

Summer 2010

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### Words from a Hope Hospice Family

The comfort and support that you provided with your guidance and good nature was like a blanket of comfort during one of the most emotionally challenging times of life. Your special gift of understanding and knowledge helped to heal our hearts and your guiding light made the “letting go” as good as it could be under the circumstances.

Thank you once again for all that you gave. It made a world of difference.

*Sue Ellen Ainsworth-Calagno*



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## Your Right . . . Your Choice Taking Charge of Your Later Years

In our busy lives, it is often a challenge to find the time to adequately plan and prepare for our later years. When we finally do sit down to do some planning or re-evaluating, we consider things like life and health insurance, annuities, advanced directives for health care and even funeral arrangements. But there is another area to be considered in our planning and using it to the best advantage calls for due diligence as well. At some point we may need to make a very important decision for ourselves or a loved one: seeking hospice care.

Does thinking about hospice seem too scary or premature? Most people take the ‘Not Now’ approach to such an idea. But, like everything else, learning about options in advance of needing them is often the most prudent approach.

Among the many myths about end-of-life care is one that suggests that hospice is meant for people in the last days and weeks of their illness. Nothing could be further from the truth. You can access hospice with a prognosis of six months or less. Another common misconception is that hospice is only for cancer patients. In fact, hospice care is appropriate for people with ANY life-limiting illness including dementia, lung disease, or ALS.

One of the least known facts about hospice care is that it’s your right to access it when you need it. It’s a benefit covered by Medicare and Medi-Cal and most insurance plans. It will cost you nothing when you are ready. Thanks to generous community support, no one is denied the services of Hope Hospice because of inability to pay.

You do not have to wait for your doctor to tell you it’s time for hospice. You can



request an assessment at any time. If your condition improves you can opt out of hospice care and the same care can still be available to you at a later time should you need it.

Including hospice care as part of your retirement planning and knowing what choices you have before you face a serious illness is a great way to empower yourself. Knowing your options and the services available in your area, can help you in these ways:

- Understanding end-of-life care helps families plan for a time when caregiving needs increase.
- All hospices are not alike. As a thoughtful consumer, comparing them can help you determine which one will best meet your unique needs.
- Including your ‘hospice of choice’ in your final arrangements, will, or advanced healthcare directives avoids confusion and last minute research and decision-making.

By deciding on hospice early in an end-stage illness, you and your family can access the myriad of services available beyond bedside care that can add quality of life for you and your loved ones.

*For Advanced Directives visit our website: [www.hopehospice.com/](http://www.hopehospice.com/)  
Click on Other Helpful Resources*

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**30 Years of Remembrance**



*Helen Meier, Executive Director*

In reaching the milestone of our 30th anniversary, we are reminded that no patient is ever forgotten. Their names are part of a journal that chronicles every person we have served.

The Patient Log Book is lovingly kept. For thirty years each name has been recorded and each person remembered. It is a symbol of the honor and compassion we feel when we are invited into the home of someone who is facing the last months, weeks, or days of life.

Hope Hospice has grown. The quality and breadth of services provided has increased but the sense of reverence brought to this work continues.

Karen Archer, RN, clinical coordinator, has kept the log carefully for much of our growing years. "Each time a family calls and comes into our care, I go to the log book and record their name. I've been with Hope Hospice for over 25 years so this symbolic record is a way for me to remember the patients who have been part of our hospice family. What an honor it has been to help so many people at this tender time in their lives. I feel I am called to this work and the log book is my call to remembrance."

New names will be recorded. Our quality care will keep getting better. But some things will never change. Our patients and families will always be supported with compassion, dignity, and excellence.

*Donations received between January 1 - December 31, 2009. Our sincere thanks and apologies to these donors who were not included in the Spring Newsletter:*

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## A New Appreciation: Grateful Families Program

We at Hope Hospice frequently hear comments from members of our community about our caring and compassionate staff. We appreciate and encourage the family members of our patients to give us feedback about their personal experience with our programs and services. One family member recently sent us a note saying, "I appreciated all the caring support and concern for my well-being after the loss of my mother. It helped me immensely in my grieving process." Often, while working with patients and their families, our care team is asked, "How can I say thank you for all the wonderful care you provided to our loved one and to the family?"

The Grateful Family Program was designed to answer this question. The Program offers patients or their families the opportunity to make a charitable donation as a way

*When I say my prayers each morning, I remember all of you at Hope Hospice with a thankful heart as you did everything possible to bring comfort to our family while shielding John from lots of underlying pain.*

*~ Carolyn Ainsworth*

of saying "thank you" to their nurse, social worker, home health aide, chaplain, hospice volunteer, bereavement staff, or any member of the Hope Hospice team.

Funds raised from the Grateful Family Program are used to help us continue providing specialized, quality hospice care and grief support to all regardless of ability to pay.

We invite you to share information on this new program with others who have benefited from our care. Please contact Donna McMillion, Director of Development, at [donnam@hopehospice.com](mailto:donnam@hopehospice.com) or call 925-829-8770 with questions about our programs and services.

## A Big Thank You to All Hike for Hope Supporters!



Mark Your Calendars for:  
**2010 Lights of the Valley Illumination Celebrations**

Livermore - November 30  
Robert Livermore  
Recreation Center

Dublin - December 1  
Dublin San Ramon  
Services District

Pleasanton - December 2  
Heritage Bank

San Ramon - December 7  
San Ramon Regional  
Medical Center, South Bldg.

