

Then & Now—41 Years of Caring for Local Residents

A vision of caring for people that was started by eight nurses and numerous community leaders 41 years ago continues today through the passion of a new generation of nurses, medical social workers, therapists, and support team. Two of the eight nurses, Imogene Canan and Joy Carlson recalled how the organization started. “We kept talking about the need in our community for patients to recover at home,” said Carlson. “We were very determined.”



This group of nurses started meeting at Canan’s house. The nurses had no money, no office space, and no supplies. Several community leaders volunteered to serve on their Board of Directors, as advisors, and help with donations. Kosciusko REMC provided them free office space. With the support of the community, the agency flourished. “We couldn’t have done it without them,” said Canan and Carlson of the community’s support. “We were known as the good do’ers. We started with one nurse and the fee for home care 41 years ago was \$8.00 a visit. Our annual budget was \$38,000.” In 1982, hospice care was underway, for those in our community that are terminally ill.

Today, Kosciusko Home Care and Hospice operates 7 programs: home care, hospice, The Help Center (locally-raised funds to defray patient and family expenses), Medication and Dental Assistance, Kid’s Smile Kosciusko, Lifeline and private duty care. They also partner with REAL Services. A large portion of its funding comes from the K21 Health Foundation, United Way of Kosciusko County, county support, and local donations.

The agency has grown to include 30 full-time and 20 part-time employees. The home care & hospice staff served 474 patients in 2016, totaling 16,122 visits and 178,000 miles driven by staff to care for patients. There were 111 veterans that received services. In 2016, The Help Center distributed assistance funds and services to 861 Kosciusko County residents through the KCCF-Good Samaritan Fund, Kosciusko Riley Kids Fund, and Cancer Care Fund. In 2016, Medication & Dental Assistance provided vouchers for 707 clients for medication, medical supplies, emergency dental assistance, and kid’s dental assistance. An additional 720 children from area preschool/daycare centers participated in Brush! – dental education program.

“The passion for caring for local resident still radiates through our employees. Several of our employees have been working with us 15 plus years. Our greatest asset is our employees,” said Amy Kellar, Medical Social Worker. “It’s all about taking care of the community,” said Jeni Riley, Hospice Director. “It’s a collaborative effort.” For more information, call (574) 372-3401 or visit www.koshomecare.org.