



For Immediate Release

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**Hospice of Michigan at Center of Award-Winning Project
by Grand Rapids Community College Students**

Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 6, 2015 – A project by students at Grand Rapids Community College documenting the lives of Hospice of Michigan patients received top honors in the school’s Armen Awards.

The series of seven stories, written by members of “The Collegiate” staff working with professor Jennifer Ackerman-Haywood, includes a look at the people who provide end-of-life care to HOM patients, from a social worker to a chaplain to a service operations manager. One story documents a day in the life of hospice nurse Holly McKay, who shares this about the passing of a patient: “I remember at the end of the day they went peacefully and, hopefully, how they wanted to – and that brings you your own comfort. You realize that you have been able to make a difference.”

The Armen Awards – named after longtime GRCC supporter Armen Oumedian, who created and funds the awards – honors excellence in service learning. Faculty members lead students in designing and completing service projects that benefit community organizations.

“We are delighted that the remarkable stories of our patients and our hardworking and compassionate employees were captured so beautifully by these students,” said Marcie Hillary, executive director of Hospice of Michigan-West Michigan. “And we are equally delighted and honored to be part of this award-winning effort aimed at exploring the question of how do you live a meaningful life.”

Here’s a look at other stories in the series:

- In “Sweetheart, I love you,” we meet HOM patient Robert “Bob” Booth and his wife, Bernadette – married 62 years and struggling to manage his achalasia and pulmonary fibrosis and her increasing dementia.
- In “Don’t take life for granted,” we meet 32-year-old George Shelden, a married father of three who has been in and out of hospice care for nearly three years and hasn’t been able to get out of bed for more than a year.
- “Social media is forever” takes a look at what happens to social media accounts after someone dies.
- “Have you had the talk? (no, not that talk)” offers resources and tips for how to have end-of-life conversations with loved ones.

The stories and a video of the project are available at <http://thecollegiatelive.com/hospice/>.

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 nonprofit 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 health care 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.

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