

# Bampa's House:

## Where families find care, support



Sisters Angela Fernandez and Lisa Bailey, along with Angela's daughter Alyonna, at Bampa's House in Corning, where their mother Sandy Carbone died in December. KATE COLLINS/THE LEADER

### Family reminisces about mother's final days at Corning's end-of-life home

**Jeff Smith** Corning Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

CORNING —

**S**andy Carbone was 71 when she had a seizure following a long battle with lung and brain cancer. The next step, and the difficult decisions that came with it, were alleviated by Carbone's insistence she live out her final months in a comfort care home. ● "When she wasn't able to take care of herself she came out here to Hammondsport to live with me and my family," said Carbone's daughter, Lisa Bailey. "But mom insisted on not wanting to die in my home and was adamant saying she needed to go to a comfort care home when the time came." ● Bailey said the process to move Carbone to a comfort care home began immediately after she suffered the seizure Nov. 8. ● "After mom had the seizure we called CareFirst and they called Bampa's House, which had an empty spot at that time," Bailey said.

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# Bampa's

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## How Bampa's House stepped in overnight

Bampa's House Executive Director Ann Roberts traveled to the Hammond-sport home the next day to interview Carbone and to tell the family more about the non-profit comfort care home.

"I kind of looked at (Bampa's House) online. But I really didn't know," said Bailey, with tears in her eyes while talking about her mother. "You can read, but it doesn't really let you live it. I was scared."

Bailey said all of those fears were calmed when Carbone was admitted to Bampa's House on Nov. 10.

"It was great," Bailey said. "The caregivers and the volunteers at Bampa's weren't just people there to take care of my mom. They took care of my mom because they wanted to take care of my mom."

Roberts said Bampa's House, at 170 E. First St., offers residents a large bedroom and fully accessible bathroom, a deck off their room, and access to a dining space. It has cared for six residents since it opened in early 2020.

"The nice thing about Sandy being at Bampa's House was that her daughters and family members knew she was safe," Roberts said. "That was a big deal. She was very pleasant and enjoyed her interaction with the caregivers."

"It would have been just awful if not for the love and care my mom received at Bampa's," Bailey said. "Every person deserves to die with dignity and mom was able to die with dignity."

Angela Fernandez, Lisa's sister, said Bampa's House staff and volunteers took very good care of her mother.

"You couldn't have asked for any place better for mom to be at," Angela Fernandez said.

Alyonna Fernandez, Sandy Carbone's 7-year-old great-granddaughter, agreed.

"It was good," Alyonna Fernandez said. "They took good care of mamma."

## How the staff helped Sandy Carbone

Roberts said Carbone came to Bampa's House in a wheelchair, then she

was bedside and later bedbound. She died at the comfort care home Dec. 29.

"Mom wanted to have a card day," Bailey said. "That was one of her last wishes. To make birthday and Christmas cards. Volunteers brought tables and chairs and they helped us make cards. My mom couldn't participate at that time, but she was able to sit there and watch us make the cards. They helped her complete her last wishes."

"We had big hopes of helping Sandy create some cards," Roberts said. "But in the end caregivers used her thumb print and had her sign her name on the cards,"

Bailey said she can not stress enough how caring the caregivers and volunteers were to her mother.

"And not just for my mom, but for me as well, my husband and entire family," Bailey said.

Bailey said the staff was attentive to her mother's religious needs, including the reading of the Bible on Christmas Day, along with praying the Rosary. Volunteers decorated a Christmas tree in her room, and a deacon, Ray Defendorf, brought her communion.

"Ray helped Sandy a lot with spiritual care," Roberts said. "Her sister, Veronica Kobinski, came and said the Rosary with Sandy weekly. It was very touching. It meant a lot to Sandy."

Carbone's family members said Roberts' phone calls were the glue that held them all together.

"She was my rock," Bailey said. "And she still is. She still checks in on me and my family."

Roberts added, "You were able to get your sleep at night and be back to see Sandy (at Bampa's House) the next day."

"With a smile on my face," Bailey responded. "And during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were still able to see mom every day."

Bailey said her mother "truly" liked her time that she spent at Bampa's House.

"At first she was a little nervous because it was yet another change for her, and knowing it was her last spot," she said. "But after she got there, she loved it. They took care of her."

Near the end of Carbone's life, Bailey said mom wanted meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, and brussel sprouts.

"That was quite a bit of food for mom and Roberts just made that happen for her," Bailey said. "It turned out that was her last meal. So it was great that they were able to do that for her."



Sandy Carbone with a volunteer's dog at Bampa's House in Corning. PROVIDED

## Change at Bampa's House

Roberts stepped down as executive director of the Bampa's House, March 5, and she will be relocating to Tennessee where her husband has accepted a new job. She has been the director of Bampa's House since it opened in early 2020.

"Ann has been an incredible director, helping us establish Bampa's House; training a wonderful, giving team of volunteers; making strong connections with our local partners; and arranging to open our doors ... despite the current pandemic," said Joan Wilson, Bampa's House Board President.

Roberts said she worked with Arnot Ogden Medical Center Dr. Kimberly P. Kaffenbarger for 17 years prior to taking the executive director position at Bampa's House.

"Dr. Kaffenbarger's practice had a lot of focus on palliative care and end of life care," Robert said. "Which I also found an interest in. We did home visits for our patients, which is unusual for an internal medicine doctor to do."

Roberts said when she first read the job description for Bampa's House she thought that is way too much for one person.

"But in the center of the job description for the quality and person who could do that job, I read it and said if this person can do it, I can do it," Robert said. "It was a really good fit for me."

Replacing Roberts will be Jennifer Houghtalen, a registered nurse and family nurse practitioner with over 40 years of experience in the medical field, Wilson said. She and her family recently provided end-of-life care for her mother, Jean C. Bruce, who lived across the street from Bampa's House.

Houghtalen said she knew she wanted to get involved with Bampa's House following her mother's passing in November.

"I've been orientating and learning what Ann has already gleaned in terms of the role," Houghtalen said. "It's exciting to think about being here."

The non-profit Bampa's House is named after deceased Jim Dugan, who was called Bampa by his grandchildren. He was a life-long resident of the Corning-Painted Post area, spending his career at Corning Community College, volunteering through the Lions Club, and facilitating beer tastings with the Better Beer Boys, a local beer tasting group.