March 17	St. Patrick's Day Giveaway <i>To purchase your tickets, contact: Adrienne Kelley at (315) 475-5422 or akelley@francishouseny.org</i>
May 9	Auxiliary of Francis House Annual Meeting and Fashion Show
September, TBD	Auxiliary of Francis House Silver Tea
October 12	There's No Place Like Home
December 6	Memorial Mass (Blessed Sacrament Church) and Gazebo Lighting

## Celebrity Chefs

Throughout 2016, we'll celebrate our 25th year with a celebrity chef and a special meal prepared for our residents. Each month we will welcome a chef from a restaurant in our community to prepare a meal. The meal will be created in the Francis House kitchen by the chef and served to our residents as our main meal at noon.

It is a fitting tribute because it exemplifies the generosity of our community that has helped to make every resident feel loved and valued.

Our January Celebrity Chefs will be Bill LaFluer and John Borchardt from Carnegie Catering.

For more detailed information on upcoming events and activities, visit us at [www.francishouseny.org](http://www.francishouseny.org)

## Living the Final Chapter: Compassionate Care for Persons at the End of Life

Thursday, March 10, 2016 at LeMoyne College

Keynote Addresses:

*"Riding the Dragon: Strengthening Your Inner Life in Challenging Times"* by Robert J. Wicks, Psy.D.  
*The Healing Potential Within Conversations*, by R. Ann Fitzgerald Ober, RN, PhD.

Breakout Session: *Spiritual Care, Planning Considerations, Social Hospice Model*

Who should attend? Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, physicians, health aides, social workers, grief counselors, therapists, long-term care administrators, pharmacists, pastoral care providers, and anyone involved in providing end of life care.

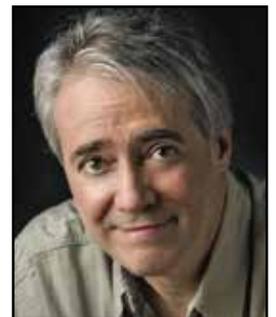
Visit [www.francishouseny.org](http://www.francishouseny.org) for more information.

A Special Dinner Presentation March 9, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

## Unforgettable, An Evening with Scott Simon

Scott Simon is one of America's most admired writers and broadcasters, having reported from all over the world and during many wars. He is the award-winning host of NPR's *Weekend Edition Saturday*.

Mr. Simon comes to Syracuse to discuss his latest book *Unforgettable*. When he began tweeting from his mother's hospital room in July 2013, Mr. Simon didn't know that his missives would soon spread well beyond his 1.2 million Twitter followers. Squeezing the magnitude of his final days with her into 140-character updates, Mr. Simon's evocative and moving meditations spread virally. Over the course of a few days, he chronicled his mother's death and reminisced about her life, revealing her humor and strength, and celebrating familial love.





## A Dream ...

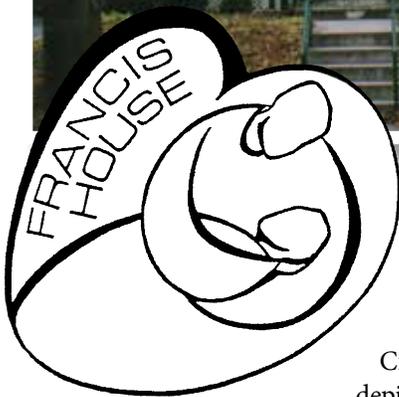
The dream of Francis House began with our founder, Sister Kathleen Osbelt. Her experiences as a hospital chaplain and a volunteer companion for a woman dying of AIDS opened her eyes to the lack of support and services available to people who were dying.

Sister Kathleen dreamed of a place where people could spend their final days filled with the love of family. She brought her idea to the leadership of the Sisters of St. Francis who welcomed the idea of Project Home.

The Syracuse community came together to support the project. The Sisters of St. Francis donated a two-family home on Michaels Avenue on the north side of Syracuse. A core group of community leaders helped raise enough money to renovate the home. Volunteers gave countless hours painting, cleaning and decorating to make the home comfortable.

(Left) Francis House began in a two-family home donated by the Sisters of St. Francis at 108 Michaels Avenue.

(Right) Sister Kathleen enjoys a moment with resident Claudile in 1994.



### Original Logo

Shortly after Project Home was opened, our name was officially changed to Francis House to reflect the love of those sick and dying that was given by St. Francis of Assisi. Created by Sister Rose Raymond Wagner, our original logo depicted the embrace that embodied our values of compassion, unconditional acceptance, respect and dignity.

