



Alliance Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice takes care of one of its own

North Benton resident Kay Bravis spent 23 years of her professional career caring for others when they could no longer care for themselves. It was only when Bravis was diagnosed with small cell cancer that she was forced to retire and look to others to return the favor.

Bravis received her cancer diagnosis in January 2012. She was informed that she was not a candidate for surgery, so the call was made to Alliance Visiting Nurse Association (AVNA) and Hospice in October of that year.

"I worked until I couldn't do it anymore," Bravis said. "I knew that I wanted the same people that I worked alongside for so many years to be there when I needed them."

Bravis had no knowledge of what hospice care was when she first started with Caring Hands Inc., an affiliate service of Alliance Community Hospital, in 1988. Over the years, she became close to the nurses from Alliance Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice as they worked together to care for the community.

"Most people go into a nursing home when they get a diagnosis like mine," Bravis said. "But I knew I wanted to be home around my family. All I want is to pass away in my own bed. I couldn't do it without help from these hospice nurses."

The AVNA and Hospice team provides both medical and spiritual support to its patients. Bravis and her family are especially thankful for the assistance with medications. The family says that they have never asked for something twice and appreciate the constant attention, day or night.

Numerous hospice nurses have cared for Bravis since her diagnosis, but she certainly has a few personal favorites.

"I've known some of my nurses for years and years so the friendships mean so much more when they visit or simply call to check in," Bravis said.

Hospice nurse Doria Kisling has nothing but good things to say about Bravis. "Kay really is one of us and is a very special lady that I'm so glad I've gotten to know over time."

AVNA and Hospice provides care to anyone seeking assistance, but support from



LEFT: Kay Bravis, center, is surrounded by Hospice nurses Doria Kisling, left, and Jan Fugate. Hospice has helped Bravis remain in her home despite her terminal cancer diagnosis. **BELOW:** Bravis holds a photo of her Marine grandson, David. The AVNAH and Hospice "Dream Team" helped make Bravis' wish come true by providing her with the funds to make the trip to see her grandson graduate from boot camp.

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a patient's family truly aids the process.

"Hospice works best when a family pulls together and is truly there to support a loved one," Hospice nurse Jan Fugate said. "Kay has taken care of so many people her whole life and we are just returning the favor."

Doctors gave Bravis only three to six months to live after her initial diagnosis. She immediately went out and bought all of her grandchildren cross necklaces so they would always have something to remember her by. Bravis believes that one goal kept her going and that was seeing her Marine grandson, David, graduate from boot camp this past June. With the help of the AVNAH and Hospice "Dream Team," her goal was met. This team helps make final wishes come true for hospice patients and their families.

"I only had \$50 in my wallet when I received that card

from my hospice family," Bravis said. The card contained enough money so that Bravis and her family could make the trip to South Carolina together to attend the military graduation. There are numerous military mothers on the hospice staff and they knew how important a milestone like graduation is. "To be able to see the beach with my family was amazing. My grandson is now stationed in North Carolina, but he texts me every day to see how I'm doing," Bravis said.

The Alliance Visiting Nursing Association and Hospice program is a nonprofit organization. Events like the Steppin' Out For Hospice 5K Twilight Run/Walk help support hospice and its services.

The 5K will take place at 7:45 p.m. Saturday. Cost is \$20 for early registration or \$25 for race-day registration. A 1K Run/Walk for children ages 10 and under will start at 7 p.m.



The children's 1K costs \$10 for early registration and \$15 for race-day registration.

Runners and walkers can register on race day from 4 to 6:30 p.m. The starting line will be in front of Alliance

Community Hospital's main entrance. Food and drinks will be provided after the race. The run will take place rain or shine.

Awards will be given in several categories and children

ages 10 and under competing in the 1K run will receive participation medals.

For more information on hospice services or the 5K, call 330-596-7575 or visit www.achosp.org.

Aultman Hospice seeks volunteers

The Aultman Hospice program is seeking volunteers to provide companionship and support to hospice patients and families. Aultman Hospice has volunteer opportunities available in the following areas:

Respite volunteers — these volunteers will provide physical and emotional support to the hospice patient in their home on a weekly basis. The presence of a volunteer provides the caregiver with an opportunity to step away from the home and the full-time care of the patient for a little while.

