



## A PATH FORWARD AFTER GOODBYE

*Husband receives support, finds peace after wife's death*

Brad Knudson of Waverly knows firsthand that grief can be crippling. It was only a week after his wife, Jane, died from Huntington's Disease that he had a panic attack.

"One night it just hit me. I looked over where she used to lay beside me and thought, 'She is never going to be there anymore.' Suddenly, I couldn't breathe," he said.

Brad always considered himself a strong and confident individual, but he had no control over this. His first instinct was to get up and take a walk around the neighborhood, like he and Jane used to do every day up until a month before she died (even when he would have to push her in her wheelchair). It helped, but it wasn't enough.

A week later, he joined a GriefShare at his local church, where he gained a lot of knowledge and camaraderie, but still found himself getting emotional every time he said Jane's name. Then, he received a call from Cedar Valley Hospice's grief department checking in to see how he was doing.

*"If you process grief in an effective way, you can not only survive but thrive."*

– Brad Knudson, Waverly

That call started a fruitful grief support partnership that changed his outlook on living without the love of his life.

### **Jane and Brad's Story**

Jane and Brad were married on Aug. 6, 1983, in Vinton. She grew up quiet and shy but became a strong woman with a quick wit and a cutting sense of humor. Brad recalls fondly how she went from being uncomfortable with her pony, Dolly, as a girl to someone who would ride a horse up the side of a mountain in Mexico.



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### ***Making Memories***

*Brad Knudson, right, his wife Jane, left, and children Inga and Clare enjoyed traveling and doing trips together, like this one in Colorado in 2019.*

*They prioritized making memories together, knowing Jane's Huntington's Disease would someday prevent her from doing all of the things she used to.*



### ***Inside***

***Get amped up for Rock the Cause fundraiser***

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# Grief support helps families, available to all

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"Jane was a very kind soul who was very bright and loved her kids dearly," said Brad. "She worked at the Waverly Library as an accountant later on, so she always had two or three books she was reading."

Jane was in her 30s when she was evaluated for Huntington's Disease, a fatal neurological condition that affects your movements, thinking and mental health. She wasn't experiencing symptoms, but because the disease is inherited and her father had the condition. Jane had a 50/50 chance.

It changed their lives, but Brad and Jane did not retreat – they planned. Jane started counseling right away to prepare for what was to come. They also bought a house on the outskirts of Waverly and began renovations to make it livable for someone in a wheelchair.

"Jane's dad made it 26 years with the disease, so we thought she would live until her 80s, which is why it was a surprise when she died at 64," said Brad.

## Receiving Help & Support

Brad was Jane's main caregiver, meticulously tending to her needs, medications and their relationship. He bought a hot tub to help with her nerve pain and an electric bike with a seat in the back so she could get out into new surroundings. They also did water exercises together, knowing that keeping her active would help keep her strong.

At first, he was able to manage his caregiving duties, but as the disease progressed, it became more difficult to both care for her and take care of daily tasks. His daughter Clare suggested having an aide from Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community come in to help. Then, they suggested Cedar Valley Hospice for even more support.

"I would have never been able to keep her home until the end without Cedar Valley Hospice. For a year and a half, they were there whenever I needed them," said Brad. "People have this idea that hospice is for taking care of loved one's death. It's so much bigger than that. Don't worry if you have it figured out or not, have Cedar Valley Hospice come in and do an evaluation. They know – not you."

He especially remembers how well Bartels and Cedar Valley Hospice worked together to give Jane the best care. She would get her nails painted and get so much joy from listening to the music therapist. Brad also received support. When he called Cedar Valley Hospice in the middle of the night, help was there. When he had a question about pain medication, he got answers.

"They anticipated everything we would need. At first, I didn't understand why we were sent equipment that we weren't using, but when I needed that special wheelchair because one day Jane could no longer hold her head up, it was there, and she was comfortable," added Brad.

## Learning to Live With Grief

At Cedar Valley Hospice, we understand that every grief journey is unique, and that grief is ongoing and brings a wide range of emotions that can be overwhelming and hard to understand.

"Expressing your grief is an essential part of healing," said Cedar Valley Hospice Grief Team Lead Laura. "Our services are available to adults and youth in the community at no cost. Talking about your



*Jane and Clare loved being in the hot tub. For years, Clare stressed over wondering if she too would have Huntington's Disease. This last year, she tested negative.*

feelings helps you process them instead of carrying them alone. Exploring these feelings with a trusted listener gives you space to be acknowledged and can help you make sense of your experience."

