

MY HOSPICE STORY



NANCY ABERNATHY

Former Hospice of East Texas Board Director

It was a Saturday afternoon in June of 2019. My cell phone rang, and I could see that it was my father’s sitter calling. She said that Daddy was agitated and in pain. She thought he needed to be checked by a Hospice nurse. I immediately phoned the HOET call center. Daddy had been under their care for three months. I jumped in my car and drove the short distance from my house in Longview to Daddy’s in Gladewater.

Not long after I arrived, the doorbell rang. The nurse at the door was a young man who I had not met. I ushered him to Daddy’s bedroom

where he introduced himself and asked if he could take some vitals. The visit was short, as Daddy was not able to talk, but the nurse was able to get him comfortable with medication. I walked the nurse to the door and thanked him for coming to help. As the door was closing, he turned around and asked if Daddy had served in the war. I said, “yes.” “Which branch?” he asked. I told him the Air Force. “What did he fly?” “B-17s,” I replied. His eyes sparked as he told me his grandfather had flown the same planes.

The nurse asked, “May I go back and talk to your father?” So, back to the bedroom we went. He grabbed Daddy’s hand and thanked him for his service and told him about his grandfather. He asked Daddy where he had received his flight training. I answered for Daddy, as he was too weak. I told him “Cookeville, Tennessee.” Daddy opened his eyes and looked at me like I was crazy! With all his strength, he whispered, “Blytheville Arkansas.”

What a proud Air Force pilot my Daddy was! As I was to learn the following week, Daddy’s basic training was in Tennessee, but he learned to fly B-17’s in Arkansas. That young man not only eased my father’s pain that Saturday afternoon, his empathy and gratitude also gave an elderly veteran a sense of pride for service to his country. I will never forget our exchange and the lesson it taught me – we are never too old to be appreciated and admired!

Hospice of East Texas and its gracious caregivers are fulfilling a noble calling.

OUR MISSION

Hospice of East Texas seeks to enhance the quality of life for individuals and families dealing with life-limiting illnesses and to assist bereaved family members by providing compassionate, comprehensive, coordinated care and support.

OUR VISION

We are the blueprint for exceptional end-of-life care inspired by commitment to our patients, our people, our purpose.

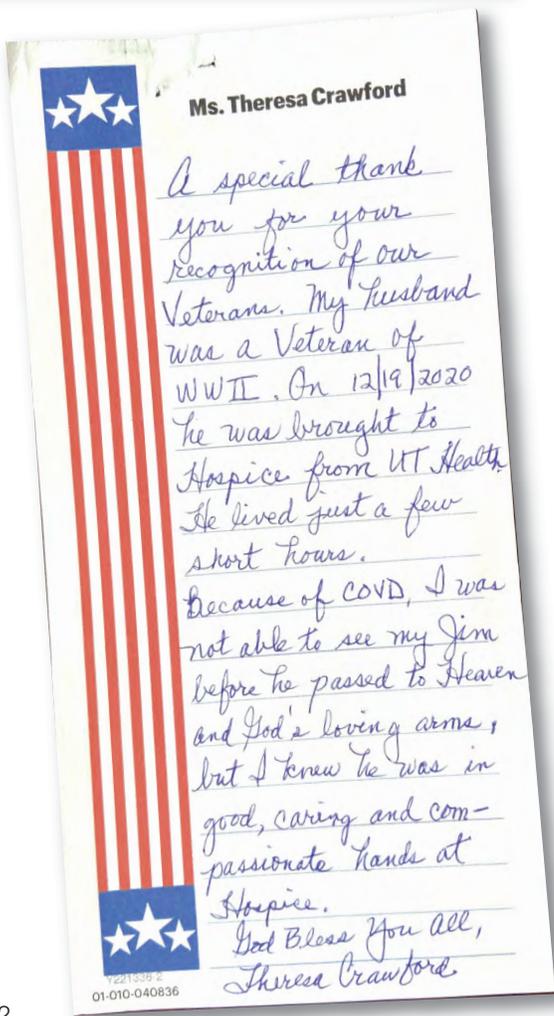


WE HONOR VETERANS

In 2001, the Department of Veterans Affairs established their Hospice and Palliative Care Initiative which created a national network of end-of-life care advocates for our veterans. This program ensures our nation's veterans receive the best end-of-life care and their families also receive extraordinary support. Hospice of East Texas is honored to be the only hospice in our region certified as a National Hospice-Veteran Partnership Program, and we take the trust afforded us by our veterans seriously.

