

SPRING, 2005
**FRIENDS OF
 HOSPICE**

Catholic
 Health Initiatives

St. Joseph's
 Area Health Services

Retirement will soon be official for Dr. Deane Johnson

Years as St. Joseph's Hospice
 Medical Director helped to shape
 the doctor he became

Retirement changes things. Instead of wearing a stethoscope roped around his neck, Dr. Deane Johnson holds a mild-tempered beagle (Kallie) in his lap. Rather than ordering diagnostic tests for patients, he special orders sheet music for customers with requests at Beagle Books, the book store he and his wife operate in Park Rapids. His retirement became official April 1.

While these changes mean life is less scheduled for Johnson, who dedicated nearly 25 years to patients at St. Joseph's and Dakota Clinic, he'll never forget the lessons he learned as St. Joseph's Hospice Medical Director. The role, which he took on in 1986, helped to shape the doctor he became.

"Hospice care is really focused on patient comfort and their living each day the best they can," he says, noting that as a hospice physician the emphasis is "on the present" and trying to do the best you can for the patient's immediate well-being. When working as a family practice physician, on the other hand, more attention is perhaps paid to preventative and diagnostic medicine. Hospice taught him more about compassion and "learning to deal with situations

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*Dr. Deane Johnson and Park
 Rapids' celebrity
 beagle, Kallie*



St. Joseph's Area Health Services
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It's Happening Again

By **Sandra Goodman**

Spring is a time for optimism. Suddenly living seems easier, happier, and less stressful. Depression lifts and a feeling of hope fills the air. We shed our winter blues and replace our frowns and cantankerous attitudes with smiles and loving-kindness. We visit with our neighbors over fences, clean up the barbecues, and start leafing through seed catalogues. Life is good . . . but not invariably and not for everyone.

It's happening again. Spring is once again knocking on our doors. Each of you know, love, or can befriend someone who is hurting and building walls around his or her heart to keep you, and the entire world, out. You are unfamiliar with the grieving process and are most likely very uncomfortable with winging it when it comes to the subject of death. Therefore, I am going to give you a few suggestions that should ease your apprehension. If you can coax just one bereaved person out of the pit for a few hours this spring, you will have accomplished more than many people do in a lifetime.

Get their attention

Go to the bakery, grab some doughnuts, then to the garden shop and buy some plants. Ring their doorbell. When they wearily open the door a couple of inches and peer out, stick your foot in the door really fast. Tell them, "I really need coffee to go with these goodies, and will you show me a good place to plant these flowers for Jim?"

Say their name

While you're digging and planting those flowers, talk about something you remember about the deceased. If you didn't know them, ask questions. Get to know them. Use their name as often as you can until both of you feel comfortable.

Give them things

Take them books that seem inspiring, candles they can light when in need of a connection, photo albums for the loved one's picture, and journals to write in at 3:00 a.m.

Invite them to breakfast or coffee

It may be the only reason they have to get out of bed at all. The bereaved use sleep as a shelter from the world.

Take them to a doctor if they pose a danger to themselves or others

Grief is depression. If it is severe enough, medication

may help alleviate some of the pain until the bereaved person is strong enough to face it head on. Offer to go to a counseling session or a grief support group with them.

Call them often

Don't just call once a month, call once a day. Always ask how they are feeling, what you can do, and then *listen*.

Send a card on special days

Special days are the deceased's birthday, death date, all holidays, anniversaries, and special family events such as weddings. Always write something like "Thinking of you and knowing that you must be missing John..."

Encourage laughter, remember the power of touch

It is healing.

Allow them to share spiritual beliefs or lack thereof

Be open and willing to listen to anything they may be experiencing, feeling, or searching for. Your job is not to judge, but to support.

Have no expectations for the time they spend grieving. It is individual, nothing is "normal," and if they don't feel it now, grief waits. Just go with the flow. Stay with them and walk at their pace.

Once again, spring is fast approaching. You are feeling optimistic and excited about the upcoming season and all of the things you can accomplish as everything comes alive again. The winter has been long and hard, you are ready for a new beginning. I understand. I share your anticipation. Six years ago, when my son died, is not now. My corner of the pit has been occupied by many since my stay there, and I have no intention of revisiting it. But there are many who have just descended and they are burrowing in, seeking solitude. Although I firmly believe that being there is a necessary task in getting to the other side of grief, I also believe that we must come out occasionally for fresh air and sunshine. It is up to you, and to me, to go into his world and reach out for a hand waiting to be touched. Once they've taken hold, their chance of successfully climbing out is greatly increased. So go on, go buy those doughnuts - someone is waiting just for you.

