

# Volunteer matters

News for the more than 700 EveryStep volunteers who support our non-profit mission through hospice care, grief and loss services, our thrift store, senior support and family support programs.



March 17, 2020

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## EveryStep's COVID-19 Response

### *What volunteers need to know*

*EveryStep's top priority is the safety and health of its employees, volunteers, and the people in its care.*

**Please regularly refer to EveryStep's COVID-19 webpage for the most up-to-date information and resources.**

With the quickly changing situation involving the COVID-19 pandemic, EveryStep is taking steps to ensure our programs continue to serve our patients, clients and their families.

This includes our multitude of volunteer services that impact patients, clients and their families each day.

Each of EveryStep's volunteer programs will be affected differently during this uncertain time, please read below and check our website for the most up-to-date information on any programs you may be involved in.

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## Volunteer Visits Suspended for Hospice

Effective March 17, EveryStep has made the decision to suspend all visits by hospice volunteers, at/in all locations, until further notice.

Out of an abundance of caution volunteers will no longer provide visits to patients, whether patients reside at home or in our hospice homes in Creston or Des Moines.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your volunteer coordinator.

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## EveryStep Giving Tree Thrift Store

Given the nature of EveryStep Giving Tree's business and our predominantly volunteer staff, we have made the decision to close the store to shoppers until at least March 30.

**Currently, the back door of the store is open and accepting donations.**

This was not a decision we made lightly. We will re-evaluate our closure as the situation surrounding COVID-19 changes.

We apologize for any inconvenience. Please stay safe!

If you have any questions please leave a message for the store at 515-270-2414 and check our [Facebook page for updates.](#)

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## Senior Companion Program

Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, the EveryStep Senior Companion Program will temporarily suspend services as a precaution against COVID-19.

The health and well-being of our volunteers and clients are of the utmost importance. Thank you for your understanding.

If you have questions regarding the Senior Companion Program, please contact Hannah Rivas by [email](#) or phone at [515-314-9320](#).

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## Amanda the Panda Programming

Due to the current situation with COVID-19, EveryStep Grief & Loss Services' Amanda the Panda program is postponing their spring Amanda the Panda Grief & Loss Camp that was originally scheduled for April 4 and 5. We are working to reschedule the weekend camp and will keep you posted as decisions are made.

Currently, Amanda the Panda support groups are postponed through at least mid-summer.

However, the fall Amanda the Panda Grief & Loss Camp has been scheduled for the weekend of October 3 & 4 at Pilgrim Heights Campgrounds in Montour.

Updated information on all postponed and pending Amanda the Panda programming will be shared as soon as possible. Please [contact us](#) with questions, or visit our [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

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**For the most up-to-date information on EveryStep's COVID-19 response, click here.**

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## EveryStep's Preparation, Prevention & Practices

*EveryStep stands beside the people in our care and we have taken steps to ensure our programs continue to serve our patients, clients and their families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**EveryStep has implemented an emergency preparedness plan to help address and prevent the spread of COVID-19:**

- When direct care is not essential to the health and safety of a client, EveryStep is identifying alternative means of providing information, support and education.
- EveryStep is cooperating with its community partners and fellow healthcare providers, honoring their COVID-19 screening procedures and protocols.
- EveryStep has implemented daily surveillance and temperature checks of its direct care staff, following the recommendations of the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). EveryStep has prepared a staff tracking tool for the purpose of documenting any instances where the staff person or volunteer is exhibiting or self-reporting flu-like symptoms.

- EveryStep follows IDPH guidelines and has implemented “social distancing” protocols. This is resulting in the cancellation of planned events, organization-wide, through at least May 16, and affects all support groups or events, including the April 16 Game On! Helping Families Move Forward fundraising event.

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## Preparation

A team of individuals at EveryStep is actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation daily, making sure our workforce is informed, healthy and prepared to respond.

On Sunday, March 15, EveryStep enacted its Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP), which covers prevention and response to a pandemic situation. The plan addresses protocols, processes and communications to guide staff and volunteers through an emergency situation. Please contact your program’s leader with any questions you may have regarding EveryStep’s emergency preparedness plan.

The organization relies on credible sources for guidance: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Polk County Health Department. EveryStep has ready access to obtaining updates on any new developments that involve the spread of COVID-19.

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## Prevention & Practices

EveryStep urges sick employees to stay at home. Staff are also urged to follow prevention measures and to monitor their symptoms (such as reporting any relevant symptoms, such as an elevated temperature (100.4 or above) or new respiratory symptoms).

EveryStep employees are also urged to practice respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene. EveryStep also asks that all visitors to its hospice houses wash or sanitize their hands prior to entering a patient’s room. In addition, EveryStep is honoring the practices and protocols put in place by its community healthcare partners.

IDPH recommends the following to help prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are

not available.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if sick.
- Cover mouth with upper arm or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## Public Access To EveryStep's Locations

We have made the decision to close all EveryStep offices to the public, EXCEPT the following locations:

- **EveryStep's 9<sup>th</sup> Street offices, 1111, 9<sup>th</sup> St., Des Moines**
- **EveryStep's Bright Kavanagh Center, 3000 Easton Blvd, Des Moines**
- **Kavanagh House on 56th Street, 900 56<sup>th</sup> St., Des Moines**
- **Greater Regional Hospice Home, 1111 Country Club Dr., Creston**

Our offices in Centerville, Council Bluffs, Creston, Knoxville, Mount Ayr, Mt. Pleasant, Osceola, West Des Moines and Winterset will continue to have vital staff presence, can be reached by phone or fax, and will accept critical deliveries of supplies. However, the offices will not be open to the general public.

### Hospice House Changes

Effective March 17, EveryStep is implementing new visitor guidelines at its Kavanagh House on 56th Street in Des Moines and Greater Regional Hospice Home in Creston.

#### Due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus:

- We are limiting entry to only two visitors for each patient at a time.
- Because children don't always show typical symptoms of the virus (fever and cough), we are limiting access to adults 18 years or older. We recognize that it may be important for some children to visit a loved one for healthy grieving and closure. If a visitor feels such a need exists, they are asked to speak with the hospice house director or other leader on staff, who can safely accommodate the request.
- EveryStep staff are screening all visitors as they enter our hospice houses for

possible COVID-19 exposure or symptoms. Anyone who may have been exposed to COVID19 will be asked leave, with EveryStep's sincerest apologies for the hardship and our offers to help bridge communication between the visitor and the patient.

- Anyone visiting patients – staff or visitors - must wash or sanitize their hands prior to entering a patient room.

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**EveryStep Care & Support Services:** We are a family of non-profit health care and support services offering compassion and guidance during life's most challenging moments.

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