



Rachel Dymond (left) with her mom Marilyn Raskin-Ortiz, stepdad Mike Ortiz, and corgi Mischa.

Hospice Family Attests: Hospice Was a Wonderful Experience and a Literal Lifeline

In 2022, Mike Ortiz was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) with Parkinsonism - a progressive brain disorder affecting thinking, memory, movement, behavior, and sleep, among other things. LBD is also the second most common type of dementia behind only Alzheimer's disease. Out of love, stepdaughter Rachel Dymond and her mom, Marilyn Raskin-Ortiz, became Mike's primary caregivers, Rachel regularly commuting to her mom's house 20 minutes away for nearly two years to help care for Mike. But as time passed, his condition worsened and Rachel realized it had progressed "beyond anything that she or her mom could do." They hired in-home aides in late 2024 but Rachel says dealing with the cognitive changes "felt like an impossible task." A friend who worked in a nursing home suggested Hospice. Mike began receiving care from The

Community Hospice in December 2024. By then, the 76-year-old could no longer carry out daily activities independently.

Rachel recalls many times when she and her mom didn't know what to do or what Mike's physical symptoms meant and they would call Hospice. "They were always responsive and told us what to do next. I don't know that we would have had additional quality time if not for Hospice," says Rachel. She recalls one particularly alarming day when Mike became non-verbal and showed signs of great pain. "Hospice came immediately," she says, adding that the team made physical adjustments, provided medications, and kept him comfortable until he felt better. "The care with Hospice was a wonderful experience. We were able to take care of him at home. Hospice enabled us to do that

and gave us a level of peace with how he passed in the process," says Rachel. Mike died in February 2026.

"I cannot overstate how invaluable Hospice services are, not just for the person receiving care, but also for their loved ones and primary caregivers," Rachel says. "Beyond providing medical care, equipment, instruction, and the physical support needed to care for a loved one, Hospice offers unwavering emotional, psychological, and educational guidance while prioritizing the wellbeing of everyone involved. The team brought a level of compassion, dignity, comfort, and support that made an indescribably difficult time feel a little less overwhelming. There were even moments of joy, laughter, and lightness," Rachel notes. "Hospice was a literal lifeline."



Can Hospice Help Someone You Love? Please Call Us At (518) 724-0242.

Hospice Grateful to Foundation Board Members for Advancing Mission

The Community Hospice expresses deep gratitude to the members of its Board of Directors who volunteer their time, energy and resources to help champion our fundraising efforts. Because of these community

leaders, Hospice is able to continue vital programs for which there is little or no funding or reimbursement, including music and massage therapies for patients, a Wish Fund, and grief counseling programs for

families and the community - all of which are provided FREE of charge. On behalf of our patients and families, we thank all our board members who help make that possible!

John Broderick, MD



A longtime physician who has more than two decades of medical experience, Dr. John

Broderick has been a member of the Community Hospice Foundation Board since 2017. Having worked with patients and families in palliative care and having seen patients die in the emergency room over the years, Dr. Broderick had grown an interest in hospice care.

In 2020, Dr. Broderick experienced the dying process up close when his

father went on hospice where he lived. He says while he understood the medical aspects as a physician, he still found comfort in the support of hospice staff who were there for him and his mom through their time of need. "It was nice to have someone to help in the process and to put it in view," notes Dr. Broderick. As a result, they found peace. "The best thing you can give a parent or loved one is to be there when they pass, holding their hand," he says.

Since then, Dr. Broderick says multiple factors have kept him engaged on the board, from his interest to his history to his experience managing patients

who could benefit from the quality care that Hospice offers to those at the end-of-life. "I still believe in the mission," he states, noting that the Hospice Foundation funds many "extra services" to help patients, such as music and massage therapies, which are not necessarily in normal hospice programs. Dr. Broderick believes that things can be done outside of the medical cycle and supports the idea of identifying other programs that can benefit patients. He says more education and outreach are needed for both the public and the provider network so that everyone understands the healthcare system and doesn't think of Hospice care as an afterthought.

