



# 2023 NEWSLETTER

*Proudly celebrating 45 years of compassionately caring for our community*

## PEOPLE OVER PROFITS



### ***A message from our President & CEO***

The landscape of healthcare in America is in flux. Value-based decision-making is all the “buzz” and an interconnected set of social, demographic, medical, and economic forces are reshaping how health care works—and doesn’t work—in our society. Despite America’s reputation as a world-leader in research, innovation, and treatment, costs are high and outcomes are getting worse. A recent study found that only 18% of Americans trust the US health care system to put their well-being ahead of profits.<sup>1</sup>

In recent months there has been more attention paid in the media than ever about the misconduct, fraudulence and dishonesty of for-profit hospices. Multiple articles in prominent publications (ProPublica, New Yorker, NY Times, LA Times) have illuminated how for-profit hospices have come to dominate the field (70% of hospices are for-profit) and, that for-profit hospices receive more reimbursement per patient than not-for-profit hospices, have high profit margins and provide fewer professional services than not-for-profit hospices.

This media attention is both important and much too late. At Good Shepherd, we worry that articles like these only bolster an increasing mistrust in health care providers and may even reflect a negative light onto values-based organizations, like ours, who have consistently and unconditionally continued to make **people over profits** our mission. What these articles do not adequately address is how profit-driven providers pull resources out of the system that not-for-profit hospices like Good Shepherd need to provide the level of quality, compassionate care our patients deserve and need.

At Good Shepherd, our efforts to provide that higher level of care go on despite the challenges. **We are only able to focus our efforts on people because of people like you**, who do, and have, focused your efforts on Good Shepherd.

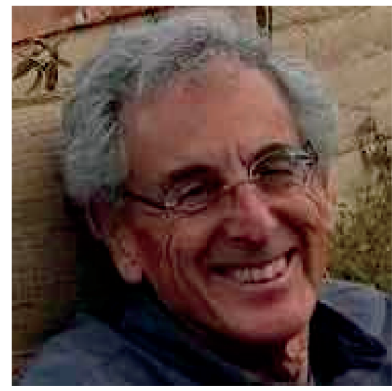
For the past 45 years, not-for-profit providers, like Good Shepherd, have served patients and families through the continuum of declining health and the end of life. Collectively, not-for-profit providers like ours have built a reputation for delivering exceptional care in circumstances that are deeply challenging for our patients, their loved ones and for our staff and volunteers.

This year, I want to highlight the stories of three people who have inspired me and many others. These individuals understood the importance of putting people first and acted to make their communities better through their work to advance not-for-profit hospice and palliative health care.

1 <https://www.hospiceinnovations.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NPHI-Emergence-Survey-Updated-2.23.pdf>

## Maury Weinrobe

Before becoming a dedicated and faithful volunteer for Good Shepherd Community Care, Maury was a researcher and professor of economics. As a patient care volunteer at Good Shepherd, Maury formed many therapeutic relationships with our patients, helping them to reconcile themselves with their mortality and to clarify their legacy. As an administrative volunteer, we relied heavily on Maury's mathematical brilliance.



As a Board Member, Maury consistently applied a deep understanding of, and commitment to, our mission and a concern for the organization's fiscal health, which he brought together with a rich and thoughtful ethic that provided guidance to me, our board members and other staff.

Maury died in May of this year. His was most certainly a life well lived. His legacy lives on here at Good Shepherd and in so many of the places and people he has influenced.

**Cindy Mayher**, was the CEO of Parmenter VNA & Community Care for many years and founded the Miriam Boyd Parlin Hospice Residence over 20 years ago. A few weeks ago, our staff at the Parlin had the honor of caring for the woman who made that residence possible and who made it such a special place.



Cindy was also instrumental in establishing the children's bereavement program (Camp Erin) that is now a part of Good Shepherd Community Care. Those who worked with Cindy describe her as determined and kind and someone who led with integrity and compassion. I remember collaborating with her many years ago and finding her to be completely dedicated to the mission of her organization.

I was able to visit Cindy the day before she died, to see her loving family at her side, and to see the excellent care provided to her by our staff at the Parlin. Cindy led a life of love for her family and for her community. There are thousands of people, who have no idea who Cindy was, whose lives have been touched in positive ways by her work. We are thankful to Cindy for the many gifts to her community from which we at Good Shepherd benefit as well.

