

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

So much sadness... and so much kindness



Everyone who works at Hospice of East Texas, staff and volunteers alike, has heard this comment, "I don't know how you do it. It must be so sad."

The truth is that, yes, there are many sad moments, but there are also moments of such sweetness and even moments of unspeakable joy. Our work here is like life itself, a mixture of pain and sadness, balanced by moments of joy and even celebration.

Two days before Christmas, we admitted a young woman to hospice care, too young to be dying of terminal cancer, too young to be leaving a two-year-old daughter. Adding to that unimaginable tragedy were her family's circumstances: a disabled husband, desperate poverty, a home that was more a shed than a house fit for people, cold weather, no coats, her little girl without a pair of shoes that fit. Certainly, there was no Christmas either, nor even the thought of one.

But then, as they always do, the people of Hospice of East Texas went into action. They called their coworkers, their friends and neighbors. They dug deep into their own pockets. The necessities, food and cash and shoes and coats, started piling

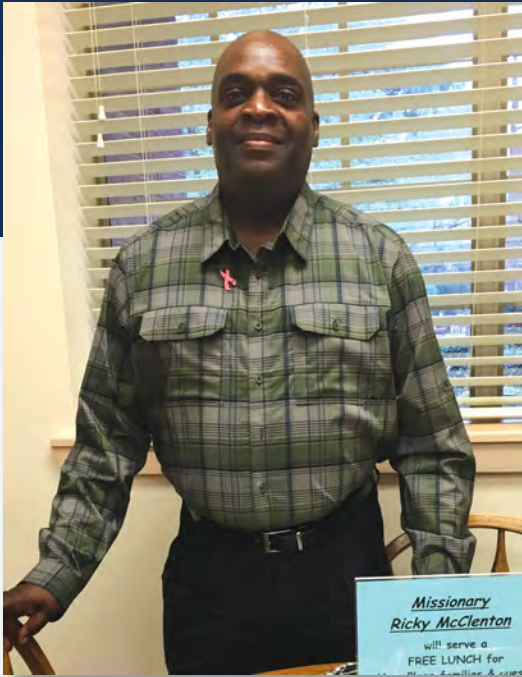
up, and so did the fun things, stuffed animals, candy, silly little girl treasures. Already on a tight holiday schedule, with lots of work and their own families to take care of, staff and volunteers stayed late, worked the phones, went out of their way to pick up donations. A Hospice of East Texas medical equipment van became Santa's sleigh, delivering comfort and joy to a family who had no expectation of either.

Yes, there is sadness and tragedy in the work we do at Hospice, no doubt about it. There was nothing good about this young woman's situation. But the people of Hospice of East Texas were there for them, and continued to be, not just at Christmas but in the months to follow, working to smooth and balance their tragedy with comfort and kindness and generosity.

We can do that because of your support. For thirty five years, generous friends in our communities have upheld our mission, making sure that Hospice of East Texas was here to help families like this and thousands of others. Because of you, we can provide our unique brand of extraordinary end-of-life care to everyone who needs it. And because of you, we can go above and beyond when circumstances call for it, creating a little joy to balance the sadness, sharing some good to smooth the bad.

“Because of you, we can provide our unique brand of extraordinary end-of-life care to everyone who needs it.”

What you do for the Lord will last.



Rickey McClenton's godfather wrote in his high school yearbook, "What you do for the Lord will last." Rickey didn't like that one bit. "Everyone else was getting 'the future is yours!,' things like that! What was he thinking?" questioned Rickey.

Turns out, Rickey's godfather's words were prophetic. For years, Rickey, now known as Missionary Rickey, has been serving the Lord in lasting ways with many gestures of kindness and encouragement. For his service as a volunteer to the patients and families of Hospice of East Texas, Rickey was recognized at the 2017 Annual Meeting in February of 2018.



Every Sunday morning and every holiday, Rickey comes to HomePlace, Hospice of East Texas' inpatient facility, and makes rounds with the snack cart. The cart is filled with snacks and cookies and crackers, water and soda, all free for families and visitors, welcome treats to those who may have been at their loved one's bedside for days at a time. Along with the treats, Rickey delivers his special brand of cheer and comfort, telling families he is praying for them, hugging when it's appropriate, always smiling.

A Servant's Heart

Rickey also serves Hospice patients at home, often visiting three or four patients each week, and once a month he delivers a BIG home-cooked meal to the family kitchen at HomePlace.

Rickey's service to Hospice of East Texas is just the tip of his missions' iceberg. The blessings of his service, encouragement, prayer and food touch hundreds of lives each month, not just in Tyler, but all across the United States.

"My godfather also told me, 'God has great things in store for you. He will bless you,'" said Rickey. "And He has!" Hospice of East Texas has also been blessed by Rickey's caring servant's heart, and we are deeply grateful to be in his mission field.

Visit Hospice of East Texas' Facebook page to see a video of Rickey McClenton in action!

A Golden Anniversary

2018 is Joyce Story's professional golden anniversary. She has been a nurse for 50 years!