Save the Date! "Touched by an Angel" Serves Up Tasty Event for Hospice

Foodies, get your taste buds ready! The Community Hospice will host its **28th Annual "Touched by an Angel"** fundraiser, **Thursday, Oct. 15, 6-8 pm**, Canfield Casino, Saratoga Springs. The special tasting event

will feature complimentary wine, beer, and Saratoga Springs Water, along with a variety of savory and sweet food stations all prepared by local restaurants and chefs. Proceeds will benefit Hospice

programs and services in Saratoga and Washington counties. **To reserve your spot, please call Jodi at 518-525-1070 or visit www.SaratogaAngel.org.**



Leo P. Chenette



Welcome to Leo Chenette, the newest member of The Community Hospice Foundation Board. As

deputy director of Private Equity at the New York State Office of the Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, Leo says several factors drew him to the board. He had been well acquainted with Board Chair Jim O'Connor who had hired him for his first job after college. Leo says he had interned for Jim while in college and ended up working with him for four years after. Later,

career opportunities led Leo to a new chapter and a move to New York City but the area native would hear the call of home amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Leo moved back to the Capital Region to join the State Comptroller's Office. When he and Jim reconnected, Leo expressed an interest in getting more involved in the community.

"Everyone in some way has had personal experiences with Hospice," notes Leo, who had lost two older family members to cancer. To this day, he still remembers vividly how comforting it was to have Hospice staff around as he gained a newfound understanding of Hospice that he had never had before. Wanting to learn more

and do more, Leo is excited for the opportunity to contribute to the grassroots efforts.

"One of the most traumatic things, as a child, is the fear of losing their parents," says Leo, who notes that he had known kids in school who had lost their parents but that he was not aware of any organizations that reached out to help families and children. He says he feels "privileged" to be a part of Hospice which serves the community and especially children through its grief programs. Leo looks forward to helping heighten awareness of Hospice to reach those who don't yet know about the myriad of services available.

A Walk to Remember: 1,100 Walkers Remember Loved Ones in Support of Hospice

Step by step, more than 1,100 walkers gathered at Siena University on June 13 - not just to walk, but to honor and remember loved ones, and to support The Community Hospice's **25th Annual "Walk for Hospice."** The event raised \$160,000 for extra non-reimbursed programs, including music and massage therapy to bring joy and comfort for patients, and grief counseling for families. Our heartfelt gratitude to all those who joined us in the powerful show of compassion, community and healing.



Hospice Care Is Available in:

☒ Your Home ☒ Nursing Homes ☒ Hospitals

Call **(518) 724-0242** if you or a loved one needs care or support.

Rock Voices Ring Out in Resounding Support: Hospice Workers Are “Extraordinary”



They're a choir group that speaks compassion, camaraderie, and community through music. Rock Voices, with chapters across the Northeast, including Albany and Saratoga, is aimed at “healing ourselves and others through song.” The singers perform every season not just for their love of music but to make a difference for local charities. Both chapters recently chose to support The Community Hospice raising an unprecedented \$23,000 to benefit terminally ill patients.

Nate Altimari, director of Rock Voices for the Albany and Saratoga chapters, says members nominate a local charity before every concert. Hospice was nominated multiple

times by both chapters this spring. “The generosity from our choir members and their communities is something I’ve never experienced before,” says Nate, adding that season after season, there is a culture of helping others, from food pantries, to shelters, to the backstretch workers in Saratoga.

Joan Miller, a member of Rock Voices Albany, was among those who nominated Hospice. She says the nonprofit “has been a part of my family’s story in a very real way” during the loss of her mom, dad, and brother-in-law. “I’ll never forget my dad in the hospital hallway when my mom’s doctor recommended hospice. He was devastated. He

said, ‘that means she is going to die soon.’ He wasn’t ready to hear it,” she says. Her mom, on the other hand, had days where she even joked, calling the hospice staff her “hostage workers” telling friends, “I’d love to go out today, but my hostage worker is coming.” Joan recalls harder moments near the end when her mom kept asking, “How will I know when it’s my last day?” She remembers the nurse taking her mom’s hand and saying, “Theresa, it’s like giving birth. Did you know the exact day you were going to deliver?” Her mom said no. And the nurse said, it’s just like that. “That simple answer brought my mom peace,” says Joan. “That’s what Hospice gave our family—peace. Yes, it’s end-of-life care but it’s also care for living. It’s dignity, comfort, and support—not just for the patient, but for everyone who loves them. It’s having someone walk alongside you during one of the hardest times in your life, making it feel a little less overwhelming, a little less lonely—and even a little lighter. The people who do this work are extraordinary.”