Brad couldn't agree more. Before talking with a grief counselor, he slept all the time, didn't have energy, his blood pressure was elevated and most days felt "in a fog." He has learned that there is a different avenue to finding peace – with work, acceptance and balance.

It has taken two years for Brad to be in a "good place" again after Jane's death. He is working less, has his energy back, enjoys his quiet time in a healthy way and now looks toward the future.

"I used to think if I'm not always thinking about her, I'm forgetting her," said Brad. "I've learned that it's all right that life goes on, but it takes work. If you process grief in an effective way, you can not only survive, but you can thrive. When you collaborate with good people like Cedar Valley Hospice, you can find a good direction."



**Call 800.626.2360 for no-cost grief support or visit [cvhospice.org](http://cvhospice.org)**

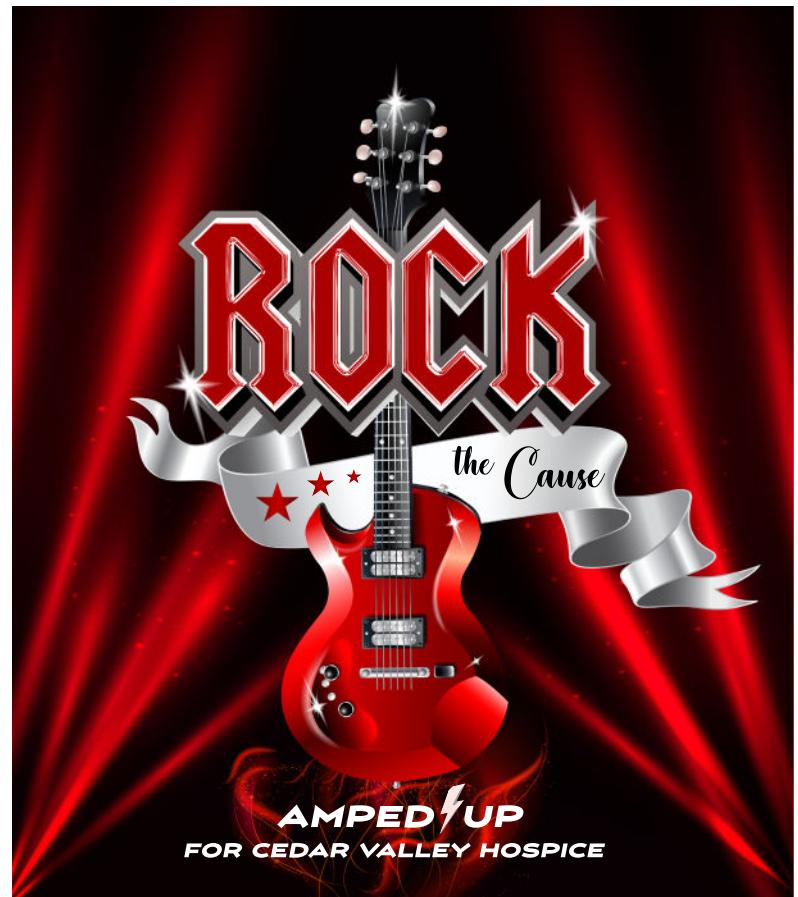
# Spring fundraiser sets the stage for giving

Get ready to rock with purpose! Cedar Valley Hospice is thrilled to announce **Rock the Cause: Amped Up for Cedar Valley Hospice** on Friday, March 27, from 6–10 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls.

Enjoy a night of socializing at this year's classic rock-themed event. Try your hand at beer tastings from Second State Brewing, test your luck at the Backstage Bottle Pull and show us your best air guitar moves at the Soundcheck Selfie Station. The silent auction will be stacked with must-have items and surprises from generous community partners.

The Snozzberries will close the evening with live music, bringing your favorite rock hits to the dance floor. We're also amping things up with exclusive Rock the Cause apparel, available for pre-sale or with limited quantities available for purchase that night. (See pg. 5 for details)

Every dollar raised goes straight to supporting patients, families and clients served by Cedar Valley Hospice. So grab your friends, don your best concert wear and get ready to Rock the Cause — where great music meets a great mission!



**RSUP**  
by March 12

## GET YOUR TICKETS: \$60 each

1. Visit [cvhospice.org](http://cvhospice.org) or scan QR Code

Note: HANDBID handles our ticketing for the event.



