



NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact: Kathy Padro
(925) 829-8770
kathyp@hopehospice.com**

Voice of the Volunteer - Lamplighters Share Their Experiences National Volunteer Week – April 10 – 16, 2011

(DUBLIN, CA) This week, groups and organizations around the country will be honoring those who give their time in the service of others. Volunteers have been called angels, lifesavers, and vital team players in the world of human service. At Hope Hospice, we see our volunteers as lamplighters.

In the 18th century, lamplighters were employees of a town who lit 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. There is a long history of the role of a lamplighter-as-lightbringer as a symbolic figure in literature.

Hope Hospice has its own brand of lamplighters, in the form of devoted volunteers who bring the light of friendship, diligence, creativity, and caring to patients and families facing the end of life. We are especially mindful of their contributions during this week: ***National Volunteer Week, April 10 - 16, 2011.***

Today, we are proud to shine a light on these dedicated volunteers who, from time to time, have shared insights about their hospice volunteer experiences:

Aura Velarde, of Danville, is a volunteer in the Grief Support Center. She states, "When working with the children, I try to be their safety net. 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 things I couldn't understand are much clearer now.

Thais Carlucci of Pleasanton shares, "I have learned something from every patient and family I have spent time with. I have had patients in their 90's that have lived such full and interesting lives. I am always amazed at how peaceful and comfortable they are in the final stages of their life. There are benefits to 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 people, and observing how they handle this stage of their life."

Kathy Knox, a Danville resident, has served 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 continues, "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."

About the decision to volunteer, Thais says, "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 hospice staff is so supportive and so appreciative of you. You will find it to be very rewarding." Hope Hospice offers a variety of volunteering opportunities from administrative, to special events, to patient visiting, pet therapy to art at the bedside or joining our *Voices of Hope* choir. For information on volunteering, visit our web site at www.hopehospice.com.

The Hope Hospice team extends a heartfelt thank you to all hospice volunteers for the sacred work they bring and for their ongoing commitment to patients, families, and the community.

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About Hope Hospice

Hope Hospice offers state-of-the art medical care and emotional support from a team of local professionals, many with hospice and palliative care certification. The Hope Hospice team of doctors, nurses, social workers, home health aides, and chaplains work together to alleviate pain, provide emotional and spiritual support, and to make every moment count. Their compassionate care and guidance is available 24/7 in responding to changing needs and to provide solutions to the challenges of those facing a life limiting illness. Services are provided to anyone with a prognosis of six months or less and take place anywhere the patient calls home. Hope Hospice comfort care is provided wherever the patient calls home and services are covered by most health plans including Medi-Cal and Medicare.