



# Seasons

FALL 2014



A PUBLICATION OF THE HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS FOUNDATION

## A Love Beyond Numbers

They've made more than 100 quilts for Hospice of East Texas—but no one is counting. They refuse to count, actually. "That's God's job—to keep track of them," insists Shirlee Perkins of the Peaceful Partners Quilters. "We just make them and send them out with prayer and love."

The Peaceful Partners gather each Tuesday and Thursday in a quilting barn Shirlee's husband, Red, built for her on their property near Golden, TX. Surrounded by shelves full of colorful materials and supplies, the room buzzes with the sounds of sewing machines and laughter, the bonds of friendship and commitment to their work almost palpable.

Shirlee heard about Hospice of East Texas from Pastor Vic Willmann, a Hospice chaplain who also pastored at Trinity Lutheran Hawkins-Holly Lake where her family worships. The quilters had been searching for a way to use their creations to help others, and Pastor Vic was quick with the offer to share them with Hospice patients. The ladies have been making quilts for four years or so, each of them stitched with love, and completed with a label which reads "May God bless you with His love and grace. From Peaceful Partners quilters and Trinity Lutheran Church Hawkins -Holly Lake, TX".

"I love having a tangible gift to give to my patients," says Pastor Vic. "I tell them that the quilt represents a community of people who are praying for them and loving them in this season of their life, even though they don't know their

names. I tell them about the quilters and say, 'when you need extra assurance of prayer and concern, pull this quilt around you and know that others are praying for you'. It's a comfort to the patients and a comfort to their families."

One of Vic's patients has a lot of little dogs. "They're a great joy to her," says Pastor Vic, "and they jump on and around her bed all the time, but she doesn't want them to mess up her quilt. She keeps it folded on her bed, right by her head, and when I come she spreads it out to cover herself, and we have prayer together. She calls it her prayer quilt."

Patients and families are awed by the beauty of the quilts and touched that there are people who care enough about others to share their hand-made creations with people they don't even know. One family loved their father's quilt so much that they used it to cover the casket at his funeral.

"Many patients, because of the length of their illness, have become isolated from their spiritual traditions, and isolated from other people," says Pastor Vic. "The quilts bring them back into the feeling that there are people who know them and love them. To me, they're like a parable."

The quilts are also symbolic of the mission of Hospice of East Texas. "We surround our patients with a community – doctors and nurses and social workers and chaplains and volunteers - covering them with the quilt of hospice care and compassion. Like quilt pieces, there are many parts of hospice care, and together we make a big difference," says Pastor Vic. He should know. Vic and his wife cared for his sister-in-law in their home with the support of Hospice of East Texas, and a quilt from the Peaceful Partners Quilters on her bed in her last days.

So have the Peaceful Partners made one hundred quilts? Maybe two hundred? No one knows except God, but everyone knows they are a parable of care and love, a love beyond numbers.





# Hearts in Harmony

Chase and Sophie know when it's time to go to "work". When they see their cape or the special collar and leash, something changes. They are not just dogs. They are trained, compassionate volunteers, ready and willing to help.

Chase, Sophie and seven other canine volunteers, along with their five human friends, are part of "Hearts In Harmony", a therapy pet organization which serves Hospice of East Texas. Each week, a team of two dogs and their human companions come to the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center to share their gifts of unconditional love with patients and with staff.

The canine team is usually one large dog and one small one. Sophie, a Doberman, and Chase, a Jack Russell terrier, like to work together, and each brings unique skills. Approaching a family standing in the hallway outside their loved one's room, Sophie seems to sense who needs

### Chase 'at work'



Chase and Sophie visit with Bert Simon



attention and walks up slowly, leaning in for contact and offering her head to be scratched. With permission, she will lay her big head on a patient's bed and gaze sweetly with her liquid brown eyes. Chase, who at home is "boing-y", according to his owner Crystal Jones, is still and quiet when he visits HomePlace. If a patient wants a visit, Chase will lie quietly on their bed, for as long as the patient wants.

"They know," says Ruth Compton, "and we just have to listen to them," marveling at the sixth sense the dogs have. "They know when to leave and when to stay longer with a patient."

