

Reflections Newsletter

Spring 2020 | 888.823.8880 | gilchristcares.org



In this Issue...

Though the way Gilchrist provides care may look different than just a few short months ago, COVID hasn't stopped our commitment to delivering compassionate, vital care to our patients and families. Read on to learn how Gilchrist has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Also in this issue:** Many of the stories in this issue were reported before the pandemic. Since then, Gilchrist has implemented new practices and safety precautions, including the use of personal protective equipment, to keep everyone safe. Learn how Gilchrist has helped people both before and after the pandemic to always have hope.

Above: Gilchrist Center Baltimore nurses in their personal protective gear stand united in continuing their care for patients at the end of life.



Gilchrist Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the novel coronavirus pandemic took hold in our community in mid-March, Gilchrist rapidly responded to ensure our patients and families could continue safely receiving vital end-of-life care and support.

Our dedicated caregivers rose to the challenge. They donned their protective equipment and continued providing essential care to more than 1,000 seriously ill individuals each day—in homes, residential care centers and our three inpatient centers in Towson, Howard County and downtown Baltimore.

The way Gilchrist provides care looks very different today than it did a few short months ago—with fewer in-person visits, more telehealth, the use of personal protective equipment and limited visitors. But the end goal of providing comfort and compassionate care remains the same.

Here are a few of the ways Gilchrist has responded to the pandemic:

Keeping Our Patients and Families Safe

In the early days of the crisis, Gilchrist quickly adopted new safety protocols, policies and training for staff—even as circumstances and public health guidelines seemed to change by the day. Gilchrist moved fast to acquire personal protective equipment for our employees and train them on proper use to keep everyone safe.

Innovating New Ways to Meet the Need

Our staff came together, innovating new ways to meet the needs of our community—through telemedicine, video chats, more frequent check-in calls and other practices. We launched virtual music therapy sessions, chaplain services, grief counseling and 'Salutes to Service' to honor veterans.

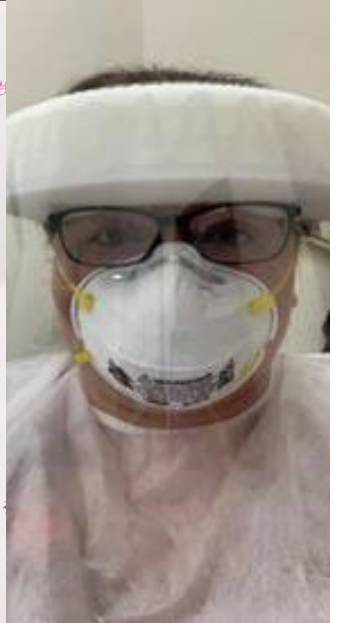
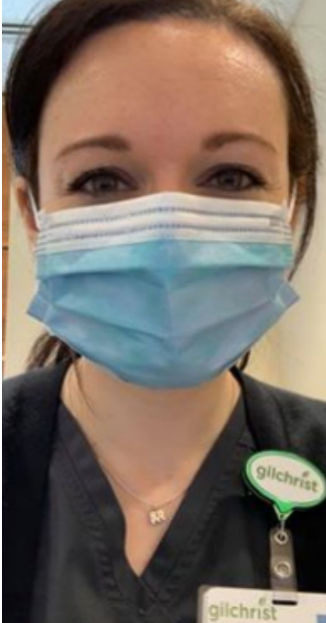
Caring for Patients With COVID-19

The seriously ill population that Gilchrist serves is especially susceptible to COVID-19, as many are elderly and have compromised immune systems. For patients with the virus, Gilchrist cares for them at home using full protective equipment and following established safety precautions. Gilchrist also provides care in its COVID-19 dedicated inpatient hospice unit at Gilchrist Center Towson, which is the only one in Maryland.

Responding With Compassion

The virus has disrupted lives in so many ways. Families are dealing with uncertainty and fear, isolation and grief. Our staff have responded with compassion to help people who are struggling. Our caregivers held patients' hands when they were alone. They connected patients with their loved ones through video. And they offered reassurance, human connection and comfort.

