



in touch

Spring 2022

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire board of Solace Friends, Inc. (Solace), I want to express our deep gratitude to you for supporting our mission to create “Solace Home,” where our community’s most vulnerable individuals can receive community, comfort, and comprehensive person-centered care in safe surroundings as they live out their final days.

2021 was an exceptionally successful fundraising year for Solace. With your help, we’ve made it halfway to our initial start-up goal of \$500,000. Response to our year-end mailing generated more than \$50,000 from 100+ individual donors, alone! This included two generous matching grants—one from Virginia Graves and Peter Tropman; the other from an anonymous donor. We also received amazing support from 17 foundations, corporations, and faith-communities. In 2022, we hope to secure our house and start welcoming guests.

Stepping up our community outreach has also been fruitful. We shared our vision and plan with a number of entities and look forward to the opportunity to make presentations to all sorts of other groups. Additional PR has generated more interest from the media—including a beautiful feature article in the March issue of Our Lives (OL) magazine. We’ve also created more valuable alliances that include a relationship with Husch Blackwell attorneys Meg Pekarske and Andrew Brenton who have graciously offered pro-bono assistance related to Adult Family Home licensing.

I have been wishing that by the time you read this message, the unrest in Ukraine would be over and her people would be free to return safely home. Sadly, this is not likely to happen any time soon. Knowing that families are being separated and displaced during a time of such threat and worry is absolutely anguishing. I feel a similar heartache when I think of vulnerable people in our community who are facing death without support and shelter. We pledge to do our little bit here in Dane County to demonstrate exquisite kindness and tender care to those in particular need of refuge at the end of life.

We hope that we can count on your ongoing support—whether it’s by sending another donation, volunteering, or simply spreading the word. In the meantime, please accept our heartfelt thanks for all you’ve done to help us reach this critical milestone.

Sincerely,

Ann Catlett, MD, Board President



A way of saying

Two simple words are used to name our organization, and when used together, they clearly define what we bring to those we serve:

Solace: comfort and consolation in a time of distress

Friends: trusted people who provide help and support when needed most



Please help us find our home

A nonprofit organization relies upon monetary donations to help support the costs of programming and operations. Solace is no exception; however, our current pressing need is to find a **single-level, 4- or 5-bedroom house in Madison, on or near a Metro transit line**. If you or someone you know are looking to sell or donate a home that fits these criteria, please contact Solace board president: ann.catlett@solacefriends.org, or facilities chair: kathy.kamp@solacefriends.org.

Who counts—and who doesn't

There is a huge gap in knowledge about end-of-life care options and outcomes for people who are unsheltered or suffering from serious mental illness (or both). Currently, there are no formal measures in place nationally or locally to collect accurate numbers and other related information. However, we know that in the U.S., each group has limited access to, and use of, community hospice services. We can draw from our own unofficial surveys and several research projects done elsewhere to inform our understanding of the need for initiatives like Solace Friends.

One study included 445 unsheltered residents of Boston:

- The mean age of death in this group was **53**, and represented **10 x the mortality rate** of the general Massachusetts population during the study period
- The most common causes of death: non-communicable diseases such as cancer and heart disease, alcohol use disorder, and chronic liver disease

Roncarali JS, Baggett TP, O'Connell JJ, Hwang SW, Cook EF, Krieger N, Sorensen G. Mortality Among Unsheltered Homeless Adults in Boston, Massachusetts, 2000-2009. JAMA Intern Med. 2018 Sep 1;178(9):1242-1248.

Another study that focused on the mortality among those with serious mental illness found:

- 4.5% of the US population suffers from serious mental illness (SMI)
- Individuals with SMI die approximately **15 — 25 years earlier** than those without SMI
- Increased mortality is largely due to serious medical illness (as opposed to trauma, suicide, or overdose)

Shalev D, Fields L, Shapiro PA. End-of-Life Care in Individuals With Serious Mental Illness. Psychosomatics. 2020;61(5):428-435.

Our foundation, corporate and faith-community donors:

UW Health

Madison Community Foundation

MGE Foundation

Roots & Wings Foundation

Evjue Foundation

Seeds of Hope (First Congregational Church)

Barry Family Foundation

Jim and Vicki Struve Foundation

Katz-Krantz Family Philanthropies

Husch Blackwell

J.H. Findorff & Son, Inc.

Preferred Title

Advent Lutheran Church

St. Paul — St. John Lutheran (Mazomanie)

Presbyterian Women of Westminster Church

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Zion Lutheran Church

Donor spotlight

One of our earliest donors was local philanthropist Jim Struve who first heard about Solace from a beloved friend who'd learned about us from someone else that knew one of our board members. Intrigued, Jim went to our website for



more information—what he saw there motivated him to make an unsolicited donation. When we contacted him to express our appreciation, he told us what prompted him to give so generously to such a new and little-known cause.

“It really hit home that there are people in our community, mostly unheard and unseen, who are unsheltered and uncared for while they are dying,” says

Struve. “Providing compassionate care and a safe place to live during their last months on earth seems like a simple way to relieve needless suffering. I feel fortunate that I could contribute something to make this happen, especially since I know that I've had a very privileged life.

“I truly believe the need for Solace Friends is real and ongoing,” adds Struve. “What Solace is trying to do is not just a “nice-to-have” thing for Dane County. The clients Solace will serve are people who don't have many advocates right now, and that needs to change. I hope to be part of that change by spreading the word and incentivizing others to help build a solid base of sustainable funding that Solace can count on year after year.”

Thank you Jim, for being a true Solace Friend!

More ways to help

Time and talent are just as valuable as dollars, and Solace has many rewarding **volunteer opportunities** ranging from administrative and community outreach to direct personal caregiving & companionship. We also want to expand and diversify our **board of directors** and various **working committees** involved in planning, organizing, and operating our program. We are especially looking for people to join our Programming and Personnel, and Finance and Budget committees. If you want to help, we'll find a way. Please call us or go to our website for details.



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