



Hildegard House

dignity has a home



The Little Things: The Bell, Oatmeal, and a Lap around the Beads

Thelma is 101 years old, never married, and has no living relatives. She came to Hildegard House from the hospital after suffering a severe head laceration from a fall. She had multiple other health problems and had Hosparus Health at home. She said it was okay to write this story about her.

It is amazing what a little love can do! Thelma lived alone and was used to being waited on by her friends. To say that she was “spoiled” is putting it mildly. For example, the hospital chart says that she “voiced that hospital food was ‘shit’ and that she cannot be expected to gain strength by eating it.”

Looking back in her Hildegard House binder, it is not surprising to see that one of the volunteers wrote that “she is very particular about her food,” and that she was “very demanding....couldn’t be pleased today.” At Hildegard House, we do not have a call light system as they have in the hospitals. We have little bells that the residents have at the bedside. The first weeks Thelma was here, there was lots of bell ringing! She needed lots of attention. A volunteer wrote, “at times she was agreeable but not very nice!”

Compassionate Companions continually provided her TLC. “We offered her everything, including her oatmeal. I think we made her three different meals that evening. She told us nobody at Hildegard House could make oatmeal that is edible.” Another told me jokingly, “I’ve often thought that Thelma could easily be a judge on one of those cooking shows. She is more than ready to tell you her egg is over cooked, the sausage too hard and that you don’t make the toast right!”

Thelma is devoted to the saying the Rosary. She says it three times a day and often watches Mass on the Air. She knows all the mysteries. She often asked volunteers to say the Rosary with her. She taught many of them how to say the Rosary and has extras in case anyone needs one. A volunteer reported that she “agreed to pray the Rosary with Thelma and was getting her Rosary out. When she saw my Rosary, she grabbed it and told me to give her the damn Rosary. I laughed and explained to her that we both had white Rosaries.” She said, “Oh well, we are fighting over our own Rosaries!”



Thelma

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A Word from the Executive Director



In her recent book, “The Library Book,” Susan Orlean writes that the idea of being forgotten is terrifying to her. Not only that she will be forgotten, but that we are all doomed to be forgotten—that the sum of life is ultimately nothing, that we experience joy and disappointment and aches and delights and loss, make our little mark on the world and then we vanish and the mark is erased, and it is as if we never existed. She says we are all whispering into a tin can on a string. We whisper the message into the next can and the next string. And she says writing a book for her is the act of defiance and a declaration that we believe in the persistence of memory.

A volunteer told me that she thinks that what Hildegard House does is to provide a way to create memories of people who are invisible, who might otherwise be forgotten. We remember them and that’s what matters. We have a service of remembrance for them when they die, and talk about them, laugh and tell stories, just as a family would do at a wake. We are their family.

Hildegard House is a kind of act of defiance and a declaration that every person’s life is sacred even to the last moment. We believe that dignity and comfort are an important part of the end of life. And that no one should have to die alone or lonely.

“Every atom in your body came from a star that exploded. And, the atoms in your left hand probably came from a different star than your right hand. It really is the most poetic thing I know about physics: We are all stardust.” -Lawrence Krauss

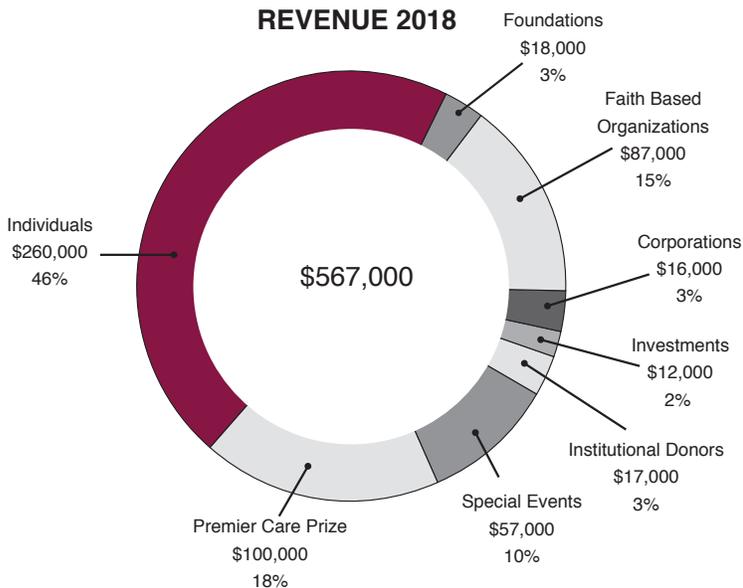
Hildegard House is not a place of death...but a home full of life. For life. For resurrection. As Dorothy Day said, “we have all known the long loneliness, and we have learned that the only solution is love. And that love comes with community.” And so it goes each day at Hildegard House. We remember. We are stardust. We are community. We love.