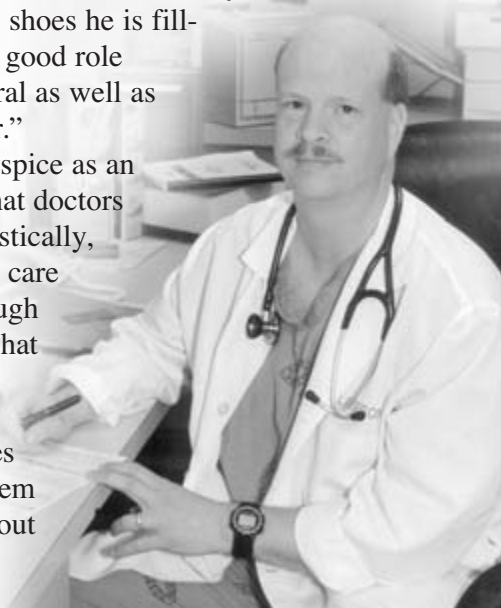
Sandy Goodman is the author of Love Never Dies: A Mother's Journey from Loss to Love (Jodere Group, 2002), and the founder and chapter leader of the Wind River Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

Dr. John Lageson takes over role as St. Joseph's Hospice Medical Director

Dr. John Lageson, whose specialty is internal medicine, took on the role as St. Joseph's Hospice Medical Director January 1.

Lageson, who has close to 15 years experience at St. Joseph's and Dakota Clinic, says Dr. Deane Johnson, whose shoes he is filling, served as a good role model "in general as well as hospice director."

He views hospice as an extension of what doctors do daily. "Realistically, we're all taking care of patients through life," he says. That includes caring for them at the end of their lives and allowing them dignity throughout the experience.



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that are inherently difficult or uncomfortable."

Hospice was relatively new to the area back in the 1980s when Johnson volunteered to take over for Dr. Richard Trinity. "I was interested in it, but I didn't know much," he admits. A short time later he completed a Bush Foundation fellowship and traveled to England and Scotland to study and visit various hospice organizations. Among other educational opportunities he took in was the Educating Physician with End-of-Life Care (EPEC) through Northwestern University. That, coupled with his years of experience, may find him sharing his expertise with others.

"I'll miss working with people in that close and special way that you do, both in family practice and with hospice care," he says, "and I'll miss the ongoing relationship you have with your patients and co-workers."

For now he'll be setting his own schedule. He has musical interests he plans to pursue and his share of the book store to run. He plans to do some teaching. Long-term goals are sketchy right now, but for now "it's nice to step back and take a deep breath."



Thanks

Though we only knew you for a short time your kindness and caring for Dad and our family truly touched our hearts. We will always remember the comfort you offered during a very difficult time in our lives.

Thank you.



Thank you for your loving care, concern, patience and understanding during this difficult time. We appreciate everything you did for Mom and the family. We thank you for your continued prayers as we move forward.

Enclosed is a memorial in her name; it is our hope that others will benefit from your fine care in the future.

Hospice staff

Kathy Kleen, PHN, Hospice Director
 Chris Broeker, PHN, Hospice Manager
 Lucinda Peterson, LSW, Hospice Social Worker
 Laurel Hed, LSW, Hospice Social Worker
 Rev. Bob Light, M.Div, MA, Hospice Chaplain
 Iva Thielges, Hospice 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
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218-732-4552



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

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4 FRIENDS OF **HOSPICE**

Upcoming events

- ▶ **June 1** - 4th Annual Golf Event to benefit St. Joseph's Hospice and Scholarship Fund, Blueberry Pines Golf Club, Menahga
- ▶ **July 22** - Annual Chicken Dinner, American Legion, Park Rapids
- ▶ **September 12** - 1st Annual Invitational Bridge Open, Blueberry Pines, Menahga

Education series on grief starts soon

Hope Shines On: Finding Meaning in Grief

St. Joseph's Hospice will sponsor a four-part series on grieving called, "Hope Shines On: Finding Meaning in Grief."

The series will be held from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday evenings starting April 12 at Northern Pines Assembly Grounds (located north of Park Rapids).

April 12 - The first of this education and support series opens with Dave Southward, a licensed clinical social worker, who will present, "Understanding the Grief Process." Southward will provide an overview of grief and highlight ways people cope.

April 19 - Arlys Hess, a licensed social worker, will talk about "Self-Care: Taking Care of Your Feelings." Her topic centers on

how we care for ourselves as we grieve.

April 26 - Rev. Bob Light will explore spirituality and the grieving process during his presentation, "Where is God in Our Suffering."

May 3 - Laurel Hed, a licensed social worker, will present, "Loss of Dreams." She will lead participants through the process of understanding the need to redefine the future after the death of a loved one.

Participants may attend one session or all sessions. A light supper will be served.

Pre-registration is requested by calling Lucinda Peterson, St. Joseph's Hospice social worker, at 237-5481.

