

# FRIENDS OF HOSPICE

FALL / WINTER, 2009

## LIGHT UP

## A LIFE

**Program and tree lighting  
held the Friday  
after Thanksgiving**

6 pm

Friday, Nov. 27

Meet you downtown  
at the Christmas Tree, Park Rapids

## HONOR A LOVED ONE TODAY

† CATHOLIC HEALTH  
INITIATIVES

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St. Joseph's Area Health Services  
HOSPICE

323 So. Main Avenue  
Phone: 218-732-4552

Park Rapids, MN 56470  
After Hours: 218-732-3311

# Hospice leaves a legacy of compassion

During the holidays or on other special occasions, many of us gather with family and friends. More often than not, these gatherings include the telling and re-telling of family stories, observations about how a child's behavior or expressions mirrors that of other family members, and the sharing of recipes and traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation. These remembrances often include those who are no longer with us.



This emphasis on remembrance, while present during joyful times, also plays an important role in difficult times, especially at the end of life. Studies have shown that, when faced with a life-limiting illness, most people are more concerned about the impact it will have on their family, not themselves.

By focusing on the individual, not the illness, hospice and palliative care honor life's final journey. Hospice and palliative care brings comfort and peace to help people live every moment of life to the fullest,

leaving loved ones with memories they can treasure.

Losing a loved one is always hard. However, having support and care especially tailored to the end of life can help bring out special moments that might not otherwise be possible.

Hospice and palliative care professionals and volunteers understand that every person they care for is a unique individual with a lifetime of experiences, relationships, and gifts to share. Last year, more than 1.4 million people chose hospice care when facing the end of life. This choice ensured respect and dignity for the person who was dying, and ensured that family and loved ones were left with a legacy of compassion and caring.

November is National Hospice/Palliative Care Month, a time to celebrate those who provide hospice and palliative care to those in our community and help raise awareness of quality care at the end of life.

For more information contact St. Joseph's Hospice at 218-237-5593, or the Caring Connections HelpLine at 800-658-8898, or visit [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org).



## Book Review

By  
Betsy Meyer

### "The Christmas Box"

By: Richard Paul Evans

© 1993, 87 pages in length

★★★★☆

Richard Paul Evans originally wrote *The Christmas Box* as an expression of love for his two daughters, never intending for it to be published. Many Christmas seasons later, this touching tale relates the meaning of Christmas in a profound but simple way.

The story relates how a young couple, Richard (who narrates) and Keri, accept a position to care for a lonely widow, Mary Parkin, in her spacious Victorian mansion.

As Christmas draws near, Mary becomes anxious about Richard's obsession with success and his failure to make time for his family. She urges him to reconsider his priorities, but he is always too busy to heed her advice. It is only when

Mary is on her deathbed and her secret sorrow is revealed through the letter-laden Christmas box that Richard realizes what she has been trying to tell him.

The message concerns love, of course, and the strings Evans pulls to vivify it should squeeze sobs from even the stoniest of hearts. It's notable, however, that unlike many well-known Christmas tales (such as Dickens'), which carry that message in a basically nonsectarian manner, this is steeped in specific Christian imagery and belief as the author draws on the drama of Jesus as God's sacrifice for the world's sins, and of his crucifixion and resurrection.

This tiny treasure will cause you to rejoice in the blessings of the season while stirring up a child-like vigor for the holiday season.

## Remember, celebrate the deceased

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

For families who have experienced a death during the past year or several years, the approaching holidays may be cause for trepidation.

A death in the family impacts many individuals and many generations. Grieving is necessary, and each person needs to grieve in their own way.

A family gathering on Thanksgiving or one of several December religious celebrations is an ideal time to observe sound grieving practices. It is important for us to remember the deceased individual by recalling stories and sharing memories. The 4-year-old great grand daughter, who is not able to fully comprehend the finality of death, needs the opportunity to say: "Grandma made the bestest chocolate chip cookies!" The 17-year-old grandson needs to tell the story

about the time grandpa helped him land a trophy walleye.

To put it another way, grieving is not just about tears and sadness. It is also about memories and about celebrating attributes of the deceased.

A holiday gathering also provides opportunity for a memorial tribute or toast, the placing of a special ornament on the Christmas tree, or similar events to remember and honor the deceased. The single most beneficial element to the holiday gathering after a family death is the remembering. Family members may be inclined to emphasize silence, thinking they are preventing tears or sadness. Experience tells us that the family will benefit greatly from opening up and recalling the deceased.

Shalom,  
Chaplain Bob



*Grief support  
group in place  
for anyone  
suffering from loss*

St. Joseph's Area Health Services Hospice offers a grief support every month for those coping with loss.

From 2 to 3:30 p.m., on the first Thursday of every month, anyone who has experienced the death of a friend, family member, or loved one is welcomed to attend.

Bob Light, hospice chaplain, and Laurel Hed, social worker, facilitate the monthly sessions.

The sessions are held at St. Joseph's / Innovis Health lobby conference room. If you have any questions, please call Laurel at 218-237-5744.

### 2010 dates to remember

As you flip to your 2010 calendar on Jan. 1, don't forget to mark St. Joseph's Hospice's special events for the coming year:

**Golf event:** June 2

**Chicken Dinner:** July 16

**Chili Contest:** August 14

**Legends and Logging Days:** Aug. 13  
and 14

**Light Up A Life:** Nov. 26

### 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  
Angie Gustad, RN, Hospice Nurse  
Cindy Little, RN, Hospice Nurse  
Marlene Lindgren, RN, Hospice Nurse  
Cathy Schmidgal, RN, Hospice Nurse  
Trish Tandsater, RN, Hospice Nurse  
Suzette Free, LPN, Hospice Nurse  
Home Health Aide Staff  
Hospice Volunteers

**St. Joseph's Hospice**  
**323 So. Main 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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FRIENDS OF  
**HOSPICE**

**St. Joseph's "Light up a Life"**

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

*Thank you for your gift!*



**\$5** lights  
 a bulb  
 on the Christmas  
 tree in honor  
 or memory  
 of a loved one.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, zip \_\_\_\_\_

Donation amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

This gift is:

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

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

Please send acknowledgement to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_