On page 11, learn more about the special fund that has been created to allow Gilchrist to respond to emergent needs. To donate to the Gilchrist COVID-19 Support Fund, visit gilchristcares.org/covid-19-fund.



More Time for Treasured Moments



Now under the care of Gilchrist hospice, patient Marion Fickert spends as much time as she can playing piano.

Gilchrist takes on her mother's medical care, so Carol can focus on just being a daughter again.

Carol Grap had been worried about her mother, Marion, for some time. At 95, Marion struggled with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and dementia, and her health was declining. Last July, Marion moved in with her daughter, and Carol became her primary caregiver.

Carol worked in the health care field, so caregiving came naturally. She monitored her mother's blood pressure, kept track of her medications and coordinated care with doctors.

But when Marion fell and broke her arm, Carol could no longer get her mom in and out of bed. "That was the straw that broke the camel's back," she said. Worried and exhausted, she knew she could no longer care for her mom by herself. That was when she called Gilchrist.

With Gilchrist, Carol and her mom had the full support of the hospice team, including nurse Garnitha Ferguson and social worker Bonnie Weissberg, as well as a music therapist, chaplain and hospice aide to help with bathing and getting dressed. Carol was relieved to have a team focused on her mother's care and felt reassured knowing she could call a nurse any time, day or night.

"I feel like I've had the burden of medical care and stress lifted off of me," Carol said. "I can now focus on loving my mom and keeping her joyful instead."



Carol Grap (right) was relieved to have the Gilchrist hospice team, including nurse Garnitha Ferguson and social worker Bonnie Weissberg, focused on her mother's care.

One of Marion's biggest sources of joy is playing the piano. Both mother and daughter share a love of music, and now, they can spend more time playing and singing. Seeing her play, you would never guess this four-foot-four bundle of energy was seriously ill, let alone on hospice. Though some days she is more cognizant than others, when she sits at the piano, the music naturally pours forth.

Marion loves performing, so Carol regularly brings her mother to nursing homes to play for the residents. At every performance, Marion starts off her set by playing her signature song, "You Are My Sunshine," while Carol harmonizes and dances along. By the time Marion plays her final song — "When the Saints Go Marching In" — everyone is singing and swaying to the beat.

Moments like these will become treasured memories for Carol in the months and years to come. With the support of Gilchrist, Carol is grateful that her mother is enjoying each day and able to do what she loves. Marion is just as grateful, saying "I am so thankful for this gift of music and to be able to give so much joy to other people."

To learn more about Gilchrist Hospice Care, visit gilchristcares.org/hospice.

Note: This story was reported before the COVID pandemic. Gilchrist employs full safety protocols including personal protective equipment to keep patients, families and staff safe.

Veteran Granted One Final Wish

As Todd Morley's cancer grew progressively worse, he had one last wish—to marry his life-long love, Tammy. Tammy had been caring for him for over two years, through multiple health conditions. "It hurt so much to watch him go downhill," she recalls. As he grew weaker, the couple worried that Todd would be too sick to endure a wedding. They also had no one to officiate the ceremony and were quickly running out of time.

A former Navy medic, Todd was a proud veteran. After his service, he worked at Bethlehem Steel for many years. He loved fishing, rebuilding cars, and his cat, Zoey. His favorite saying was, "Tough times don't last. But tough people do."

When Todd began hospice care with Gilchrist, he and Tammy were comforted by their team's compassionate care, which Tammy calls "absolutely wonderful." They developed a special connection with their Gilchrist chaplain, Avi Sharfman, and their social worker, Anna Blyukher. When Avi and Anna learned of the couple's desire to marry, they decided to help make their dream a reality. With the couple's blessing, Avi and Anna planned a wedding as well as a special veteran pinning ceremony to honor Todd for his service.

