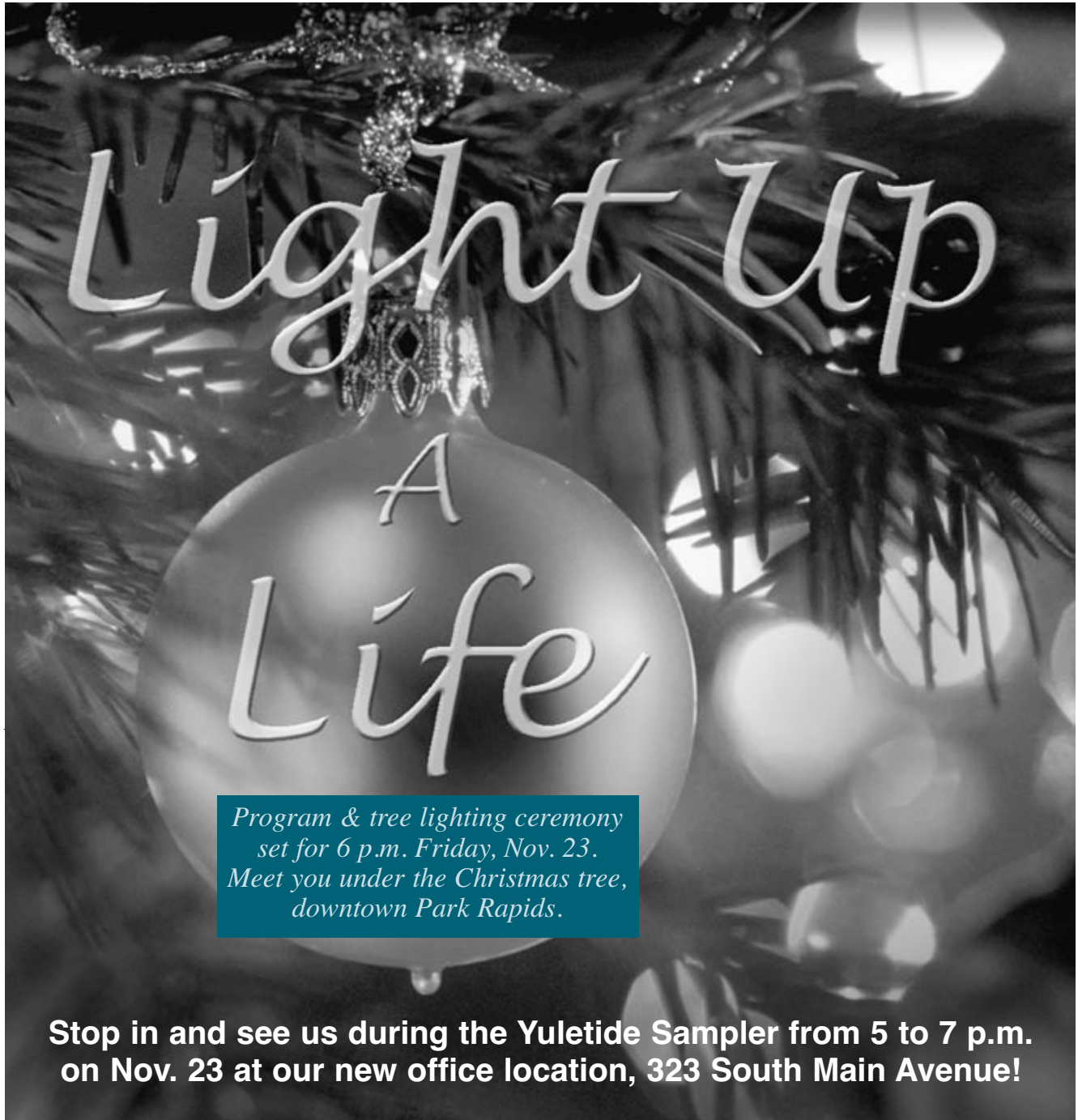


See Light Up A Life Donation Form on back.

