Knowing We’ll Be There

Steve and Marion Knipp’s three grown children were certain their parents would be upset. Worried that their mom was overburdened by the stress of taking care of their dad, they had reached out to Gilchrist Transitions, a Gilchrist Services program that offers non-medical care for non-hospice patients, without asking their parents permission first.

Much to their surprise, Marion was thrilled.

“It’s simply that I knew there would be someone I could call for advice on caring for Steve,” she said. “Someone would be there when I needed them.”

Launched three years ago, Gilchrist Transitions initially grew out of a need to offer a safety net of sorts for one-time hospice patients who were still seriously ill but no longer qualified for end of life care because their health had stabilized. Used to the comprehensive care of the hospice team – and attention from nurses, aides, social workers, chaplains and volunteers who took care of everything from medication management to personal care – patients and families would find themselves suddenly alone, and unsure where to turn for help.

Marion and Steve Knipp are very grateful for the support they’ve received from Gilchrist Services’ Transitions program.
Today, the program offers service coordination and volunteer support to not only former hospice patients but also to “clients” who are either not yet eligible for or not yet ready to accept end of life care. Over the past three years, Gilchrist Transitions has provided services for more than 600 clients and their families.

For families, the program offers an initial face-to-face assessment by a Transitions case manager, who walks them through difficult discussions about their current and future care needs, as well as where to find help for everything from having hospital beds delivered to ensuring that personal care needs are met. After that initial visit, program employees make follow-up calls, once or more a month, to make sure there are no new or lingering needs, and offer volunteer visits, if needed.

For those families who are uncomfortable with the idea of hospice, Transitions also offers an emotionally safe-environment for families to discuss end of life care options with professionals who are not hospice workers but know about the program and its benefits. Three out of every four Transitions clients ultimately enroll in hospice – both Gilchrist Hospice Care and elsewhere.

“When and if they’re ready for hospice, we can make it happen quickly,” Anjana said. “We’ll even call other hospices for them.”

For the Knipps, who were tired of cycling in and out of the hospital, the program offered the comfort of knowing that they could call Transitions, if needed, to discuss concerns related to Steve’s cancer or heart disease, as well as volunteer support for both Steve and Marion. Their volunteer, Kathe Curran, sits and talks with Steve for a few hours each week while Marion runs errands or has lunch with friends. She has been able to continue as their volunteer even as Steve Knipp, who calls Kathe “his professional friend,” moved from his “professional friend,” moved from one of Gilchrist Services’ other programs.

“Kathe is a perfect match. It’s extraordinary,” said Marion. “My friends call it my playdate when she’s there.”

“You have lost not only a steadfast supporter, but a true friend.”
A newly constructed 2,415 square-foot addition to Gilchrist Center Towson designed to enhance the inpatient experience of our Jewish patients has been completed and is open to patients and families, with a dedication celebration for the space scheduled for this fall.

The addition, which serves as a complement to Gilchrist Hospice Care’s new and thriving Jewish Hospice Program, includes a Jewish chapel, a family area and a beautiful courtyard and is located on the terrace level of the inpatient center. But while it was conceived to accompany the Jewish Hospice Program, the new space is open and accessible to all patients at Gilchrist Center Towson and their families, regardless of their spiritual beliefs.

“It’s such a tranquil place. When you walk in, you’re met by sunlight flooding into the chapel,” said Jewish Hospice Program Manager Chaya Lasson.

The new space is part of Gilchrist’s larger effort to enhance the care of its Jewish patients by ensuring that the care and services they receive is sensitive and adherent to the customs, rituals and laws that bring them comfort and around which they have built meaningful lives.

While Gilchrist’s program has always served patients of all backgrounds, Jewish patients have historically been underrepresented in the hospice population.

Launched in January, Gilchrist’s Jewish Hospice Program includes both home and inpatient care, and staff and volunteers have received special training on everything from Jewish observances to religious influences on medical decision-making.

Admitted to Gilchrist Center Towson for symptom management in late June, Mark was soon amazed by the dozens of Towson colleagues – both past and present – who streamed in and out of his room each day, bringing everything from compact discs with his favorite music to treasured flowers from his own garden with them.

So when Mark, who worked at Towson for 34 years, most recently as an operations manager, expressed regret to Kristin Metzger, RN, one of his hospice nurses, that he had never gotten to formally retire, she suggested that his family arrange for a retirement party – to be held at Gilchrist Center.

“I said, ‘This may be a crazy idea, but how do you think he’d feel about having a true retirement party here to celebrate everything he’s done for Towson?’ Kristin said.

Her sister was super excited about the idea.”

The festivities, held July 16 in the family dining room at Gilchrist Center, drew a standing-room only crowd of Towson colleagues from the department of Physics, Astronomy and Geosciences, who feted Mark with food and well wishes.

“ ‘For people to come in here and share their feelings and love and support – what a celebration of his life!’ said Marian Kearney, Mark’s oldest sister. ‘I’m so thankful that he got to see what people think of him. I’m glad that his Gilchrist nurse suggested the party.’

Pictured above, (l to r): Dr. Henry Chen, Mark’s friend; Marian Kearney, Mark’s sister; and Mark Scarinzi, Gilchrist patient.