Ed Nolley, a volunteer veteran and member of Gilchrist's We Honor Veterans taskforce, arrived at the couple's home dressed in full military uniform. He conducted a 'Salute to Service' ceremony and presented Todd with a veteran pin and an American

flag quilt handmade by volunteers. Todd was visibly moved.

Then, Avi performed the wedding, with Gilchrist chaplain Charline Berry and volunteer Joe Shatus celebrating with them. Todd could barely lift his hands, but the couple exchanged rings and vows. When it was over, Todd said, "I've always loved you, Tammy."

"I told him I loved him too," Tammy recalls. "It was something so beautiful. I will never forget it."

Not long after, Todd died. Tammy will always remember how the Gilchrist team came together to make their wedding possible. Though their time together was cut short, the memory of that day will live on in her heart.

It will also become a treasured memory for Avi. "As a chaplain, being able to bring that sacred moment to Todd and Tammy is something I will always cherish."

Todd Morley died peacefully on February 22, 2020.

To learn more about Gilchrist's We Honor Veterans program, visit gilchristcares.org/whv.

Note: This story was reported before the COVID pandemic. Gilchrist employs full safety protocols including personal protective equipment to keep patients, families and staff safe.



Todd Morley's Gilchrist hospice team made arrangements for him to marry his life-long love, Tammy, and honor him with a veteran Salute to Service. Top (L to R): Gilchrist volunteer Joe Status, volunteer veteran Ed Nolley, chaplain Charline Berry; Bottom (L to R): Tammy Morley, Todd and chaplain Avi Sharfman.

Answers When You Need Them

Before coming to Gilchrist, Debbie Dasher's experience with the healthcare system was harrowing. After a surgery to remove a tumor on her lung, doctors said the cancer was gone and did not refer her for radiation. Unfortunately, they were wrong, and the cancer spread.

A few months later, Debbie was experiencing pain, headaches and trouble keeping food down. When her sister, Diane—her primary caregiver—repeatedly reported these symptoms to the doctor, she felt brushed off. Diane had so many questions, but no one seemed to be listening.



Gilchrist hospice social worker Brittany Frazier and nurse Carson Savage spend time talking with Diane Duggan about her sister's care.

It wasn't until they came to Gilchrist that the family finally found answers. Debbie and Diane now had a team of experts to provide care and explain what was happening. Gilchrist put Debbie on the correct medications to control her symptoms. Whereas previously Debbie was in intense pain and not getting out of bed, once Gilchrist began overseeing her care, everything changed. "The difference was night and day," recalled Diane. "Debbie was able to communicate, and the light was back in her eyes."

Before, Debbie worried she would no longer be able to spend time with her grandchildren. But once under the proper care, she was able to enjoy their company and even hold her new baby grandchild. "Seeing her interact with her grandchildren was wonderful," said Diane. "It was so meaningful to her and our entire family."

The Gilchrist team took care of everything and put the family at ease. Brittany Frazier, their social worker, provided emotional support for both sisters and offered suggestions for Diane on how to care for herself while also caring for her sister and elderly mother. Brittany also let her know about a Gilchrist service that could help her mother—Elder Medical Care, which provides medical care and emotional support to older individuals at home.

"The difference was night and day... Debbie was able to communicate, and the light was back in her eyes."

—Diane Duggan, Debbie's sister

Diane describes their nurse, Carson Savage, as their "rock." Carson helped Diane understand her sister's symptoms and how to best care for her. She told Diane to call her any time with questions, day or night. Talking to Carson and Brittany was like talking to her own daughters, Diane said.

As her sister's condition worsened, Diane felt she had the emotional strength and support she needed. She is so grateful for her Gilchrist team's skilled guidance and care.

"They're incredible," she said. "I'd be lost without them."

Debbie Dasher died on March 7, 2020, surrounded by family.

To learn more about hospice care at Gilchrist, visit gilchristcares.org/hospice.

Note: This story was reported before the COVID pandemic. Gilchrist employs full safety protocols including personal protective equipment to keep patients, families and staff safe.

