



PATHWAY HOME

They are 16 individuals ... from different backgrounds ... with different experiences ... from throughout the county. But they have a common desire to assist those nearing the end of life with comfort, dignity, quality of life and spirituality.

They do not have any grass or soil under their feet ... no mortar nor bricks ... no building to call "home" ... no furnishings. But they do have a cornerstone and solid foundation committed to providing the warm, accepting and supportive environment of a comfort care home for two residents at a time transitioning from this life to the next.

They are Pathway Home and they are in the process of bringing comfort care to Seneca County.

The group came together this spring with two objectives – improving the quality of life for the terminally ill and helping them and their families find grace for the journey. The board also is committed to helping families with the grieving and bereavement process

It fills a need for Seneca County residents who must use outside services if they wish to use comfort care. Currently, those seeking comfort care homes must travel to Auburn (Matthew House), Clifton Springs (House of John), Ontario (Pines of Peace), Penn Yan (Keuka Comfort Care) or even further.

Comfort care is palliative care for those diagnosed with a terminal illness and no expectation of recovery. Comfort care homes are home-like facilities that can provide 24 hour care for residents who are unable to safely re-main in their own homes.

The vision is just that – a home away from home with hospital beds, private baths, amenities and room for family. Volunteers and staff will provide hands-on care; assistance with bathing, dressing and medication; cooking; housekeeping; and emotional and spiritual support for residents and families. Although there are no fees for the comfort care services, residents must be associated with a hospice/palliative

County, Lifetime Care and Hospice of Wayne and Seneca Counties offer these services.

Families will be encouraged to participate as much as they can in their loved one's care and comfort.

How you can help
Tax-deductible donations are being accepted through a partnership with United Way of Seneca County. Checks should be sent to United Way of Seneca County/Pathway Home, P.O. Box 516, Seneca Falls, NY 13148-0516.

Pathway board

Diana Becker, president; James Clark, vice president; Robert Kernan, treasurer; Tina Sullivan, secretary; Karen Beals, Stephen Beals, Rick Coe, Gail Lohr, Michael Kelly, Diane Macaluso, Gerald Macaluso, Debra Maher, Phyllis Motill, Martha Shields, Joseph Siccardi, Judith Young.

Pathway Home will be available to any person with a terminal illness and in need of care, regardless of age, creed, color, ethnic background or religion. The resident must have a life expectancy of less than three months as determined by a physician and have chosen palliative care over curative treatment.

Pathway Home's board president, Diana Becker,

points out the key challenge to making the vision a reality is support from the entire community. Support includes money and material donations (the latter from a "wish list" to be developed when a site is selected) and, most of all, your time. Volunteers will ultimately be needed for construction, maintenance, fund raising, hands-on patient care, cooking, housekeeping, gardening and administrative help.

"It's important to have families close by to visit and provide that sense of community," said Becker. "We want their family to again be family and not caregivers."

The support thus far has been encouraging. An accountant and an attorney have volunteered their time in setting up the organization as a not-for-profit agency. United Way of Seneca County has partnered as a temporary conduit for donations. In House Graphic Design, Waterloo, donated in-kind logo and design work. Much of the initial printing has been provided by Wilson Press, Seneca Falls. Web site work is also being donated to the cause. And the list goes on and on.

Now the board is actively looking for a home and/or property that will result in the bricks and mortar stretching off that cornerstone and onto that foundation.

It's just another step in a journey of faith.