



Spring 2019

*Sometimes you don't know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.*

## OLD FAITHFUL WATCH PARTY

Mr. Billy Stanley is a retired engineer. A smart and physically active man for most of his life, Mr. Stanley's dementia has robbed him of many of his physical and mental capabilities; a hard thing for him and a hard thing for his wife to watch.

On a routine visit to Mr. Stanley in his nursing home room on a day that was a particularly hard day, Hospice of East Texas Chaplain, David Badders asked Mr. Stanley what he would like to do, **anything** he would like to do if only he could. The answer was unexpected. "I'd like to go see Old Faithful," said Mr. Stanley. "I always wanted to see that, and I never did."

That's the kind of statement that sets the Hospice of East Texas team into motion. There's something one of our patients wants. What can we do to make it happen?

Chaplain David contacted Marleen Elkins, volunteer coordinator, and Dave Leming, Mr. Stanley's Hospice volunteer. Dave did some research and found out that it was possible to watch the eruptions of Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming via a live web cam set up by the geyser. Dave also figured out



Nelda and Billy Stanley with Dave Leming, volunteer (back) and David Badders, chaplain (right).

how to connect to the webcam with his computer and how to stream the footage onto the television in the nursing home's living room.

Marleen called Colonial Lindale nursing home and proposed having an "Old Faithful Watch Party." The staff was delighted!

On the appointed day, Dave arrived early to get all the technology set up, and when Mr. Stanley and his wife, Nelda, came into the room they were greeted by the site of Old Faithful in real time on the television. Like the park visitors on the screen, waiting patiently all bundled up

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against the cold, the “Old Faithful Watch Party” in the nursing home gathered around to watch and wait. Marleen shared a guide book she bought on a recent vacation with beautiful color photos of Old Faithful.

Then, something magical happened. Mr. Stanley’s engineering mind kicked into high gear. “What is the volume of water the geyser spouts?” he asked. “How high does it go?” “How often does it erupt?” Engaged, happy, and animated, Mr. Stanley fired question after question, his eyes twinkling, and a smile on his face, as Marleen found the answers in the guide book. Mrs. Stanley beamed at the sight of her husband, talkative and “on point,” the way he had once been. Then, it was time. Old Faithful erupted, just as it does every day, exactly on schedule, and the “Old Faithful Watch Party” was there to cheer this wonder of nature, so far away and yet right there in the living room of Colonial Lindale.

“What would you like to do?” Chaplain David had asked on a particularly hard day. The Hospice of East Texas team took Mr. Billy Stanley to Yellowstone National Park to see Old Faithful just as he wished, creating a really good day and some special moments full of joy and wonder.



## A Note From Marji

I am surrounded by phenomenal people every day at Hospice of East Texas. Our boards of directors are committed, visionary and inspire us. Our staff are dedicated, expert professionals whose passion for our work and compassion know no bounds. Our volunteers are simply the best, freely giving their time and caring to extend the reach of our mission. And our generous donors, as they have always done, support our work in ways both big and small.

The health care landscape is ever-changing, but the phenomenal people of Hospice of East Texas are flexible as well as committed and generous. While our commitment

to our mission is unwavering, we are also looking at new ways to serve and partners who share a common cause, to make certain that comfort, dignity and peace at the end of life are possible for everyone.

2018 was a challenging year, but as we enter 2019 the phenomenal people of Hospice of East Texas remain dedicated, compassionate, visionary and strong. We continue to hold those we serve at the heart of our work every day, replacing pain, despair and uncertainty with comfort, hope and support to navigate this most difficult of life’s transitions.

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## Special Volunteers

At the Hospice Annual Meeting and Celebration in February, two special volunteers and a group of volunteers were honored for their exceptional contributions to the Hospice of East Texas mission.



### Hearts N Harmony

There are more than 250 volunteers at Hospice of East Texas. Most of them have two legs. Most, but not all... because there is a very special group of volunteers who have four legs, the canine volunteers from Hearts N Harmony who volunteer with their human companions.