Integrative Medicine Helps Patients With Cancer Live Their Best Life

By Rhonda Gold, Ovarian Cancer Survivor

Gilchrist's Integrative and Palliative Medicine services are available to patients receiving cancer treatment at GBMC.

Encouragement, mindfulness, hope and renewal are essential for cancer survivors. My experience with Gilchrist's Integrative and Palliative Medicine at GBMC has improved my overall outlook and helped me redefine my personal goals based on my current medical reality.

Dr. Delia Chiaramonte, director of the Integrative and Palliative Medicine program, has encouraged honest, open discussions about areas for improvement most important to my well-being. She has counseled and supported me in feeling a greater sense of control in my life, provided options to minimize treatment side effects, suggested mind-body therapies to improve my coping abilities and continues to provide professional guidance in medical decision making. I have been able to live my best life with cancer because of the supportive care and counseling that I have received from Dr. Chiaramonte and my care team.

I have been living with cancer for nearly five years. Having survived three recurrences, my goal is to achieve maximum comfort and function with an optimal quality of life. The Integrative Medicine services address physical, psychosocial, emotional, spiritual, social and practical aspects resulting from cancer treatment. Integrative and Palliative Medicine has led me to an array of complementary therapies I never knew existed at GBMC.

Fatigue is a major consequence of cancer treatment. Having services in one location—including medical, counseling and complementary therapies—is ideal for patients who are immunosuppressed and need one-stop shopping for their overall well-being. Being able to schedule an appointment for complementary services on the same day as a doctor's appointment or treatment is not only convenient but also rejuvenating and uplifting.



The available services are amazing and personalized to individual needs. My experiences with the therapists have been very meaningful. My personal experiences such as reiki, craniosacral therapy and massage are now an integral part of reaching my goals for a quality life.

These services are so beneficial for improving one's outlook and enhancing quality of life. Complementary therapies are invaluable in treating the mind, body and spirit. They are incredibly comforting and healing for individuals facing cancer. Caregivers, family members and patients often are unable to navigate available options on their own, and it is overwhelming to search for information and support.

I am grateful for this truly integrative approach to cancer care, which helps patients live their best life and prepare for end-of-life decisions.

To learn more about Gilchrist's Integrative and Palliative Medicine program at GBMC, visit gilchristcares.org/integrativemedicine.

Lessons on Love and Grieving



Steve Shefter meets with Gilchrist grief counselor Hilary Harrington.

Steve Shefter and his wife, Susan, thought the best years were still ahead. They had just celebrated Steve's 60th birthday with a family vacation in Cape May. "We had worked our lives to get to this wonderful point," recalls Steve. "We were working less, had grandchildren...life was good."

Three weeks later, they learned Susan had advanced stomach cancer. As the couple prepared for what would come next, they turned their focus toward each other. If there is one thing Steve is thankful for, it's that they cherished every moment of their remaining time together.

They shared painful but important conversations and reflected on their marriage. They laughed, cried, and thanked each other for their wonderful memories. And they grew closer than they had ever been.

After Susan died, Steve began grief counseling with Gilchrist. Clinical counselor Hilary Harrington helped him work through the emotional roller coaster of grief. "When you're going through grief, the whole world is strange and out of balance," says Steve. Hilary assured him that what he was feeling was normal, and though his pain may feel unbearable at times, he would get through it.

Now more than a year after his loss, Steve says he is in a good place. Part of his healing came from understanding that his wife would want him to continue living a happy, meaningful life. Through his experiences, Steve has become somewhat of an expert on grief and the loss of a loved one, and he is writing a book (*Preparing to Part: Love, Loss, and Living*, Sept. 2020) that he hopes will help others. Here are a few thoughts from Steve about what he has learned.

Use the time left with each other to seek closure.

Take time to grow closer because you'll live with that closeness forever. Say, "I love you" and "thank you" for your time together.

Don't ignore the practical aspects. Though going over death benefits was very emotional, my wife felt a sense of pride knowing this could help me.