**Florence Maddix** is a retired social worker and was one of the founding volunteers at Good Shepherd 45 years ago. "There was a lot that was needed back then," Florence recently told me. "What people mostly needed was someone to talk with, someone who would listen to them. Back then nobody wanted to talk about dying with people who were going through that." Today Florence is receiving care from the hospice she helped to establish those many years ago.



Meeting Florence was such a pleasure and an honor for me, as was working with Maury and being able to visit with Cindy before she died in our hospice residence. They remind us that what we do is really all about people – the people who need our care and those who devote themselves to providing that care. It reminds us too, that those of us who provide this important care will also be in need of it someday. And we will want and need an organization like Good Shepherd that puts **People over Profits**.



# COMPASSIONATELY CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

## *Our Home Away From Home*

How do you determine the best environment for your end-of-life care needs when staying in your own home is no longer viable? First, you need to know your options and how they differ from each other.

A Hospice Residence, like the Miriam Boyd Parlin Hospice Residence, is a great option for people who can not or no longer wish to stay at home and are seeking routine hospice care aimed at increasing their comfort and quality of life as much as possible. Hospice care in a residence may include pain management, symptom management, emotional and spiritual support for the patient and family, assistance with daily tasks, nutritional services, and therapeutic services. The Parlin is also strongly supported by hospice volunteers. Our private residence, featuring 10 private suites, offers around-the-clock comprehensive compassionate hospice care and support from expertly trained hospice staff, including licensed professional nurses and home care aides.

General Inpatient Care (GIP) may be necessary if a patient's symptoms can no longer be managed at home or in a home-like setting, such as the Parlin. Some patients may choose to spend their final days in an inpatient center while others may return home once they are more stable. If the needs of a patient increase to the point where care is not manageable at home, Good Shepherd is able to negotiate private rooms at a number of skilled nursing facilities that we partner with to provide continuity of care. We also have a relationship with a local hospice house that allows us to admit our patients there and remain the hospice provider. In both scenarios, Good Shepherd remains the provider of hospice and our care team continues to visit patients who are admitted to either location, while the facility staff administers around-the-clock care.



## A special welcome to our new Board Members

Catherine McCauley Jones, RN, CHPN, Clinical Nurse Liaison, Newton Wellesley Hospital

Darrin Miles, CEO, Nested Therapeutics

Susan Nemetz, CEO and Founder, The NemetzGroup LLC; CEO and Founder, Corval LLC



# COMPASSIONATELY CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

*Unmasked*, by Alixis Van Horn, APRN-C, ACHPN

Earlier this year, with the official end of the public health emergency, Good Shepherd front line staff, along with a large majority of the health care world, were finally permitted to practice unmasked.

As a clinician who worked on the front lines of the pandemic in a hospital ICU, the mask was both a hated part of the uniform and a saving grace. On the one hand, masks make it difficult to breathe, and that impact on patients cannot be overstated. For all of us, the masks were confining but they added another layer of misery to the experience of individuals who were ill or having trouble breathing. At the same time, masks were a mechanical barrier that hid all sorts of emotions and responses. I worried at times that I would become so accustomed to having the mask to hide my face I would be unable to autoregulate if the time ever came that we were allowed to stop



wearing them. My colleagues and I expressed gratitude for the obstruction of the mask so many times – our emotions and reactions were hidden under that layer of armor. But also hidden was the nonverbal feedback: the expressions of compassion, the smile or the giggle or the look of solidarity, both from patients and from each other. As much as we were protected from “showing too much,” we were hindered from showing - and receiving - enough. The patient/provider relationship depends on being able to fully engage to build trust required for meaningful work, even more so in palliative care and hospice. We felt these losses the most keenly.

Nonverbal transactions are vital to building human connection; the greatest testament to their elemental role is the effect of their absence. Health care workers constantly navigate the division between sick and well. The pandemic further divided us along political lines, and the distance was magnified by the relative anonymity of masking. It sparked conversations of a kind we never had with patients before, sometimes long overdue, about access and privilege, religion and values. These were uncomfortable and often bewildering discussions, and I wondered at times if we would find our way back to unity. Health care workers got a birdseye view of the divisiveness and distrust spawned by the pandemic, and it did not add anything positive to experience.