Karen

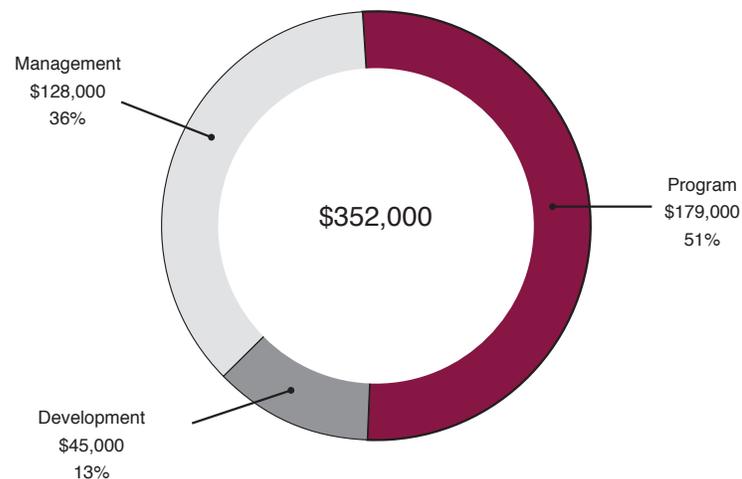
Karen Cassidy
Executive Director

Annual Financial Report

REVENUE 2018



EXPENSES 2018



In addition to our generous contributors shown above:

- More than 200 volunteers logged 14,481 hours, a value of \$357,536.
- In-kind donations worth \$22,000 were received.

The Little Things: The Bell, Oatmeal, and a Lap around the Beads (cont.)



Sarita Gardner plays for Thelma

After a month, the notes in the binder changed tone a bit. Thelma was “active and feisty”, “she loved the broccoli soup and conversation that went with it” and was “pleasant and cooperative.” She “ate chicken noodle soup, toast, pineapple upside down cake and ice cream.” She awoke in the morning and shared stories, “dancing the Charleston, Foxtrot & Waltz, and saying that Thelma is her middle name and laughed because she couldn’t remember her first name”. The note in her binder said, “She has been very lovely and is a joy to be with” and “we sang some songs and did the word jumble.”

The bell? “She rang her bell and wanted to give me a hug.” Also, “I had answered a rather impatient bell ringing. I told her I would go get what she wanted. I turned and as soon as I rounded the corner to go down the hall, she gave a one-time weak ring and continued to do the faint ring every few seconds until I got back. When I walked back into the room, she was grinning mischievously.”

And a few weeks later... “Thelma was very pleasant and happy this morning. She had a compliment for everyone who came in the room.” “She had a bowl of vegetable soup and said, ‘This is really good!’ “Was in great cheer, engaged in meaningful conversation with volunteers, laughed plenty and interjected her fabulous sense of humor.” “In great spirits. Showed me the Christmas stuffed bears she received. Named one Oscar. Worried because he doesn’t have any pants on.”

“She talked about having no relatives. All have died.” “Very happy that the harpist visited and played for her.” “She is teaching us how to make perfect oatmeal.” Is really enjoying and desiring bedside company.” “Very interactive and conversant the whole shift, she was feisty and in good humor, wanted to hear some good jokes. What she ate she said was “really tasty!”



Thelma and Renate Fish, Compassionate Companion

Another volunteer expressed this: “There is a sacred space in Thelma’s room. She possesses a unique spirituality with her Rosary, Eucharist and sharing her God. She is a blessing to all of us, even when our stories about her have bleeps!”

Food may still be an issue at times, but she has no complaints when it comes to Rosary time. We are all blessed to have such a sweet spirit touch our lives. And we know how to make oatmeal and come quickly when the bell rings!

Compassionate Companion Spotlight

Mike English



Mike is an attorney and his firm has a unique way of giving back to the community through giving 10% of closing costs to selected charities. At the real estate closing of one of our current Compassionate Companions, it was suggested to Mike to include Hildegard House on this list. That is how he found out about Hildegard House! He attended Compassionate Companion training and has been a regular Sunday morning volunteer since July 2017. Mike says that there is a “mutual transformation” that happens when volunteering. “You think you are doing good, but the residents give me more than I give. It is beneficial to your soul.” Mike and his wife, Karen have two children, Abbie and Matthew and two dogs Charlie and Ruby. We thank Mike for his compassionate service and being part of the Hildegard House family!

Interested in Volunteering?

Volunteers are the heart of Hildegard House. Are you interested in volunteering?

Compassionate Companions provide the day-to-day care for our residents just as a family member would at home: Making lunch, doing laundry, giving medications, or watching TV. We ask for a commitment of at least one five-hour shift per week.

Call Jana McNally,
Volunteer Coordinator
at 502-581-8267

Email Jana at
Jana@hildegardhouse.org



Thanks to Dr. George Webb for the “Lunch and Learn” for our Compassionate Companions!

Wish List

Gift cards always help – Kroger, Walgreens, Target. We love to get the special things that our residents request! You can help us!

Keurig K-cups, Swifter sheets, paper yard waste bags, unscented pump hand soap, batteries of all sizes, light bulbs, large black garbage bags without drawstrings.



Our Board

Stephen E. Sage, *Chair*

Missy Stober, *Vice Chair*

Joanne Weis, *Secretary*

Carl Herde, *Treasurer*

Betty J. Adkins

Julie Boatright

Wes Burgiss

Beverly Glascock

Jennifer Glassner

Sr. Janet Marie Peterworth

Marty Robinson

Donna Trabue

Chuck Anderson, MD, *Medical Director*

Karen Cassidy, *Executive Director*



Hildegard House
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Our Mission

Providing a home and compassionate care for individuals at the end of life who have no home or loved ones to care for them so that they may die with dignity.



Hildegard House

dignity has a home

www.hildegardhouse.org
502-581-8267



Upcoming Events

The Remedy plays at Saints -
Saturday May 18, 7-10:30pm
131 Breckenridge Lane
\$10 cover

Hit it for Hildegard Golf Scramble
October 4th at
Heritage Hill Golf Club