# FRIENDS OF HOSPICE

Vol. 12, No. 3

FALL, 2007



*Program & tree lighting ceremony  
set for 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 23.  
Meet you under the Christmas tree,  
downtown Park Rapids.*

**Stop in and see us during the Yuletide Sampler from 5 to 7 p.m.  
on Nov. 23 at our new office location, 323 South Main Avenue!**

† Catholic  
Health Initiatives  
**St. Joseph's Area Health Services**  
600 Pleasant Ave. Park Rapids, MN 56470

# Life experiences, hospice staff opened my eyes

By Mel Liljedahl

## Hospice.

I was asked to ponder over this word and write about what it means to me.

When I first thought about hospice, I was living in the Twin Cities area. In death, I lost my father, mother, two brothers, and a sister. It was when one of my brothers was dying that I became aware of hospice. You see, he was not married and had been the caretaker of our mother prior to her death. Within a year my brother experienced a recurrence of cancer. He had a very short time to live.

Three of us boys still living in the area were asked to provide hospice for him. Without any training I didn't fully understand what was expected. I certainly didn't think he was dying. My wife, Ina, and I took turns visiting.

One morning I received a phone call that he had passed. It all happened so fast. I wasn't expecting that. It was a real shocker.

Some time later I heard about training for hospice volunteering through church. I called to sign up, but the training was at a time in which I was not able to commit. Still, I never forgot about it.

Upon retirement and following a move to Park Rapids, I saw an ad in the *Park Rapids Enterprise* in search of hospice volunteers. I realized this was my chance and called Betsy Meyer, Hospice Volunteer Services Coordinator.

I knew I was in the right place when I walked in the room for my first training session. I felt welcomed and put at ease immediately. It was a good fit.

I started to learn that what I needed for hospice volun-



“What does hospice mean to me?  
That's simple; loving God  
and my neighbor...”

- Mel Liljedahl

teering was desire and compassion. I met most of the hospice staff through training. I can say they are truly professional, caring folks. While I cannot do the nursing, doctoring, or administering that they do, I can try to emulate them in other ways. I can do my part by loving, caring, showing empathy, sharing myself, feeling sadness and joys, laughing, crying, giving a hug or holding a hand. Sympathy, commitment, understanding, a pat on the back, sitting quietly, sharing hope, reading a book, working on a puzzle, talking, watching TV, or just being a good person are also character traits that I try to emulate in both my personal life and in my role as a hospice volunteer. Being there for the hospice patient and the caregiver, letting them have dignity and respect in this time of death and loss, are what matters most.

Hospice has given me a brighter and more positive outlook on life. What does hospice mean to me? That's simple; loving God and my neighbor.

## We all need to plan for the future

In the event of life-limiting condition or death, everyone needs to have a plan. You should collect and organize important documents in one location and tell someone the location of these documents. Additionally, write a Letter of Instruction that includes:

- ▶ The name and contact information of your physician, current prescription and non-prescription medications and medication allergies;
- ▶ The location of your Advance Directive;
- ▶ The name of your attorney and other advisors, such as a clergyman and financial advisor;
- ▶ A list of all insurance policies, policy numbers and related identification cards;
- ▶ Information concerning your Social Security and Veterans Administration benefits;
- ▶ Who should be notified of your death, and how you would like them to be notified;

- ▶ Instructions concerning organ donation;
- ▶ Preparation of your obituary and where you would like it to appear;
- ▶ Funeral and burial desires or arrangements;
- ▶ The location of any safe-deposit box and its key;
- ▶ The location of your will, trust and related estate planning documents;
- ▶ A list and location of bonds, deeds, home mortgage, and other asset documents;
- ▶ Your wishes regarding the settlement of items not covered in your will or trust; and
- ▶ Your financial obligations involving periodic payments.

For more information on planning for your future, contact St. Joseph's Hospice at 732-4552.

## Words that confuse

Pastor's Ponderings  
By Rev. Bob Light, Hospice Chaplain

Recognizing that within the Christian tradition there are many interpretations of scripture and many understandings of the role God plays regarding illness and death. I am going to risk sharing my personal thoughts about phrases we use at this juncture in life.