Founded in 2000, this very special group came into being specifically to serve the patients, families and staff of Hospice of East Texas. Each week, twice a week, a team of two dogs and their humans come to the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center to share their gifts of unconditional love.

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

The canine team is usually one large dog and one small one, and they like to work together, each bringing unique skills. Approaching a family standing in the hallway outside their loved one's room, the bigger dogs seem to sense who needs attention and walk up slowly, leaning in for contact and offering their head to be scratched. With permission, they will lay their big head on a patient's bed and gaze sweetly at them. The

smaller dogs, usually bouncier, somehow know to be more still and quiet when they are at HomePlace. If a patient wants a visit, they will lie quietly on their bed, for as long as the patient wants.

Their human companions say the dogs just "know" and the humans have learned 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 Jones tells the story of one visit she remembers vividly, 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.

Ruth Compton shares that their work at Hospice is not easy for the dogs. "It really takes a lot out of them. 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 are 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!



**Bobby Crone**

There are some people who are just fixtures at Hospice of East Texas, and Bobby Crone is one of them. You can find him at our offices most every day... and even on the days you don't see him around, it's most likely that he's doing something, somewhere for Hospice.

Hospice has a yard service, but Bobby puts the finishing touches on their work to make sure the grounds and gardens around the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center and HomePlace always look nice. In the warmer months, Bobby is often at work just as the sun comes up, before it gets too hot. No limb touches the ground for too long!

For several years, Bobby volunteered to lead the bereavement support group for people who had

lost their spouses, a job that requires great compassion and attention.

Bobby makes regular rounds to the freezers in all the employee break rooms and office areas to keep them stocked with ice cream and frozen treats, such a nice touch that is so appreciated by our staff.

And for years and years, Bobby has volunteered to visit hospice patients in their homes. His volunteer coordinator knows that she can count on Bobby for any assignment, anywhere. He will go to homes, nursing homes, assisted living facilities. He is willing to help those patients and families who are difficult or who live in difficult circumstances. It doesn't matter. Bobby knows what they are going through, because Hospice of East Texas cared for his beloved Martha in the final months of her life. It's because he had the same experience that Bobby now gives back to Hospice of East Texas.

We can't imagine a day in the life of Hospice of East Texas without the presence of Bobby Crone.



**Kathryn Rogers**

Kathryn Rogers is a registered nurse whose professional career spanned three decades, in Michigan, Dallas and Tyler. She was an OB supervisor, a medical researcher, an ICU supervisor, and the OR supervisor at what was known as "the chest hospital"

back in the day. She held a corporate position supervising nursing homes and built two assisted living facilities.

Through all those jobs and in all those places, Kathryn developed a heart for patients at the end of life, and when she retired, she decided being a hospice volunteer might be for her. "I went to Hospice of East Texas for a tour, and that sold me," she says.

"People ask me why I chose to volunteer at Hospice," says Kathryn, "and my answer is 'Hospice chose me.' I really feel this is where I was meant to be, especially after the death

of my husband. Hospice saved my life." Kathryn volunteers at Hospice four mornings a week. She would volunteer every day, but her boss, Kim Reel, the volunteer coordinator, makes her take a day off!

Kathryn's volunteer job is to call the physician of record for each Hospice patient who has passed away, to let the doctor know of their passing. Some days it's ten calls, some days it's thirty. The calls are a courtesy so that doctors' offices are informed and can update their records, but it's also more than that. The relationship between many patients, their physicians and the office staff can go back decades, and the calls are often meaningful and touching to those who receive them.

The calls are an extra touch from Hospice of East Texas, letting the physicians and their staff know that we are thinking of them too. Kathryn has been doing these calls so long and so well, that when she's out and someone else is making the calls, the physicians' office staff say, "Where is Kathryn?"

Hospice of East Texas is very grateful to Kathryn Rogers for the gift of her time and the gift of her heart for our patients and families.