Remember that your loved one would want you to live a happy, meaningful life. I knew Susan would not want me to feel guilt, remorse or regret.

Don't ask why. Some questions can never be answered, like why bad things happen to good people. Don't waste time trying to find answers when there are none.

Don't put off grief counseling. The adage "Time heals all wounds" is not always true. Without trained professionals guiding you, your loss can leave a 'scar.' The grief doesn't go away if you bury it—it will just come out another time.

"Grief counseling has been a life changer for me. If I didn't get counseling, I would be lost."

—Steve Shefter, Gilchrist grief counseling client

Go to one-on-one counseling before trying a support group. It's essential to work through personal aspects of your grief before sharing with others. Grief is like a hiking journey, and counseling is a map.

Find something that brings you joy and purpose. I do puppet shows for children and am writing a book. I also build tranquility gardens. I'm learning that I still have a lot of life left.

Develop a core group of 'first responders.' They are the first people I go to when things are going well and when things are going wrong. Just as some people might run away in a fire, others run toward you.

Try to interact with others every day, even when you don't feel like it. Loss is like being in a pit. You can't pull yourself out by pulling your own hair. You need other people to help you.

To learn more about grief counseling at Gilchrist, visit gilchristcares.org/grief-counseling.

Note: This story was reported before the COVID pandemic. Gilchrist employs full safety protocols including personal protective equipment to keep patients, families and staff safe.

Gilchrist Staff Win Awards

Gilchrist's medical director, W. Anthony Riley, MD, and nurse practitioner Beverly Ruiz, MS, CRNP, have been named Health Care Heroes by the *The Daily Record*. The awards recognize excellence, innovation and service in the health care industry and honor individuals who have made an impact on the quality of health care within Maryland. Dr. Riley won the Lifetime Achievement Award and Beverly Ruiz won the Nurse Practitioner of the Year Award. The awards were published in the June 26 issue of *The Daily Record*.

Gilchrist nurse practitioner Catherine Mauriello, MS, ANP-BC, ACHPN, won the GBMC Art of Nursing Nurse Leader Award. Each year, GBMC HealthCare celebrates its nursing staff and nursing as an art form—the art of science, knowledge, and caring. Employees nominate their colleagues in seven nursing categories, and the winners span the continuum of the GBMC healthcare system. This year's winners were honored in a surprise virtual celebration.

To learn more about these awards and others, visit gilchristcares.org/news.



Gilchrist award winners:

W. Anthony Riley, MD (top-left), Beverly Ruiz, MS, CRNP (top-right) and Catherine Mauriello, MS, ANP-BC, ACHPN (bottom-left).

Gilchrist In The News

Gilchrist and its staff were featured in multiple news outlets over the past month.

To watch and read these stories, visit gilchristcares.org/news.



Gilchrist nurse practitioner **Erica Cerquetti** was featured on a GBMC Facebook Live event discussing suggestions to keep your brain healthy during a quarantine situation.



Gilchrist geriatrician **Jason Black, MD**, was interviewed on WMAR-TV (ABC Baltimore) in a news segment about whether it's safe to visit elderly family members and the balance between social distancing and avoiding isolation during the pandemic.



Gilchrist President **Catherine Hamel** was interviewed by GBMC's Elizabeth Dovec, MD, on the series "Whats Up, Dr. Dovec?" She discusses the importance of advance directives and how the care we are providing has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as what brought her to Gilchrist.



Delia Chiaramonte, MD, Medical Director of Gilchrist's Integrative and Palliative Medicine program, was interviewed on WBFF-TV (FOX45) discussing the importance of advance care planning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



WJZ-TV (CBS Baltimore) aired a segment about virtual music therapy at Gilchrist during the COVID-19 pandemic, featuring music therapist **Lacy Kidwell** and one of her patients.

THE BALTIMORE SUN

The *Baltimore Sun* highlighted Gilchrist Center Towson nurse **Kristin Metzger** and Clinical Managers **Gina Ranieri Bender** and **Tina Maggio** in the story: "On Baltimore's Front Lines: Nursing Those Sickened By Coronavirus."



