



Together for a reason, a season and a lifetime.

They say that people come into your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Well, in the case of Diana Allen, Ruth Johns, Faye Cummings and their moms, it seems they were brought together for all three. Throughout their mothers' residency at a memory care facility, they were an active presence enriching the lives of their moms, other patients and their families. As their mothers declined, and each daughter turned to Lumina for hospice care, their support for each other strengthened, and they have remained lifelong friends ever since.

but those of the other residents and staff. Knowing the unique experience that they each were going through provided support that could not be found elsewhere. "We all knew what was going on. You had someone who was playing in the same field," says Ruth. "We had conversations we just couldn't have with other family and friends."

As educators, it was natural for these three daughters to engage not only their moms, but other residents and families in activities. Meeting for pre-dinner music became a daily tradition. Faye particularly enjoyed

When Diana Allen's mom moved into a memory care facility, she learned she would be getting a roommate and, admittedly, was a little nervous. How would it go? Would they get along? Importantly, would the roommate accept Smokey the cat? To her delight she learned that her mom's new roommate was the mother of a long-time acquaintance and fellow Special Education teacher, Ruth Johns. "I was so surprised that Arlyne (Ruth's mom) was going to be my mom's roommate!" says Diana. And, thankfully, Arlyne loved cats. A few months later, Ruth learned that the mother of long-time friend and former art teacher, Faye Cummings, had also moved into the facility. "Ruth is an old friend," says Faye. "And it didn't take long for Diana to feel like an old friend too."

Soon, these three new-old friends became known as "The Conifer House Daughters" and were a daily presence at the facility enriching not only their mothers' lives,

"Getting together is honoring our moms."



The Conifer House Daughters (from left): Ruth Johns, Arlyne's daughter; Diana Allen, Janet's daughter and Faye Cummings, Merriam's daughter.

watching the residents come to life in response to live music and encouraged more music participation and other art activities. All three daughters planned simple activities for the residents to enjoy from making root beer floats and tie dying, to creating mosaics and playing with balloons. Diana became known as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



IN MEMORY OF



Merriam, Faye's Mom



Janet, Diana's Mom



Arlyne, Ruth's Mom

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 the "coffee lady" stopping by every morning on her way to work to engage with the residents and serve them coffee while they awaited breakfast.

"We really learned what a difference it makes to have a physical presence in the facility," says Diana who went on to become a Long-Term Care Ombudsman, inspired by her mom's experience.

Looking back on their time together it is clear that, while it was a challenging time, it was also a rich time filled with many gifts—like finding each other. Another gift was the connection each of the daughters developed with other residents some of whom, for whatever reason, had no other visitors. "I always left feeling better than when I arrived," says Diana. "It was therapeutic just to give someone love," adds Faye. "To hold their hand or simply pat them on the back."

"I feel so incredibly fortunate to have had Ruth and Diana to share in the memory care years," says Faye. "We did a lot of problem solving, venting, and laughing together. We cared for each other and for each other's mothers. It was a very unique connection."

Their hearts break thinking about the challenges families face today to stay connected with loved ones from a safe distance. "I would get arrested!" jokes Diana, who admires facilities that are finding creative ways to connect using technology, open windows, PPE or plexiglass,

and is concerned about those suffering from loneliness and isolation.

Janet, Arlyne and Merriam were residents together for two years and, ultimately, died within a few months

of each other in 2016. All three moms became Lumina patients. Arlyne, Ruth's mom, was on hospice first. Reflecting on the support of hospice, Ruth takes a deep breath and her shoulders noticeably relax. "I would just breathe a sigh of relief when they would walk in the door," she says. "They just knew how to interact with my mom, and how to advocate for her." When Diana's mom became eligible for hospice, Arlyne's

hospice team was also her mom's team. "I felt immediately reassured that my mom was in good hands!"

"The Lumina Team was extremely helpful as mom needed more care and support," says Faye. "They offered tender, professional care that enhanced mom's quality of life so much that my quality of life was enhanced too," says Faye. "That was a real gift."

