

The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast **HOSPICE TODAY**

Spring 2008

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Sharing Hospice Stories





Mary J. Labyak
President and Executive Director

Ever since the first stirrings of heart and mind came together to establish the groundwork for introducing hospice care in this country, people have relied on this movement and what it brings to our lives.

Our community hospice was born in 1977 on the strength and conviction of mission-driven volunteers who had seen friends and loved ones struggle with pain and isolation connected with advanced disease, age and impending death. Determined, those who launched our agency were convinced that hospice would lead to a better way to care for loved ones and others who were nearing the end of their lives. Those pioneering, dedicated volunteers believed in the value of creating a not-for-profit hospice because they acted out of compassion and vision, not according to the dictates of a bottom line.

Our founders identified community needs and sought to help, and their leadership and deep conviction guide us even today as we honor our community's confidence in our hospice. Throughout the life of The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, our community has encouraged and nurtured our growth. In turn,

it is incumbent upon our leadership, staff and volunteers to act in good faith, dedicated to good stewardship practices, making certain that our dollars support everyone in our community, leaving out no one. Moreover, we have an obligation to represent our community – to act as its agent for change when necessary and take a leadership role in educating policymakers whose decisions affect hospice care.

We have always looked upon our relationship with our community as a sacred trust, one we value greatly. One of the most important aspects of a strong, responsive not-for-profit organization is listening to community voices. Over and over, being attentive to the call of community has led us to develop new programs and services because those we serve want and need them. A leading expert on the not-for-profit sector, Lester Salamon, calls this sector the centerpiece of American culture, representing “a faith in the capacity of individual action to improve the quality of human life.” Thank you to all of you who have allowed The Hospice to be part of your lives. We remain committed to improving quality of life for all we serve.

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published three times
a year. © The Hospice
of the Florida Suncoast,
5771 Roosevelt Blvd.,
Clearwater, Florida 33760.
Nonprofit postage paid at
Tampa, Florida, Permit No.
2199. For more information
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On the cover:

Hospice House Woodside chaplain Elle Wolf-Muhleck is one of many chaplains who centers herself before offering spiritual support to patients, families and staffers. Her preparation includes meditation, walks around the Woodside grounds and swimming. These relaxation techniques help her mind to be clear and present so that she can be there to offer support. “My ritual starts before I start my job. I try to sit in the silence so I feel like I’m starting from a centered place,” Elle said.



Hospice Today

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Chaplain Looks Within Before Offering Support

Elle Wolf-Muhleck, chaplain, Hospice House Woodside, usually starts her day with a swim to meditate, a stroll around the Woodside grounds to soak in the beauty of nature and a few moments of silence sitting in the chapel. These things help her to be centered and present when working to support others.

“My ritual starts before I start my job. I try to sit in the silence so I feel like I’m starting from a centered place,” Elle said. Sometimes, she will meditate some more during the day. “I do a very simple meditation that focuses on breathing. That’s something you can do wherever you are,” she said.

Her work is primarily with the staff at Woodside, who witness some 85 deaths each month. “I can be a support to them,” said Elle, adding that she can help them to be present for patients and families. “It’s about spreading that love and kindness to our patients and families,” she said.

Remaining centered is not always an easy thing in their work environment, Elle admitted. “It takes work to be centered and I’m not always that successful with it,” Elle said. She’s interested in learning more about cumulative loss and how that affects herself and



physical and mental attitude as you go and visit with people, you are able to be with them. I try to keep an ongoing healthy attitude about my own life’s issues so that they don’t become entangled with their (patients’ and families’) issues,” Calvin said.

her coworkers. “I want to learn more about my own balance so I can be more available for staff,” she said.

Vassar “Calvin” Crews, chaplain, Lavender Team, explained that his preparation begins long before he meets with patients and families at nursing homes and assisted living facilities (ALFs). His is a holistic approach to preparation. “By maintaining a very healthy, spiritual,

Calvin also taps into a spiritual strength in his preparation. “To center myself, I pray. I believe that there is a divine guidance in the work that I do. I believe that I am a channel to provide them (patients and families) with the spiritual support that they need,” Calvin said.

