

Welcome news from our founder and board president

Wow, and whew! What a month we had in June 2022! While all of Solace's board members and volunteers have been working steadfastly to achieve many key objectives, none of us imagined how many things could fall into place all at once. We have terrific news to report and hope you'll share the joyful anticipation we're feeling about the progress that has been made since our last issue of this newsletter. Here are a few of the highlights:

- *Solace Friends welcomed Amy Mondloch, our first-ever executive director. Check out her letter of introduction below.*
- *In early June we got word that Monona Bank and Forward Community Investments were partnering to put a lending package together that would allow us to shop for our first Solace Home.*
- *The very week that they solidified the loan, we started looking at properties with the help of our dedicated realtor, Ann Raschein of Mad City Dream Homes. Given the market, we were absolutely astonished to find a near-perfect home on the east side of Madison.*
- *Solace submitted an offer post-haste and it was accepted! If our next steps proceed smoothly, we'll begin renovating this fall and have our eyes on starting services as soon as feasibly possible.*



We are grateful for your support that has helped us to reach these important milestones! We can't do any of this without you. We offer our deep gratitude for your gifts of time, expertise, and money. We hope you look forward to hearing progress updates along the way and can't wait to share them with you.

All the best,

Ann Catlett, MD

Hello Solace Friends!

It is a great gift to simply get to say those words to all of you. It brings me much joy to introduce myself as the new executive director for this important new organization. I am thrilled to join Solace's dedicated board and volunteers as we work to ensure quality end-of-life care is available to the most vulnerable and underserved members of our community.



What an exciting time to join Solace Friends. Thanks to the generous support of many individuals, foundations, organizations, and businesses across our community, we've made giant strides in the last few months and are now poised to take the big leap towards buying a house!

Meanwhile, I'd like to share a little about what's brought me to this work and my hopes for our movement forward.

Introducing our new executive director

My journey toward this work began in the early 1980's when I was just a kid and my mom had breast cancer. Her great strength throughout her years with the disease taught me a lot about life, about who I am, and about what's important. By 1984 it was clear that she wouldn't be with us much longer. Our house was filled with family and friends. Everyone was taking turns staying by her bedside, bringing food, helping to care for me, and lending a hand with all of the duties that needed to be done. It was a place filled with love where we held on to each other through her passing on July 7th, 1984.

The lessons I learned about love and caring from my mom and all those who gathered around us then guided me to a lifetime's work in the world of social justice. I started my career in East Tennessee in the 1990's with Save Our Cumberland Mountains fighting strip mining and deforestation. From there I returned to Madison to direct the Grassroots Leadership College from 2003-2012. Next, I headed north to the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota to direct the work of Toxic Taters, an organization

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dedicated to healthy food and sustainable agriculture. I later went on to the University of Minnesota-Morris to be the Community Program Administrator for the Center for Small Towns until 2020 when I decided to come back home to Wisconsin where I've worked at the Memory Project and the Meriter Childcare Center before finding this exciting position with Solace.

My journey has given me the great opportunity to be involved with many organizations and community projects over the years as a board member or volunteer including a few familiar names like JustDane, Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, and WORT. All of these experiences and many more have led me down the road to where I am today, starting my work with you, Solace Friends! I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you. Please reach out to me at (608) 843-8191, or amy@solacefriends.org.

Warmest regards,

Amy Mondloch, Executive Director



Solace Friends will always depend on generous gifts of support from others in our community—and not just financially. Time and talent are just as valuable as dollars and we invite people of all ages, interests, and abilities to join our **volunteer teams**—now and in the future. We have many rewarding opportunities available, ranging from administrative and community outreach roles to direct personal caregiving and companionship.

We are especially looking for individuals and groups who are interested in helping to develop our policies and procedures, want to work with communication and outreach, to assist in recruiting more volunteers and personnel, and to be part of our ongoing fundraising efforts. We also want to expand and diversify our **board of directors** and various **working committees** involved in planning, organizing, and operating our program.

These are all exciting opportunities to learn "on the ground" about building an organization that connects with health care, social justice, and social services. If you or someone you know want to get more involved, we'd love to hear from you. Please call us or go to our website for details. To contribute financially, it's easy at: <https://www.solacefriends.org/you.html#donor>. For additional updates and insights, please follow our Facebook page: *Solace Friends: Community, Comfort, and Care at Life's End*.

We're in good company

As the first social model home for dying people in Wisconsin, we are pleased that there's growing interest in establishing similar programs throughout the country. According to the The Omega Home Network (OHN), (<https://www.omegahomenetwork.org/>), a national non-profit membership organization that promotes the development and expansion of community homes for dying people, more and more people are sensing the value of such initiatives and taking steps to create safe spaces that provide community, care, and comfort for those in need. As members of OHN, Solace Friends is grateful for the networking opportunities, helpful resources and guidance the organization provides. For instance, OHN developed a special interest group for those homes that focus on providing shelter and care to *vulnerable populations in particular*. This SIG meets monthly; usually 3-4 other homes from across the US participate to share practical ideas and problem-solving around shared challenges. It has been immeasurably valuable to learn from homes who are up and running!



Another example of growing interest was presented in a program called RADDEATHREADS which was held virtually through Zoom in May. The National End-of-Life Doula Alliance (NEDA) (<https://nedalliance.org>) and the Collective for Radical Death Studies (CRDS) (<https://radicaldeathstudies.com/>) co-hosted an 8-part series titled: "Whose Life/Death Counts?" which explored the invisibility of indigent death. During each session, participants were exposed to teachings and conversations that looked at the complexity and often un-memorialized deaths within unhoused populations, incarceration settings, immigrant communities, etc. Attendees were invited to consider ways to best advocate for policy related solutions, as well as, how to raise awareness for practical action at the community level when it comes to unsupported or unacknowledged death and dying experiences. More details can be found on the CRDS website. Here's a good article that helps explain the importance of efforts like ours: *What Constitutes a Good and Bad Death?: Perspectives of Homeless Older Adults*: <https://drive.google.com/file/>



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