I often hear the word "take" in conjunction with dying, statements such as, "God took my loved one," or "I guess God isn't ready to take me yet." There are, of course, gentle uses of the word "take" such as, "I'm done with this, why don't you take it." But used in the context of dying it has sort of a violent connotation, it is an act of "taking away." I often suggest to families that it is the disease that caused the death (not God), and when the disease causes the human life-giving functions to cease, God is there to "receive" the soul or spirit of the deceased.

For children the idea of "take" also has the implication that the life can be returned. It is important that in our conversation with children, we do not imply that the

deceased has "gone away." Our hospice library has some good books on how to share with children the news about death.

There are many more words and phrases that, to me, convey false images about death, but let me finish with one used for grieving. I hear the words "get over" mixed in with well intentioned support. I would suggest that we never "get over" the death of a loved one but we do survive, we adapt or adjust, we find new pathways for our life but if we truly loved the parent, spouse, sibling, child then we will never "get over" that less like we get over the flu or a broken arm. Our losses are always with us, hopefully as gentle memories of that relationship.

Language is a powerful tool that only we humans have. It is important that as we use this wonderful tool, we consider the meaning of words and not allow ourselves to be slaves to cult words that have crept into our vocabulary.

Shalom, Bob

## There's power in words, silence, and hugs

By Chris Broeker,  
Hospice Manager

I was quite taken with Bob's words (at left). He and I are kind of "word people" (those of you who are word people too know what I mean by this). What I have found to be one of the best things to say to someone who is grieving is, "I'm so sorry this has happened to you." Then I listen.

My mother used to say, "God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason." In all honesty, words don't always come easily to everyone or in every situation. Well-meaning intent can often be misunderstood.

With that in mind wouldn't it be terrible if we all stopped supporting our family and friends in their time of need because we don't know what words to use? Your presence means so much to those who have lost a loved one, even if you don't know exactly what to say.

Sometimes hugs are more powerful than words... and we all have a ready supply of those!

### Hospice staff

Chris Broeker, PHN, Hospice Manager  
Dr. John Lageson, MD, Hospice Medical Director  
Lucinda Peterson, LSW, Hospice Social Worker  
Laurel Hed, LSW, Hospice Social Worker  
Rev. Bob Light, M.Div, MA, Hospice Chaplain  
Betsy Meyer, Volunteer Services Coordinator  
Jill Grimes, CHPN, Hospice Clinical Coordinator  
Nora Simpson, PHN, Hospice Nurse  
Marlene Lindgren, RN, Hospice Nurse  
Suzette Free, LPN, Hospice Nurse

**St. Joseph's Hospice**  
600 Pleasant Avenue  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
218-732-4552



*For more information about hospice services or for more information about volunteering, call 218-732-4552.*

If you choose to no longer receive this newsletter, please call 218-237-5482 or 1-800-566-3311 ext. 482 and ask to have your name removed from the mailing list. Thank you.

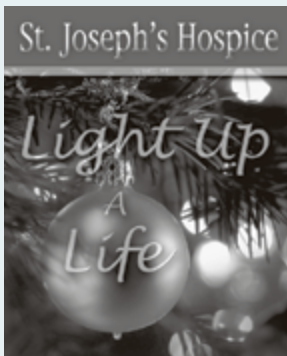


St. Joseph's Area Health Services  
**Hospice**  
 600 Pleasant Avenue  
 Park Rapids, MN 56470

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**HOSPICE**



**St. Joseph's "Light Up A Life"**

\$5 lights a bulb on the Christmas tree  
 in honor/memory of a loved one!

Mail your donation to:  
 St. Joseph's Hospice  
 600 Pleasant Ave.  
 Park Rapids, MN 56470

*Thank you for your gift!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Make checks payable to St. Joseph's Hospice)

This gift is:

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Please send acknowledgment to: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

*Grief Support*

**"Coping With  
 the Holidays"**

Nov. 10, 2007

9:30 a.m. - Noon

Riverside United Methodist  
 Church in Park Rapids

Dec. 1, 2007

1:30-4 p.m.

May Creek Lodge in  
 Walker

Both sessions include helpful information for dealing with loss and grief over what can be a difficult holiday season. We explore how grief interacts with activities and rituals of the holidays.

For more information or to register, please call St. Joseph's Lucinda Peterson, LSW, at 237-5481 or (866)588-4552. ext. 481.