*Lynn Kurtz Interview Draft 1, 5.12.2023*

*Lynn Kurtz lives in the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan and has been a hospice volunteer for 20 years. When she retired as an elementary school teacher, she still wanted to give back to her community as a volunteer caregiver because*

I think because of working in small public-school systems for so long, you do a lot of extra things like volunteering with the school and the community, and when I retired, I didn’t want to sit at home all the time.

Hospice of the EUP in the Sault Ste. Marie area had a bridging program for people who were not dying but had a chronic condition.

For seven years, nearly every Monday, I sat with a woman who was an amputee so her husband could do the weekly shopping. They were both elderly, and I was privileged to get to know them well and become good friends.

I realized early on that I taught her grandchildren in school and got to know her daughter too when she came to visit when I was there. Sometimes I would do special things for her and her husband, like decorate their home for Christmas. Eventually, we realized that the husband should no longer drive, and my husband then volunteered and drove him to the stores every Monday.

My mom was in hospice just before the EUP Ball Hospice House opened. Her journey gave me more encouragement to help here where I could. I have such gratitude and admiration for all those who work in Hospice care.

My husband and I have known many people who have been to the Hospice House, and the care the nurses and other staff give that their families cannot provide is phenomenal. I have had a lot of fulfillment as a volunteer caregiver and, along with that, some grief, of course, saying goodbye to friends I have made.

The hospice staff has changed over the 20 years due to the building of the Ball Hospice House. But the one thing that hasn’t changed is Executive Director Tracey Holt. Tracey is a very persuasive person—a real go-getter. You don’t want to tell her no because she inspires you to want to be involved.

During the COVID-19 crisis, things really slowed down. In the last six months, it has picked up, and I have volunteered at the Hospice House as a receptionist, greeting people at the door when needed, and still sitting with patients occasionally. I have enjoyed the people aspect of volunteer caregiving, and getting to know them and learning from them has enriched my life in so many ways. Also, working with other volunteers has been an inspiration.

***For Social Media:***

Quote 1:

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Quote 2:

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