Beyond working with patients and families at various sites, he provides ongoing support to many of the facilities’ staff members. He’s prayed with them, had their parents as patients and held memorial services for their loved ones. “I’ve entrenched myself in their lives. They are my eyes and ears and can give me the true perspective about patients,” Calvin said.

Like Calvin, Raymond “Ray” Hawkins, chaplain, Pearl Team, looks for spiritual strength and support to be able to help the patients and families he visits at nursing homes and ALFs. He’ll sit in his car for a few minutes before he enters, meditating and praying. Another part of his preparation includes studying a variety of prayers, having a list of resources on hand and taking along his guitar to play for patients.

Above all, he has taken to heart The Hospice’s lesson of being present during visits. “That’s one of the things we learned – just being. Not so much doing; that’s the easy part, but being. I do it because that is what I hope people would do for me and it’s an important part of care. I prepare myself to listen and to journey with a patient,” Ray said.

A Letter from the Chair of the Board

In thinking about my tenure on The Hospice Board and my new role as chair, I find myself reflecting on the past and also looking to the future with the same thoughts we all have at times -- why am I here and what is my purpose?

To some, The Hospice is a valued friend when needed most, and to others it is an organization with a mission plan. Both views are reasonable, but what drives The Hospice above all things are people and their lives. Whether you are a staff member, a volunteer, a family member, or an individual under care, life and the value we all see in it is why The Hospice exists.

Sharing some thoughts on the value and purpose of The Hospice is the theme of this letter. As a 39-year old husband, father of two children under three, and a business owner, I tend to see life passing by at a 100 MPH at times. However, when I do take time to stop and look at where I’ve come from and where I’m heading, it is easier to see how the simple, everyday actions I take can impact others’ lives.

As I write this letter, only my maternal grandmother is alive. I was home the night my paternal grandmother passed away under hospice care in my old bedroom. My paternal grandfather would pass away within a year - also under hospice care. I still think back on their impact and role they both played in my life. My maternal grandfather and mentor passed away a little over a year ago. I mention these family members because they are so much a part of me and my life today.

Just as my grandparents, parents and extended family have touched my life, I now see how my actions touch the lives of my children. But as I mature, I see how interactions with others can have the same consequences on those around us as family can. A smile, hug, listening and helping others may not always have an immediate effect on a specific person, but in reflection they provide the day-to-day opportunities to fulfill our purpose at The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast.

All of the things described above are a snapshot of what I see as The Hospice. It represents our heritage, our future and a clear opportunity to learn from one and impact the other. I’ve often mentioned to others that I wish I could do more; I think in many ways everyone associated with The Hospice feels the same way. It’s a cause and a chance to give back to what we cherish most -- life.

So while I’m happy to be able to serve in a small way as chairman, I am even prouder to be associated with a team of volunteers, staff and supporters who are the foundation of an organization whose mission is to be a valued friend when most needed.

The Hospice Hosts Children's Art Exhibitions

A new children's art exhibition series is underway at The Hospice. The Word & Image: Arts in Education Partnership four-part series is a partnership of The Hospice, Pinellas County school system and The Arts Center, which educates children about the arts and offers them access to gallery and exhibition space.

The series, themed *Look Who I'm Talking To!*, features the work of Pinellas County

Place and the welcome center at Roosevelt community service center. Additional work from the series is displayed at The Arts Center in St. Petersburg. The young artists have greeted the community at receptions at Roosevelt when the new exhibitions have opened.

The current exhibition will run

through the end of the school year. The series will continue in the fall when school is back in session.

The public is welcome to view the artwork at Roosevelt community service center, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.



elementary, middle and high school students, who created pictures and essays depicting whom they would have telephone conversations with and what they would discuss. The artwork is rotated and displayed at A Gathering



The Hospice Remembers Longtime Supporter – Eddie Dow

Eddie Dow touched the lives of countless patients and families with his unwavering, longtime support and service to The Hospice. Eddie was many things to The Hospice over the years– volunteer, fundraiser, donor, trustee of The Hospice Foundation and friend. Sadly, he lost his battle with cancer and died at Hospice House Woodside last September.