2. Download HANDBID app before event for bidding & activities



NOTE: Once you have the app, you will need to create a Handbid password. If you attended a previous spring fundraiser, you still have to register.

**CAN'T ATTEND? BID ON AUCTION ITEMS ONLINE STARTING MARCH 20!**

Download the Handbid App and enter Rock the Cause or visit [cvhospice.org](http://cvhospice.org).

**For questions, call Haley at 319.272.2002.**



# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS



## Support Rock the Cause!

**Order Rock the Cause Apparel:** Whether you plan to attend the event or just want to show your support, grab your throwback rock T-shirt, long sleeve or sweatshirt, sponsored in part by Witham Auto Center and Craft Cochran Screenprint & Embroidery. Prices begin at \$20. Order by visiting <https://cvhospicerockthecause.itemorder.com/> or scan the QR code at left.

**Round up for Rock the Cause or Give \$5:** Shop at select Fareways in the Cedar Valley and round up your bill or donate \$5 to sign a record in support of our upcoming event. All records will be displayed at the event on March 27. Proceeds benefit Cedar Valley Hospice patients and families. **Thank you and ROCK ON!**



## Youth grief camp set for July

The Eucalyptus Tree program is hosting a **free grief day camp** for youth ages 5-12 who are grieving the death of a loved one. All campers will receive lunch and a T-shirt. Youth will be able to share their story with other kids and learn about grief through participating in fun themed activities. The event is scheduled for mid-July. **Stay tuned for more information** on social media or by visiting [cvhospice.org](http://cvhospice.org) in May. If you know a young person who could benefit, call 319.272.2002 to be put on our pre-registration list.



## Arboretum partnership earns award

Cedar Valley Hospice was recently awarded the **2025 Gift of the Heart: Community Partnership Award** from the Association of Fundraising Professionals - Northeast Iowa Chapter. During 2025, Cedar Valley Hospice partnered with the Cedar Valley Arboretum & Botanic Gardens to offer unique support for patients, families and clients. This included free admission to the gardens, a calming space to hold grief support groups and a presence at our Release & Remember fundraiser, where Arboretum staff provided information about monarchs and a chance to see caterpillars up close.

## Schedule a free presentation

If your business or organization is interested in learning about hospice, grief support or other end-of-life topics, schedule a free Speakers on Site presentation! Call Annika, community engagement specialist, at 319.272.2002 or visit [cvhospice.org](http://cvhospice.org) to learn more.

Some of our presentation topics include:

**Hospice 101 or Myths of Hospice**

**GUIDE Dementia Care program**

**Advanced Directives**



# Moments that Matter

**With Morgan, RN**  
**Quality and Compliance Manager**  
**Employee since 2022**

## How does your position support Cedar Valley Hospice's mission?

My role at Cedar Valley Hospice is Quality and Compliance Manager. I am also a registered nurse. My job is to oversee care and monitor changes in Medicare rules. I love to try to make Cedar Valley Hospice the best that we can be. I enjoy improving processes and teaching staff.

## Share a story that has impacted you.

When I first started, I went to an admissions visit with Dr. John Zehr, our medical director. The patient was leery of hospice services but very much needed our help. We were able to address her apprehensions, and she did decide to become our patient. I am passionate about making sure that every eligible patient receive the care they deserve by our teams visiting, educating and supporting them along their journey.

I am very proud of the care that our team delivers and their compassion and dedication to quality. This is demonstrated by our organization receiving the CAHPS Honors Award and being the only 5-star hospice in our area on



*Morgan lives in Independence with her husband, four kids and two dogs. She loves coffee, reading and traveling. Her favorite thing is to have “Mommy days” with her kids where they go to the pool (in the summer), library, park and more.*

**With Bryan Burton**  
**Board Member, 2024 - Present**

## How does your position support Cedar Valley Hospice's mission?

As CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Cedar Valley, I am deeply committed to creating opportunities and providing support for children and families during times of need. I believe that strengthening families ultimately strengthens our entire community. My service on the Cedar Valley Hospice Board of Directors has given me a unique perspective of the challenges families face when coping with loss, whether it's the passing of a loved one or the grief that comes from community tragedies. This experience allows me to approach leadership with empathy and insight, ensuring that the programs and partnerships we foster truly meet the needs of those we serve.

