

FRIENDS OF HOSPICE

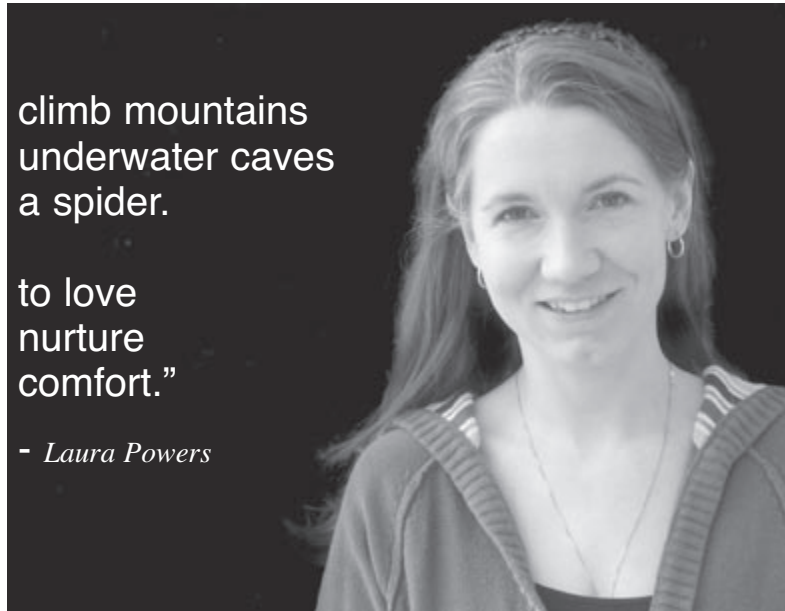
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SPRING, 2008

“I am not driven to
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I am driven
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- Laura Powers



Strong sense of self, passion drives volunteer

By Laura Powers

I became a hospice volunteer probably much the same way as other volunteers; after my life was first touched by hospice. My friend was ill with cancer, and, after a strong but failing battle, she opted to stay at home and spend her remaining earthly time with family and friends. Hospice was called, and I happened to be there during a visit.

I was nervous because I really was not well educated on the program and sort of believed that when you call hospice you may as well have called the undertaker. I was very quick to learn that this belief had no merit. I observed the visit and was very touched by the whole process. Hospice staff showed compassion and caring, they all treated my friend with dignity and respect.

Soon after that visit I read in the paper that the hospice program was looking for volunteers and called Betsy Meyer, the volunteer coordinator right

away. I did some rearranging of my schedule to be able to attend a three-day, very informative course. I became a volunteer at age 31.

To me, wanting to be a hospice volunteer was easy. When you are passionate about something in your life and truly believe in it, it seems so natural. I am not driven to climb mountains or dive in underwater caves or touch a spider. I am driven to love and nurture and comfort. I am a listener and love my visits. I am a hugger and believe in human touch having a healing power. I believe in God and have a faith that gives me strength even when hope is seemingly lost. I love being a hospice volunteer.

I am grateful to the many families that have allowed me to be a part of their lives during such difficult and emotional times. Hospice has touched my own life in a way that I feel compelled to do the same for others.

† Catholic
Health Initiatives

St. Joseph's Area Health Services

600 Pleasant Ave.

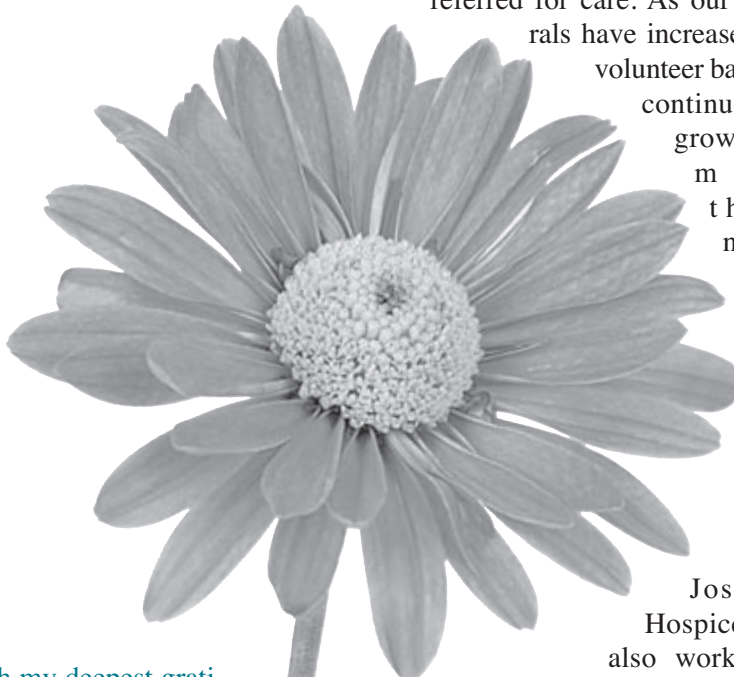
Park Rapids, MN 56470

St. Joseph's Hospice blossoms with care

"Thank you all for the wonderful care shown to our mother and family.

There are no words to express our gratitude for this wonderful program but 'to God be the glory!' May your good works continue to be blessed."

-Family
of a hospice patient



"With my deepest gratitude to all staff who took such great care of my husband. He loved each and every one of you and so do I. God bless you!"

-Wife
of a hospice patient

During the 2007 fiscal year, St. Joseph's Hospice received \$63,309 in monetary donations alone. Those gifts, from generous hearts throughout our service region, helped bring comfort and quality care to 104 hospice patients and their families.

There were plenty of highlights to mark the fiscal year in 2007. At St. Joseph's Hospice, we continued to be blessed with a rich, diverse program that is grounded in the premise of serving others, with dignity and respect, during the last days of their lives.