So it's easy to feel grateful to be rid of the hot, uncomfortable mask. It's easier to communicate, both verbally and through expression, and it's easier to surmise others' responses and adjust accordingly. In palliative care and hospice, much of what we do is predicated on an intuitive process of discernment, and part of that is “reading the room,” taking the emotional temperature and assessing readiness by observing and listening. The absence of the mask makes that so much easier. If our own faces are naked and that makes us vulnerable, it only levels the field between clinician and patient, and makes us a little more aware of our humanity. And maybe now that the worst is behind us, we can begin the work of healing, face to face.



# COMPASSIONATELY CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

## ***Managing Stress and Grief through Mindfulness, by Sharon Arkoff, LICSW***

Life is complicated. We are all susceptible to losses at any given time: loss of a loved one, loss of time to do the things that we enjoy, loss of social/physical connections, and loss of autonomy to move through the world as per our own wishes. A therapist might say to you, “How does all this potential loss make you feel?”

If it makes you feel more emotional or more stressed, you're not alone. Studies report 57% of Americans are grieving the loss of someone or something close to them over the last three years, and more than 26% reported anticipating more stress in 2023.

The good news, though, is that there are proven techniques for reducing stress and anxiety. One such tool is “mindfulness.”



Sometimes linked with yoga (which incorporates physical moves) and meditation (which often incorporates a mental goal), the ancient practice of mindfulness is about paying attention to all of your current emotions and all that's happening around you. The idea is to experience your feelings and your reactions as they are unfolding from moment to moment, without judgment or preconceived “shoulda, woulda, coulda.”

All you need for mindfulness is yourself. Mindfulness is free, it's portable, it can be done anytime, and it's good for you. Studies suggest that mindfulness practices help people manage stress, cope with unexpected challenges, and reduce anxiety and depression. Many people who practice mindfulness report an increased ability to relax, better work and life satisfaction, and improved ability to cope with life events such as loss or major changes.

So, what does this mean for you, when life brings losses and challenges to your door?

First, allow yourself to name the things you're experiencing. Curiosity? Exasperation? Grief? Are you tired? Are you hungry? Is it too noisy or too quiet? Stop and give it some thought. Do any of these feelings surprise you? How are they informative?

Maybe you're being abrupt with others because you're feeling resentful of your long day and the changes to what you originally had planned. Maybe you're tired because you didn't sleep well last night. Once you name these feelings and identify where they're coming from, you may feel calmer and re-grounded. Then you can be more comfortable deciding what emotion or what daily task you want to take care of first, and how to best take care of yourself.



# GOOD SHEPHERD INSTITUTE

## ***Research and the Good Shepherd IRB***

Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the first modern hospice, believed that “You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life.” Research was one of the four pillars of her then-groundbreaking and now time-tested palliative care model, standing right alongside compassionate care, expert pain and symptom control, and teaching.

One of the four pillars of the Good Shepherd Institute, our research contributes to collective knowledge and advances the science of compassionate care, carrying Dame Saunders' vision forward. Over the past year, our HEARTplay Program has been collaborating with the University of North Carolina Charlotte on a study that examines the impact of peer support groups for bereaved children and youth. This exciting project also explores “post-traumatic growth,” a theory that people can often experience positive growth following the adversity of psychological struggle. In other parts of the organization, our team contributed to St. Louis University's study on how hospice discharges impact patients and caregivers, and Bowling Green State University's related development of a hospice discharge best practice.

The Good Shepherd Institutional Review Board (IRB) reconvened at the beginning of this year, marking our ongoing commitment to advance understanding of how to deliver the best care, while ensuring that any research we participate in will always put the wellbeing of our patients and their loved ones first. Ten individuals - representing the Good Shepherd Board of Directors, staff and community - make up our IRB. The group carefully reviews and follows each research study, and offers subject matter expertise to study site coordinators, as needed.

Good Shepherd believes wholeheartedly in the power and potential of collaborative research to identify and address gaps, remove obstacles, and continuously improve access and enhance quality of care.