Today, almost four years after their mothers died, Diana, Faye and Ruth still meet regularly. Their friendship extends beyond their time together with their mothers at the memory care facility, often meeting for walks, a glass of wine or just a chat. Asked if they do anything special to honor their moms when they get together, Faye's response says it best: "Getting together is honoring our moms." ✨

"Lumina offered tender, professional care that enhanced mom's quality of life so much that my quality of life was enhanced too," says Faye. "That was a real gift."



HOPE FOR TOMORROW

BY ELIZABETH FRENCH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is the acts of kindness and dedication that I see in our staff and volunteers, along with the outpouring of support from our donors and community partners, that inspire me to feel positive about the future of Lumina—even at this difficult and unprecedented time.



I am struck by the caring our staff demonstrate, not just around the clinical aspects of care, but around the families and patients we serve. We all worry about what our patients and their families must be feeling: we imagine loneliness, helplessness, fear, and isolation, especially for those patients in facilities who cannot have visitors. Yet I have witnessed our staff go to great lengths to advocate for our patients and find creative and safe solutions for them to visit face-to-face, on a porch or through the window with family. Our dedicated volunteers also find creative ways to support patients, one even brought along cleaning supplies to a window visit ensuring a great view.

As the demand for our caregiver and grief support grows, we are finding new ways to deliver these much-needed programs. The stresses of living in the time of Covid-19 act to exacerbate concerns and anxiety during a period of life that is always difficult. Phone and online groups allow us to connect from a safe distance, but it is the devotion of our team that provides the personal touch needed.

The response from our donors and community partners has been heartening, from financial gifts and handsewn masks, to treats and cards for our dedicated staff. This generosity of spirit ensures that we can continue our mission during this challenging time and in the years ahead.

These acts of kindness—of seeing and connecting to the human being—are inspiring. They demonstrate the core values of Lumina—a patient-centered approach, with emphasis on the importance of relationships and quality of life. I am hopeful for what tomorrow may bring. ✨

The Importance of Ritual

BY MELISSA ALLEN, BEREAVEMENT COORDINATOR

Rituals invite us to slow down, to be still, to think, to feel, and to connect with the world around us. In times of grief, rituals can connect us to those who have died and can help us engage with our own grief and feelings in a safe and meaningful way.

The importance of practicing and performing rituals during grief cannot be overstated. During this pandemic, we are restricted from some of the rituals that comfort us most. We are all experiencing the loss of gathering for funerals, celebrations of life, potlucks, and memorial services. All of

A ritual can be any activity—done with intention. It is the intention that provides meaning. A ritual can be as simple as preparing your loved one's favorite food or lighting a candle together as a family.



these rituals provide support, meaning, safety, predictability, and compassion during a time in our life that can feel chaotic and scary. While we cannot gather in person, I encourage you to think about the rituals you can perform in your own home, to make space for your grief and to remember those who have died.

A ritual can be any activity—done with intention. It is the intention that provides meaning. A ritual can be as simple as preparing your loved one's favorite food or lighting a candle together as a family. It could be setting aside time to share funny stories about the person you lost or spraying their perfume. It could be setting a place for them at the table and inviting others to name what they miss or to share a cherished memory. It could be planting a flower for them in your garden or reading their favorite poem.

Until we can gather again as a group to perform grief rituals together, I invite you to create your own rituals—acknowledge your grief and find meaningful ways to express your thoughts and feelings. ✨

IN MEMORY OF BETTY JOHNSON

In April, the world lost a bright light in the death of Betty Johnson at age 97. We, at Lumina, are eternally grateful for Betty's countless contributions to the community—especially her leadership and vision as a founder of Benton Hospice Services, now Lumina Hospice & Palliative Care.

Fellow founder, George Constantine, reflects on Betty's role in those early days. "One evening in 1977 our neighbor, Betty Johnson, stopped by for a visit and stated that she and others wanted to establish a hospice to serve our community. At the time, there were only a few hospices in the U.S., mostly on the East Coast, so there were no guidelines or tools available. Betty Johnson was the torch that lit the way and, within several months of our initial meeting, we had a functional framework for a stay-at-home, all volunteer, donor-funded organization known as Benton Hospice Service (now Lumina)."