One thing Eddie was especially well known for was being the founder and creator of the beloved Lights of Lake Park Estates fundraiser, a spectacular lights display put on by homeowners throughout the neighborhood. The event was founded in memory of his wife, Ruby, a former patient of The Hospice. Eddie's family and neighbors rallied together and carried on with Lights last year in memory of Eddie and Ruby. They raised nearly \$28,000 to benefit The Hospice. Nearly \$400,000 has been raised since Lights was started in 1994. The event will continue in the future.

In addition to fundraising, Eddie was a devoted volunteer who served more than 10 years as a driver delivering prescriptions to patients. He was honored for his service with The Hospice's Volunteer of the Year award in 1999. "Eddie was a fixture



Eddie Dow (right) and Santa Clause collect donations at Lights of Lake Park during Christmastime 2001.

in the pharmacy, a place he loved to go to and where he was loved. It became his home away from home," said Tom Turner, pharmacy dispatcher. Eddie combined his admiration for the pharmacy volunteers and staffers and love of stamp collecting by creating a book.

"Eddie interviewed the volunteers and with what he learned about them, added appropriate stamps to display that information. He also presented several staffers with

pages, using his creative wit and stamps," Tom said. Given his love for stamps, Eddie was especially pleased to be chosen as a guest speaker during the unveiling of the Hospice Care stamp in 1999.

Eddie will be missed by many and always remembered for his kind spirit and big, hospice heart. "The pharmacy and Woodside have lots of memories of Eddie's walks through the halls. We are grateful for his years of persistent dedication," Tom said.

The Hospice Ball

More than \$290,000 was raised on behalf of those served by The Hospice at The 7th Annual Hospice Ball, Bella Venezia, in January. The black-tie event was a sellout.



Jennifer Jackson and Matthew Kersting enjoy a dance at the ball.

Marchers Greet Community at MLK Justice Parade



Bethune-Cookman University band jams at parade.

Staffers and their family members along with volunteers of The Hospice and its family of programs waved, greeted and passed out lots of candy to spectators during the 23rd annual Martin Luther King Jr. National Drum Major for Justice Parade, St. Petersburg. The spirited group enjoyed the delightful weather, camaraderie and opportunity to represent The Hospice and connect with the community on the day to honor King.

The group marched behind the Bethune-Cookman University Marching Wildcat Band, sponsored by The Hospice Foundation and the featured band of this year's parade. The super-sized band pumped out crowd-pleasing rhythmic and upbeat tunes and choreography. The parade stretched from Tropicana Field to Vinoy Park and included many other bands from around the country, floats and community groups. It was one of many parades and community service projects held throughout the U.S. in celebration of King's life and his remarkable contributions to the civil rights movement.

Patient Benefits from Hands-On Reiki Therapy

Bronze Team volunteer Barbara Hawkins centers herself by meditating before administering Reiki to patient Natacha Ritz. After Barbara is prepared and barefoot, she enters Natacha's bedroom and begins the Japanese healing therapy. First, she places her hands on Natacha's warm head and then moves her way down to her heart and then stomach. All is peaceful for Natacha as she lays on her bed listening to her favorite serene music and feeling a spiritual energy flow through her body.

"You can just feel her become relaxed," said Barbara, who was trained in Reiki by The Hospice. When she is finished working on Natacha, she says I love you to her and quietly exits the room, leaving her in a state of ultimate relaxation and comfort. Reiki, which is made of two Japanese words – Rei, which means God's wisdom or the higher power, and Ki, which means life force energy, has been extremely effective for Natacha, who has suffered for

years with facial cancer. She has since experienced fewer migraines, relief from some agonizing pain and a reduction in anxiety and stress as a result of Reiki.

Natacha says she's exhilarated by the sessions and would have one everyday if she could. "Reiki has done so much more for me than I ever expected. When her (Barbara's) hands touch me, it's this enormous feeling of being able to breathe, calmness and relaxation," Natacha said. She prefers Reiki to taking pain pills, which can have negative side effects, and other alternative therapies such as acupuncture, which are expensive and have yielded few results.

She went on to explain how she feels a spiritual healing during the sessions. "It's almost like an out-of-body experience in which you feel lifted out of it and it's purely peaceful.

It's a feeling of being enveloped and a feeling of blessing. Barbara's been a godsend to me,"

Barbara helps Natacha relax with Reiki.

Natacha said. She says the sessions have given her a renewed energy that makes her feel like going out more often. "I was homebound before. Now I have new things to look forward to," she said.

