

Volunteer Voices

Whatcom Hospice



St. Joseph Hospital
PeaceHealth

A Newsletter of the Whatcom Hospice Volunteer Program, 800 E. Chestnut St., Ste. 1-C, Bellingham, WA 98225
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Please submit your volunteer report at the end of the month. Mail, fax to 756-6884, or email dgillespie@peacehealth.org Don't forget your name. For email, just provide patient initials. For all others, full names, please. If you have been assigned a patient and he/she is not using you, please report it—even if only in an email. Your help may be needed elsewhere.

FEBRUARY VOLUNTEER EDUCATION & SUPPORT

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT GROUP—MONDAY, FEB. 22nd—2:30—4:30 p.m.

Lower Level Conference Room—800 E. Chestnut St., Bellingham



Support Group is for all volunteers who wish to connect with other volunteers, to discuss issues that have come up, to hear what other volunteers are doing, & to re-connect with old friends and meet new ones. We come to support YOU and the important work that you do in hospice. You are welcome to share what you are doing—singing with the Threshold Choir? Making prayer shawls? Need support with a difficult client? Frustrated that Dianne hasn't called you lately? Get updates on the new Hospice House. Come, share, and feel supported.

Please contact Dianne at 756-6892 or dgillespie@peacehealth.org if you plan to attend.

MARCH VOLUNTEER EDUCATION & SUPPORT

VIGIL TRAINING—TUESDAY, MARCH 23rd—5:00—8:00 P.M.

Lower Level Conference Room, 800 E. Chestnut St., Bellingham

This training is for new and not-so-new volunteers who would like a deeper understanding of vigil sitting—sitting at the bedside in the final hours. This is a repeat of the class given September, 2009, but is being offered in the evening for your convenience. Call Dianne at 756-6892 if you plan to come.

**STOP BY TO PICK UP YOUR TRAVEL BAG, SCARF,
HAND SANITIZER & ROOM DEODORIZER GIFTS**



If you haven't stopped by to pick up your travel bag and silk scarf from the McNett Corp., please do so. The travel bags are nice quality and the scarves come in a variety of colors & designs.



INTERESTED IN KNITTING “COMFORT SHAWLS”?

There are now 4 volunteers knitting shawls for hospice patients. We originally called them “Prayer Shawls,” but they are not being made with specific prayers, just love, hugs, and positive intentions, so patients will know someone cares for them and wraps them in love. Volunteer Sally DuBane is managing the project. Call her at 671-1420 or email mtnsgal@comcast.net if you are interested in joining the group. Also, if you are knitting, please send Dianne these hours. We can use them. Thanks!

IF YOU HAVE THE BOOK “FINAL GIFTS” OR OTHER BOOKS OR MOVIES CHECKED OUT, PLEASE RETURN THEM. THERE ARE 6 COPIES OF “FINAL GIFTS” MISSING. MANY NEW VOLUNTEERS HAVE RETURNED THEIRS WITHOUT A NOTE & DIANNE IS NOT SURE WHO HAS WHAT AT THIS POINT. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!



**Volunteer
Birthday Corner
For February**

*You may be cleaning up after
“The Dirty Dozen” or
“Driving Miss Daisy,”
You may be “Home Alone” with
your patient or spending
“Tuesdays with Morrie”
But whatever tasks
you do for hospice,
In our book, you’re a STAR!
Thanks for all you do for Hospice!*

Margaret Chester 2/15
Janet Johnston 2/10
Bill Kern 2/13
Michael Kleps 2/9
Joanne Kurtz 2/2
Kathleen Matthes 2/17
Jennifer Moe 2/4
Rheta Mogenson 2/17
Annie Shepard 2/11

*“You go in thinking that you’re
going to help somebody, and
every time they end up
helping you.”*

—J. Edward Lewis, minister of inmates
who volunteer to sit with prisoners
in the hospice ward

*“I shall pass through this world
but once. Any good therefore that
I can do or any kindness that I can
show to any human being, let me
do it now. Let me not defer or
neglect it, for I shall not
pass this way again.”*

—Mahatma Gandhi

*“Let us not love with words or
tongue but with actions
and in truth.”*

—1 John 3:18

*“If you can’t go where people are
happier, try to make people
happier where you are.”*

—Ashleigh Brilliant

DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS ROCK!

The hospice staff is VERY appreciative of the delivery volunteers who pick up and deliver medications during the week but especially on the weekends. Your help is invaluable to the nurses who can now spend their time nursing patients rather than running all over the county delivering medications. We are very pleased that this program has become so successful, and your willingness to help is overwhelming! You guys rock! Please make sure you send those delivery hours to Dianne. Thanks!

A GIFT I GIVE MYSELF

By Hospice Volunteer Bill Kern

At the end of my Mon’s life, I took a leave of absence to permit her to stay in her home. The support that hospice gave to her and to me convinced me that I wanted to volunteer when I had the opportunity. I have now been doing so for over 4 years.

I am personally more interested in helping a family share the end of a loved one’s life with respect and dignity than I am with tacking on the maximum number of days to a life span. This spirit permits me to become as deeply involved as possible in each situation without experiencing excess sadness. I never have the sense of being in the midst of some tragedy, but rather see my role as doing whatever I am able to do to help a family get to a place where they’ve decided they wish to go.

Beyond the excellent training I received, perhaps the most important thing I had to learn was to completely set aside my ego. If I am able to enter a situation with compassion and respect—forgetting about how I need to perform—I am able to provide some service that is helpful. I cherish some of the verbal, emotional, and physical connections that occasionally develop between a patient and me. But it is just as important to sit with a totally unresponsive person for a few hours, allowing a partner some respite by napping, getting out with a friend or doing chores. I don’t need to reach a profound level of conscious interaction with a patient to know I’ve made a positive contribution.

Though I may not feel “grief” at the end of a patient’s life, I still feel an intensity that is very different from the rest of my life. When a patient dies, besides loss, I experience some relief—a serious responsibility is over. And then in just a few days, I am aware of what a huge hole there is in my life by not having that connection. Being a volunteer is no noble sacrifice on my part; it is a gift that I give to myself.

