

Stillwater Stories

First Edition | 2026



Red
Diamonds
of Hope



Stillwater
HOSPICE

HOSPICE CARE • HOSPICE HOME • PALLIATIVE CARE • GRIEF SUPPORT

Forged in Love: Josh's Red Diamond Mission



In August 2013, Brenda Jank walked through the doors of Stillwater's Hospice Home with a heartbreak no parent is ever prepared to carry. Her son Joshua, a 19 year old already a medical veteran because of sickle cell anemia and on the autism spectrum, had spent a year in a new medical mystery and

nearly 90 days in the hospital. His oxygen levels kept dropping and his health kept getting worse. At last, a specialist named the rare diagnosis: hepatopulmonary syndrome, a liver-lung disease whose only treatment is a transplant. But Joshua wasn't a candidate. Not with sickle cell.

The doctor's best guess was two years. And that summer, "everything that could go wrong went wrong," Brenda recalls. By August, Josh was at Stillwater, and the family believed they were saying goodbye. Stillwater's team helped Brenda make the hardest shift of all—moving from chasing cure to embracing comfort.

With oxygen, attentive symptom management, and steady nursing care, Josh's pain eased and his breathing became more manageable. "They got so on top of the pain," Brenda says. "I learned pain medication makes the breathing easier. It helps you breathe."

And then something unexpected happened: Josh started perking up.

As family and friends came to the Hospice Home to visit at his bedside, a friend brought small red glass hearts, tokens for those who came to love on Josh. When the hearts ran out,

Josh asked for more. His mom drove to a hobby store and bought every red item she could find so he could choose. Among them was a clear plastic box filled with small red gems that looked just like diamonds.

Josh lit up. Red diamonds. Right there, inside Stillwater's Hospice Home, Josh's life mission began.

Those first days, the diamonds were simply gifts for family and friends. Then Josh asked, "Can I give one to my nurse?" Within hours, the red diamonds were everywhere: in staff pockets, in family hands, in the quiet hallways where people came to say goodbye but left carrying something hopeful. Soon, cards were created so people would understand the message and share it forward.

"This gem is red because love makes a difference. It's a diamond because God does amazing things under heat and pressure."

Over time, Josh's simple act grew into The Red Diamond Days project (RedDiamondDays.com)—a movement built on the belief that love matters, and that every person can be a hope-bearer in a hurting world. Josh passed out thousands, then tens of thousands, then more. People mailed photos of diamonds found in glove compartments and floor mats years later. A child once asked for an extra red diamond at a school talk, explaining through tears that one of Josh's red diamonds had been placed in her sister's casket.

Josh, who once hated being the center of attention, became a speaker, visiting schools, nursing homes, adoption celebrations, recovery centers, and youth centers. He invited people of all ages to live on purpose and love out loud.



He found meaning not by ignoring his suffering, but by letting it refine him. Red diamonds, after all, are formed under fierce heat and pressure. So was Josh.

Though the Jank family had thought Josh only had a short time once he was admitted to Stillwater's Hospice Home, what seemed like an end turned into a new beginning. For the next ten years, Stillwater walked beside him, helping him stay comfortable, supporting Brenda and their family, including husband Tim, and siblings Samuel, Joseph, Anna, and Noah, and surrounding them with steady,

compassionate care. Brenda remembers caregivers who became "forever friends": social workers, spiritual care counselors, music therapists – and even the nurse who saw Josh on Friday before he died early on Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023.

Josh's final years weren't measured by what illness took, but by what love made possible. Because Stillwater helped him breathe easier and hurt less, Josh had the freedom to do what he came to do: give hope away, one red diamond at a time.





Because of you, compassionate care continues long after a loss.

We are honored to share that Stillwater Hospice has received Opioid Settlement Funding through the City of Fort Wayne

to support overdose-related grief counseling and education through the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center. This funding strengthens counseling, support groups, and specialized programming designed specifically for those grieving an overdose or substance related death.

Your belief and support in our mission makes opportunities like this possible. This issue features many individuals that inspire and lead with heart. From Brenda to Cheryl to Diane, I am deeply grateful for each of these remarkable women and the meaningful impact they make as part of the Stillwater story. They have brought compassion, comfort, and guidance through my journey and, I know, the lives of many others.

I am deeply grateful for every person who supports our mission. Your generosity truly makes a difference in the lives of those we are honored to serve.

Serving with you,

Leslie Friedel, CEO

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Breaking the Silence Around Overdose Grief

Backed by the City of Fort Wayne's Opioid Settlement investment, the Grief Center is creating safe spaces for healing beyond stigma and shame.



