



Seasons

The
HOSPICE
of East Texas
SPRING 2015

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When It's Not Lovely...

It has long been our practice to tell stories about the lovely things that happen at The Hospice of East Texas, the sweet things, the heart-warming things; peaceful deaths with loved ones gathered round to say goodbye; families reconciled at the end of life; volunteers whose service knows no bounds; hearts touched; meaning found.

In their work, the staff and volunteers of The Hospice of East Texas perform extraordinary acts of kindness and compassion every day and surround patients and families with, as one family wrote, "so many things we didn't even know we needed". Most regard this work as a ministry, and as people of faith and professionals trained to soothe and mend, they find meaning and great joy in the extraordinary medical care and human compassion they give. It is good work.

But the reality we don't often share is that what happens at The Hospice of East Texas every day is sometimes distinctly not lovely. To journey with the dying and those who care for them can be very painful emotionally, demanding physically, and sometimes even shocking. To be a part of this work can bring frustration, deep sadness, and anger. It can shatter, level, and bring into question all one thought the fairness and order of things in

the world should be.

Jordan's* short life was sad, from beginning to end. Abandoned by his mother and severely beaten by his father, he spent his life in foster care, where those who were supposed to rescue him were no more nurturing than his parents. When Jordan died at HomePlace from the beatings he received, the only people with him were his social worker from Child Protective Services, and the Hospice of East Texas staff. Buried in an unmarked grave, the one lasting mark of Jordan's brief life is a tile at HomePlace given by Chaplain Dennis Harvey in his memory.

Susan's* permanent home was an 8 by 10 foot travel trailer she shared with more dogs than anyone could count and a litter of puppies under her bed. Fragile and unstable, with no family and no resources, she didn't have many choices, but she was fine living that way, and kept very much to herself. Then Susan became ill, very, very ill, and was reluctant to seek help. By the time she was referred to Hospice of East Texas, and the staff found her, the filth in her trailer was indescribable. Still Susan didn't want to leave, and the bureaucratic process to remove her from

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her home against her will but for her own health and comfort, was painfully slow. In the interim, the nurses, home health aides, social workers and chaplains cared for her right there in her little trailer, running a gauntlet of unfriendly dogs at every visit, doing what they could to keep her clean and comfortable, and buying dog food for her companions.

Tom* was a proud man, the rock in a family full of instability, where imprisonment, abuse, abandonment, and drug habits were commonplace. His home was at the end of a long dirt road where it got dark early, where cell phone coverage was spotty and where people, known and unknown to Tom, came and went at all hours of the day and night. Frequent changes in medicines and medicine protocols couldn't seem to get Tom's severe pain under control, and he was suffering terribly and needlessly. The Hospice team began to suspect someone of diverting Tom's medicine and wrestled for a solution to allow him to stay in his own home as he wished. They took care to always visit in pairs, mindful that what was happening in that home was unpredictable at best.

So, yes, what happens at Hospice of East Texas is sometimes not lovely. It is often impossibly sad, sometimes so hard, sometimes such a stretch to do what Hospice people do, to offer themselves, emotionally and physically, to care for those who need them. But Hospice people do this work because they believe that every single human being, no matter who they are or what their life's circumstances are, deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, given choices about their lives and their last days, and to leave this life free of as much pain as modern medicine and a caring community can alleviate.

Sometimes, at the end, we know that what we did was good. Sometimes we only know that we did what we could, all that we could.

And we have to find peace that in a world where things are sometimes not fair, not easy, not right, not lovely, the care and compassion of The Hospice of East Texas is enough. More than enough.

**names are changed to protect patients' identities*



A note from Marji... A quilt of care and compassion

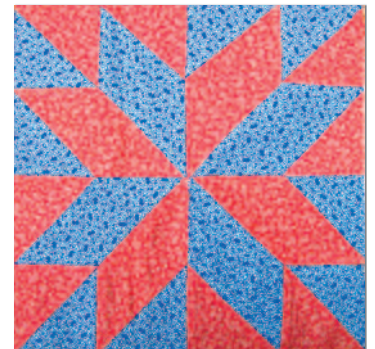
Quilts have long been a part of our tradition at Hospice of East Texas. They cover every patient bed at HomePlace and are given to many of our Home Care patients by our chaplains.

