

Spring 2011

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When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

--Henri Nouwen

Submitted on January 16, 2006 - Mercy Mission Kenya



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Lamplighters: Bearing the Gift of Compassion



In the 18th century, lamplighters were employees of a town who lit the street lights by means of a wick on a long pole. At dawn, they'd return and turn the lamps off. In some communities, lamplighters served in a role akin to a town watchman.

At Hope Hospice, we have our own brand of lamplighter in the form of devoted volunteers who bring the light of companionship, creativity, diligence, and devotion to those we serve. During *National Volunteer Week, April 10 - 16, 2011*, we would especially like to honor our volunteers by sharing some of their stories.

Aura Velarde volunteers in our Grief Support Center and brings her own experience to her volunteering in our Children's Grief Support groups. She comments, "When working with the children, I try to be their safety net so they feel it's okay for them to be wherever they are in their process. I attempt to help them understand that they are not alone especially once they learn that I was only nine when my mom died. For the parents, I feel as though I am proof that their kids will be okay. I hope that I help the parents exhale. Becoming a Hope Hospice volunteer has helped me come full circle in my own grief process with my mom's death and the things I couldn't understand are much clearer now."

Thais Carlucci, a home care volunteer, says, "I have learned something from every patient and family I have spent time with. I have had patients in their 90's who have lived such full

and interesting lives. I am always amazed at how peaceful and comfortable they are in hospice during the final stages of their life. There are benefits for both of us. For the patient, I am a listening ear, a change in the routine of the normal day and just someone to talk to. For me, the benefit is getting to spend time with some delightful patients and observing how they handle this time of transition."

Thais invites others to consider volunteering: "If you are saying to yourself I do not have the time or am not trained to do that kind of volunteering don't let that stop you. The Hope Hospice team will be so supportive and so appreciative of you. You will find it to be very rewarding."

Kathy Knox has volunteered with Hope Hospice for the past two years and recalls a particular experience with one of her patients. "Everyone warned me about her. She was angry and defiant...a tough little lady. I was patient and persisted. Eventually, she softened. I was able to reach her in some way. Her son couldn't believe it. I saw her four times a week. I didn't give up on her. When she died, her son said, 'You made all the difference; she was so peaceful.' "

Kathy says, "My life is enriched by the families I have met. It is a privilege to be with them at this time in their lives. The trust we share is really special. And I have grown from what I've learned from patients and families. Death is not so scary to me any longer and I see that, in general, it is a peaceful journey."

A heartfelt thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers for their ongoing commitment to our families and our community. For information on volunteering, visit our web site.

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A Fond Farewell

“Change is the constant, the signal for rebirth.” Christina Baldwin

The hour my father died the hospice nurse gently washed his body. She helped my mother say goodbye to him with dignity and grace. I didn't know that she was also changing the direction of my life. Hospice care made sense to me; it was the right way for a life to end with support, guidance and care. Nine years later I accepted the position of Executive Director of Hope Hospice.

Now it is time for another transition. In late February I informed the board president of my intention to retire.

When I arrived in May of 2002, I received a warm welcome from board and staff and we established the goal of increasing services to patients, families and members of the community. During the ensuing nine years our patient census has more than tripled. We've enhanced grief support services, continually improved the quality of our patient care and augmented support for families and caregivers. The infrastructure was changed to further professionalize the organization. Patient records were automated, we moved into a much needed larger office space, a new logo/new look were adopted and new electronic and print materials developed. We kept our eyes on the goal of maintaining costs while augmenting services. The result is a modest financial reserve to assure continuity of care should we encounter a rainy day and, most importantly, high quality services that surround patient and family with care.

The board is now looking for the right person to lead Hope Hospice into the future. When I pass the baton to my successor, the new CEO will have the joy of leading a thriving hospice organization with ongoing potential for growth.

We have wonderful staff, board and volunteers but it takes the entire community to assure that everyone who needs hospice care will receive the quality services they deserve. I thank every one who has supported Hope Hospice by volunteering, donating, or telling someone about hospice care and grief support.

Hope Hospice has grown and changed but one thing remains constant: The patient and family are still at the center of our organization. Each day hospice staff and volunteers provide a circle of care and support for families when their loved one is dying. This will never change. It is the heart of Hope Hospice.

It has been a privilege to serve as Executive Director for nine wonder-filled years and I look forward to hearing about future growth and success.

