

FALL/WINTER, 2005
**FRIENDS OF
 HOSPICE**

Catholic
 Health Initiatives

St. Joseph's
 Area Health Services

'I learned to live life for each moment'

In August, five dedicated women became St. Joseph's newest hospice volunteers after completing 20 hours of training. Barbara Gauldin, Debbie Grieg, Roberta Lutz, Andrea Malm, and Millie Peterson will be sharing their various gifts with hospice through home visits, office work, and bereavement support. The following article by Andrea Malm is the first in a series based on hospice volunteer experiences.



Hospice, to me, is exactly what we all want from our lives; to be valued for who we are and have people around you that truly care about you, especially when you need it most. In the short time I have volunteered with hospice, I have been moved by the entire team, not only in their dedication to their profession, but by their compassion for each of the families that become part of their lives. We all get to a point in our lives in which we are touched by one another in such a remarkable way that it changes us forever. I have been blessed to have had many such people in my life as I have traveled down the road of loss of many loved ones.

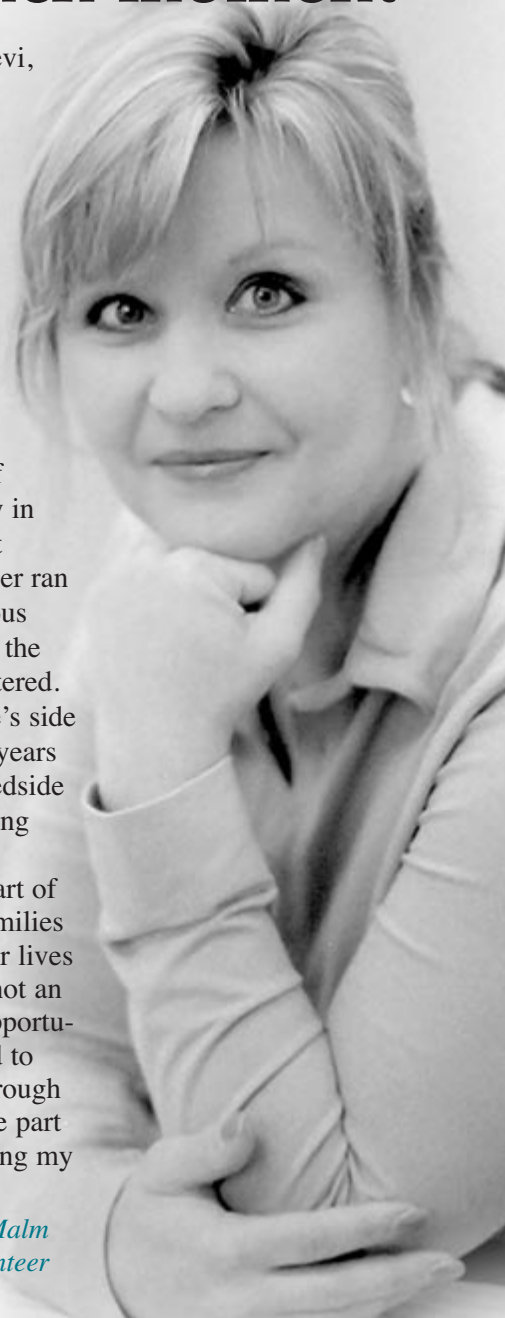
The first was my precious son, Caleb, who at the age of two was diagnosed with cancer. People who did not know us, did many things to help; delivering food, cleaning our house,

helping care for our older son, Levi, and just being there to hold my hand and cry on the days that we received bad news. The words, 'Thank you,' were just not enough. A year later, when Caleb passed, the compassion continued; through phone calls, cards, or even someone taking the time to pick me up to attend grief support group. As my son went through treatment in Texas where we lived, my hometown of Park Rapids supported our family in many ways. This community sent cards, people called, the newspaper ran an article, and there were numerous benefit fundraisers to help defray the extreme medical bills we encountered.

I have since been at my uncle's side when he lost his wife of over 30 years to cancer, and also my father's bedside as he drew his last breath from lung cancer.

I feel honored that I can be part of the hospice team and also that families would allow me to be part of their lives during a tender time. No, this is not an easy road, but we are given an opportunity to create memories. I learned to live life for each moment, and through hospice volunteering, I hope to be part of that same compassion and caring my family experienced.

*Andrea Malm
 Hospice Volunteer*



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