Amazingly, the quilts just come to us. Quilters groups throughout East Texas make and donate them. Sometimes families at Home Place whose loved ones were covered by a quilt in their last days, return with quilts to donate for other patients and families. Some are new, made just for this purpose. Others are quilts that have been in their family, treasures given to Hospice of East Texas in gratitude for the care their loved ones received. Recently a lady brought a quilt that was given to her on her wedding day, with her name and that of her late husband, embroidered in the corner. "John would want Hospice to have it," she said. "You took such good care of him."

The quilts are physically beautiful, bright spots of color and imagery that brighten what can be some very dark days. They are also symbolic to us. Made of many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, each piece is stitched to the other to create a whole that is greater than each piece alone, just like the work of The Hospice of East Texas. Our care for those who are dying and our support of their families

is made possible by many people with many skills and gifts who create the tapestry of care and compassion with which The Hospice of East Texas covers those we serve.

You, our friends and donors, are an important part of that quilt.



In all that we do, we are mindful that the support of our community is at the heart of what Hospice of East Texas is all about. This organization was created by volunteers, built with philanthropic contributions and has been sustained for thirty two years by people who so believe in, trust and value this work that they give generously of their time and their monetary support.

In an ever-changing healthcare landscape, we know that community support of East Texas is something that will never change. Your presence, your prayers and your gifts are more important than ever before if we are to continue our historical commitment to care for all who need us.

Thank you for being a part of the quilt of care and compassion that is The Hospice of East Texas.

Many thanks to the AI Fine Little Big Band for wonderful music on the coldest night of the winter in Tyler!



Light up a
LIFE



Many thanks to all of you, our friends and supporters, for another successful Light Up A Life season!

As a time of remembrance and reflection, more than 4000 tributes 'to light up a life' were sent 'in honor of' and 'in memory' of those held dear, made possible by 854 gifts totaling \$132,033.50.

Ceremonies in ten East Texas communities offered a time for those served by Hospice of East Texas and the public at large to make new holiday memories.

Proceeds from this signature fundraiser will go to support the extraordinary care, compassion and commitment of the Hospice of East Texas in the year ahead and will help to insure that this extraordinary care is available to all who need it, regardless of age, disease or financial circumstances.



The
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of East Texas Foundation

Extraordinary care, compassion and commitment.

For more information please call 903-266-3402 or visit www.hospiceofeasttexas.org.

Jann McGaughey

Jann McGaughey has been a volunteer for Hospice of East Texas for 24 years!

Jann doesn't remember exactly how many patients she has worked with, but she has clear memories of 43 of them! That's 43 lives, and the lives of countless family members, touched by Jann's caring presence as she visited with them, took food, sang for them, and cried with them. And that's 43 people that Jann has loved and said goodbye to. The youngest patient assigned to Jann was two weeks old and the oldest was 95.

Jann wrote this remembrance recently about a patient she grew close to:

"I was assigned to be the volunteer for a grandfather who had just moved into the bottom story of his daughter's three story home. His granddaughters, ages 4 and 7, were a little timid around their grandfather at first. He was very old and frail and probably a little scary to them. When I visited, though, the granddaughters would join us in his room, and the grandfather shared with me that the four year old had not come into his room until I started visiting. I played games with the girls while their grandfather watched, and you could tell

that he enjoyed just watching, seeing their smiles and hearing their little girl giggles.

"One day, I taught the 7 year old to crochet, and we would just sit together, rolls of yarn in our laps, working away while Grandfather watched. After the patient died, I lost touch with the family, but about ten years later I saw the girls' mother in the grocery store, and she told me that her daughter still crocheted and had taught several others as well."

What a great story this is about the 'power of presence'. So often volunteers who are new to Hospice of East Texas wonder what they will "DO" with their patients, how they can "HELP". Jann's remembrance is a good reminder that the greatest gift we can give is just to be present with those at the end of their lives, and being present will tell us what to do and how we can help.

Thank you Jann McGaughey, for twenty four years of presence and dedication.



Since 1948, the ladies of the Hawkins Study Club have been meeting monthly for fellowship, for programs that inspire and enrich and to plan their service to the Hawkins community. For twenty two of those years, they have organized their community's Light Up A Life ceremony benefiting Hospice of East Texas. The program offers a time to remember loved ones in a special candlelight memorial service and has also raised tens of thousands of dollars for the mission of Hospice of East Texas.

