



“Grief Transformed by Hope: What our Grief and the Butterflies Can Teach Us”

78 Monarchs Butterflies were released in memory of loved ones at Chesapeake Highlands Memorial Gardens on Sunday, October 5. About 130 persons came together as individuals and families to reflect how loved ones who have died continue to impact their lives today. The event is intended to celebrate the memory of loved ones as well as to create a setting for family, caregivers and friends to give heart-centered attention to their own emotional and spiritual journey through grief.

Marcianna Kreamer, General Manager for Chesapeake Highland Memorial Gardens, stated in her welcoming comments, “We knew that we wanted to have an event to honor loved ones, but we wanted it to be unique and we thought how wonderful it would be if we could partner with a non-profit. Since we have been a longtime supporter of Calvert Hospice, the idea of us working together made perfect sense. Usually, there is a spiritual meaning (to the butterfly), but I believe everyone would agree that to watch a butterfly does bring about a feeling of calm and peace and wonder at their beauty. Our heartfelt desire for you today is that when you release your butterfly, you also release pain and in return gain hope.”

Brenda Laughhunn, Executive Director for Calvert Hospice, shared that Calvert Hospice was grateful to partner with community agencies like Marcianna Kreamer and her caring team at Chesapeake Highlands Memorial Gardens. “We can multiply our capacity for good when we join together like this, rather than by simply adding up our individual efforts.” Brenda went on to share how Calvert Hospice’s “Bereavement Programs and the Burnett Calvert Hospice House are open to any Calvert County resident and rely solely on the generosity of the Calvert community to keep these programs available because we do not receive any direct financial reimbursement to cover the cost of these essential programs.” She stated that Calvert Hospice is dedicated to support these kinds of events as they advance their commitment to deliver the “best care possible, rooted in a philosophy built on the themes of help, hope and healing throughout every moment of life, including our very last ones. And when persons are granted the opportunity to focus on the quality of their life, when aggressive curative treatment would only deplete and interfere with those dwindling opportunities, they can choose to tend to personal goals, final life messages, healing relationships and finding spiritual peace.” Brenda affirmed that the large attendance at this butterfly release, “is a sign of a healthy and hopeful community that remembers and honors those from our past that have shaped ours.”

Linzy Laughhunn, Chaplain for Calvert Hospice, shared in a brief reflection “that grieving is an ongoing journey as individual as each relationship to that person is unique.” He went on to invite those gathered to “see the butterfly as a symbol of how lives change and are transformed and that even as we see the butterfly transition through each of its stages as egg, larvae, caterpillar, and the chrysalis, it is this final stage that is most striking and memorable, that of the winged butterfly in its full expression of freedom in flight and beauty.” He drew the parallel to how, “we often see and celebrate with our families in hospice care, right up to the very last moment of life, the hope that a person’s

experience of life, love, faith and sense of worth continue to stretch out before them.” Linzy stated that gatherings like this memorial butterfly release “grant us an opportunity to share that same hope, that our most beautiful moments may still lie ahead of us, and that we can best honor those that we have loved and lost by making the choice to cherish what is truly important and letting go of what hinders us from enjoying life.”

The Butterfly Release involved opportunities for persons to participate in several symbolic reflections using stones, rose petals and a symbolic “Wall of Memory” story board as dulcimer music was provided by Susan Hood, a Calvert Hospice nurse, and her husband Doug. The pinnacle of the experience was the individual release of 78 Monarch butterflies by family members and friends. Many shared connections that evoked everything from laughter to tears. Spontaneous stories were recalled and new memories inspired by the fragile, winged-beauty of their Monarch butterfly. A time for refreshment, sharing and gathering information about grief programs and services was provided at the conclusion.

Calvert Hospice is passionately dedicated to providing Hospice care for anyone experiencing a life-limiting illness. Bereavement services are also available for children, teens and adults who have lost loved ones. For more information about Calvert Hospice and our Bereavement Programs, events, and services visit us at www.calverthospice.org, email information@calverthospice.org or call Melinda Ruppert, Bereavement Coordinator, at 410-535-0892.