## Share a story that has impacted you.

Cedar Valley Hospice was a gentle presence during two of the most painful chapters of our lives — the loss of both my in-laws. Though I wasn't directly involved in their care, I will never forget the comfort it gave my wife and her siblings to know that compassionate hands were holding theirs, soft voices were offering reassurance and warm blankets were tucked around their parents in those final moments. They didn't just provide care — they created an atmosphere of dignity and peace when everything felt fragile. For that, we will always be profoundly grateful.

**Bryan and his wife, Mary, have lived in Waterloo since 2000, where they raised three children and built fulfilling careers. They recently welcomed a new grandchild, which he said "deepens our commitment to shaping a vibrant future for this region."**

# VOLUNTEER FOCUS

## Hospice & Palliative Care Association of Iowa honors volunteers

The Hospice & Palliative Care Association of Iowa (HPCI) recently honored five Cedar Valley Hospice volunteers who generously give their time and energy to support us. Cedar Valley Hospice also earned the inaugural Excellence in Care Award, which recognizes a hospice or palliative care organization that leads with innovation, quality and a deep commitment to patient care.

### **Tyann Rouw - Waterloo | Volunteer since 2024**

Tyann Rouw of Cedar Falls is a wonderful volunteer who has made an incredible impact in a short time. She serves as a patient/family volunteer and is a valued presence at the Hospice Home, where she consistently brings kindness to everyone she welcomes. Her calming presence and sincere compassion offer comfort during some of life's most difficult moments. Tyann has formed many meaningful connections with patients – including a patient she sees weekly who is living with dementia. Her gratitude for the opportunity to serve is evident. Tyann also volunteered at Cedar Valley Hospice's youth grief camp. Her empathy and gentle nature allowed her to connect deeply with campers, helping them feel seen and supported.



### **Rosetta Anderson - Independence | Volunteer since 2014**

Rosetta Anderson of Oelwein felt called to give back after Cedar Valley Hospice took great care of her father. Rosetta's experiences with her patients stand out – whether it be learning to play cards, creating Valentine's Day cards for a patient's grandchildren or providing respite for a caregiver of both a husband and wife who were receiving hospice care together. When Rosetta learned of our GEM program that helps carry out wishes, she recommended a patient who would love to go fishing again, which was made possible at his favorite spot. As a baker and gardener, she often takes flowers or baked good to her patients. Rosetta is also a great advocate and a special volunteer with so much kindness and positivity.



### **Shelly Hook - Grundy Center | Volunteer since 2014**

Shelly Hook is an outstanding and dedicated volunteer whose compassion shines in every interaction. As a patient/family volunteer, she gives her whole heart to those she visits. She builds genuine, caring relationships with patients and families, offering comfort, companionship and support during some of their most tender moments. In addition to her patient visits, Shelly generously volunteers at the Hospice Home, filling shifts and supporting both staff and families with the same kindness and compassion. Shelly often shares, "If I can make a difference in someone else's day and put a smile on their face, that fills my heart." This simple yet powerful statement captures her spirit perfectly.



### **Karen Ryan - Waverly | Volunteer since 2010**

Karen Ryan of Sumner has a heart, grace and empathy that truly shine and stands out in everything she does. Karen is the kind of volunteer you can always count on – steady, dependable and willing to take on any new assignment that comes her way. What makes Karen special is the way she connects with patients and families. She has a natural gift for bringing comfort in difficult moments, offering quiet support at the bedside or simply being a calm and caring presence when words aren't enough. Karen's service reflects the very best of what hospice stands for – dignity, compassion and love. We are deeply grateful for the countless lives she's touched and the comfort she's brought to so many.



### **Ashley Utley - Waterloo Friends Committee | Volunteer since 2021**

As a member of the Cedar Valley Hospice Friends Committee, Ashley helps raise funds and awareness for Cedar Valley Hospice through events and advocacy. She attends monthly meetings with enthusiasm, always offering fresh ideas and jumping in wherever needed. Whether assisting with setup, tear-down, creating decor or recruiting her family to help, Ashley ensures every event runs smoothly. At the Release & Remember event, Ashley's generosity shines. She not only sells T-shirts but donates commemorative items, such as butterfly glasses, stickers and handmade butterfly bracelets. This year, she made over 500 bracelets to sell at the event, raising nearly \$2,000 for our patients and families. In just four years, Ashley and her creative spirit has become an invaluable part of the organization.





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*Making Each Moment Matter.*

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# Winter 2026 Newsletter

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volunteer spotlights

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