Graduating in 1968 from Wichita General Hospital School of Nursing, a three year RN diploma program at the hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas, Joyce lived in the nurses' dormitory under the close supervision of a house mother. She remembers white caps, sharpening needles, sterilizing syringes to use over and over again.

Joyce's first nursing job was in pediatrics, and now, fifty years later, she reflects that she has come "full circle," working in end-of-life care as a Field Mentor and Home Care nurse for Hospice of East Texas.

In the years in-between Joyce has done med-surg nursing, been a house supervisor, and an assistant director of nursing. She served as director of nursing in a hospital for twenty one years. Ten years ago, she joined the staff of Hospice of East Texas.

As a Home Care nurse, Joyce spends her days visiting her hospice patients in their homes, in nursing homes and in assisted living facilities. She treasures the close relationships and friendships she develops with patients and their families. "I always tell them, 'I'm not a boss. I'm part of a team that will help you in your final days. I promise to be here for you and to do anything I can to make these days as comfortable and joyful as possible.'" For Joyce, this work, these relationships, are a privilege, one she's not ready to give up just yet.

"I love this work," Joyce asserts, though she acknowledges that it can be difficult, mentally, physically and emotionally. "I put 2,400 miles on my car every month, traveling to see my patients. The time behind that windshield is actually good for me. I think. I pray. I recharge so that I can be my best for the next family I visit."

"My rule is to treat people the way I want to be treated," Joyce says. "Death will come for all of us. It doesn't matter how much money we have or what we have accomplished in life. I hope there will be someone there for me when my time comes."

For Joyce, there are so many memories from her years as a hospice nurse, but one stands out in particular. Her patient was a hoarder, in a horrible living situation. "Of course, all of us – nurses, social workers, physicians, volunteers – we all wanted to 'fix it', move the patient to someplace better, but that was her home and that's where she wanted to stay. She died peacefully in her home, just as she wanted. She died with dignity. Every human being deserves that."

If Joyce could change one thing about her work, it would be that families call for hospice care sooner. "There are so many misconceptions about hospice," she says. "We do NOT hasten death! Our team can bring so much peace and comfort to patients and to their families, but we need time to do that. You know, the strange thing is that so often my patients are ready. They know it's their time. It's their families who aren't there yet. Part of my job is to help them acknowledge the reality, help them say good-bye."

Joyce adds, "A patient once told me, 'Hospice is half-way to heaven!' I believe that. With the support and care of the hospice team, our patients can stay in their own homes, and pass to the next life surrounded by the people they love. When the time comes, doesn't that sound like heaven to you?"



Hospice of East Texas' 35th Birthday...

What a Year 2017 was!

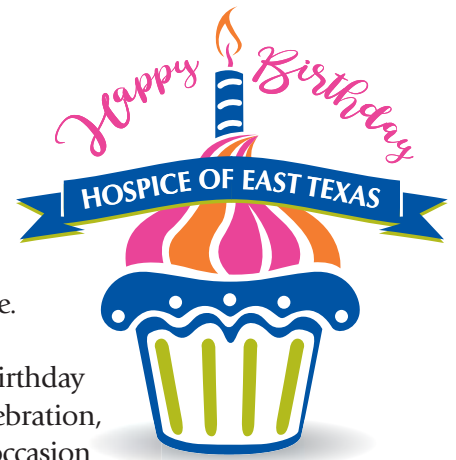
We take one final opportunity to thank everyone who made 2017's year-long celebration of Hospice of East Texas' 35th birthday a resounding success.

The Thirty-fifth Birthday theme resounded through the year with celebrations throughout the region, culminating in a BIG, and we mean BIG birthday party on October 5, with almost 600 friends and supporters joining us for the occasion.

YOUR financial support helped raise an amazing \$675,000 which will go to offset the cost of unfunded care for hospice patients with no Medicare

or private insurance.

2017's milestone birthday merited joyous celebration, and it was also an occasion for renewal and commitment to excellence in the future. We concluded this big birthday year committed to our legacy, our unmatched care and compassion, our "above and beyond" programs and services and our commitment to care for all who need us. With YOU, our friends, donors and supporters, we look forward to the next 35 years!



Celebrations



East Texas Giving Day and Volunteer Appreciation events followed the birthday theme in 2017.



A birthday celebration of nonprofit hospice care in Nacogdoches honored Dr. Larry Walker for his many years of service as a hospice physician.



Almost 600 friends, donors and community leaders joined Hospice of East Texas at the Thirty-fifth birthday celebration on October 5, 2017.

Pictured left to right:
 Ann Campbell, RN
 Christine Alden, RN;
 Jessica Henderson, LBSW
 Dr. Larry Walker, Hospice Physician
 Travis Clardy, Texas State Rep.
 Patti Goodrum, Director of Love
 In the Name of Christ
 Robin Kirk, RN
 Sally Jones, RN



As a part of Hospice of East Texas' 35th birthday celebration, three volunteers were honored for an extraordinary achievement... thirty five years of consecutive service EACH as a volunteer for Hospice of East Texas. Individually and collectively, they have made an indelible mark on our organization, and left their heart prints in the lives of literally thousands of patients and families.