The two seem to be kindred spirits who have shared a special connection with each other since they first met. "We connected right away. We're really in tune with each other," said Barbara, who shares a common love of yoga with Natacha and takes yoga classes with her. Barbara believes that their connection and Natacha's openness to Reiki is what fuels her ability to help Natacha.

"She is the best patient I've ever had. She's brought me along so far with Reiki," Barbara said. The sessions have benefited Barbara's well-being as well. "I feel so much when I do Reiki and get something back when doing it. You can't reach out to heal another without healing yourself," she said.

Natacha chronicles the health and wellness benefits of Reiki in this excerpt from her journal.

Dec. 6 - During REIKI session, I felt great power coming from Barbara's hands - touching my face, head and neck - felt almost an out-of-body experience. In the next few days I feel my ear tingling (It has been numb since 1998 cancer surgery) and I have feeling in my right ear -- Each day I've felt more sensations in the entire area that has been numb for 9 years. I am certain it has to do with Barbara's gift from God as a REIKI therapist.

Spiritual Volunteers' Calling to Help Patients and Families

Elsa Johnson and Mary Palamar share a common bond – they both love to learn. Elsa, patient, Green Team, loves watching the History Channel, collecting artifacts from around the world, computers and taking trips to Barnes and Noble. At age 92, she reads about 4 books a week. One of her favorite topics to discuss is religion, which she was able to do with Mary, Green Team's new spiritual care volunteer, and Donna Daniels, chaplain, Green Team.

"Information and history, oh, I love them. Age doesn't have anything to do with mentality," said Elsa during the visit. The religious discussion touched on many topics including Moses, Jesus and his brother, James, Ghandi, ancient religious artifacts and spiritual energy. It was Mary's first shadowing experience as part of her field orientation, which is required after completing The Hospice's spiritual care volunteer and volunteer chaplain training.

Mary, who is a retired college special education teacher and a museum junkie, was at ease talking with Elsa and intrigued by what she had to say. "Looking at you, Elsa, I realized you can always learn something new," Mary said. Elsa, enjoyed the opportunity to share her religious thoughts with Mary,



Participants share stories during inspirational hour at Woodside.

who is one of many spiritual care volunteers who focus on patients, families and caregivers. Professional volunteer chaplains have the same role, however, work in ministries or are retired from the profession.

Both categories of spiritual volunteers have the common goal of assisting The Hospice's staff chaplains with patients. Donna, along with Valerie Gibson, professional development coordinator, The Hospice Institute, and Tim Arsenault, regional director, Tampa Road community service center, worked together to create the program 4 years ago in response to the growing census of patients. The training has been held on a quarterly basis at Tampa Road or Roosevelt

community service centers.

"We build on The Hospice's volunteer training and encourage inclusiveness. We try to match patients with volunteers of the same faith," Donna said. A few teams use the volunteers already and she is hoping that more will follow suit. "They (volunteers) are a tremendous help. They do what all volunteers do, they care and listen," she said.

The volunteers provide a wide range of spiritual comfort and support to patients, families and caregivers including companionship, giving communion, praying, Bible studies and sharing stories. The Rev. Laurie Edwards, professional volunteer chaplain, Hospice House Woodside, who ministers to a religious science church, hosts a weekly inspirational hour for patients, families and

Mary Palamar (right) and Donna Daniels (middle) visit with patient Elsa Johnson.



staffers at Woodside. "We talk about everything, relationships and families, things on their mind, what's on the other side. We explore every religion. We've had times of laughter, crying and discovery," Laurie said.

John Rybka, professional volunteer chaplain and 11th hour volunteer, Woodside, and Orthodox Anglican priest, spends a lot of time with families, however feels his true calling is with patients. "I have a sense I've been called to talk to the spirit of the patient. You can have some very deep and meaningful discussions at the end of life," said John, who will sit for hours at a time with patients. "I spend a lot of time praying for the individual's soul and helping that person cross that bridge from this life to the next. It's a privilege," John said.