## Founded in Unconditional Love

The Gospel of St. John quotes Jesus as saying: "I have come that you might have life and have it in abundance." (John 10:10)



Sister Kathleen shares a moment with resident Leona in the new Great Room, 2007.

Within every person is the longing for a fullness of life. It is love that brings forth that fullness, that abundance. That is why Francis House was begun 25 years ago—that persons may be given a full life until death. We all desire to be loved and to love. Without love we perish. Is there a time more critical than the end of life for needing to feel that we are loved? My constant cry when trying to establish Francis House was always: "No one should have to die alone!" To be able to establish a home where people are surrounded by love has been my/our greatest joy. Whenever I am praying for intercession, I lift up my heart to all those who have died at Francis House for help, for it is they who have taught us about loving and they who have been loved. These 25 years have brought us hundreds of residents and volunteers whose lives have touched us and changed us in some way. We carry a bit of each other's spirit as we move toward our own final home. Could there be a greater community of love and communion of saints? How blessed are we to have this ministry and privilege.

Sr. Kathleen Osbelt, Founder

# ... Becomes Reality



(Above) Father Yeazel and Francis House staff celebrate long-time volunteer, Florence Yeazel's birthday at Francis House in 1998, with staff members. We were blessed to care for Florence as a resident in 2000.

(Right) Blessing of newly built gazebo, 1994.

## Msgr. J. Robert Yeazel

Member of original Advisory Board, FH Pastoral Care, FH Board Member

"When the original group came together to discuss Project Home, the atmosphere was one of grace and blessing. It felt as though the Lord was saying, 'I want a place for people to feel loved before they come into my presence, and you can do it, I know, and I will bless your efforts.' When the first residents entered it was a dream come true. It made all of our efforts worthwhile as we witnessed the residents happy and at peace."



## A Letter from One of Our First Residents...

Dear Friends,

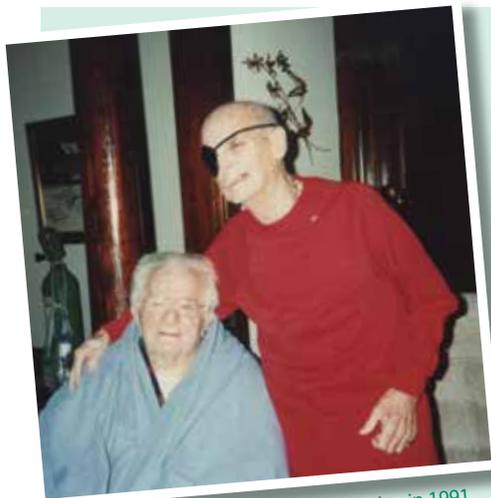
*I would like to express my feelings of my new home, Francis House, which I call "Love House." It is filled with love from every nook and corner from the staff and volunteers. Love is coming from the heart of each one of these people. I belong! Francis House is home! Enough could not be said as to how much of a real home it is.*

*Each and every day, something more has been added to my life during these past weeks at Francis House.*

*The atmosphere creates a real home for me. The only real home which will be better is when my Lord calls me home. Looking forward to this, I have no fears of being alone. Someone will always be with me to hold my hand and walk the last mile with me with love and care.*

*This is my home and I love it as such. I truly love and am loved in Francis House and am really happy here. Thank you for all you have done to make this possible for me and for all those who will come after me.*

Love, Earl



Earl (standing) with fellow resident Joe in 1991.

## Jim Abbott

Member of original Project Home Committee

"When Sister Kathleen first came to me with the idea of Project Home, I honestly didn't think it would work. I believed in the idea of a home of comfort for people in their last days, but it was an immense undertaking to create a new system of care. But after talking with Sister Kathleen, feeling her passion, and seeing she had the smarts and the mind of a developer, I knew she would do it."

"I have never had a relative, or anyone close to me become a resident of Francis House, but I continue to support it to this day because I believe in its purpose, I have seen it change lives, and I support Sister Kathleen and the Francis House leaders who have protected and focused on its mission."



Unconditional Acceptance

# Our Family Expands

The Auxiliary of Francis House was founded in 1992 to help Sister Kathleen spread the word about the new ministry and to organize fundraising events. In the past 25 years the Auxiliary has raised over \$500,000. Although a staff-led development department began in 1997, Auxiliary members have played an active role in every event and activity through their support and hands-on help. They also continue to organize and run their Annual Silver Tea and Annual Luncheon. Auxiliary membership has grown to over 400 members.

