



Every Day Matters

The **HOSPICE**
of East Texas

SPRING 2023

A Message of Love & Gratitude from Cindy & David Dykes



Four years ago, our family encountered a life change as my dad had a stroke that left him unable to stay at home any longer. He went to rehab for a month and then to assisted living. While it seems to be such a terrible journey, we all found that new friends, blessings and an opportunity for ministry awaited us at Atria Copeland. Dad qualified for hospice care, and we began our time with Hospice of East Texas. Thank you, Lord, for Hospice of East Texas and our fellowship with them!

We were given the absolute best caretaker in the person of Lenora Owens. She was a gift from God! She cared for Dad as her own, and we quickly grew to love her. There was always a lot of laughter and sass in the room when she was there, so it felt like family. It even got to the point that she had to pick out Dad's clothes, not us! Then COVID-19 hit and a lockdown was enforced on

assisted living facilities. The only person that could enter the facility and spend face to face time with Dad was Lenora. Atria Copeland did an excellent job with the restrictions, and I am thankful for them. As for hospice care, Lenora was faithful to continue her care for him and helped us with deliveries and pick-ups of clothes, goodies, cards and such. I could depend on her to have eyes on Dad and give him the physical touch of love he was missing from us.

We are here to care for our loved ones and ease those last days of life for them until they graduate into heaven. I cannot say enough good things about Lenora and the team at Hospice of East Texas. Even today Lenora keeps up with our family. She calls my

Continued on next page

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 extraordinary end-of-life care; inspired by our commitment to our patients, our people and our purpose.

Continued from front cover

92-year-old mother just to visit and I text her to see how her old dog, Lucky, is faring. Both Lenora and Hospice of East Texas continue to be a blessing to us. Recently, our son-in-law, Dr. Jason Holman (pictured below), joined The Hospice of East Texas team as a physician. It is our privilege to continue to be a part of Hospice of East Texas and to share of our plenty to help others as they go through the end of life with their loved ones.

Cindy and David Dykes



Pictured left to right: Karli Fitzgerald, Director of Outpatient Care, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Lenora Owens and Marjorie Ream, President/CEO

Hospice HEROES

At Hospice of East Texas, there are many involved in the day-to-day operations, both clinical and non-clinical. Of those involved, there is a special group that deserves significant recognition. They have often been described as **HOSPICE HEROES...** they are the Hospice Home Health Aides. Lenora Owens and Elizabeth Rodriguez are two such heroes.

They are the backbone of what allows us to do what we do. They provide both personal care and assistance for our patients and their families. They are the eyes and ears for our nurses, often seeing even the slightest bit of decline or change of condition in our patients. They have a way of developing a relationship with their patients unlike any other disciplines.

Families often write letters describing the relationship between their loved one and their home health aide. "Our home health aide was a gift from God, and we quickly grew to love her." One family member wrote that she often overheard their home health aide, Liz, and their nurse singing and cooing over her father as they tended to his care, making him feel more comfortable and at peace.

For 25 and 20 years, respectively, Lenora Owens and Liz Rodriguez have provided compassionate care and dignity to our patients and their families. They have been described as having a wealth of knowledge and professionalism that is unmatched. They have provided peace for our families during the most difficult time of their lives. They have provided comfort to our families, knowing that their loved one would be in a clean bed so that they could rest peacefully that day. They have been described by their nurses as being experts in their role. They have overcome personal challenges, and still show up to work every day bringing their best selves. They both have said at the end of the day, there is no other line of work or place they would rather be than at The Hospice of East Texas. A job like this grows into a conversation, which turns into a relationship, with guidance and friendship offered on both sides.

So... here we are, 20-plus years later celebrating two remarkable women, employees and friends. "Don't wait. Do things now because you are not given tomorrow." Lenora and Liz have heard this advice over and over again, and they both live their lives accordingly.

Thank you, Lenora and Liz, for your service and for your expertise you offer to our community.

**SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
OF 2022**

398 patients who were veterans and recognized for their service

191 dedicated volunteers serving our mission

13,536 volunteer hours

\$372,244 saved by utilizing volunteers



Treasure *Dianne Adams, Holly Lake Ranch, Texas*

We have a treasure in East Texas and in my experience, many people still don't know about it.

The warm, welcoming 28-bed facility known as HomePlace became home away from home for me and my husband John. Because he suffered from multiple illnesses of peripheral arterial disease, COPD, asbestosis and more, we found ourselves in and out of the hospital and emergency room. During one of those exhausting visits, Peggy came in to visit with us about all that is offered by The Hospice of East Texas.

We made the life-changing decision for hospice care. **Our intention was to make every remaining day matter.**

John was discharged from the hospital to HomePlace where they took such good care of him, he returned home several times! Although he regressed and was readmitted, **the expert and loving care he received let us make the most of each and every day.** John was relieved of the agitation, pain and depression caused by illness and medication.

When he was at HomePlace John's rooms were always bright, cheerful, warm and clean. We were delighted to find one of his rooms had a door to the outside with a small patio and chairs where we could sit in the sun. The colorful quilts are still a vivid and treasured memory along with the beautiful gardens.