Our entire staff is involved with honoring each veteran who is admitted onto our service. In addition to having veteran recognition in their room at HomePlace, when the veteran leaves HomePlace for the last time, our staff fills the hallways of HomePlace with hands on our hearts; recognizing the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families. The flag of the military branch in which they served covers their body and will be flown at half-staff for several days. Our Home Care veterans also receive certificates of recognition, their branch flag and lapel pin for their faithful service to our country and as always, our chaplains are continuously available to stand beside every veteran and family.

Veterans took an oath to serve our country and our oath is to allow every person to pass with honor, grace and dignity. It is what we do; and what we do well.



EACH AND EVERY GIFT MATTERS

to Hospice of East Texas...because each and every gift comes from a place of love...



Earlier this year, Megan and Matt Magill – Magill Musical Theatre Studio – reached out to Hospice of East Texas, wanting to dedicate their spring musical to the children cared for at HOET and donate a portion of ticket sales to the Hospice of East Texas – one of the rare hospices that provides pediatric services.

Megan Magill, originally from Tyler, Texas, was a working actress in New York City for almost a decade before returning to her hometown. Her love for theatre and children lead her today, as she offers pre-professional musical theatre training to students, with an original production at the end of each school year. Each production features MMTS's students and is written, directed, and choreographed by Megan. This year's musical, *WIGS*, centered around characters that are children at the end of their lives.

Megan writes in the Playbill:

"The universal fear of death and the implications of dying young do not at first glance seem like good fodder for a musical, but I felt compelled to write and then examine a story wherein the children had learned what adults seemingly could not. Namely, that life is for living... even when we are surrounded on all sides by the nagging presence of death. It turns out, to live is to look our mortality in the face and smile (or dance and sing) because death is surely as much a part of life as being born."

Simply put, it seems to me that really being alive is making peace with death well before it comes. Beholding hope in the eyes of our fellow sufferers is the surest way to pass from life to death to life again in the arms of love."

Hospice of East Texas is honored by the gift from the MMTS, dedicated to our pediatric program. This meaningful support will ensure that our staff is equipped to walk alongside families and provide very special loving care at a very tender time.

ABOVE AND BEYOND...

We often use the phrase “above and beyond” to describe what happens at Hospice of East Texas.

Every day, our staff and volunteers truly do go “above and beyond” to create the extraordinary care and compassion that have been the hallmarks of our mission for forty years.

Above and beyond... to reunite a mother and son, to celebrate a birthday, to make a dream come true. This is YOUR Hospice of East Texas.

...TO REUNITE A MOTHER AND SON



Janette Bonner, Hospice of East Texas RN, wrote this email to her colleagues:

I wanted to let each of you know about an amazing thing that happened with one of my patients. I have a patient at Holly Lake by the name of Louise Beard. She has been on service since February 11 for Parkinson's Disease and has had a slow and steady decline. She recently sustained a fall with a hip fracture and has since declined quickly. Louise has a son named Jacob who sustained an anoxic brain injury at birth, is wheelchair-bound and requires 24 hour supervision. He resides at Whispering Pines in Winnsboro. Jaime Ashburn, Hospice of East Texas social worker, also had a patient on HOET services at Whispering Pines, and has been

visiting with Jacob for a while now, not realizing that he was Mrs. Beard's son. David Badders, our chaplain, has also met and talked with Jacob while he was there visiting our other patient. Once both of them met with Mrs. Beard, the connection was realized.

Jaime spoke at length with Mrs. Beard and realized she had not seen Jacob in person since before Covid (due to visitation guidelines) and once restrictions were lifted, she was bedbound. Jacob is also not mentally capable of understanding why she had not been to visit and could only FaceTime with him. Jaime made it her mission to arrange for Jacob to be able to see his mother. She personally called Whispering Pines several times and arranged with the facility for them to transport Jacob to his mom's home for a visit. Jacob was able to make a visit to his mom on Saturday! His sister texted me pictures, a video, and a voice text of their reunion, and I must say that the tears began to flow! I cannot even put into words the pure joy my patient and the rest of the family felt. I visited with the patient, her daughter, and her husband today, who could not thank Jaime enough for making this happen. Honestly, I have not seen my patient as alert and excited as she was today since I began seeing her! She went on and on about the visit and how she was finally able to see “her sweet Jacob.”