## ***Programs of the Good Shepherd Institute***

The programs of the Good Shepherd Institute help navigate the many changes and challenges in the current health care environment and offer opportunities to explore new areas in the fields of aging, dying, death, grief and other life transitions. These programs are offered free of charge to our community. Examples of previously presented programs include:

- Helping Patients and Families Navigate End-of-Life Decision-Making
- Hospice 101: An Introduction to Care and Services
- Soldiers' Stories: Caring for Aging Veterans
- Bereavement: Stages of Loss and Recovery
- Compassionate Care Through A Cultural Lens: Hospice Care in Russian, Asian and Latino Communities
- Ethical Considerations in Surrogate Decision Making

For a full list of our offered programs or to request a presentation, contact Kate Bancroft at [kbancroft@gscommunitycare.org](mailto:kbancroft@gscommunitycare.org) or (617) 969-6130.

*\*CEUs available upon request with advance notice*





Good Shepherd  
Community Care



SAVE THE DATE

## ANNUAL INSTITUTE DINNER

### **A HEART THAT WORKS** **WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROB DELANEY**

It was the book he didn't want to write but eventually felt compelled to. Rob Delaney's memoir—profound, painful, full of emotion, and bracingly honest—offers solace to those who have faced devastation and shows us how grace may appear even in the darkest times.

In 2016, Delaney's one-year-old son, Henry, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Two years later, Henry died, and his family watched their world fall away to reveal the things that matter most. This fall, Rob will join us in conversation about his 2022 New York Times bestseller, *A Heart That Works*, an intimate, unflinching, and fiercely funny exploration of what happened. From the harrowing illness to the vivid, bodily impact of grief and the blind, furious rage that followed through to the forceful, unstoppable love that remains. In the madness of his grief, Delaney grapples with the fragile miracle of life, the mysteries of death, and the question of purpose for those left behind.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2023**  
**BOSTON MARRIOTT NEWTON**

We are pleased to present an exclusive new alternative to traditional Institute Dinner Sponsorship and are excited to announce our new *Good Shepherd Corporate Champions Circle*. **We invite you to become a founding member.**

For 45 years, through the generous support of our community and business leaders like you, Good Shepherd Community Care has been delivering the highest quality of care, support and education for patients and their families in Greater Boston. We have been honored and humbled by our community's passion for ensuring everyone has access to exceptional care at the end-of-life.

This new and exciting opportunity for businesses provides **enhanced benefits** that stretch beyond a single event (like the Institute Dinner) and show your support for all of our patients and families. We are committed to strengthening our relationship and want to show you the difference you make to your neighbors in need.





# RECENT EVENTS

## 6th Annual Camp Erin Boston Golf Tournament

This Spring, Good Shepherd Community Care was proud to partner with Ron and Marilynn Rokes to hold the 6th Annual Golf Tournament to benefit Camp Erin Boston. Held at Wayland Country Club, nearly one hundred golfers came out to enjoy beautiful weather, fantastic food, and a day full of good will and friendship. All proceeds from the event benefitted one of Good Shepherd's newest programs, Camp Erin Boston, a free bereavement camp for youth and families held in August and November, 2023.

*Thank you Ron and Marilynn for helping make this event possible!*



## More from HEARTplay and Camp Erin Boston

Our HEARTplay Program recently hosted a meeting of the NE Children's Bereavement Network, welcoming bereavement professionals throughout New England who specialize in supporting young people who are grieving. Special guest Barb Brunzell of LOSSteam MetroWest spoke about the vital services her program offers. Good Shepherd was proud to host the Network's first in-person meeting in almost 3 years!

On a hot Sunday in July, Camp Erin Boston hosted its 11th annual Ice Cream Social at Good Shepherd Community Care. This pre-camp event welcomes all campers, families, volunteers and staff to enjoy ice-breaker activities, fun carnival games, discussions and of course ice-cream! "It helps us all get acquainted with each other and get excited for camp" explains Jenn Wiles, Program Director. Camp Erin Boston was held on Saturday, August 19. *For more information, please visit [www.camperinboston.org](http://www.camperinboston.org).*





## RECENT EVENTS

### *An “Out-of-This-World” Volunteer Appreciation Dinner*

Starry accents and intergalactic costumes abounded! This spring, Good Shepherd was thrilled to hold our first annual volunteer appreciation dinner in four years! Our annual themed event brings together staff from all areas of our organization to honor the invaluable and vast contributions of our dedicated, compassionate and multi-talented volunteers and Board members. It was a stellar evening of serious fun!



## GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

### *Volunteer with Good Shepherd!*

As valuable members of the Good Shepherd team, volunteers are vital contributors to our supportive network of care and help ensure that our patients receive the highest quality of hospice and palliative services.

**Join one of our comprehensive trainings!** Applications are available on our website under the “Get Involved” tab: [GSCommunityCare.org](http://GSCommunityCare.org), or, call our office at (617) 969-6130. Thank you!

#### Volunteer Opportunities:

- Friendly Companionship Visitors to Hospice Patients
- Hospice Residence Support Volunteers (non patient-facing: cooking, watering plants, maintaining bird feeders etc.)
- Hospice Residence Companionship Visitors
- Pediatric Palliative Care Companionship Volunteer Visitors
- Bereavement Volunteers to make phone calls
- Administrative / Office Support at our Newton office

#### Also seeking these Special Skills/Experience:

- Reiki, Pet & Massage Therapists
- Veterans to visit patients who are veterans
- Bilingual (Russian, Spanish, Chinese and other languages)

# GIVING & GRATITUDE

## ***Good Shepherd Wins Largest Gift Ever!***

The HEARTplay Program at Good Shepherd Community Care recently participated in 100 Women Who Care Boston North's quarterly giving event and WON one of the biggest checks the organization has ever granted! A members-only giving circle of philanthropic women dedicated to amplifying the awareness and support of deserving non-profits in the local area, 100 Women Who Cares Boston North chapter has awarded more than \$214,000 since its inaugural event in 2018. Good Shepherd was nominated to "pitch" by its Board Chair, Helen Hellstrom, a member of the Boston North chapter since 2022. Jennifer Sax, VP of Advancement and Jenn Wiles, Program Director for the HEARTplay programs represented Good Shepherd for the award. "Good Shepherd and 100 Women Who Care are naturally aligned organizations in that they were founded on the belief that the community can and wants to take care of one another," explains Jennifer Sax, who recently returned to the group's quarterly meeting to share the impact that their \$12,800 gift has made. "When women support each other," she addressed the group, "incredible things happen."



## ***We Got a Cummings Grant!***

HEARTplay is one of 150 local nonprofits that was recently awarded a portion of Cummings Foundation's \$30 million major annual grants program. Selected from a total of 630 applicants during a competitive review process, HEARTplay will receive \$225,000 over three years.

"We are beyond grateful to the Cummings Foundation for this generous grant, which ensures that children and families in our communities have increased access to impactful, compassionate and free grief support," says Jennifer Wiles, Director of the HEARTplay Program. HEARTplay plans to use this funding to maintain and expand its unique grief and bereavement programs for children, teens and young adults of all abilities and their families in the greater Boston area.

The Cummings \$30 Million Grant Program primarily supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties. Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the areas where it owns commercial property. Its buildings are all managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. The majority of the grant decisions were made by about 90 volunteers, including business and nonprofit leaders, mayors, college presidents, and experts in areas such as finance and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion).

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*Did you know that as of January 1, 2023, all Massachusetts taxpayers may now deduct charitable contributions on their state return. If you cannot itemize and receive a deduction for charitable contributions on your federal return, you will still be eligible to receive a deduction on your state return. The new deduction is available for contributions made to qualifying nonprofits, like Good Shepherd, based in Massachusetts or out of state. Note that contributions must meet the requirements of Internal Revenue Code Section 170.*



# GIVING & GRATITUDE

## *The Blanketeer's Journey, An Interview by Fiona Cusack*

When we think of being wrapped in a blanket, we are reminded of warmth, security, and comfort. Maybe we're simply relaxing, or maybe we're attempting to find a moment of solace and support in a difficult time. For Dianne McAdam, one of the Boston Chapter Coordinators of Project Linus, blankets mean so much more.

An avid knitter and crocheter her entire life, making blankets for beloved family members, Dianne reached a point where her relatives' closets were overflowing with her generosity. She had the idea of donating her blankets to local charities and found Project Linus. Since 1995, Project Linus has gifted newly handmade blankets and afghans, lovingly created by volunteer "blanketeers" like Dianne, to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need.