Sharing Hospice Stories

It was a Christmas she will always remember – the year she was able to help a family in need. The family had just moved to Florida from Illinois with no money or friends and had their little boy in hospice care. June Lee



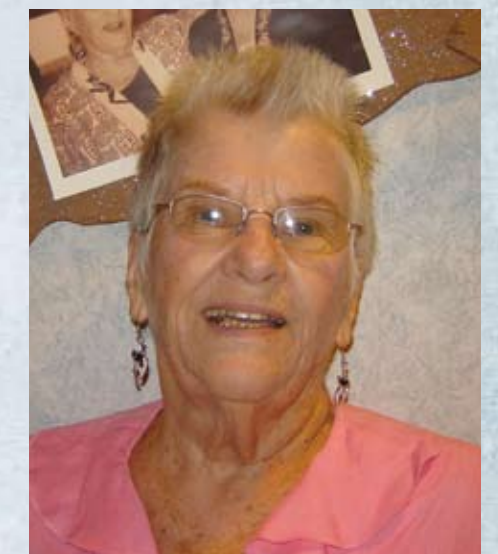
Ray Weaver tells his story.

"Julee" Goodman, volunteer, Green Team, who first joined The Hospice in 1991, and her friends gave the family some money so that they could have a nice Christmas with each other.

"It was one of the best Christmases they ever had given the circumstances," said Julee, who shared her time with the family for more than a year. "I had the joy and the heartache. It was such an opportunity and it entailed so many things," Julee said. She was one of many volunteers who shared their stories at the Hospice Angel Stories volunteer holiday party last December.

Many stories of special memories and warm feelings about being a hospice volunteer were told and

videotaped as part of The Hospice's initiative to preserve volunteer stories. "We want to capture people's stories. Everybody has a story," said Valerie Gibson, professional development coordinator, Center for Learning, at the event. Valerie said the videos can be great training tools for new volunteers. "It's a way for us to have volunteers teaching volunteers. Your stories are important and the work



Dorothy Lecain

that you do is important and you need to share that with people," Valerie said.

Storytelling is a phenomenon happening across the country, Valerie said. She noted how National Public Radio (NPR) has set up a booth to record people's stories to use in the national archives about life in the U.S. "Storytelling is happening in lots of different places. Keep telling your stories," Valerie said.



New Vice President

Catherine “Cathi” Carr has joined The Hospice as vice president of support services. In this new position, Cathi will oversee several areas including Durable Medical Equipment (DME), evenings and weekends and supplemental staff departments and the pharmacy.

Cathi previously served for many years as director of patient services at the American Cancer Society, Florida Division in Tampa. There, she was responsible for providing overall leadership for statewide patient services’ activities and leadership in the areas of planning, implementing, reporting and evaluating patient services’ policies and programs. Before that, she was president of ASAP Delivery Service, Inc. in Tampa.

“As a new member of The Hospice family I am honored to join an organization that lives its mission every minute of every day. To serve as a strong, effective advocate for patients and their loved ones is not

another job or career - it is a calling. It is exciting to look to the coming months and years to see how I can contribute to this essential quality of life service,” Cathi said.

Appointments

Kathy Roble, director of volunteer services, has been elected vice chair of the National Council of Hospice and Palliative Professionals’ executive committee.

Stacy Orloff, vice president of palliative care and community programs, has been appointed to serve on an expert advisory panel for the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the National Association of Social Workers, to develop a social work credential specific to hospice and palliative care.

Grants

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs has awarded The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast a new grant to start the **Caregivers for Adults: Senior Companion Training Program**. The program will train individuals to provide companion and homemaker services to elderly residents of Pinellas County who are geographically or socially isolated. The goal is to improve quality of life and enable individuals to remain in their homes in lieu of moving to a care facility. After completing this training, the participants will be eligible for paid positions with local service providers.

Awards

Pet therapy volunteer **Ricky Kirkman** was awarded the Pinellas Animal Foundation’s Col. Edward T. Imparato Award at last year’s BOWser Ball. Ricky, one of the original pet therapy volunteers, has attended speaking engagements for The Hospice and visited patients with his owners and longtime hospice volunteers, Liz and Jim Kirkman.