Betty Johnson (left) pictured here with fellow Benton Hospice Service, now Lumina, founders: David Kliewer, Jean Kliewer, David Connell and George Constantine.

Lumina Medical Director, Shawn Foley, M.D. adds, "Some people are driven to leave this world a better place than they found it. Not many still have that drive in their late 90s or when they have been on and off hospice. Betty Johnson was one of those people. One day, it seemed like she may pass, and the next day I would hear of her running a meeting for health care reform. If life is all about our efforts to make the world a better place, Betty certainly lived as full a life as possible."

Our condolences to Betty Johnson's many friends and family. 🌸

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

Celebrating Rena Woods' 30 years of volunteer service.

Following her mother's hospice care and her own experience with grief counseling, Rena Woods was inspired to give back. Her volunteer journey began 30 years ago and continues today. From providing respite care and compassionate vigils, to helping with household chores and shopping—and almost everything in between—Rena has enriched so many lives and we are thankful for her service.



"Rena is always willing to try something new; she shares openly and brings both compassion and joy to those around her. She is an inspiration to others."

~ Naomi Hirsch, Volunteer Coordinator

"It is heartwarming to witness the strength and love expressed by both patients and those who love them," says Rena. "Serving as a Lumina volunteer is a rewarding and educational experience."

We are deeply grateful to all of our 120 volunteers. Without them, we would not be able to deliver the compassionate care and support our patients and families need.

A special thank you to Corvallis Sewing Brigade, SoftStar Shoes, Mary's River Quilt Guild and the many volunteers who have donated homemade masks and face shields to protect our staff.



Why Loneliness Matters

BY HELEN KAO, M.D., MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL INNOVATIONS

The United States faced a loneliness epidemic long before people were advised to practice social distancing due to COVID-19, with nearly half of Americans reporting they often feel lonely or left out.

Loneliness is distinct from, but related to, social isolation. Social isolation is an objective measure of one's social connections and network. Loneliness is a feeling that the number and quality of relationships a person has does not fill the relationships one desires. Someone can be surrounded by friends but feel lonely. At the same time, someone can live alone with minimal contacts, and feel content.

Both loneliness and social isolation negatively impact health—they increase blood pressure and stress hormones and weaken immune function. Among older adults, loneliness may predict functional decline. Estimates indicate that loneliness may shorten a person's lifespan by 15 years, a risk equivalent to the impact of obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

While we work to protect the public health from COVID-19, we must recognize that loneliness brought on by social distancing can have profound detrimental effects on health and mortality. As Lumina continues to care for people with serious illness, we repeatedly hear that human connection to loved ones is the only thing that a person may be "living for," or that gives a person a sense of meaning in the face of limited life expectancy.

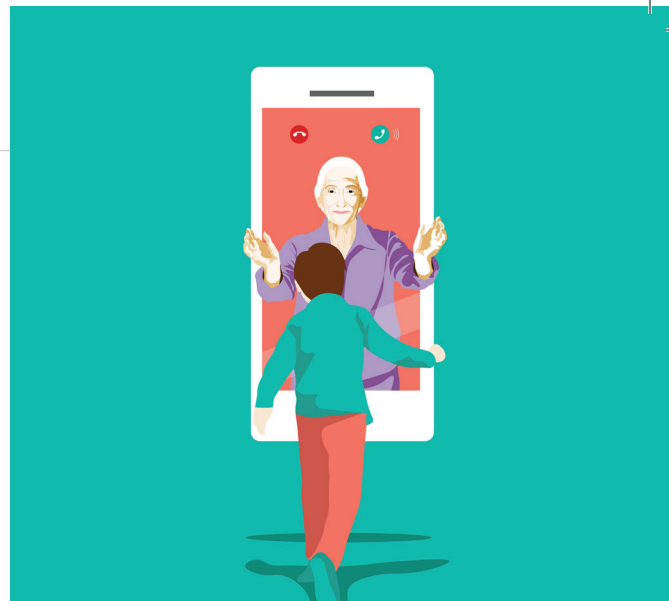
We must be thoughtful and creative in addressing loneliness during COVID-19. We have to be, or I would venture that more people may be harmed by society's response to COVID-19, than by the disease itself.