Crystal remembers one



Ruth Compton with Sophie and Crystal Jones with Chase

visit in particular, the thought of it still bringing tears to her eyes. "Chase and I went in to see a little lady in her 90's. As we entered the room she called out, 'Oh, Skipper, I knew you were coming to see me!' The lady shared that all her family and her friends were gone and that she herself was ready. She thought Chase was her beloved dog, Skipper, and she was delighted that he had come to see her one last time." Crystal and Chase completed their visits to patients and staff, and returned to the lady's room before leaving that day. She had passed away.

Their volunteer work at Hospice isn't easy for the dogs. "It really takes a lot out of them," says Ruth. "They offer themselves to the patients and families and it's as if they pick up so many emotions. They are also a great stress reliever for the staff who enjoy their visits so much. You know, what the people at Hospice do is hard. They are so professional and so competent, but it's hard, and the visits from these volunteers is a bright spot in their week."

"When people hear that we work at Hospice, they often say, 'Oh, I couldn't do that,'" says Ruth. My response is, "I can't imagine not doing it!" And we at Hospice of East Texas can't imagine our week without the Hearts In Harmony volunteers!

### Hearts In Harmony Volunteers

Crystal Jones - Chase, Miss Texanna and Brittany  
 Shannon Sieber - Lucy, Jessie and Addie  
 Marilynn Pryor - Becca  
 Michele Compton - Bailey  
 Ruth Compton - Sophie

*Hearts In Harmony was founded in 2000 by Ruth Compton and Marilynn Pryor especially to serve the patients and staff of Hospice of East Texas. Its volunteers also visit the children at Youth and Family Enrichment Center.*



## A note from Marji... About Hope

Sadly, many people have the misconception that choosing hospice care means giving up hope. Nothing could be further from the truth!

When it is time for patients and families to receive hospice care, perhaps hoping for a cure is unrealistic. But there remains much to be hoped for:

- Hope for days full of dignity
- Hope for relief of pain and suffering
- Hope for the opportunity to live well during whatever time remains
- Hope for time with family and friends, to share what hasn't been shared, to say what needs to be said

The staff and volunteers of The Hospice of East Texas are focused on bringing hope to the patients and families we are privileged to serve. Our extraordinary care, support and

*“Hope” is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tune  
without the words  
And never – stops – at all.*

Emily Dickinson

guidance can bring light when hope has dimmed with illness, pain and needless suffering.

Your support of Hospice of East Texas makes hope possible for thousands of East Texans each year. As the poet Emily Dickinson wrote ...hope “never stops at all.”

Marjorie Ream  
President and CEO

*Light up a*  
**LIFE**



The  
**HOSPICE**  
of East Texas Foundation

Extraordinary care, compassion and commitment.

**In loving memory  
of a friend or relative**

**In honor of someone who  
lights up your life**

**As a holiday gift in honor of family,  
friends or business associates**

Each year, proceeds from Light Up A Life, Hospice of East Texas' signature fundraiser, help to ensure that our staff and volunteers are able to serve each and every patient who needs the extraordinary care, compassion and commitment for which Hospice of East Texas has always been known.

We hope you will consider a gift to Light Up A Life. What better way to give than to make a contribution that will directly touch the lives of patients and their families at a time when they need it most?

Watch your mail for Light Up A Life materials, arriving in late October or visit our website at [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org).

For more information please call 903-266-3402 or visit [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org).