11th Hour volunteers — These volunteers need to have good evening and nighttime availability and are contacted as needed. They are most often called to sit with a patient at the Aultman Women's Board Compassionate Care Center or extended care facility when the patient is experiencing increased symptoms or is near death, or to provide companionship and allow loved ones to get much-needed rest.

There is a significant need for male volunteers. All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and are required to attend a total of four training sessions. The sessions are free, but registration is required. All training sessions will be held at the Aultman Women's Board Compassionate Care Center, located on the Aultman Woodlawn campus at 2821 Woodlawn Ave. N.W. in Canton.

Training sessions will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sept. 17, Sept. 24, Oct. 8 and Oct. 15.

For more information, contact Becky Shafer, Aultman Hospice volunteer coordinator, at 330-479-7450 or rshafer@aultman.com.

Aultman announces Health Talk series topics for September

Aultman Hospital presents the following free Health Talk programs during the month of September:

■ **Sept. 3** — "Treatment of Neurologic Disease with Botox" will be presented by Ryan Drake, M.D., neurologist, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at Aultman West. Botox is not only used for wrinkle lines and cosmetic reasons. It also used to treat many neurologic diseases including chronic headaches, brain injury, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. Come find out more about the many uses of Botox.

■ **Sept. 4** — "Heart Disease — Prevent the Event" will be presented by Adene Keller, RN, cardiac rehab, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman North. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S. Come learn how you can help prevent heart disease and reduce your risk.

■ **Sept. 5** — "Total Joint Replacement" will be presented by Jeffrey Dulik, D.O., orthopedic surgeon, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman West. Learn the latest trends in total joint replacement, including minimally invasive and

computer-assisted hip and knee replacements.

■ **Sept. 10** — "Empty Nest" will be presented by Barbara Fordyce, Ph.D., psychologist, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman North. Parents may feel emptiness, loneliness or depression once their children leave home. Come learn ways to overcome these symptoms and more.

■ **Sept. 11** — "ACL Injuries" will be presented by Eric Johnson, M.D., orthopedic surgeon, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman North. One of the most common knee injuries is the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) sprain or tear. Athletes who participate in high-demand sports like soccer, football and basketball are especially susceptible to these injuries. Come find out how you can both prevent and treat ACL injuries.

■ **Sept. 12** — "Total Joint Replacement" will be presented by Timothy Conlan, M.D., orthopedic surgeon, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman West. Learn the latest trends in total joint replacement, including minimally invasive and

computer-assisted hip and knee replacements.

■ **Sept. 17** — "Massage and Mobility" will be presented by Lyn Sabino, licensed massage therapist, from 2 to 3:30 p.m., at Aultman West. Massages can aid in the healing process, as well as promote relaxation and well-being. Learn other benefits, how to find a massage therapist and see a demonstration.

■ **Sept. 18** — "Basics of LASIK" will be presented by Sanjeev Dewan, M.D., ophthalmologist, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman North. Join us to learn about vision correction surgery, used to treat farsightedness. Learn how LASIK eye surgery can reduce your need for glasses.

■ **Sept. 19** — "Compassionate Journey" will be presented by Terry Livengood, M.A., C.T., Aultman Hospital Spiritual Care, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman West. From diagnosis to death, end-of-life issues affect everyone. Learn tips for the dying patient and family to make it a compassionate journey.

■ **Sept. 24** — "Hearing Aids"

will be presented by Dana Hout, licensed hearing aid specialist, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at Aultman North. A hearing loss can impact your safety and quality of life. Come have a "mini" hearing test and check out hearing aid samples.

■ **Sept. 26** — "Medicare Today" will be presented by Sharon Smith, Medicare educator, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Aultman West. Learn options for the original Medicare plan, the many advantage plans as well as prescription drug coverage options. Get your questions answered here.

Presentations are held at the following locations: Aultman North, 6100 Whipple Ave. N.W., North Canton; Aultman West, 2021 Wales Ave. N.W., Massillon.

Presentations are for educational purposes only and do not in any way constitute professional advice. All programs are free and open to the public. Seating is limited and reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, call 330-363-TALK (8255) or sign up online at www.aultman.org.