## Hospice Celebrates with Toys for Tots Co-Founder

When hospice nurses Jennifer Natsch-Jensen and Kari Rayford met Lt. Colonel John Hampton, a retired Marine and resident of Deer Hill Care Home, they knew he had a story to tell. John's full life included stints in journalism, public relations, and the military. His most notable accomplishments came in 1947 when he worked as a public information officer for the Marine Corps Reserves in Los Angeles. Fellow Marine reservist Major Bill Hendricks, the public information officer at Warner Brothers, had an idea for helping needy children. Hendricks drafted John to organize a toy collection. He and Hendricks decided to place a toy barrel in a Warner Brothers theater entrance. The sign they placed on the barrel read: Toys for Tots. The first year the two men worked with other reservists who collected 5,000 toys for children in the Los Angeles area. Based on the success of that campaign, the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed



every Marine Reserve Unit across the country to conduct a local Toys for Tots campaign.

Looking back, John Hampton doesn't boast about his ties to the famous program which has distributed over 419 million toys to 195 million needy children in the US, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. "He is very modest," says his daughter, Clare Revelli. "He has always harbored a soft spot for children," she added. In May, John celebrated his 103rd birthday with family, friends, the Hope Hospice team, and the Deer Hill Care Home staff in Lafayette.

As with all of our patients, it is a privilege to serve John and his family. "We are grateful to have had more time to learn about John and his family which is often not the case when people come to our care in the final days and weeks of life," says Jennifer Natsch-Jensen, RN, case manager. "John is a great example of the benefits of early hospice care and a shining reminder to us all of the enduring legacies of our veterans."

## Welcome New Staff!

**Adrienne Ball, RN**

*Adrienne Ball has worked in hospice and homecare for the past 10 years, most recently at Sutter VNA & Hospice in Emeryville.*

**Brian Copperstein, MSW**  
Social Worker

*Brian has spent most of his career as a Medical Social Worker in acute care hospitals and nursing homes. He feels it's a privilege to help patients and families with the emotional aspect of healing.*

**Amanda Davis**  
Home Health Aide

*Amanda has worked as a home health aide for Brightstar Healthcare and at Bruns House in Pleasant Hill. She came to Hope Hospice because, "I was impressed with [them] as people and professionals."*

**Melissa Vega**  
Patient Care

*Administrative Assistant  
Melissa has worked in several medical offices including eight years at Concentra Occupational Medical Center.*

## Volunteer Corner



In May, 2010, Pushpa Dalal, MD, a volunteer for Hope Hospice, received the Juanita Haugen award from the Pleasanton Community of Character committee. "Caring for people is at the center of my heart," she says.

After the passing of her husband, a Hope Hospice patient, Pushpa decided she wanted to give back in some way. Recognizing the sadness and fear many patients and their loved ones experience at the end of life, she worked with Wendy Celeste, Hope Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, to design a unique program called *Vigil Volunteers*.

It offered a chance for volunteers to learn the art of becoming a compassionate companion and included training on the signs and symptoms of approaching death, gentle massage, and comfort touch as well as the use of quiet meditative music, creating a sacred space, or reciting prayers from the person's faith tradition.

At a moment's notice, Pushpa, one of several *Vigil Volunteers*, responds to requests to 'sit vigil' with the dying. *Vigil Volunteers* bring a quiet presence to the bedside of those on their final journey: holding a hand, praying, playing soft music, and offering words of reassurance.

As a long time OB-GYN physician, Pushpa sees her role as that of helping people birth into the next phase of life's journey. Her dedication has given Hope Hospice patients a special gift at the end of life. For these reasons, Hope Hospice takes great pride in congratulating Pushpa P. Dalal, MD, on receiving the Juanita Haugen Volunteer of the Year award.

## Summer Grief Support Groups

Spousal Loss (Adults) July 21 - Sept. 8, Wed. Evenings

Parent Loss (Adults) July 15 - Sept. 2, Thurs. Evenings

Summer Youth Workshops - (Child: 6-12) (Teen: 13-18):

### Mini Books Workshop:

Participants will create and decorate a mini book about their loved one. This will give children a chance to capture some of their memories in written form using stickers, special papers, quotes, beads, and ribbon to embellish the pages.

*Children: July 8, 4-6 pm + Teens: Aug. 12, 6-7:30 pm*

### Memory Garden Workshop:

Children will make objects to place in their gardens / yards to honor their loved one. The life cycle of nature will be used to reinforce the grief cycle.

*Children: July 14, 1-3:30 pm*

### Feelings/Mask Decorating Workshop:

After a discussion of the feelings we experience in grief, children will decorate a full sized face mask, representing their inside and outside feelings.

*Children: July 28, 1-3:00 pm*

### Treasure Maps & Treasure Boxes:

Children will design their own treasure map representing some of the obstacles to their grief and finish by creating a treasure box that they fill with mementoes of their loved one.

*Children: Aug. 5, 4-6:00 pm*

### Remembrance Beading:

Participants create personalized jewelry to honor the memory of their loved one including key chains, bracelets and necklaces.

*Children: July 21, 10 am - Noon + Teens: July 22, 6-7:30 pm*

**To register for workshops, call: (925) 829-8770**