I'm telling all of you this, not only to recognize Jaime as an outstanding employee, but to let you know how she went above and beyond for my patient and her family. I cannot thank her enough for the care and compassion she showed to them. Many days we are left discouraged and broken after seeing our patients. Today was not one of those days for me. Today renewed my faith in why I chose to do what I do and why I love working for Hospice of East Texas.

Thank you, Janette, RN

...TO CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY

HomePlace was notified of a new patient being admitted, a 39 year old man. His 40th birthday was coming up. He told the admission team that he had planned to celebrate that milestone year with tacos but now, time is not on his side. When HomePlace Charge Nurse Melissa heard of the patient's wishes, she started making plans of her own for an early birthday celebration! After learning that peanut butter was the patient's favorite, she went home that night and made a homemade peanut butter cake. Other staff filled the room with birthday balloons and celebratory decorations. Tacos were ordered and delivered by the Director of Chaplain and Bereavement Services.

When the patient arrived at his room, he was not only surprised, he was stunned! "This is the first birthday party celebration I have ever had like this," he said. The HomePlace staff, physician, nurses, chaplains, social worker, volunteer coordinator and volunteers then capped off the party with a spectacular chorus of "Happy Birthday!"



...TO MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE

In a troubled and tumultuous life, Sarah* and her family held on to one modest dream: that she would graduate from high school and her mother would see it. That doesn't seem much to ask, but for Sarah's family it was reaching for the stars... until Hospice of East Texas stepped in and made it happen.

There are things known and things not known in this story. Pieces can put together, but the pieces don't make a whole story. Single mom. Whereabouts not always known. Maybe in Dallas, maybe in East Texas. Homelessness. Children sometimes scattered and sometimes with mom. Mental illness. HIV. A terminal cancer diagnosis.

But maybe the whole story doesn't matter, just the ending. When Sarah's mother became seriously ill, extended family in East Texas welcomed Sarah, her mother and sister into their home. Sarah and her sister enrolled in school. Despite all the obstacles in their family's history, Sarah had enough credits to graduate in May, and she had been issued her graduation cap and gown. But Sarah's mother's cancer was moving

fast, she was referred to Hospice of East Texas, and at her initial hospice visit in April, it was apparent that a May graduation might be too far away for the family's modest dream to come true.

If you've ever read a story about the Hospice of East Texas team, you know the ending of this story. Social Worker, Katrena, called the school and got permission to do a mock graduation, complete with a certificate. A date was set for the "graduation," to be held bed-side at home, but soon because time was of the essence. Chaplain Tim agreed to be the "officiant." Nurse Emily made special cookies, decorated with Sarah's name and school logo. Katrena and Volunteer Coordinator, Marleen, put out the call to the Hospice staff for graduation presents, and they flooded in. The family's entire Hospice team gathered, gowned head to toe in protective gear because of other health issues in the home. Everyone smiled as Sarah walked slowly through the living room to the sounds of "Pomp and Circumstance" played on someone's phone, into the bedroom where Sarah stood by her mother's bed for the "ceremony." Punch and cake and cookies and presents and cards were a fitting finish for a day when a dream came true.

* not her real name



Marji Ream
President/CEO

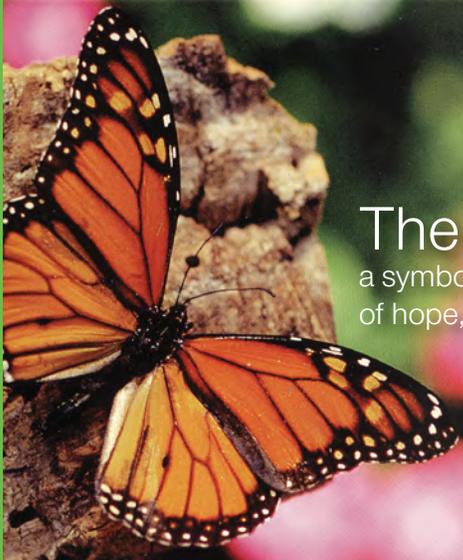
A MESSAGE FROM MARJI

In addition to our Mission and Vision, the Hospice of East Texas has a set of Guiding Principles that infuses everything we do. This newsletter reminds me of our principle "Hospice of East Texas affirms life." These pages are filled with celebrations of life and special occasions that remind us – **every day matters.**

From Veterans who served with honor and distinction to birthday and graduation celebrations, we focus on opportunities to make memories that will be cherished for generations.