Earlier this year my mother, who lived in Austin, Texas, was on hospice care. She was in her 90's, blind and using a walker. Through my mother's experience, I learned how rare it is to have a blessing like HomePlace. The Hospice of East Texas truly is a gift from our community to our community.

Will. Power.

I've never received a bill for John's services and care. Indeed, no one receives a bill from the Hospice of East Texas. **Your gifts and mine support the sacred mission of Hospice and its' precious caregivers.**

I am continually on the lookout for clean, bright blankets to donate. And, although I don't consider myself wealthy, I discovered an additional way I can offer support.

I've made the Hospice of East Texas my heir – the beneficiary of my life insurance policy. I do not have children, but believe that even if I did, I would still make this gift to Hospice. Hopefully, they won't receive it for a while, but when I go, I know it will help a wonderful East Texas treasure continue.

“Leaving a legacy is a way of saying thank you – to God, family, life and others.”

John C. Maxwell

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

Total patients cared for in 2022
2,229

Miles driven for patient care
1,656,699

A LASTING LEGACY

Hospice of East Texas is fortunate to have friends like Dianne Adams who want to “give back” in a meaningful way. Including Hospice of East in your estate plans could be the most important charitable gift you ever make. We encourage you to speak with your attorney, accountant or estate planning advisor to make certain the legacy gift you are considering meets the needs of your family and your individual goals. To discover how you can leave a lasting legacy in support of the mission of The Hospice of East Texas, please visit our website (www.hospiceofeasttexas.org), email (bbrush@hospiceofeasttexas.org), or call 903-266-3402. Every gift matters.



HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS
40 A GIFT TO OUR COMMUNITY
 1982
 2022



One more round of applause to everyone who made Hospice of East Texas' 40th Anniversary Year a year to remember!

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Ann Minton Lake Celebration Courtyard

The Celebration Courtyard, at the entrance to the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center, was dedicated on November 21, 2022 – celebrating *life, love, and memories*.

This lovely space is bordered by low walls, centered with brick walkways, and features a beautiful garden. It was given in loving memory of Ann Minton Lake, long-time volunteer, supporter, board member and friend to The Hospice of East Texas. She herself was a creator of beautiful gardens, and her gracious spirit continues to be a blessing to so many.

Construction of the courtyard was funded by private donations. It is a place of tribute, inspiring all who enter our HOME – staff, volunteers, board members and, most importantly, patients and their families.

If you would like to celebrate the life of someone held dear, please consider a donation of a garden wall plaque.

Funds raised will support the mission of Hospice of East Texas and our commitment to serve all who seek our care, regardless of financial circumstance, age, or complexity of care.

To purchase an 8 x 8 Granite Plaque (\$1,500 Donation), please visit our website at www.hospiceofeasttexas.org or call Kristen Seeber, Donor Stewardship Officer, at 903-266-3400, ext. 191. Each gift is appreciated, and each gift makes a difference.



Marji Ream
President/CEO

A Message From Marji – The Gift of SELF

A human instinct is a desire to help when we encounter friends or family in troubled times. We may conclude, “But what can I do? I don’t know what to say. I don’t know what to do. I am not wealthy.” Be mindful that we all possess a special gift that is underestimated – the gift of *self*.

For perspective, review your own life through the lens of gratitude. Who has supported you? Who has always been there for you as a parent, sibling, friend? Recall when someone just listened when you needed to process, vent, or confess. Have you experienced random acts of kindness from a stranger? Do you know people who freely share poems, jokes, or songs? Has your confidence been buoyed when you encountered someone

who remained determined in the face of personal limitations and/or overwhelming circumstances, and their perseverance provided inspiration? Remember when someone shared how much you have meant to them over the years.

The gift of self may be as simple as presence, when you just don’t know what to say... or a hug... a gentle touch on the forearm. The gift of self is a precious blessing that we choose to share with others.

I have immense gratitude for the abundant gifts of self that have been bestowed on our patients, families, and community - and each other - by The Hospice of East Texas Staff, Volunteers and Boards.

**SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
OF 2022**

13,465 bereavement mailings and **2,389** phone calls to families after the death of their loved one
563 touchpoints for grieving children and teens

40 support groups, seminars, and workshops for those grieving a loss

LIGHT UP A
Life

Sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the many
generous donors who contributed to

**Light Up A Life,
Hospice of East Texas'**

signature fundraising campaign, in 2022!

These meaningful gifts will provide

LIGHT & LOVE

to thousands of patients and families served
by Hospice of East Texas in the year ahead.

*Light Up A Life is our end-of-year tradition,
offering the opportunity to shine light into the lives
of others through the purchase of holiday cards – which
we mail for you! - in honor or in memory of those
held dear. These loving gifts ensure that our care and
compassion are available to East Texas families when
they need us most. More information about this
meaningful endeavor for 2023 will be shared in the
fall. It's not too early to start thinking about how
YOU can be a GIFT to others!*

**Thank You to Our
Light Up A Life
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