When someone dies from an opioid overdose, the grief that follows is often heavier and quieter than most people realize. Families are hurting, but they may feel judged or blamed. Some even feel they don't have the "right" to grieve out loud.

That's why the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center stepped in.

A service of Stillwater Hospice, the Grief Center is open to any adult in the community, regardless of how their loved one died. More than 60 percent of those who come had no prior hospice involvement. It is, at its heart, a place for the community.

With support from a \$25,000 grant from the national Opioid Settlement Fund, facilitated by the City of Fort Wayne, the Grief Center made a clear commitment: don't let people grieve alone, and don't let stigma decide who receives support.

The work began with learning. The bereavement team pursued specialized training in overdose loss and trauma, strengthening their ability to listen without judgment and respond with compassion when emotions are complex and difficult to name.

From there, the team expanded its reach. Using grant funds, they launched facilitator training for community members interested in starting overdose grief support groups. The goal is simple but powerful: more safe spaces, more trusted faces, and more opportunities for

people to share their stories and be met with understanding.

The grant also strengthened one-on-one counseling. New workbooks by grief expert David Kessler help individuals navigate guilt, anger, and the search for meaning. The lending library grew as well, offering resources for those who may not yet be ready to speak but still need to feel seen.

Presence remains at the heart of the work. The bereavement team attends community remembrance events, standing alongside families with a simple message: your loved one matters, and so does your grief.

To extend that support further, the team created resource folders for partner agencies, helping others understand the unique challenges of overdose loss and how to connect people with care.

Overdose loss often brings complex and layered grief. Some people feel their pain is minimized because of stigma or shame. Others carry grief tied to years of struggle before the death. Many put their own grief on hold while they manage immediate needs for their families.

The emotions can be overwhelming. People may feel the death was preventable. Guilt shows up in many forms. Shame can linger. Blame gets passed around. Fear settles in—fear that it could happen again to someone else they love.

This grant did not erase that pain. But it did something powerful. It helped the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center meet it with clarity, compassion, and courage.



Staff Spotlight

Diane Snouffer

CNA/PRN

HOSPICE HOME



1. What inspired you to volunteer at Stillwater Hospice?

I knew I wanted to volunteer after experiencing end-of-life care with my father-in-law. After a fall, he was admitted, and we didn't know what to expect. The staff guided us every step of the way, answering every question with patience. Dad had six children and their spouses by his side, and we rarely left his room. The team brought in extra chairs and even made us cookies. That simple act of kindness meant everything. I remember thinking, I want to be that person—to share a little love with families during such a hard time.

2. How did you get started?

Soon after his death, I looked into volunteering but was advised to wait a few years. When I came back, I knew it was right. Orientation was a one-day session led by compassionate staff. I quickly realized I could do more than bake cookies. I began visiting patients and families, listening to stories—and often laughing. I saw how much those visits mattered. The staff welcomed the extra help, and I felt like part of the team. Their compassion inspired me to consider becoming a CNA. I wanted to be part of “team blue,” and everyone encouraged me to take that next step.

3. What drew you to this work?

I saw firsthand how much love goes into hospice care. People truly care about what they do, and it shows. I couldn't imagine a more meaningful calling than caring for others during such an important time.

4. What challenges did you face?

Going back to school later in life wasn't easy. Many people said they could never do it. But I knew what I wanted, and I was genuinely interested in what I was learning. I studied hard—and prayed even harder. Stillwater supported me every step of the way. Even the doctors encouraged me and told me I would have a job when I finished. That belief meant so much. It wasn't easy, but I was determined.

5. What does Stillwater mean to you?

It's important for me to love what I do and give it my all. My journey at Stillwater is one of my greatest accomplishments. Volunteering here is deeply rewarding, with many ways to serve—from honoring veterans to sitting bedside during Watchful Passage. The volunteer staff is kind and supportive, always asking how they can help. To be a CNA in hospice is not just a job—it's a blessing and an honor.

Together, We Can Grow a \$1 Million Endowment for Healing

Stillwater Hospice is inviting our community to help build something lasting, something that will support grieving individuals not just today, but for generations to come. With a transformative \$1 million founding gift from the Frank and Huber Family Foundation, the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center Endowment Fund has been established to secure the future of grief support across northeast Indiana.

Created in honor of Peggy F. Murphy and in celebration of the Grief Center's 10-year anniversary, the endowment reflects a shared commitment to compassion, dignity, and care for those navigating loss. Since opening in 2015, the Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center has helped thousands of adults find comfort, connection, and hope through counseling, support groups, and education, all offered at no charge to the mourner.