Most importantly, the Auxiliary has focused on raising awareness of Francis House through their activities and pin sales. The original pin

sales began as a partnership with Pins by Lucinda. Today, the Auxiliary sells handmade stained glass pins by local artist Tina Barry. Francis House pins are worn by many proud supporters throughout our community.

In 2005, Auxiliary Board Member Theresa Letcher suggested the creation of a Youth Auxiliary, modeled after the adult Auxiliary to give high school students volunteer experiences at Francis House and as Board members. Over the 11 years, these young adults have created and implemented fundraising events, organized pantry drives, sold bracelets at Auxiliary pin sales, and have given countless hours of hands-on help at our home.



Youth Auxiliary Board members decorate the houses for Christmas, 2014.



(Left) Past volunteer and long-time supporter Sue Congel pours for Myra Dombroski, past Auxiliary Board Member at one of the first Auxiliary Silver Teas. (Above) Former Auxiliary Leaders celebrate

at the 2012 Auxiliary Christmas Lunch: Joanne Speach (front right) first Auxiliary President; Bea Malfitano (back left) second Auxiliary President; Jo Oliva (front left) third Auxiliary President and Cecile Ianno (back right), long-time Auxiliary Treasurer who passed away in 2014. (Right) Roxanne Kopecky, current Auxiliary Vice President (right) sells pins with pin artist Tina Barry.



## Marie Grabowski

*Original volunteer, founder of the Auxiliary of Francis House*

"I first met Sister Kathleen when I was volunteering at St. Joseph's Hospital and she was the Chaplain there. I remember our talks when my mother-in-law was dying from cancer and she shared her dream of a home where people would all be part of a family and loved.

When Sister Kathleen asked me to help start an auxiliary, I gathered up my friends who had been part of other auxiliaries in town. We all met and trooped up to the attic—the only place to meet in the original house. Everyone was opened-minded and wanted to help right away. We had the most talented ladies who did things right.

## Jo Oliva

*Auxiliary board member, president of Auxiliary 1997-1998*

"I was in a doctor's office waiting room and I picked up Newsweek and it had an article about this lady, Lucinda, who made pins. At the same time, Bea Malfitano our immediate Past President, 's son gave her the same article. We tracked her down and started selling our house pins. At first only house pins were available. We ordered 100 pins in our first order, hoping we would sell them. We sold out right away. We sold pins at the house and at our Silver Teas."

**Meg Bogosian**

*Founding event committee member, past Board member, past Auxiliary Board Member*

“The house was open, but we were working out the quirks—it was such a new thing. The most important thing was to be there for the residents and make them comfortable. One of our first resident’s wish was for mashed potatoes and gravy for breakfast, and that’s what I made! We had volunteers stay all night through; there were no planned menus; going up and down stairs... a lot!”

“I remember the first meeting for the event in 1997. I was nervous to ask people for donations, but I loved this ministry and said I would beg for it. Beth (Hoey, Francis House Director of Development) said, “it’s not begging, you are giving somebody the opportunity to support our ministry and help these people we care for.” I never forgot that.” Meg continues to lead the prize committee for There’s No Place Like Home, securing over 250 prizes herself every year.



Meg snuggles resident Jan, 1997.

*“Glory to God whose power at work in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.”*

*—Eph. 3:20*



Simone Lepine, far right, at her father’s bedside with her mother and sister, 1997.



Resident Bea enjoys visiting time with Sr. Colette’s cat Valentine on the porch, 1992.

**Simone Lepine**

*Daughter of resident Andre Lepine (December 1997)*

“Francis House teaches you that death is part of life, and in sadness you can find joy and celebrate life while you have your loved ones here. We learned to celebrate with our Dad while he was alive. That was a tremendous gift. When you are in your worst moment, the best people show up. I remember the first night Dad was at Francis House and a volunteer asked me and my family if we wanted some lasagna she had just made. I thought, this place is here for all of us, our whole family! When my mother was ill, I was able to take care of her at home thanks to what I learned from Francis House.

**Sr. Colette Walter**

*Household Coordinator*

*Respect*

“My favorite memories are sitting on the front porch with residents. We’d watch people walk by, enjoy the view. I loved Thanksgiving and sitting around the dining room table with our residents and families and laugh and laugh. It felt like the old homestead with a close family and lots of love. What I don’t miss is the stairs! We used to have to carry everything up and down... supplies, bedding, and every meal up and down, it was a lot!”

“I often tell family members that I believe when a resident dies, there is a whole group of people waiting with outstretched arms saying, ‘welcome to the Francis House Club in Heaven!’”