Ricky Kirkman visits patient.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) recognized a longtime staffer and a program of The Hospice with service awards at its annual conference in Washington D.C. in April. **Becky McDonald**, executive vice president of programs, received



Becky McDonald

the prestigious NHPCO 2008 Heart of Hospice Award for her remarkable work in hospice and palliative care. Becky is a hospice pioneer who has spent 30 years creating care programs at The Hospice and other hospices in Florida. She has also been instrumental in supporting and expanding the services of hospice programs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“I’m truly humbled and proud to receive the Heart of Hospice Award. I’ve been involved in hospice care for many years and have worked with so many wonderful people. What a fulfilling, rewarding career,” Becky said.

The Hospice’s A Plan for Life: Your Personal Journal and Resource Guide was awarded the NHPCO 2008 Award of Excellence in Education. The journal and resource guide was created in 2006 as a gift to patients, families and

caregivers receiving hospice care from The Hospice. The journal provides an outlet for reflection on the experience of living with the impact of a serious illness, caregiving, loss and grief. There are also several resources for support, caregiving tips and other information in a user-friendly format. Response from patients and families has been favorable.



Irene Southwick

Irene Southwick, volunteer, Red, Rose and Pearl Teams, is the recipient of the Greater Tampa Sertoma Club’s Service to Mankind Award 2007. Irene received this recognition for her dedication to The Hospice’s patients, families and community. She accepted the award at a luncheon in January.



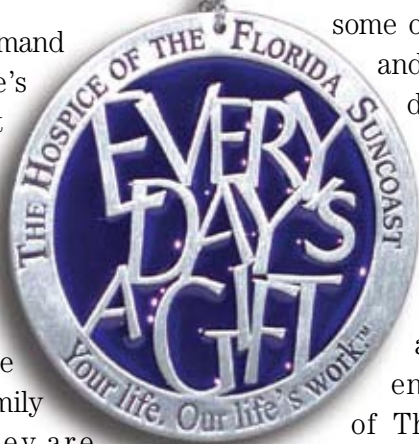
Gerie Grant

Gerie Grant, volunteer, Purple Team, was presented the Most Caring Volunteer award of the year by Freedom Square Nursing Center for her 11th-hour work last year. Gerie, who joined the Purple Team in 2001, supports many teams doing visits with patients whose deaths are imminent. Besides volunteering at The Hospice, Gerie helps out at her church and other organizations.

Jade Futhey, teen volunteer, was honored with a Tampa Bay Buccaneers award at the Bucs playoff game in January. Jade was nominated by her high school for the award, which included a prize of a \$1,800 donation to the charity of her choice. Jade’s donation was made to The Hospice.

New Sun Catchers Available

Back by popular demand are The Hospice’s Every Day’s a Gift sun catchers. People love the decorative silver and blue items to keep for themselves or give away as gifts to family and friends. They are available for a \$10 donation at The Hospice’s community service centers and thrift stores and Hospice House Woodside. All proceeds benefit The Hospice.



Becky McDonald, executive vice president of programs, with Nikiwe, Dr. Patrick and Barbara at reception.

South African Visitors

Three staffers from our sister hospice in Soweto, South Africa traveled to Florida for a visit in April, thanks to funding raised by The African Hospice Committee. Barbara Campbell-Ker, executive

director, Dr. Patrick Mashele, inpatient director, and Nikiwe Dube, nurse coordinator, met with some of The Hospice’s staff and observed caregiving during their stay. Last year, members of The Hospice staff had the opportunity to visit the Soweto hospice to learn and work in their environment as part of The Hospice African Exchange Program.

A special reception was held in the South African visitors’ honor. The three also spoke at the annual JABULA! gospel fest Soweto hospice fundraiser as well, and attended the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) annual conference in Washington, D.C. Stacy Orloff, vice president of palliative care and community programs, was one of the participants in The Hospice African Exchange Program. She said she was glad to see her South African friends again and that they had a wonderful time during their stay.

“They really enjoyed and appreciated being here.

The opportunity for them to meet so many of our staff and observe some of our programs and services was so valuable, the same as it was for us when we went there last year. They were overwhelmed with the generosity of time, support and materials given to them,” Stacy said.

JABULA!

The 7th annual JABULA! Rejoice Gospel Fest in April raised more than \$1,600 to benefit The Hospice’s sister hospice in Soweto, South Africa. The popular community fundraiser held at McCabe United Methodist Church in St. Petersburg featured rousing performances by several Tampa Bay choirs, a teen soloist and members of The Hospice’s Hospice Youth Providing Encouragement (HYPE) program, which got members of the audience on their feet.