Sustaining this level of care requires more than annual support. Endowment gifts provide a permanent source of funding by being invested over time, generating income each year while preserving the initial gift. This approach creates long-term stability, ensuring that services remain accessible regardless of economic shifts or growing demand.

For donors, an endowment gift offers a meaningful way to extend their impact. It ensures that compassion continues beyond a single moment, supports access for those who might otherwise go without care, and creates a legacy that will touch lives for years to come.

The Frank and Huber Family Foundation's leadership gift has laid a powerful foundation. Now, Stillwater Hospice invites individuals, families, businesses, and community partners to help grow the endowment through matching gifts and commitments of all sizes.

This is a rare opportunity to turn compassion into something enduring. By supporting the endowment, donors help ensure that every person facing loss in our community has a place to turn—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. Learn more at Stillwater-Hospice.org/matchforhope.

“Thanks to you, there is always a place where compassion leads, dignity is honored, and every grief journey is met with understanding.”

— LESLIE FRIEDEL, CEO, STILLWATER HOSPICE



Planned Giving Anyone Can Afford

Have you ever wished you could support our work with a planned gift, but thought you couldn't afford it? There are ways you can make a commitment today while still preserving your assets for retirement and providing for your family.

THERE IS GOOD NEWS!

Planned giving is a simple way to help Stillwater Hospice's mission flourish in the future while continuing to support your financial goals. Please contact us to learn more about planned giving opportunities at donations@stillwater-hospice.org or (260) 435-3222.

<p>Gifts from a Will or Trust</p>	<p>Designating us a beneficiary in your will or trust is a simple way to commit to our cause, and it will not affect your cash flow during your lifetime. In addition, it's easy to revoke this type of gift if your situation or goals change.</p>
<p>Beneficiary Designations</p>	<p>Naming us as the beneficiary of a retirement plan, financial account, or annuity is another simple option that allows you to keep full use of these assets in your lifetime and can be updated at any time without legal support. In many cases, these gifts can also reduce estate taxes and help your heirs avoid certain income taxes.</p>
<p>Life Insurance</p>	<p>If you have an old, unneeded life insurance policy, you can donate it to us and take an immediate tax deduction. You can also name us as a beneficiary of your policy.</p>

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FOURTH ANNUAL TO BENEFIT STILLWATER HOSPICE



Wednesday, May 13, 2026

SOLD OUT

Event registration from 11:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Lunch served from 11:45 a.m.

Event to conclude at 1:00 p.m.

Mirro Event and Conference Center

10622 Parkview Plaza Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Why I Give | The Ralph Taylor Conservation Fund



To know Ralph Taylor was to know that living the best life meant wandering through and wondering at nature. For him, nature brought comfort, peace and unity. It did, and it does. He was an ardent sower of wildflowers and other indigenous species of plants. He sought the solace of the woodlands to address his grief. He passionately introduced each person around him to both the spectacular and the specifics of nature. The Ralph Taylor Conservation Fund supports projects that share his beliefs that the world around us *is* us. Supporting the work on the Stillwater Prairie and offering Grief Hikes would have made him smile. And that smile radiated joy and harmony. *Text provided by Cheryl Taylor.*



Run with Heart. Support Stillwater Hospice.

You're already running the miles. You've trained through the early mornings, the aching legs, and the moments you almost quit.

Why not make every step mean more?

When you sign up for a Fort4Fitness event, you can choose a charity partner. We hope you'll choose Stillwater Hospice.

Your run can help bring comfort to someone facing serious illness and guidance for a family walking through grief. Because of supporters like you, Stillwater can care for people across northeast Indiana and never turn anyone away who cannot pay.

When you designate Stillwater as your charity partner for Fort4Fitness, whether you're biking the Spring Cycle, racing at the Fall Festival, or dashing through the possible snow in November, your participation directly fuels our work in the community. Every dollar raised stays local. Every race supports real people.

So lace up. Choose Stillwater.

And turn your miles into compassion.



5910 Homestead Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46814 • P: 260-435-3222 • 800-288-4111
www.stillwater-hospice.org



THE PEGGY F. MURPHY
**Community
Grief Center**



Complementary Grief Programming



Specialty Series

- Invisible Ink
- Meditation & Mindfulness
- Healing Haiku
- Knitting
- Tai Chi



Quarterly Sessions

- Book Club
- Sound Bath
- Wellness Coaching
- Art



Monthly Sessions

- Yoga for Respite & Restoration
- MELT Method
- Drum Circle
- Grief Hikes



Half-Day Retreats

- A Siblings' Grief
- Memories of Mom
- Remembering Dad
- A Parents' Grief
- Grief Day Camp for Adults



Follow the Grief Center Online!