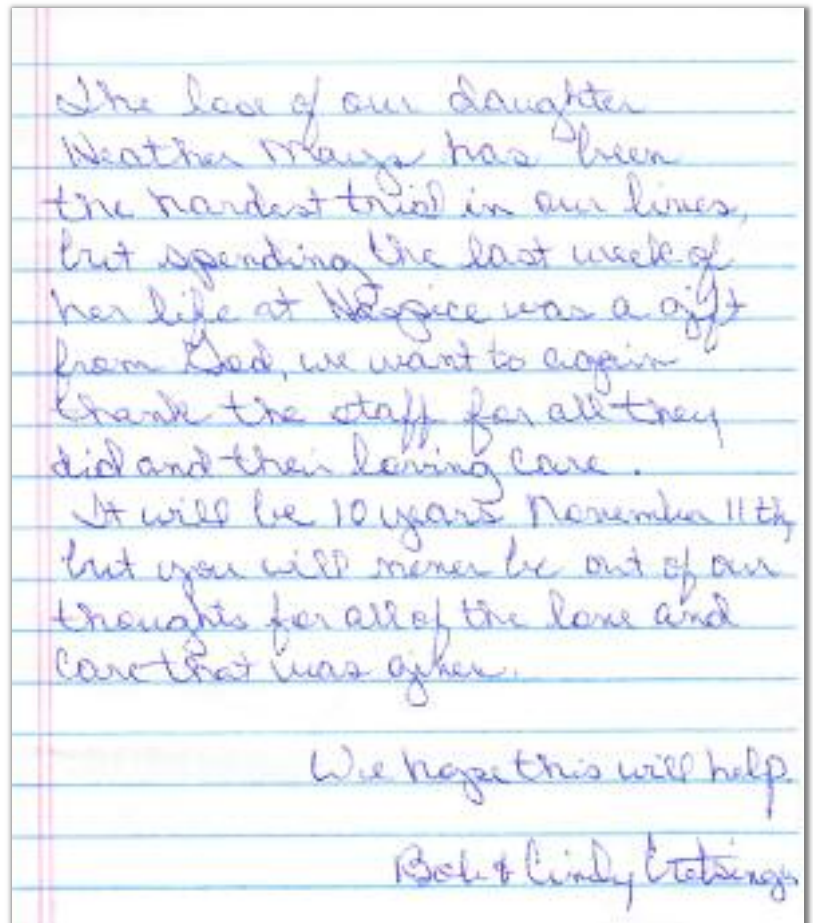


**Frances Harrell** rides the bus from The Hamptons to volunteer at HomePlace each week. We call it her chariot!



**John Sauls** is a great friend to Hospice of East Texas! With the permission of his clients, he calls us after estate sales to donate the remaining merchandise for sale in our Hospice resale shops, and he searches the internet for correct pricing of items.

Ten years after their daughter's death, the **Cretsinger family** recently sent a generous donation to Hospice of East Texas, along with this touching note which we share with their permission:



“We could not have gotten through those days were it not for Hospice of East Texas,” Mrs. Cretsinger said. “We didn’t even know you existed, but you were there for us when we needed you desperately. I honestly believe HomePlace is the closest place to heaven on earth I will ever see.”



“Like” Hospice of East Texas on Facebook to receive the most up to the minute news, inspiring stories and education on end of life care.

Trudy Scales



A family member said recently that what impressed him most about HomePlace was “the kindness of strangers.” Donations of coffee, snack items and meals bring light and comfort to families. Pictured are just a few of the many friends and religious congregations whose “kindness” touches so many.



Gleda Brady



St. Mary Baptist Church



Friendly Baptist Church

Hospice of East Texas,  
What a wonderful  
group of people you  
are. Everyone I came  
in contact with was  
so nice and caring.  
A very special thank  
you to Dee Wilkins  
and Alice Grace. Mom  
looked forward to your  
visits. She would  
ask me everyday "who  
is coming today". you  
-all took such good  
care of my mom and  
you will not be  
forgotten.

Thank you for  
your words of sympathy,  
your voice of concern,  
your gesture of caring  
and the love you offer.

The Family of  
Margaret Bateman

Ansan Bateman

# Service is her middle name

It seems like **Pat Anderson** was born to serve others. In her professional life, in her volunteer work, in her family and in her church, helping others is as natural as breathing to this nonstop giver who stands less than five feet tall.

Since 2005, Pat has found one of her outlets for service in her work as a volunteer for Hospice of East Texas. "My mother was cared for by Hospice of East Texas, and all of us said, if we ever had time to give back to Hospice, we would. They were so competent and caring, so good to her and good to our whole family, all seven of us children and our families." As a retired registered nurse, who worked at East Texas Medical Center for 19 years, Pat is comfortable with the whole hospice concept, and deeply appreciates its unique brand of comfort and care.

In the beginning of her volunteer work, Pat served as a patient volunteer, visiting patients and their families in their homes and in nursing homes. As the volunteer program grew, so did the need for keeping track of 300 volunteers and the paperwork required to administer the program. Pat stepped right up, working in the volunteer office, assigning volunteers to patients, logging in volunteer hours, helping the volunteer coordinators keep the program running smoothly.

"The depth of Pat's medical knowledge is a great help to us," says Vicki Harvey, Director of Community Outreach. "But an even bigger help is her understanding of what families really need and her absolute passion for helping volunteers meet those needs. I know she would literally do anything she could to help make this difficult time of life

easier for them."