Sister Colette shares time with a resident in the living room of the original house.

# Our Home Expands

Within months of opening our home, we expanded our care from two bedrooms to all four bedrooms of the house. Still there was need for our care, so volunteers renovated the home to add two more bedrooms so we could care for six residents at a time. The J. Stanley Coyne Residence was completed in 1998, which included a single-story addition that created a total of eight bedrooms, a chapel, great room and spacious kitchen. The bedrooms of the original houses were then used for staff offices. In 2003, a second home, The Tommy Coyne Residence, with eight bedrooms was built next door and the house were connected for ease of access and ability to share resources.

Both homes were built under their \$1 million budget and ahead of schedule thanks to the volunteer leadership of Al Antonini, Ed King and Mike King. Again our community stepped forward to donate the cost of building. Companies gave in-kind donations to furnish the houses. Our volunteer shifts doubled and our volunteer family grew to over 500 active volunteers.

(Right) Mike and Ed King, work on the roof of Francis House's second home, 2003.



Ed King and Mike King working on the roof of 114 Michaels Avenue.

## Al Antonini

*Board member, building committee*

“Once I walked into Francis House and saw it, it got into my bloodstream and I wanted to be a part of it. This home is one of the best community assets we have. I was amazed that it was created and continued to flourish without any state or federal money, not even for start-up. That is unheard of,



Al Antonini and Sr. Kathleen Osbelt on moving day 1998.

especially in New York State. I couldn't believe they were operating in that small, two-story house with narrow hallways and doorways and stairs! We needed to expand for safety and to improve our care.

I think our biggest challenge in the early years was raising the money we needed. It was a matter of education because many people didn't understand or want to think of end-of-life care and there was nothing to compare us to—we were such a new concept. Our biggest strength then, and still today, is our volunteers. Not one of us is too small nor is our job too small. It is what makes this ministry. Every little act comes together to make a huge impact. I have been honored to be a part of this ministry and help it to grow into two beautiful, comfortable, love-filled homes. After retirement this was my second life and will always be a part of my life.”



(Below) Bruce Stauffer, member of the original Project Home committee, excavates the land for the addition in 1998.



Sister Kathleen is joined by Tommy Coyne (center) and Mayor Matt Driscoll for the ribbon cutting of the Tommy Coyne Residence at Francis House.



### Genevieve Saya

*FH Board Member 2003-2014, Board Chair, 2009-2014, volunteer, resident assessments*

“The first time I walked into Francis House was the day of the Open House for the 114 Michaels house in 2003. It was a freezing day, with negative temperature warnings on the news. But when we walked into the house, I was completely taken aback, even without residents you felt the peace and love of the families and supporters. The house was so warm, so loving. I left feeling like I had been in a really special place and I was blessed to be a part of it. I still feel that way 13 years later.”

In 2009, Gen was asked to become the first lay Board Chair of Francis House. She says she was never nervous. “I’ve learned that God watches over Francis House. I felt honored and knew that it would be different than any other Board or committee I had ever volunteered for. No matter your connection to Francis House—family member, staff or volunteer—you feel part of the family because you are accepted as family.”

“I’ve met with hundreds of people and they all have smiles on their faces. I’ve never heard the words “why me?” I am inspired every time I leave a resident.



Gen Saya, Francis House volunteer and former Board Member and Board Chair, visits with resident Genevieve in 2015.



There's No Place Like Home was created in 1997 as the signature fundraising event for Francis House. The highlight of the evening is the key game where guests purchase keys to unlock doors with a chance to win wonderful prizes. Since its inception, Carenegie Catering has provided delicious food stations. The night has grown to include a raffle, a 50/50 raffle and silent auction. There's No Place Like Home has become one of the largest and most successful events in Syracuse, welcoming over 2,400 people every year.

Questions? Contact Adrienne Kelley,  
475-5422 or akelley@francishouseny.org



(Left) Staff members Kathie Jerose (left) and Lesa Wiedemeier are ready to welcome our guests to There's No Place Like Home, 2000.

(Above) The key game continues to be the highlight of the evening, 2001.



Celebrating another huge event success(left to right), There's No Place Like Home Co-Chairs Patrick and Kim Murphy; Adrienne Kelley, Francis House Special Events & Development Coordinator; Nancy Light, Francis House Executive Director; and Jaime Tuozolo Event Vice Chair.