- » **Understand the true risk of COVID-19 and transmission.** Be informed to protect yourself and loved ones, rather than let fear drive actions.
- » **Know your rights.** Residents in long-term care facilities are not prisoners—they have rights to open their window, meet loved ones in a courtyard, and go for a walk or outing just as other citizens do with appropriate social distancing, facemasks and handwashing.
- » **Be kind and patient.** Hold compassion for oneself while sharing loving kindness with everyone around you—from your delivery person to grocery clerk or caregiver—so we may foster a healthier, integrated community in spite of the distancing that COVID-19 demands.

Loneliness is increasingly common across all ages. *You are not alone in this feeling.* Our collective response can help ensure that we will not diminish or lose lives to an epidemic of loneliness, while we face the COVID-19 pandemic. 🌸

Sources:

- » The "Loneliness Epidemic," Health Resources & Services Administration, (2019) (hrsa.gov)
- » Pomeroy, C., Loneliness is harmful to our nation's health, (2019) (scientificamerican.com)
- » Hold-Lunstad J., et al. Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: a meta-analytic review. (2015), Perspectives on Psychological Science, 10, 227-237.
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We can be creative in combatting loneliness and connecting with loved ones:

- » Send a sensory "visit" like a recordable greeting card, or a sound file of your voice storytelling, singing or playing music.
- » Explore taking online classes through local community resources, or Well Connected (covia.org/services/well-connected/) which provides free online programming for positive aging.
- » Engage in activities with family and friends by phone or online, like taking a virtual museum tour, preparing and eating a meal "together," or playing virtual games.
- » Call Oregon's Senior Loneliness Line (503-200-1633 or 800-282-7035) or the Institute on Aging's Friendship Line (800-971-0016) which are available for adults experiencing loneliness, sadness, or stress.



**For information on Lumina's webinar:
The Health Effects of Loneliness
email outreach@luminahospice.org**

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[Learn more at luminahospice.org/making-a-difference](https://luminahospice.org/making-a-difference)



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While we keep a safe distance, we are here for you. Our support services continue by phone or online and many of our events and programming have been moved to online formats. To be added to our email list for up-to-date information about our services, events, webinars and other programs contact outreach@luminahospice.org and follow us on  [@luminahospice](https://www.facebook.com/luminahospice)

GRIEF SUPPORT

Grief Education & Support Group via Zoom for Healthcare

This eight-week series gives you the chance to learn and talk about your grief in a safe, non-judgmental environment, as well as to give and receive support through the listening and empathy of others who are also grieving.

Drop-in Support Group via Zoom for Healthcare

This is an open, drop-in support group for anyone in the community who is grieving a death of someone they care about.

Family Grief Group

Support group for families with children and teens ages 5-18 who have experienced loss. Contact our Bereavement Coordinator at grief@luminahospice.org to learn more about any of grief services.

Care Illuminated



CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Powerful Tools for Caregivers via Zoom for Healthcare

Six-week class meets weekly. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an educational program designed to help family caregivers. Through this program you will learn how to take care of yourself while caring for a relative or friend whether you are helping a parent, spouse or friend who lives at home, in a nursing home or across the country.

Caregiver Connections via Zoom for Healthcare

Caregivers Connections groups are open to all family caregivers in our community regardless of type of illness or prognosis. Share common experiences and support one another along the difficult path of caregiving. Drop-ins are welcome. Contact our Caregiver Coordinator at caregiver@luminahospice.org to learn more.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Thank you to our volunteers who have found creative ways to support our patients and families at this time. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, contact Volunteer Coordinator, Naomi Hirsch, at naomi.hirsch@luminahospice.org.

To be removed from this mailing list, please email outreach@luminahospice.org or call 541.757.9616 during regular business hours.