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Lusk Center to Honor Hospice Pioneer  

(GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA) – Construction workers broke ground in January on a new caregiving education and administrative center for Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (HPCG) that will be named after the late Dr. John Alexander Lusk III. The HPCG Board of Directors approved the naming honor to celebrate Lusk’s pioneering role in hospice care locally and for his passion for life-long learning.

“Our board felt this was a fitting tribute to recognize Dr. Lusk’s visionary role in HPCG’s history, as well as for the many ways John and his wife, Barbara, have supported us,” said Pat Soenksen, president and CEO. “Both Barbara and ‘Dr. John,’ as we knew him, are much beloved by our employees and the community. Placing his name on the new education center highlights and honors Dr. Lusk’s legacy in the hospice movement and his steadfast commitment to education.”

Lusk, who died in 2010, was one of the original volunteers to serve on the steering committee that established HPCG more than 33 years ago. He is credited with making the first patient referral to HPCG and served for many years as HPCG’s medical director, including working right up until days before he died.

“Countless lives in our community were touched by Dr. Lusk,” said Dr. Patrick Wright, HPCG board chair. “As Greensboro’s first medical oncologist, he provided expert cancer care for patients and their families with a kind and comforting touch. Dr. Lusk was well-known for being an early adopter of computerization in health care and is considered a mentor for many Greensboro physicians, including myself.”

An integral part of HPCG’s history, Lusk was humble about his role in the early years of the hospice movement in the late 1970s. While he was trained in a traditional medical model of health care, Lusk recognized that hospice would transform medical and supportive care for patients and their families at the end of life. He quickly embraced and championed hospice care for his patients.

Over the past decade, the average number of patients HPCG serves on any given day has more than doubled from 170 to now 350 patients. “This dramatic growth required a 62.2 percent increase in our staffing,” said Soenksen. “The majority of this growth has occurred by expanding hospice care to residents of skilled-nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.”

As a result, HPCG workspace is overcrowded. Educational and meeting space is severely limited and the current campus does not allow for additional expansion. The Lusk Center will allow HPCG to relocate staff from overcrowded workspaces and bring its long-term care hospice teams, currently in leased space, back to the main campus. Most
importantly, the educational portion of the building will allow HPCG to resume offering community outreach and professional education. These crucial activities, essential to HPCG’s mission, had to be curtailed in recent years because of severe space limitations. Fortunately, one of the Lusk Center educational rooms will accommodate up to 100 people!

Teague, Freyaldenhoven & Freyaldenhoven Architects and Planners of Greensboro, has designed the 15,000 square-foot center. Lomax Construction has been awarded the contract for construction work of the Lusk Center. The project, including the land, will cost between $3.75 and $4 million.

“This is a crucial campaign that will expand our capacity, and we are very pleased with the early strong community support we have received for the project,” said Wright. “The Lusk Center will be the transformative catalyst that allows HPCG to meet immediate needs and also provides for future expansion.”

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