

# FRIENDS OF HOSPICE

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*Brenda Mason*

## 'I vowed to become a hospice volunteer'

By Brenda Mason  
Hospice Volunteer

Seven or eight years ago, my friend and current business partner, invited me to go to a Pathways-sponsored conference in Minneapolis. It was on death and dying. Patch Adams was the featured speaker.

For three days, I went to workshops and lectures by various well-known and respected authors and researchers on the subject of dying. I was completely fascinated by the compassion and love in which each of

these presenters shared their knowledge. That's when my passion to learn as much as I could about the process of dying began. I vowed to become a hospice volunteer.

A few years later, my mother-in-law was diagnosed with lung cancer. My husband and I lived four hours from her home, and the distance prevented us from

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✦ Catholic  
Health Initiatives

**St. Joseph's Area Health Services**

600 Pleasant Ave.

Park Rapids, MN 56470

# We're on the move...

- ▶ St. Joseph's Home Care
- ▶ St. Joseph's Hospice

St. Joseph's Area Health Services Home Care and Hospice will soon be making their move to the former Park Rapids Video building located on Main. Plans are to relocate by May 1. "We look forward to this relocation which will make us more visible in the community and allow our customers improved access to our services," says Chris Broeker, Home Care /Hospice Manager. More information on the move will be available as May 1 nears.



## Now I am honored to hold a space of peace

Continued from Cover

being frequent visitors. We did not fully comprehend how little time she had until her disease was quite progressed. When John and I were called and told his mother was nearing the end of her life, we went to be with her.

When we arrived and saw her nearing death, we were shocked. This dying experience was new to both of us. While the family gathered to talk with Marion and say our goodbyes and wishes, I noticed a

woman sitting in a chair in the corner.

The only way to describe her presence was that she seemed to be holding the space of peace. Who she was and her just being there gave us, the family, a calmness and acceptance that I honestly do not think would have been there without her. Who was this woman? She was a hospice volunteer. I vowed to become a hospice volunteer.

A year or so later, my grandmother became ill, spending the last week of her life at Heritage Living

Center. (What a great facility, serving a great need!) It was such an honor to sit with my grandma during her last days. I vowed to become a hospice volunteer...and, so I did!

I am truly honored to be allowed into the lives of clients, to hold a space of peace, hoping to live up to an idea I have held in my heart since Marion's passing. Each person I am honored to share time with makes me feel so blessed to be in this organization. Namaste.

# Caregivers leave a powerful impression by their very presence

By Rev. Bob Light

One of my favorite expressions comes from a poet named Rabindranath Tagore. He writes: "After you had taken your leave, I found God's footprints on my floor."

The prayer of Saint Francis captures this same powerful sense of God manifesting God's power through mortals in the opening phrase: "Lord, maketh me an instrument of thy peace."

All who serve a hospice patient; family members, friends, neighbors, hospice and home care staff, volunteers, physicians, pastors, and parish visitors, share the privilege of being a part of the patients last journey. Those of us who have shared that journey with patients know that every journey is different.

There is no "right way" to die.

One of the major tenets of hospice is that no patient need experience unrelieved pain. This allows for more relaxed interaction between the patient and caregivers. What a joy it is to visit a home and find a hospice patient enjoying grandchildren, sharing conversation with a close friend, reading a new book, or returning from a simple trip to town. As we enter the home or room of a hospice patient,

especially for the first visit, we will inevitably wonder if we will say and do the "right things." In reality, there is no such "right."

However, I also know that the fewer words I speak and the more words my presence can encourage the patients and/or their loved ones to speak the better. As we become acquainted, we may be a window to the world the patient can no longer visit. With sensitivity, we may share news about the community, their church, or other subjects of interest. After all, everything happening outside that home is part of God's world. What happens during a visit will vary according to the duties of the visitor. While one caregiver will adjust medications, another will give a bath. One will bring groceries, and another will share a prayer. One will share in recalling a wonderful fishing

trip, another will share in a conversation about dying.

And at the end of the day, the patient will say, "After you had taken your leave, I found God's footprints on my floor."

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

-- Rabindranath Tagore

## 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**



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

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## FRIENDS OF HOSPICE

### *Grief education news*

As our hospice grief support facilitators reviewed this past year, we have found a change in the participation of our grief support groups; the numbers of participants have decreased. When we asked ourselves, "why," we discovered that people are finding support in other areas.

Some churches have started grief support groups, and more individuals are taking the time to spend with grieving friends, neighbors, and church members. We also found that many of our family members are in the work force and feel they are receiving good support from their co-workers.

As a result, we have decided to not offer grief education this year but will continue to host, "Coping with the Holidays" in November (Park Rapids) and December (Walker).

We are available for support and referrals, as well as providing bereavement services to family members of our patients. If you would like to be connected to a support group in your area, please contact: Lucinda Peterson, LSW at 237-5481 or Laurel Hed, LSW at 237-5744.

### Mark your calendar!

#### **Wednesday, May 30**

6th Annual St. Joseph's Area Health Services Foundation Golf Tournament benefitting St. Joseph's Hospice and St. Joseph's Scholarship Fund. The event will be held at Blueberry Pines Golf Club in Menahga. Shotgun starts at 12:30 p.m. Registration of teams begins in April. For more information, please contact Cynthia Rooney at 237-5711.

#### **Friday, July 20**

Save your appetite for the Hospice Chicken Dinner to be held at the American Legion Club in Park Rapids. Chow time is from 4:30 -

8:00 p.m. Watch the local papers for more information. Proceeds benefit hospice.

#### **July 25-27**

St. Peter's National Catholic Society of Foresters, St. Adolph Court #901, will host their annual Foresters Rummage Sale during Park Rapids' Crazy Days. The Foresters have dedicated proceeds from the 2007 sale to benefit St. Joseph's Hospice.

If you have rummage sale items (big or small) please consider donating them to St. Peter's for this HUGE sale.