Grief Support Center Welcomes New Director



In March, Hope Hospice welcomed Lee Ann Morgan, LMFT, to the hospice team. Lee Ann's interest in providing grief support began during her nursing career. She worked for many years as a pediatric and adult intensive care unit nurse. In that role, she witnessed patients and family members struggle with intense grief reactions. As an ICU nurse, her main focus was on the physical care of her patients. However, she knew that the patients and their family members also needed the psychological and emotional support that was very difficult

to provide in her role as a nurse. She also had personal circumstances involving loss and grief. The combination of these life experiences led her to pursue a Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology to enable her to provide this type of support.

Lee Ann comes to Hope Hospice with fifteen years experience as a Registered Nurse and twelve years of experience as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. For the past twelve years she served as the Bereavement Program Manager at another hospice organization.

In her time away from work, Lee Ann enjoys spending time with her husband Scott, family and friends. She also enjoys traveling, reading, watching movies and exercising.

Summer Grief Journeys Support Groups

Spousal-Partner Loss (Adults) May 12 - June 30 Thursday Evenings

Parent Loss (Adults) May 11 - June 29 Wednesday Evenings

Comfort and Companions for Grieving Kids

Ask any pet parent about the peace and well-being their animal companions provide, and nodding heads and knowing smiles will be plentiful. In January, Hope Hospice began a partnership with Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) to bring their Pet Hug Pack to visit children and teens in the Grief Support Center.

ARF's Pet Hug Pack teams visit hospitals, rehab centers, schools and other facilities. Pack pets have been tested to ensure they are well-mannered, healthy and possess good temperaments. The teams provide unconditional love to the people they visit. "It's truly a rewarding experience to see the comfort the dogs can give to a child in need," says Ellen, a Pet Hug Pack volunteer. Her canine partner, Mingus, is a "big boned" but gentle German Shepherd weighing nearly 100 pounds. Having been told that two of the boys in the children's grief support group were leary of big dogs, Ellen was relieved to discover they were both excited to see this big, loving dog. By the end of the visit, one boy was grinning ear to ear while Mingus sat on top of him!

Young people can be easily overwhelmed by emotions at the loss of a family member. Hope Hospice gives them a safe, nurturing place to work it through, and the dogs' presence encourages them to share their feelings. Mingus and his teammates don't place conditions or judgment on the children. "Pet Hug Pack has made such a difference in the comfort level for the kids as they talk," says Hope Hospice Grief Support Specialist Linda Henry. "The gentle reassurance that the dogs give is just what these kids need." The soothing effects even have lasting benefits, as one parent remarked on his child's uplifted mood the day following the dogs' visit.



Welcome New Staff!

**Rev. Jonathan Leavy, BCC
Chaplain**

Jonathon served as hospital Chaplain at Kaiser Hayward for the past five years where he created music therapy groups for patients and was active in the Palliative Care team. An ordained minister, he is a board certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains.

**Lindsay Schoenrock,
Medical and Professional
Outreach Liaison**

Lindsay is a graduate of Arizona State University and new to California. She has worked in a similar role at a hospice in Phoenix, Arizona. A resident of Danville Lindsay enjoys hiking, sporting events, and attending musical/theatrical performances.

**Christine Darrah
Home Health Aide**

Christine managed the Hope Hospice thrift shop for eight years. She made a recent career change and received her CNA and HHA and is excited to be back at Hope Hospice in a different capacity.

Michele Ochoa Oross, RN

Michele has worked as a nurse for 27 years and was most recently employed at California Pacific Medical Center. She is happy to be working at Hope Hospice as her passion in nursing is that of patient centered care at a time when it's needed most.

We welcome back Shawwna Clark, ASW, and Julie Schnitter, RN, who are working per diem as well as our new registered dietician, Dorothy Costa.



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Save The Date!

2nd Annual Hike for Hope
Saturday, April 30, 2011
Who Will You Hike For?

Hiker Check In ~ 8:30 - 9:30 am
For More Information call ~ 925-829-8770

Hike for Hope is a non-competitive
memorial hike in the beautiful Sunol
Regional Wilderness to benefit the
programs and services of Hope Hospice.

Register at www.thehikeforhope.com

- Bring a photograph or a special memory piece
- Corporate sponsorships are available
- Hikers can choose an easy or moderate 2 or 3 mile trek on the Little Yosemite or Canyon View Trails



It's time to sign up for Hike for Hope 2011 scheduled for April 30th in the beautiful Sunol Regional Wilderness.

Hiker check in time is between 8:30 and 9:30 am. With all the rains we have had there will be a beautiful bounty of wildflowers on display and the grasses are velvet green!

Sign up by April 18th to guarantee your hike t-shirt and get the early registration fee of just \$25. www.thehikeforhope.com

We hope to see you all out there again on the trails of Sunol. Thank you for your continued support of Hope Hospice and our services.