Siobhan Roland sings soulful solo at JABULA!

Thanks for the letters. Here are just a few –

To The Hospice and staff,

First I would like to thank The Hospice and the staff of the Bronze Team for all the help and care given to Susan and me during the last months of her life. You are all wonderful.

A special thank you to what I call a gift from God. I truly believe God sent an angel to Susan in her final hours. I am so grateful for Roderick. I had never met him before, but once he entered our home, I felt a wonderful veil of calmness cover me. This gentle giant of a man brought a gift to our home. He prayed with Susan and cared for her in the most kind, gentle and calm manner I have ever seen. I believe that his overwhelming kind spirit guided Susan home and his presence comforted me in a way I never knew existed.

Roderick was gone when I got home. Had he been there, I would have gratefully hugged him and thanked him personally for his guidance and sharing this time with me and Susan. Again, thank you to The Hospice for all your wonderful staff and thank God for Roderick.

Ray Newman

Dear Emerald Team,

Thank you so much for the loving care and support you provided my husband, Jackie Farrell, and for providing such wonderful support to me and his family. Jackie had such courage with his 6-year battle with cancer. He was strong and loved life. Your support allowed Jackie to be in his Florida home, which was his wish, and allowed me to share in his care. You are all angels and I love you all. Thank you.

Sandy Farrell

An excerpt from the obituary of Mary S. O'Brien published in the March 9 edition of St. Petersburg Times...

Mary S. O'Brien passed in peace at her home on March 5, 2008 under the care of The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast (The Hospice). The family of Mary requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to The Hospice’s music therapy department, as this was the bright light in her life.

They gave her many hours of laughter and a way to express her thoughts when normally she couldn’t. They gave us many special moments with Ma that we might not have had if not for the wonderful caregivers, music therapist, Anna Weaver, social worker, M.J. Sutcliffe, and RN, Pam Dolt. They were another family to Mary.

Dear Nancy (Orange Team),

You were with us on Feb. 18 and 19 here at our condo. You went way above and beyond the call of duty to help Karen and myself so much those two days as you were initially going to set up services rather than deliver them yourself, which you willingly and nicely did for hours each day.

I am not the gushy type and never would say this to anyone who I barely know, but for some reason, I cannot get out of my head the feeling that you were an angel. From the minute you arrived, I felt like someone took away my frustration, confusion, fear and pain. And I know Karen felt it as well.

You were the perfect match for Karen. You are that rare type of woman that she could/would completely trust. You had the right tone, voice, manner and look – the gentle commanding approach with explicit forthright communication at all times. Karen was that way, too, with kids and her clients.

I cannot thank you enough and I will never forget your imprint on me, as you gave 100% to us total strangers those days.

With deep feelings, respect and appreciation,

Jay R. Stager

Pediatric Patient Visits Dolphins

One thing Nicholas Archer learned about dolphins during his visit to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium is that they like to get people wet. "I got wet more than 2 times. Dolphins have very mischievous

minds and seem like they have a good sense of humor," said Nick, a 17-year-old pediatric patient of The Hospice, who sadly died in March.

The aquarium hosted Nick, who had cancer and was an amputee, and his family as part of a new program that lets people with artificial limbs and severe disabilities visit Winter, the 2-year-old dolphin who was fitted with a prosthetic tail after she

lost her own tail in a crab trap.

Amanda Cantonis, social worker at The Hospice's child and family support program, read about the program and asked for the

arrangements to be made by Sue Cimmino, program assistant at The Hospice and Clearwater Marine Aquarium volunteer.

Nick was able to meet Winter and 3 other dolphins, one of whom also was named Nicholas. "I think he was the smartest," Nick said. He got to feed and play with them and assist the trainers. "I really liked it. I got up close to the dolphins and helped the trainer make the dolphins do some tricks," he said. And he got to see Winter swim. "She actually swam really well for a dolphin with a no-fin tail," he said.

The family also enjoyed the visit and was glad that Nick did, too. "He had a good time especially at the end when the dolphin gave him a shower. That was his way of saying goodbye. It was cute," said Frances Archer, Nick's mom.



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