We continue to celebrate our 40th anniversary year by looking forward. November 9th and 10th we present Dr. Ira Byock, a leading medical authority and public advocate for improving care through the end of life. He will share stories and insights about what forgiveness, appreciation, and love can teach us about living fully.

I invite you to join us for the 40th celebration events and welcome the opportunity to see you there.



The butterfly...
a symbol of transformation,
of hope, of bravery...

BUTTERFLY RELEASE

On a bright morning in June, over 120 people gathered on our campus to remember loved ones, to celebrate life, and – maybe – to shed a tear or two. What a beautiful experience it was to be in community together.

The annual butterfly release is offered by our Bereavement Department – which serves not only the patients and families who receive care through Hospice of East Texas, but also gives support and counseling to the entire community.

Offered free of charge, our bereavement care and grief support programs are one-of-a-kind in our area, helping our friends and neighbors remember – you are never alone.



Yesterdays and You

*I remember yesterdays
And love throughout the years
Lost in thought, somehow I find
I'm smiling through my tears*

*There are days my smile seems lost
I don't know what to do...
That's the time for memories
Of yesterdays and you*

*You always seem to bring a smile
That dries the tears I cry
When I remember yesterdays
And years that have gone by*

*Our years together may be gone
Our yesterdays are past
But you're alive in memory
And memories can last*

-kp
Out of the Ashes / FB



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE



HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS

40
A GIFT TO OUR COMMUNITY
1982
2022

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFT
OF OUR LONGSTANDING MISSION
AND LEGACY OF UNMATCHED CARE
AND COMPASSION

NOVEMBER 9, 2022

The University of Texas at Tyler
Ornelas Activity Center
(3402 Old Omen Rd)

Reception at 5:45 pm

Presentation by Dr. Ira Byock at 6:30 pm

*“The Best Care Possible – Improving Quality
By Personalizing Value-Based Care”*

Book signing following presentation

To reserve your seat or for more information:
smithcms@smithcomed.org

NOVEMBER 10, 2022

11:30 a.m.

Green Acres Baptist Church
CrossWalk Conference Center

Keynote by Dr. Ira Byock

“What Mortality Can Teach Us About Living Fully”

Honorary Luncheon Chair: Junior League of Tyler

Special Recognition: Paula Hudson Bates & Rick Jett
for 40 consecutive years of devoted volunteer service,

For more information and to purchase
sponsorships & tickets,
visit www.hospiceofeasttexas.org.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER – DR. IRA BYOCK

Keynoting the Hospice of East Texas Fortieth Anniversary Celebration will be Ira Byock, M.D., FAAHPM, a leading medical authority and public advocate for improving care through the end of life. Dr. Byock will share stories and insights about what forgiveness, appreciation, and love can teach us about living fully.

Dr. Byock lectures nationally and internationally and is the author of three books, *Dying Well*, *The Four Things That Matter Most* and *The Best Care Possible*.

A PLACE OF REFLECTION & REMEMBRANCE

Construction of the Celebration Courtyard, at the entrance to the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center and funded by private donations, is complete! This beautiful place of tribute will be dedicated in November to the memory of Ann Minton Lake, longtime volunteer, supporter, board director and friend to Hospice of East Texas, and will be reflective of her endearing qualities – welcoming, lovely, and serene.

The Celebration Courtyard offers a new giving opportunity which will continue to provide families a way to honor and

remember the lives of their loved ones. Inscribed granite plaques will be placed on the garden walls, personalized, and priced at \$1,500 each.

Please contact the Community Relations Office to discuss wording for engraving 903-266-3400 or visit our website www.hospiceofeasttexas.org and click on the “Give” tab.

Thank you for considering a donation to the Hospice of East Texas, ensuring that our unique brand of care is available to every patient and family who need it.



LIGHT UP A

Life

Some souls leave behind a trail of light that is never forgotten...

As the holidays draw near, we take time to remember those we miss... those we love...

A meaningful way to give at this special season is through our annual signature fundraiser. Your significant support of Light Up A Life ensures that our staff and volunteers are equipped to serve every patient and family who needs our extraordinary care and compassion at a very tender time.

Please be watching your mailbox for Light Up A Life materials to arrive in early November.

Thank you for your gifts of love & light...