# Hospice of East Texas 2018 by the Numbers

## Extraordinary Care, Compassion and Commitment

Throughout East Texas, the staff and volunteers of Hospice of East Texas provide the extraordinary care and compassion which makes moments matter to the patients and families we serve. As the region's largest and longest-serving hospice organization, we uphold our commitment to care that is unique in its quality, depth and breadth of service.

<b>Total patients cared for in 2018:</b> .....	<b>2166</b>
<b>Patients per day</b> (Home Care average daily census).....	<b>242</b>
<b>Patients per Day</b> (HomePlace average daily census).....	<b>20</b>
<b>Percent of patients with a cancer diagnosis</b> .....	<b>38%</b>
<b>Percent of patients with a non-cancer diagnosis</b> .....	<b>62%</b>
<b>Miles driven for patient care</b> .....	<b>1,583,871</b>



### Volunteers

251 volunteers  
 17,469 volunteer hours  
 \$439,536 dollars saved by utilizing volunteers



### Loving Attention

104 visits by Hearts N Harmony volunteers  
 4,421 donated meals for families in HomePlace



### Caring Support

17,400 bereavement mailings to families after the death of their loved one  
 4,146 phone calls to bereaved families  
 42 support groups for those grieving a loss  
 2 camps for grieving children



### Care that makes moments matter

370 patients who were veterans of our country's armed services were recognized by Hospice of East Texas  
 "We Honor Veterans" program.  
 \$910,548 in care provided to patients who did not have Medicare or insurance to pay for their care.  
 1,652 specialized consults provided by Texas Palliative Care.



“Hospice of East Texas is NOT in existence to make a profit from end-of-life care. We ARE here to fulfill Evelyn Lake’s vision.”



## A Letter to Our Donors

Thirty-seven years ago, Evelyn Lake and her friends in the Junior League of Tyler founded Hospice of East Texas. They had a vision for compassionate hospice care available to everyone, and that is the same vision that drives us today. In those early days and during these past thirty-seven years, we have faced and overcome numerous challenges.

Today, the challenges facing everyone in the healthcare industry (including Hospice of East Texas) may be the greatest ever. Escalating costs and declining reimbursement from the government and insurance companies are driving massive consolidation across the entire industry – insurance companies, pharmaceuticals, doctors, hospitals, and hospices – all seeking greater economies of scale.

We are also facing a dramatic increase in for-profit hospices – most of whom are not headquartered in East Texas, or even in Texas. Most don’t accept complicated and expensive patient cases or provide palliative care. They provide limited or no services to those who cannot pay for their care. And none have an inpatient facility like our beautiful HomePlace.

So, how are WE at Hospice of East Texas responding? As we have done since our founding, we WILL evolve and adapt while maintaining our mission and commitment to the community.

In addition to proactively reducing costs without impacting the quality of care, we are aggressively pursuing four major strategies:

- Strategic relationships with local hospital systems;
- Leveraging relationships with other major not-for-profit hospices in Texas;
- Innovative marketing to further enhance awareness of HOET;
- And, further strengthening relationships with and support from our donor community

The generous financial support of our friends has given Hospice of East Texas a solid base of financial reserves in the Hospice of East Texas Foundation. These reserves will help us weather the current challenges and provide us the time while we implement our strategies to ensure we serve East Texas for the next thirty-seven years.

When you look at our logo, it is no accident that part of our symbol is a heart. So many of you, our supporters, have first-hand experience with the compassionate care we have provided to family and friends through the years. Hospice of East Texas is NOT in existence to make a profit from end-of-life care. We ARE here to fulfill Evelyn Lake’s vision.

I thank you for your support in the past, and I ask for your support as we move into the next thirty seven years. More than ever before, we need your support and prayers. God bless you!

**Scott Myers**  
*2019 Chairman of the Board*



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Newsletter Editor • Nancy Lamar  
Newsletter Design • Autry Design  
Contributors • Wendy Frizzell,  
Courtney Waggener