PAULA BATES was a member of the Junior League of Tyler when the idea of creating a hospice in East Texas was first discussed in the early eighties. Through the years she has served as a board member, board chair, fundraising volunteer, direct patient volunteer and she continues to serve as a front desk volunteer at HomePlace. "I love Hospice," Paula says. "It's been my love for a long, long time."



RICK JETT, CPA, didn't actually start out to be a Hospice of East Texas volunteer. In 1982, his boss "volunteered" him to help the fledgling organization create an accounting system. Soon Rick was immersed in the hospice mission and devoted to its work. For thirty five years, Rick has served Hospice of East Texas as a board member, board chair, ex-officio board member and committee member. His deep institutional memory spans the years from a \$100,000 annual budget to an \$18 million one, and his commitment to our mission is unmatched.



MAUDEAN WEST went through the very first volunteer training course offered by Hospice of East Texas, and for the next thirty five years she served as a direct care patient volunteer until her retirement this fall. Maudean's special calling has been visiting patients in nursing homes, those often neglected and forgotten by others. Week in and week out, Maudean visited two or three patients, her presence a reminder that there was someone who still cared. Maudean's own words about her volunteer experience are an inspiration to us all:

"You know, my favorite patients were the ones who were in nursing homes, in a coma, not responsive at all. They were so alone. No one came to visit most of the time except me, and I don't think most of the time they knew I was even there. But I would just sit, and hold their hands and sometimes talk, and sometimes read the Bible to them. And when the nurses would tell me it was about to be the end, I would get real close to their ear and I would say the 23rd Psalm to them. It was always my going away present. I wanted the last thing they heard to be the Lord's word."



A Special Opportunity to Give

EAST TEXAS GIVING DAY



At this year's East Texas Giving Day, Hospice of East Texas will highlight the work of WINGS. This unique program offers support groups, Camp 3G and one-on-one counseling sessions for children and teens impacted by the loss of a parent, grandparent, sibling, friend, even a beloved pet.

Join us on East Texas Giving Day, Tuesday April 24th, to play WINGS Bingo and raise funds for this very special program. WINGS is offered not only to families served by Hospice of East Texas but to anyone in the community, all free of charge.

Your donations to help us "black out" our WINGS Bingo board on East Texas Giving Day will make sure that no child will have to grieve alone.

WINGS

No child should ever have to grieve alone.

These precious girls have many things in common, their adorable smiles and blond hair, both are six year old first graders, and this: both of their fathers recently died unexpectedly.

At the Hospice of East Texas' WINGS day camp for grieving children, the girls became fast friends, working together throughout the day on various therapeutic craft activities including making these "grief monsters." Our workshops, support groups and day camps create opportunities for grieving children to meet friends facing similar circumstances and learn ways to deal with their loss in an age-appropriate way.

No child should ever have to grieve alone.





A Letter From Marji *Being a Nonprofit Matters!*

There are so many misconceptions about hospice, and one of them is that all hospices are somehow connected, like chapters of the same organization. Actually, in East Texas, there are more than 25 hospices, and we are not connected in any way organizationally. Only two hospices, including Hospice of East Texas, are nonprofits. The others are for-profit businesses, with profits from their operations going to their shareholders.

Being a nonprofit means that Hospice of East Texas is owned by you, our community, and it means that we invest, not in our shareholders, but in the care we provide. As a nonprofit, we are committed to caring for anyone who seeks our care, regardless of their financial situation, which is

an enormous human and financial commitment. We are also committed to providing an extraordinary brand of end-of-life care, unique to Hospice of East Texas and uniquely nonprofit.

For thirty five years, YOUR support has been the backbone of our comprehensive, compassionate care, and it is critical to our ability to continue our mission in the constant change of today's healthcare climate. Quite simply, we couldn't do this work without YOU! Hospice of East Texas is mission-driven and community-focused because of YOU! THANK YOU!

Marji Ream
President/CEO

Take advantage of the IRA Charitable Rollover today!

If you own an IRA and are at least 70 1/2 years of age, the law requires you to take a minimum distribution from your IRA each year and pay income tax on the distribution.

If you want to support Hospice of East Texas, you may now do so through a gift that will satisfy this minimum income distribution and not be counted as taxable income.

You can give all or part of the distribution from your IRA to Hospice of East Texas, tax-free, and have it count as all or part of your required minimum distribution for the year.

Consult with your professional advisor

or call us at Hospice of East Texas to see if these benefits might be helpful to you:

- The amount of your gift is counted towards your required minimum distribution for the year.
- The amount of your gift is excluded from your reported income for federal tax purposes – your gift is 100% tax free!
- Most importantly – your gift may be used immediately to support Hospice of East Texas' patients and their families.

Contact Nancy Lamar, Vice President of Community Relations, for more information: 903-266-3402
nlamar@hospiceofeasttexas.org.





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