Many thanks to the ladies of the Hawkins Study Club for including Hospice of East Texas among the many ways you serve your community.

Keith Ingram Award recipients, Fredia Melvin, Pat Anderson, Patricia Hite, Dennis Harvey and Jann McGaughey, with Hospice of East Texas President and CEO, Marjorie Ream.



The 2014 Keith Ingram Awards

Keith Ingram was Chairman of the Board of The Hospice of East Texas at the time of his death in 2012. In his honor, each year since, it has been our privilege to honor staff and volunteers who demonstrate the same care, compassion and commitment Keith did in his service to Hospice of East Texas and so many other causes and organizations in our community. Those who are chosen to receive the Keith Ingram Awards have the same heart for the mission that Keith had.

At the 2014 Annual Meeting in February, three members of the Hospice of East Texas staff were recognized with the Keith Ingram Award. Dennis Harvey, chaplain coordinator; Patricia Hite, an RN in HomePlace and Fredia Melvin, a volunteer coordinator, have each served Hospice patients

and families for twenty years. That's a long time in any job and a milestone worth marking for longevity alone. But Dennis, Pat and Fredia are examples of more than long tenure. They are examples of the extraordinary care and compassion the Hospice team gives every day, and each of them has done their work and given of themselves, personally and professionally, in countless ways.

Two volunteers, Patricia Anderson and Jann McGaughey, were also recognized as Keith Ingram Award recipients. We have written about Pat in these pages before (see Fall 2014 print newsletter and on our website), and we write about Jann in this edition (see page 4). Pat and Jann are examples of the more than 300 volunteers who give so unselfishly of themselves and whose "above and beyond" service makes the care of The Hospice of East Texas so extraordinary.

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"The Keith Ingram Award recipients are examples of the extraordinary care and compassion the Hospice team gives every day, and each of them has done their work and given of themselves, personally and professionally, in countless ways."

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A gift from the heart...straight to the heart

She came to the reception desk in administration, barely tall enough to peer over the top. A nine year old girl, with her right hand clenched in a tight fist. "Can I help you?" asked Julia, the receptionist.

"Yes," the little girl said. "My grandmother is here. You are taking care of her. I want to do something to help you." She opened her hand, and out tumbled quarters and a dime totaling three dollars and ten cents.

Julia thanked the little girl, exclaiming about how much it meant that she wanted to help Hospice of East Texas. The

little girl pulled her bag up on top of the counter. "I may have another quarter in here if you need it," she offered.

Every gift matters to us at Hospice of East Texas—monetary gifts, gifts of the valuable time of volunteers, meals provided to families at HomePlace—but every once in a while there's a gift that just goes straight to our hearts. A grateful little girl giving three dollars and ten cents and offering to do more.



Thank you to the members of the inaugural class of Hospice of East Texas Young Ambassadors for investing your time with us! And thank you, Rabbi Katz, for a great idea!

Leah Owen Childs • Johnna Fullen • Denise Guenco
Betsy Brush Hahn • Kathy Hesskew • Frances Jackson
Carrie Ann Jasper • Peter Kane • Anna Malone
Mercedes Noteware • Kristina Ross • Jennifer Walsh
Melissa Williamson • Patrick Willis



Hospice of East Texas Young Ambassadors, Kristina Ross, Patrick Willis, Betsy Brush Hahn and Jennifer Walsh

Young Ambassadors

Rabbi Neal Katz had a great idea: invite young community leaders to engage with the mission of Hospice of East Texas through a structured program designed to educate them about end-of-life issues and the work of Hospice. Rabbi Katz' vision is now a reality in the form of the Hospice of East Texas Young Ambassadors Program.

The inaugural group of Young Ambassadors began meeting monthly in September 2014 and will continue their time together until April of 2015.

Betsy Brush Hahn had this to say about her experience in the program. "I was aware that Hospice of East Texas did

good and important work, but hearing the details of what happens daily, the impact you all have on patients and their families is truly amazing. . .What a valuable way for me to spend my time!"

Johnna Fullen echoed her sentiments: "Through my participation in the Young Ambassadors Program, I have learned about opportunities for patients and families in a loving and supporting manner during end of life journeys.....medical, legal, spiritual, and emotional aspects. I truly believe pain and grief can be lessened with the compassionate help offered through the staff and volunteers at HOET. The knowledge and friendships I have developed are life changing."

