



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
College of Human Medicine



First Michigan Pediatric Hospice & Bereavement Conference to be Held Nov. 1
Art for Charlie Partners with Hospice of Michigan & MSU College of Human Medicine
To Discuss Services Available, Needs to be Addressed

East Lansing, Michigan September 23, 2014 – The Art for Charlie Foundation is convening Michigan’s first-ever Pediatric Hospice and Bereavement Conference on Saturday, Nov. 1 in East Lansing.

This one-day conference is designed for healthcare, counseling and social work professionals from across the state. The event was created to define and remedy gaps in resources for dealing with the terminal diagnosis or death of a child and its impact on the family and community. The conference is co-sponsored by Hospice of Michigan, the College of Human Medicine at Michigan State University and the Peoples Church.

Doctors, caregivers, counselors and healthcare professionals, as well as representatives from the insurance industry and state government, are invited to participate on the panel discussions. Topics are designed to touch on specific needs of patients, families and providers in relation to serious or chronic illness in children, as well as end-of-life, grieving and related issues. For consideration on a panel, contact Art for Charlie at info@artforcharlie.org.

The morning session will begin at 8 a.m. and focus on pediatric palliative care. The panel will be led by:

- Dr. Kenneth J. Pituch, director of the Pediatric Hospitalist Service at C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital and University of Michigan professor in the Department of Pediatrics and Communicable diseases
- Dr. James B. Fahner, MD, founder of the Cancer and Hematology program at DeVos Children’s Hospital and the driving force behind Hospice of Michigan’s pediatric hospice program

Following lunch, afternoon sessions convene at 1:30 p.m. focusing on resources available to support bereaved parents. Jerome C. Wakefield, professor of social work and professor of the Conceptual Foundations of Psychiatry at New York University, will lead the discussion. He is a nationally known author and lecturer on the relationship of sorrow to psychiatry.

“Approximately 1,400 children die annually in Michigan, leaving a tremendous emptiness in the families they leave behind,” said Abigail Waller, president and founder of Art for Charlie, a charity helping children with life-limiting illnesses and grieving parents. “Yet most Michigan cities lack established resources for specialized pediatric palliative and hospice care or support for families who have lost a child.

“My husband and I recognized this need when our son, Charlie, was diagnosed with a brain tumor at the age of two. During the next three years, we learned the importance of coordinated palliative and hospice care for children in Michigan – and the scarcity of resources to address their needs. Charlie died in December, but our mission continues – to raise awareness of the need for pediatric palliative and hospice services that will provide support to families in need in our state. This conference is another step in that process.”

Registration is \$35, which includes breakfast and lunch, to attend the full day of sessions. To register, visit <http://www.artforcharlie.com/conference.htm#form>. Accommodation for the Friday and Saturday night is available at special rates at the Marriott at University Place, East Lansing through the link on the Art for Charlie website.

Please visit www.artforcharlie.com/conference or email info@artforcharlie.org for more information.

About Art for Charlie Foundation

Established in East Lansing, Mich. in 2012, the Art for Charlie Foundation, is a 501(c)3 corporation that raises money through art events and art sales to provide hospice care for very ill children and to help families who have suffered the loss of a child.

About Hospice of Michigan

A nationally recognized leader in end-of-life care, Hospice of Michigan is the original – and largest – hospice in the state. The non-profit cares for more than 1,700 patients each day, raising more than \$4 million each year to cover the cost of care for the uninsured and underinsured. HOM offers a broad range of services to enhance the quality of life at the end of life, including At Home Support™, our advanced illness management program, community-based palliative care and pediatric care programs. HOM provides grief support and counseling, caregiver education and support, and education programs for physicians and healthcare professionals through its research, training and education arm, the Hospice of Michigan Institute. For more information, call 888.247.5701 or visit www.hom.org.

About MSU College of Human Medicine

For 50 years, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine has drawn upon MSU's land grant values to educate exemplary physicians, discover and disseminate new knowledge and respond to the needs of the medically underserved in communities throughout Michigan. The medical school offers students comprehensive education in clinical settings that most closely parallel the environment in which most physicians practice, in six community campuses at 13 leading hospitals throughout the state. The college is home to centers for excellence in Parkinson's disease research and women's health and reproduction research. For more information, visit the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine Web site at www.humanmedicine.msu.edu.

About the Peoples Church

The Peoples Church of East Lansing is an interdenominational Protestant congregation with approximately 1,300 members. Established in 1907 as People's Congregational Church, it was the only church in East Lansing, Mich. at the time of its founding. In 1924, the congregation reincorporated as The People's Church, with the apostrophe being later dropped.

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