Sign up for our bi-monthly e-newsletter and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for grief education, program updates, and support group schedules.



Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to sign up for our bi-monthly newsletter.



@pfmgriefcenter



5920 Homestead Road
Fort Wayne, IN 46814



260.435.3261



GriefCenter@stillwater-hospice.org

Ongoing Grief Support Groups



THE PEGGY F. MURPHY
**Community
Grief Center**

A service of Stillwater Hospice

Awareness that grief may affect every aspect of our life is the beginning of our healing process. These programs, focusing on grief and loss, are designed to provide any adult who has suffered the death of a loved one an opportunity to explore, learn and feel supported in a safe environment. These community programs are available at no charge and hospice involvement is not required.

▼ **Peggy F. Murphy Community Grief Center • 5920 Homestead Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46814**

General Loss Grief Support Group

For any adult who has experienced loss due to death • 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month • 5:30-7 p.m.

Women's Afternoon Grief Support Group

After the death of a spouse or significant other
2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month • 2-3:30 p.m.

Women's Evening Grief Support Group

After the death of a spouse or significant other
3rd Monday of each month • 5:45-7:15 p.m.

Men's Grief Support Group

After the death of a spouse or significant other
1st & 3rd Thursday of each month • 1-2:30 p.m.
Please call (260) 435-3261 or email griefcenter@stillwater-hospice.org to register in advance by the week prior to meeting date.

We the Living

For those who have lost a loved one to suicide
2nd Wednesday of each month • 7-8:30 p.m.

Pet Loss Support Group

For those who are grieving the loss of a pet
3rd Wednesday of each month • 6-7 p.m.

Please call (260) 435-3261 or email griefcenter@stillwater-hospice.org to register in advance by the Wednesday prior to meeting date.

Finding Hope

For those who have lost a loved one to suicide
4th Monday of each month • 6:30-8 p.m.
Please call (260) 435-3261 or email griefcenter@stillwater-hospice.org to register in advance by the Wednesday prior to meeting date.

Compassionate Friends

For grieving parents, grandparents & siblings
Thursday following 1st Tuesday
each month • 7 p.m.
Contact Kelly Pulley & Katy Leach for meeting locations, (260) 255-4530, leave a message to receive a return call. No meetings in July or December.

Please call (260) 435-3261 or email griefcenter@stillwater-hospice.org to register in advance by the Wednesday prior to meeting date:

▼ **Messiah Lutheran Church**

7211 Stellhorn Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815

Stellhorn Grief Support Group

1st & 3rd Monday of each month • 6:30-7:30 p.m.

▼ **Fort Wayne Pride Center**

527 W. Berry St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802

LGBTQ+ Grief Support Group

For members of the LGBTQ+ community who have lost partners or loved ones
2nd Monday of each month • 6:30-8 p.m.

▼ **First Christian Church**

910 N. Indiana Ave., Auburn, IN 46706

Auburn Grief Support Group

For any loss due to death
2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month • 6-7:30 p.m.

For information: (260) 435-3261 or stillwater-hospice.org.



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Stillwater Hospice provides compassion, comfort, and guidance through life's journey, regardless of race, age, creed, sexual orientation, disability, or nationality.

We care for those who go on living as well. Our grief services are available at no charge for any adult who has experienced the loss of a loved one.

We proudly serve these Indiana counties: Adams, Allen, Blackford, DeKalb, Grant, Huntington, Jay, Kosciusko, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley.



Stillwater
HOSPICE

Main Office: Fort Wayne

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Berne, IN 46711

Warsaw

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Warsaw, IN 46580

Translation services available. To make a difference in the lives of Stillwater Hospice patients and families, consider making a gift to the Stillwater Foundation. Please visit stillwater-hospice.org/donate or call (260) 435-3222.

Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our mailing list. Call 260-435-3222 or 800-288-4111.

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Nursing and Patient Referral Line: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

stillwater-hospice.org



CHAP

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for Healthcare and
Hospice Innovation

Because of people like you, Stillwater Hospice is able to continue our 138-year tradition of caring for the seriously ill of northeast Indiana and their families. Your gifts, whether they be your time, talent, or treasure, have helped us care for people facing the most serious challenges in their lives. Your support makes meaningful moments possible.

Thank you!



Quickly support Stillwater Foundation by scanning the QR code to make your safe, secure online donation. Thank you!