Dianne's blanketeer story is one that connects personal grief with the love, security, warmth and comfort provided in the creation and the receiving of a handmade blanket. Dianne and her partner Richard delivered countless blankets to Project Linus together. In 2020, after a Stage 4 lung cancer diagnosis followed by a rapid decline and visitations limited due to pandemic restrictions, Richard entered hospice and died in their home. "I've read every book on grief," Dianne shared. "The thing you find with grief and the thing I struggle to understand are the ups and downs." Dianne found personal coping tactics, a support system and lifeline through Good Shepherd bereavement groups: "You can talk to people and they want to know how you're doing, but in this group, everybody just gets it."

Dianne tells a story of a 30-year-old man who was a burn victim as a child and received a Project Linus blanket that he still has today. For many children, it is not just a blanket, but a symbol of hope and the presence of others who are experiencing these feelings alongside them. In a way, Dianne's work supporting Project Linus has mirrored her own grief experience and the blanket of support, hope and human presence that she received from her Good Shepherd bereavement groups. "You learn how to grieve," she explains "but most importantly, you learn that you're not alone."

Another part of her grieving process was feeling joy around her willingness to reinvolve herself in her work with Project Linus. Not only did the work provide her with a sense of purpose, but it reminded her of Richard, who had been her biggest cheerleader and supporter. Now when she donates her time to Project Linus, it reminds her of the days she and Richard spent delivering blankets. "They may not meet me or the person that made that blanket, but I hope they know that somebody cares and they're not alone on this journey."

Camp Erin Boston, a program of Good Shepherd that offers free bereavement camps for youth who are grieving the death of a significant person in their lives, was recently a recipient of blankets from the Newton Chapter of Project Linus. "When I heard about Camp Erin," says Dianne, "I knew we had to jump on it. We support children no matter what their situation is. Supporting children who are grieving is very important to me."

To learn more about Project Linus, visit their website at [www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org).





# CULTURE OF CARE

## Top Places to Work

The cheers spilling out of the Dedham Kings on a warm April Saturday night proved that Good Shepherd, recognized as a 2022 “Top Place to Work in Massachusetts,” knows how to celebrate, too.

On the brink of our 45th anniversary in 2023, Boston Globe Magazine honored what Good Shepherd staff have long understood. “It’s not just about remote vs. hybrid and who’s working where,” the magazine wrote, “It’s about employers coming to terms with the fact that their employees need and deserve more - more flexibility, yes, but also more support, more humanity, and a greater sense of purpose.” About this distinction, Good Shepherd President and CEO, Tim Boon, shared, “The Good Shepherd team is committed to mission above all else. This commitment is expressed and nurtured by an organizational ethos that all employees offer unique skills and perspectives, all roles are interconnected, and we could not fulfill our mission without each other.”

Come find out for yourself!

The Boston Globe  
**TOP PLACES TO WORK 2022**  
MASSACHUSETTS

## Kick start *YOUR* career

Good Shepherd has many opportunities to join its growing team. Staff members benefit from a collaborative work environment in a welcoming office. We have a strong commitment to a supportive, flexible and empowering professional culture and a meaningful work/life balance. Good Shepherd offers many wonderful benefits, including but not limited to:

- 4 weeks paid time off in first year
- 12 paid holidays
- Competitive salary
- Health and dental insurance, coverage begins as of your start date
- Life insurance
- 403(b) with company match

Visit our career page for a complete list of open positions.



Good Shepherd believes in the importance of mutual respect and acceptance and values diversity in our patients, families and caregivers, employees, volunteers, community, and partner organizations. We are committed to these values and honor the dignity of each individual through the care, support and education we provide.

In order to more comprehensively serve patients and families that are fully representative of the diverse communities where we provide care, Good Shepherd has formed a Racial Equity Committee to help our organization achieve our goals regarding racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

The current focus of our Committee includes greater service to Black and brown communities, staff support around engaging in issues related to race and identity and racial diversity across our Board of Directors and Management teams.

**Learn more about Good Shepherd: [www.GSCommunityCare.org](http://www.GSCommunityCare.org)**