Mark died at Gilchrist Center on July 22nd.

Mr. Fader has also led the fundraising campaign for the program. “The new space at Gilchrist Center is extraordinary – a perfect complement to the center and a haven, offering peace and comfort for families during their most difficult time.”

For more information on how you can help, please call Lori Mulligan at 443-849-8214.
**Quilts Donated to Gilchrist Center Howard County**

The 10 patient beds at Gilchrist Center Howard County are newly adorned by large quilts generously crafted and donated by the Four County Quilters Guild as part of a several year service project.

The group has been working to create quilts for inpatient hospice centers in Howard, Frederick, Carroll and Montgomery counties and chose Gilchrist’s acute inpatient center in Columbia as one of the beneficiary of 10 bed-sized quilts and six throws.

“Hospice is there to make the patients’ last days as pleasant an experience as it can be, given the situation,” said Dawn Cynamon, the community project chair for the Guild. “Having a quilt people poured their hearts into helps families know they’re not alone.”

The Guild formally presented the quilts to Gilchrist staff in June.

“They’re absolutely beautiful and stitched with so much love,” said Catherine Frome, Associate Director of Inpatient Operations for Gilchrist. “The Guild really took the hospice situation to heart.”

**Gilchrist Staff Honored**

A Gilchrist nurse and volunteer recently received special recognition for their extraordinary care.

Gilchrist Kids nurse Erin Batton was named a Top Nurse for 2016 by Baltimore Magazine. She was one of only two nurses recognized “for their extraordinary contributions to healthcare” in the hospice/home health/palliative care category.

And Donna Naslund, a Gilchrist Grief Services volunteer was 4th Runner Up for the annual Nancy J. Petrarca Compassionate Caregiver Awards. Three additional Gilchrist employees and volunteers – Joanna Baird, a spiritual care volunteer at Gilchrist Center Towson; Mona Soliman, a nurse liaison; and Blair Wilson, the social worker at Gilchrist Center Howard County – were among this year’s 15 nominees for the award. The award recognizes employees and volunteers who display extraordinary compassion in their care for the patients and families of GBMC HealthCare’s hospital and affiliate organizations.

**Taste of Howard County**

Gilchrist Hospice Care will host the annual Taste of Howard County at Turf Valley in Ellicott City on Sunday, October 23 from 5 to 8:30 p.m.

With this year’s theme of “Go Wild for Gilchrist,” the event will feature the sweet and savory creations of more than 20 Howard County’s premier restaurateurs and caterers, as well as a cash raffle and live and silent auction. This year’s Taste will also include specialty areas for oyster, coffee and ice cream tastings.

As in previous years, all proceeds from the 2016 Taste event, which is being chaired by Tracy and Bob Lucido, will be earmarked to support Gilchrist Center Howard County, our 10-bed acute inpatient center in Columbia.

To purchase tickets, visit [gilchristservices.org/taste](http://gilchristservices.org/taste)

For sponsor information contact Cliff Hughes at 410.730.1764 or chughes@gilchristservices.org.

**The Holly Ball**

The Holly Ball to benefit Gilchrist Hospice Care, a beautiful and festive evening and a highlight of the joyful holiday season in Baltimore, will be held this year on Friday, December 2 from 7 p.m. to midnight at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront hotel.

The biennial event, which features fine dining, dancing, and mingling with friends, both old and new, will celebrate Gilchrist and our many accomplishments – and, in particular, the 20th anniversary of the opening of Gilchrist Center Towson, our acute inpatient hospice center in Baltimore County and the icon of the organization. All proceeds from this year’s event will go toward supporting Gilchrist Center Towson.

Honorary chairs of the 2016 Holly Ball are Jana and Richard Burch and Mary and Tim Mullan.

For more information on how to become a sponsor or to purchase event tickets, please contact Jamie Lynch at 443-849-8241 or jlynch@gilchristservices.org.

**Baltimore Running Festival**

Gilchrist Hospice Care and GBMC have put together a team of runners and volunteers who will participate in the Baltimore Running Festival on October 15, while also raising money to support Gilchrist Center Baltimore – Joseph Richey House.

Each participant will set a fund-raising goal to benefit Richey House, Gilchrist’s residential hospice center on Eutaw Street in Baltimore City.

For more information, please contact Ted Blankenship at 443-849-8263 or tblankenship@gilchristservices.org.
2016 Advance Care Planning Talks

Discussing end-of-life wishes doesn’t have to be difficult.

Dr. W. Anthony Riley, the medical director of Gilchrist Services, is offering a free, informative series of monthly talks that are designed to educate the public about the importance of Advance Care Planning in their health care journeys.

The talks will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Civiletti Conference Center on the Greater Baltimore Medical Center campus:

- **Tues., Sept. 20:** “Choosing Treatments Wisely: for diseases of the brain and nervous system”
- **Tues., Oct. 18:** “Choosing Treatments Wisely: for diseases of the heart and lung”
- **Tues., Nov. 15:** “Choosing Treatments Wisely: for diseases of the brain and nervous system”

For more information, or to register for one or more of the discussions, please visit the Gilchrist website at gilchristservices.org/advancecareseries or call 443-849-GBMC (4262).