## Beth Lynn Hoey

*Director of Development*

"When Sister Kathleen hired me almost 19 years ago, she said one of the first things we had to do was to create an event. That first year our goal was to have 200 guests and raise \$25,000. We had one prize table and six prize houses. We were thrilled that 225 people came and we raised \$50,000. This year our event raised \$316,000 and welcomed 2,500 guests. As with everything we have done here, we started small, made sure we did things right and then grew and developed. We wouldn't be here today without the support of many individuals who do what they can...together we have touched many lives."



## Our Family

Our ministry is a family, and at the core of our family are our staff members. We have been blessed to have many long-time employees who continue to be focused on our mission of unconditional love. We have also recently welcomed new staff members to our family. We celebrate your work anniversaries during this special year.

Thank you all for being God's hands in our work!

Scott Allen, 1 year  
Lindsay Baker, 2 years  
Ashley Braunitzer, 2 years  
Melissa Burke, 1 year  
Rea Carver, 9 years  
Judy Chanatry, 9 years  
Mary Ann Duprey, 13 years  
Melissa Fox, 3 years  
Sr. Ida Gregoire, 12 years  
Elizabeth Haahr, 3 years  
Colleen Haggerty, 15 years  
Lynn Hallowell, 5 years  
Judith Heisler, 8 years  
Beth Lynn Hoey, 19 years  
Antje Hopkins, 1 year  
Courtney Jarrard, 2 years  
Kathie Jerosé, 19 years  
Adrienne Kelley, 6 years  
Donna Korte, 11 years  
Nancy Light, 18 years

Mark Liptak, 2 years  
Sally Manahan, 5 years  
Jamie Melancon, 1 year  
Sr. Kathleen Osbelt, 25 years  
Ivy Parker, 1 year  
Joan Pridmore, 8 years  
Nadine Prince, 1 year  
Marsha Pross, 5 years  
Nancy Reilley, 8 years  
Annette Salisbury,  
Becky Shaver, 16 years  
Pattie Smithe, 1 year  
Sheila Sparks, 2 years  
Shannon Wagner, 1 year  
Sr. Colette Walter, 25 years  
Sally Whaley, 7 years  
Lesa Wiedemeier, 19 years  
Annie Wilcox, 6 years  
Carmen Yackel, 17 years



Staff member Becky Shaver with resident Jewell in 2001.



Staff member Sally Whaley with resident Marlene in 2012.

Compassion

## Receive Francis House Newsletter and Updates Via Email



If you would like to receive this newsletter and other Francis House updates through your email, visit [www.francishouseny.org](http://www.francishouseny.org). Many of you have asked for this option for your convenience and to save Francis House resources.

# Francis House History Highlights

## 1989

In 1989, leadership of the Sisters of St. Francis met with community leaders with the idea to create a home and a family where people with terminal illnesses could die with dignity and experience unconditional love.

A small group of dedicated individuals sought support for "Project Home." The Sisters of St. Francis designated a home at 108 Michaels Avenue.

## 1991

January 28, 1991 – Francis House opened its doors to the first two residents with residents. Our family included three sisters of St. Francis and 56 volunteers.

Renovations were completed that allowed Francis House to care for six residents at a time and create office space for staff members.

## 1992

Auxiliary of FH was created to raise awareness and funds to support Francis House.

## 1997

Francis House creates its signature event There's No Place Like Home.

With the construction of the new home, the Walkway of Blessings was created. The path is composed of etched bricks dedicated in memory and in honor of loved ones.

## 1998

A 7,800 square-foot building renovation and expansion project began, increasing resident bedrooms to eight. A more comfortable care environment was created.

## 1999

February 24, 1999 – Francis House celebrated the Open House of the J. Stanley Coyne Residence at Francis House. Residents moved into the new building on March 1, 1999.

## 2001

January 28, 2001 – Francis House friends, family, staff members and volunteers celebrated 10 years of caring.

## 2002

July 2002, Francis House Board of Directors voted to build second home.

## 2003

April 2003 Francis House broke ground on the new home next to current house.

## 2004

January 8, 2004 – Blessing and dedication of the Tommy Coyne Residence was held at Francis House (114 Michaels Avenue).  
 February 2004 – Four residents moved into 114 Michaels Avenue.

## 2005

Youth Auxiliary was created to give high school students the opportunity to give hands-on support while learning leadership skills.

## 2006

The final bedroom in 114 Michaels Ave. was opened.

## 2007

There's No Place Like Home grew to over 2,000 attendees.

## 2011

As Francis House celebrates its 15th anniversary, The Caring Fund in Honor of Sister Kathleen Osbelt, Francis House's endowment is created.

## 2016

Francis House celebrates 25 years of caring to over 2,900 individuals during their final days.