

WHY WE GIVE

Johnston's Family Story: Giving back to the community that supported them



For Denise and Bill Johnston, supporting Kemp Care Network began with a single visit.

Several years ago, Denise became involved through Hamilton Golf and Country Club's Par for a Cause initiative, which was raising funds for Camp Erin, now Camp Keaton, Kemp Care Network's bereavement camp for children and youth grieving the death of someone close to them. As part of that experience, she visited Dr. Kemp's House for the first time.

"I was blown away," Denise said. "It's homey. It's a little less clinical, but still provides all the care that everybody needs."

That first impression stayed with her.

When her husband Bill was later contacted about supporting a Kemp Care Network event, Denise already knew the organization was one their family could stand behind.

"We've been involved for several years because we just think it's fantastic," she said.

Their connection to Kemp Care Network continued to grow in unexpected ways. Their daughter, Kristen, spent two summers helping with the Day Wellness Program while she was a university student. Through her experiences and the stories she brought home, the family gained an even deeper appreciation for the compassion and relationships that define Kemp Care Network.

Their family's support also extended to another generation. After hearing about the hospice from Denise and Bill, Bill's parents, Jim and Marlene Johnston, became supporters of Keaton's House.

For the Johnston family, giving back is part of who they are.

Johnston Motors has served the Hamilton community for more than 100 years, with Bill representing the fourth generation of the family business. Denise says that history comes with a responsibility to give back.

"The community has been good to us," she said. "We feel we should be giving something back to the community."

That commitment extends beyond financial support. Denise believes one of the best ways to understand Kemp Care Network's impact is simply to experience it.

"I would say, talk to someone who works there. Go and see it," she said. "Once you see it and hear the stories, you understand the difference it makes."

For Denise and Bill, supporting Kemp Care Network has never been about recognition. It's about helping ensure compassionate care is available for individuals and families in the community they have called home for generations.

"You don't get to be fourth generation without the community that supports you," Denise said. "So it makes sense to support them back."