St. Joseph's Hospice has seen a steady rise in the number of clients referred for care. As our referrals have increased our volunteer base has continued to grow to meet those needs.

St. Joseph's Hospice has also worked to partner with other facilities within St. Joseph's

service area as client needs have changed. As clients move to assisted living facilities or skilled nursing facilities, hospice has improved the way can reach those people as well, wherever they are living.

Other 2007 items include:

- ▶ Karol Savage and Bobbie Wagner completed our twenty-hour hospice volunteer training to become our newest, and very compassionate hospice volunteers. They joined our 37 committed volunteer force who are proud to call themselves hospice volunteers.
- ▶ We hosted two "Living With Grief: Before and After the Death" viewing sessions with 53 individuals attending.
- ▶ Age: 79% of our patients were 65 or older.
- ▶ Average length of stay: 43.08 days
- ▶ Median length of stay: 12.27 days
- ▶ Stays under 7 days: 30%
- ▶ Average Daily Census: 15 patients
- ▶ Patients who had volunteers assigned: 58%
- ▶ Number of volunteer hours contributed: 1,577
- ▶ Pay source: Medicare = 88%; Medicaid = 2%; Private Insurance = 7.5%; Uninsured = 2%

Hospice goals for 2008

- ▶ To implement quality improvement measures (QAPI) through the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
- ▶ To develop and offer a Pain Management Conference in the fall of 2008.
- ▶ Offer our hospice volunteer training in the spring.

Good listeners make good hospice volunteers

Pastor's Ponderings

By Rev. Bob Light, Hospice Chaplain

Looking back on my life, I am painfully aware that I was not equipped as a young adult to participate in a helpful way in the journeys toward death of my older brother, my father, or my mother. Perhaps you have been unable to find meaningful ways to share the journey with a friend, co-worker, or family member who is dying or is grieving the death of a loved one.

Hospice volunteers and staff know their responsibilities may regularly place them in close proximity to death. For some of us, death may seem remote one day and close at hand the next. How do we relate to a dying individual and the family that surrounds that individual? There is, of course, no simple answer, and it may not be easy for the dying or grieving person to 'open the door,' so to speak, and let you into their inner life.

I believe the very basic skill we all need is that of being a good listener. This involves body language, eye contact, facial expression, and attentiveness.

"After you had taken your leave I found God's footprints on my floor." - Tagore

Gently asking questions that encourage the individual to go deeper are always helpful. "Can you describe how that makes you feel," or "I've never had that experience, can you find words that will help me understand?" On the other side of the coin, we never say, "I know exactly how you feel." Even if you have experienced a similar loss or similar illness, our feelings are not their feelings.

One of the gifts that hospice can bestow upon a community is a corps of individuals who are not intimidated by death. Individuals who, when the need is there, are ready to respond to those in need.

Go gently to the homes of those who confront death and share your love.

Shalom, Bob

Upcoming Events

Training

Hospice volunteers allow hospice patients to live with dignity and respect during the last days of their lives. They work alongside the hospice staff to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of our patients and their families. Their gifts can range from home visits, office work, and bereavement support to fundraising. The next training is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., **April 4, 7, & 8** at Bethany Lutheran Church in Nevis. For more information and an application, please contact Betsy Meyer, Volunteer Services Coordinator, at 237-5482.

Fifteenth Annual Living With Grief® Teleconference

"Living With Grief: Children and Adolescents," from 12:30-3 p.m., **Wednesday, April 16** simultaneously at Northwoods Bank Community Room in Park Rapids and Cass County Health, Human and Veterans Services in Walker. Lunch provided. Call 237-5482 to register.

7th Annual St. Joseph's Area Health Services Foundation Golf Tournament

Benefits St. Joseph's Hospice and St. Joseph's Scholarship Fund. Shotgun start at 12:30 p.m., **May 28**, at Blueberry Pines Golf Club in Menahga. Registration begins in April. Golf Ball Drop Tickets available at Hospice office. (\$10 for chance at \$5,000.) Call Cynthia Rooney at 237-5711 for more information.

Hospice Chicken Dinner

Dinner bell rings at 4:30-7:30 p.m., **July 25** at American Legion Club in Park Rapids. Watch the local papers for more information.

Hospice Chili Cook-off

This year we will heat up activities at Lakes, Loons & Legends with chili. Catch the cook-off on Aug. 8 & 9. Watch the local papers for more information.

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
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
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600 Pleasant Avenue
Park Rapids, MN 56470

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Editor's Note: In preparation for the upcoming Living With Grief® Teleconference on Children and Adolescents, Laurel Hed, LSW with St. Joseph's Hospice, reviewed four books that focus on helping youth in those age ranges understand their own grief.

**"Heaven Has a Floor,"
by Evelyn Roberts**

This book gives a wonderful picture of what heaven may look like. It is written in simple language and gives the child/reader the promise of seeing their loved one again some day.

**"The Land Beyond Forever,"
by Tracy Flynn Bowe**

This is a personal journey of the author through a dream she once had. She leads the reader, both young and old on a journey of visiting their loved ones who have passed on. Easy reading, fun illustrations that give the reader a sense of celebration for their loved ones who have passed away ahead of them.



**"The Fall of Freddie the Leaf,"
by Leo Buscaglia, Ph. D.**

Beautiful pictures adorn this book, and it is written in a way that all ages are able to understand life and death. The author uses easy-to-understand analogies to describe our purpose in life, and how we all follow a sense of order; from beginning to end.

**"The Next Place,"
by Warren Hanson**

This is a light-hearted book that has a gentle sing-song flow to the words. It describes the 'Next Place' as a peaceful, gentle transition to a place of no more earthly discomforts or worries. There will be reunions of family and friends who have gone before us.