Grieve. Grow. Go Forward.

"Children feel, even if they do not understand. Understanding comes later... the feelings need a hug."

Recognizing that children grieve the loss of special people in their lives and that their grief deserves specific attention is fundamental to WINGS, the children's bereavement program of the Hospice of East Texas.

In the spring of 2013 an idea for a grief camp for kids began to take shape in the hearts and minds of bereavement coordinator Wes Bynum and Anna Donihoo, social worker for the deep southeast area. "I was thinking of ways to provide better support for grieving children and the idea was born", said Anna. "As I shared my thoughts with Wes I discovered that he had been thinking in the same direction."

Camp 3G (Grieve, Grow, and Go Forward) became a reality in the fall of 2014. With the help of staff and volunteers and the gracious support of Stephen F. Austin State University, "campers" spent a Saturday filled with activities including "ice breakers", low ropes course, art therapy, "feelings" recognition, and rock climbing. With each event the children were encouraged to accept their

feelings related to the loss they had experienced and then move forward in a positive direction. At the end of the day the parents came for a short session to learn more about children's grief and ways they could support their kids along the journey.

A balloon release brought the camp to a close, offering a time for reflecting on the lives that had been touched in a very meaningful way that day.

With the addition of child life specialist, Chanda Darby, plans for the next Camp 3G are in the works. Until then, the WINGS program continues to offer grief support to hurting children throughout East Texas through one on one visits, monthly support groups and special support projects. Referrals from parents, families, school counselors, church leaders and healthcare professionals are welcome.

Special thanks to the Bernard Foundation, the Robert M. Rogers Foundation, RGK Foundation, and Stephen F. Austin State University for their support of WINGS and Camp 3G.



Camp 3G Balloon Release



Hospice Helps at Home

Licensed Masters Social Worker. Caring professional. Masters in Fine Arts. Talented artist and poet. Anna Donihoo shares her skills and talents with Hospice of East Texas in many ways. Her latest gift is a charming coloring book for children, written and illustrated by Anna, and presented to Hospice as a tool to help children deal with the death of a loved one.

Anna explained the inspiration for the book:

“I had a coloring book featuring a family of bears that I started using as a storytelling tool when families asked me to explain death and hospice care to their children. It ended up being a great way to introduce such a hard topic, but I got to thinking that it would be nice to have a story about a community of animals. And so the story of Millie the Mouse was born!”

The art in the book is Anna’s but she shares credit for the clever poems with her husband. “I must give credit to my husband John for helping with the text...he is much quicker at coming up with clever rhymes than I am!”

The characters in the story gather around Millie and her family to help Millie in her last days. Charlie the Chaplain, a wise owl; Ada the aide, a porcupine; Nona the Nurse, a little beaver; Sally the social worker, a bunny rabbit, are charming little characters depicted in their roles as a hospice team, just as Anna and her coworkers at Hospice



work as a team in the deep Southeast region around Nacogdoches.

Anna admits to having a favorite page in her book. “My most favorite page is the family gathering around Millie in her bed. What else is a little mouse to do when he is sad, but hold his tail and suck his thumb?”

Many thanks go to Austin Bank whose gift allowed Hospice of East Texas to print Anna’s book and make it available free of charge to children facing the death of a loved one. Hospice Helps at Home has proven to be an invaluable tool in making a hard time more understandable.

The Hospice Shoppe in Henderson celebrates 30 years in business



Founded in 1985, the resale shop has been like “the little engine that could”, plugging along year after year, selling clothing, housewares, furniture, and decorative items to benefit the programs and projects of The Hospice of East Texas.

Through the years, a small, dedicated staff has managed a crew of committed volunteers who value their work in the shop as a way to contribute to the mission of Hospice of East Texas. A conservative estimate is that in thirty years, Shoppe volunteers have contributed more than 150,000 hours of service, and sales have provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to benefit the patients and families served by Hospice.

During the month of April 2015, the Shoppe will celebrate with special sales, drawings, and discounts as a way to thank the community for their support. Come to 114 S. Richardson in Henderson and celebrate with us, **Monday through Friday, 10 am. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.!**

Donations to the Shoppe and its sister shop in Nacogdoches are always welcome.

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