Gilchrist President **Catherine Hamel** was interviewed on WMAR-TV (ABC Baltimore) in a news segment about how Gilchrist hospice staff continue to deliver essential care during the COVID-19 crisis.

THE BALTIMORE SUN

The *Baltimore Sun* featured Gilchrist chaplain **Samuel Young** in a story about Maryland priests finding ways to comfort the sick and dying amid social distancing.

The Impact of Community Support

Due to COVID-19, our annual Spring Jazz Brunch became the Stay Home Jazz Brunch, and it was a huge success! Virtual attendees enjoyed brunch delivered from Classic Catering and the smooth jazz sounds of the Cold Spring Jazz Quartet, all while raising invaluable funds for Gilchrist Center Baltimore—the only residential inpatient hospice center in Baltimore City. The center ensures that all city residents, including the underserved and uninsured, receive compassionate end-of-life care. Thank you to our generous event sponsors and supporters!



To view a short video that tells the storied history of Gilchrist Center Baltimore or to watch a replay of the event, visit gilchristcares.org/jazzbrunch.

COVID-19 Support Fund



Thank you to the many generous donors who have contributed to the Gilchrist COVID-19 Support Fund. The fund was established to help purchase additional personal protective equipment to keep staff, patients and their families safe during this crisis. The community has acted quickly to help fund the extraordinary need for face shields, masks, gowns, gloves, hair and shoe covers and, since March, has raised over \$113,000. Additionally, volunteers have donated homemade masks, meals, snacks and other supplies for our staff and patients. We are incredibly grateful to the community for the continued outpouring of support during these truly unprecedented times.

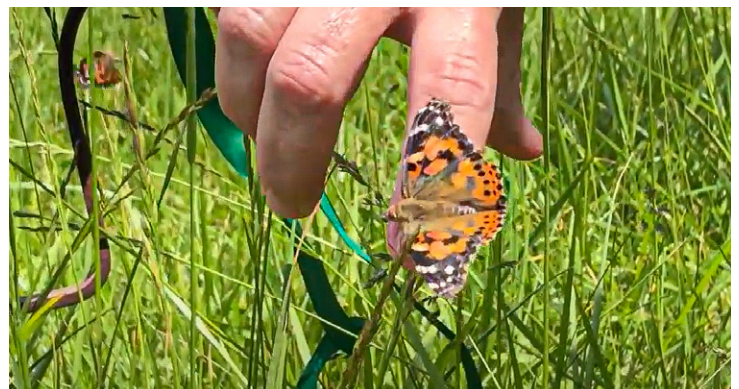
A special fund has been created to allow Gilchrist to respond to emergent needs as staff experience unexpected childcare issues or additional hardships, and to purchase personal protective gear and medical equipment.

To donate to the Gilchrist COVID-19 Support Fund, visit gilchristcares.org/covid-19-fund.

5th Annual Steps of Hope

"Steps of Hope: A Tribute Walk with Butterfly Release" has been a Gilchrist tradition for the past four years. This year, we held our event virtually. Attendees watched a video that included pictures of their loved ones, original songs from our music therapists and words of wisdom from our grief counselors, followed by the traditional butterfly release.

To read more about the event and watch the video, visit gilchristcares.org/stepsofhope.





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*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gilchrist is virtually reimagining our 2020 fundraising events.
Stay tuned for more information or visit the webpages below.*



Simply the Best!

35th Anniversary

October 18, 2020

Event Chair: Linda Ostovitz
Vice Chair: Cyndi Gula

gilchristcares.org/taste

PROCEEDS BENEFIT
GILCHRIST CENTER HOWARD COUNTY



All proceeds from the
Gilchrist Ball benefit Gilchrist's
three inpatient centers.

Saturday, December 5, 2020

gilchristcares.org/gilchristball

Chairs: Mitchell and Nell Goetze
Honorary Co-Chairs: Edward and Barbara Brody