Conservatively, Pat donates twenty hours of her time per week to Hospice of East Texas, some of it with patients, some in the office. So many hours and for so many years! What keeps her going? "When a family tells me that Hospice and our volunteers have really made a difference to them, I just glow... and I can run six months off one thank you!" Pat's service isn't confined to Hospice of East Texas. She has taught Sunday School at North Star Missionary Baptist Church for 30 years, served on the mission board, and the catering committee, and as secretary of the Deaconesses at the original East Texas Baptist Association.

Pat and her husband of 38 years, Nathaniel, have a blended family that includes six children, ten grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Any chance she will slow down? "NO!" is her quick and emphatic answer. "I'm busy, but I'm doing what I like to do—and that's helping. Sometimes it's physical, sometimes emotional, sometimes spiritual. It's all a blessing to me."

And Pat, your service is a blessing to our hospice patients and families, to your church, to your own family and to so many others.



## A new way for YOU to support Hospice of East Texas

Hospice of East Texas is blessed by the support of many giving individuals like YOU. Some of you are families who have personally experienced our extraordinary brand of care. Some of you are community friends who are committed to the concept that EVERY patient deserves the care that only a nonprofit hospice is willing to provide.

Whoever you are and whatever your gifts, we appreciate each and every one of YOU, and we are committed to offering many and varied ways for you to support the mission of Hospice of East Texas. A new giving concept offers a way for YOU to make a substantial gift to Hospice of East Texas through monthly donations.

Members of **The Hospice of East Texas 100** give \$100 each month to Hospice of East Texas, a regular monthly amount which totals a significant \$1200 each year. Recurring gifts like this are a great help, spreading giving and its impact on the budget throughout the year.

If you'd like to join other friends in membership in The Hospice of East Texas 100, please complete the information on the envelope in this newsletter, or contact Wendy Frizzell at 903-266-3400 ext. 140.

The Hospice of East Texas

100 CLUB

# Walls Lined with Love

The gifts of artist Nancy McCain literally cover the walls of HomePlace, Hospice of East Texas' inpatient facility. Beautiful ceramic tiles, each carefully hand-lettered by Nancy and finished with an overglazing technique, bear lasting messages of love and remembrance.

When plans were being made to open HomePlace in the late 1990s, Nancy met with Sue Deakins, Hospice of East Texas board member and Nancy Pfeifle, Vice President of Community Relations, to talk through the concept of creating tile murals as a fundraiser for the facility. The three ladies agreed on a color for the tiles and a style of lettering to be used, with a border depicting pine cones and pine needles, reminiscent of the trees that grace the wooded Hospice property.

Almost fifteen years later, and more than 500 tiles later, Nancy still uses delicate brush strokes to create the tiles and borders. "When I'm working on them, I often reflect on the people they are given for," said Nancy. "Sometimes I know who the person is, sometimes not, but I know that each tile represents a person who was known and loved and whose family and friends want them to be remembered." One tile has special meaning for Nancy. It was done in memory of Wanda Hughes, her friend who helped create the tiles for the first nine years and who was cared for by Hospice of East Texas in her last days.

"I know the words families choose for the tiles are very important to them, and we work hard to get them just right," says Nancy. Deep feelings and family history are depicted on each six by six tile, and Nancy patiently captures them. "He made this world a better place for his loving family." "You still live in the hearts and minds of those you left behind." "Until we see you again, we'll be loving you." "We see your smile in every new day." Even "Guns UP!" for a serious Texas Tech fan!

With a Masters degree in art education and a Masters in Fine Arts from Stephen F. Austin, Nancy has spent her working life as an artist and an art educator, teaching ceramics, painting and drawing in Tyler's public schools and at TJC, UT Tyler, Lon Morris College and Texas College. She talks about retiring, but not about retiring from painting the wall tiles for Hospice.

Thank goodness!! Nancy McCain's art is a gift to Hospice of East Texas and a gift to the families whose memories she captures.

For information on remembering someone you love with one of Nancy McCain's handpainted tiles, visit our website at [www.hospiceofeasttexas.org](http://www.hospiceofeasttexas.org) or contact the office of Community Relations at 903-266-3400. You may choose to have your tile placed on the walls at HomePlace or take it home as a special memento.



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