

# Seasons

EARLY FALL 2012



A PUBLICATION OF THE HOSPICE OF EAST TEXAS FOUNDATION

“I saw his patience and his compassion and his deep knowledge of complex issues, and I just asked him ‘would you like to be a Hospice of East Texas volunteer?’ Good for us, the answer was ‘Yes’”!

## Jim Simmons...Service Officer

If you call Jim Simmons at home after noon, you are likely to find he isn't there. “Gone to make his rounds,” says Mrs. Simmons, politely. Jim “makes his rounds” to hospice patients, veterans and those who just plain need him, every single day.

In a distinguished Air Force career, which took him to Guam, Germany, Vietnam, and all over the U.S., from desk to combat, Jim found his true niche in work with people and his deep admiration for his military comrades and their families.

When he retired in 1980, East Texas was Jim's family's first choice of a place to live. “I traveled all over Texas as an Air Force recruiter,” Jim say, “and the beauty of East Texas, the lakes and the hills, just spoke to me.”

In retirement, Jim became a Veterans Administration “service officer” – as a volunteer. Working with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the American Legion and the Veterans offices in Tyler, Jim took on the role of contacting veterans and their families to make them aware of the benefits to which they were entitled in recognition of their service to our county. It was in that capacity that he crossed paths with Hospice of East Texas.

“Jim was at HomePlace one day, talking to the wife of a veteran, helping her through the maze of paperwork and programs,” said Vicki Harvey, Director of Community Outreach.



Jim Simmons makes his rounds, including a stop at The Hamptons

“I saw his patience and his compassion and his deep knowledge of complex issues, and I just asked him ‘would you like to be a Hospice of East Texas volunteer?’ Good for us, the answer was ‘Yes’”!

Jim is now ‘on call’ to talk to veterans who are Hospice of East Texas patients and their families. His knowledge of the broad array of veterans services to which patients and families are entitled and his ability to navigate the service system are invaluable. He has found monetary assistance to help pay for care so that veterans can stay in their homes, arranged for survivors' benefits, made it possible for spouses and children to get assistance to attend college, sought replacement medals. Military honors at funerals, gravesite markers and folded American flags are

Continued on page 7.

TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON...





*Service Officer, continued from page 1.*

special touches that the families of veterans often don't know to ask for and which Jim is delighted to arrange.

On top of all this, Jim is assigned to Hospice patients who aren't veterans. Every day he "makes his rounds" to homes and nursing homes, bringing his warm smile, his hugs, treats and soft drinks to those who are lonely and often forgotten. "I get so much out of what I do," says Jim, with a tear in his eye, "probably more than I give. And if you want to know the truth, when I'm visiting my patients in the nursing homes, sometimes the staff asks me to see someone else, someone who isn't a Hospice of East Texas patient. There's one man who suffers from dementia. You ask him about today, and he just won't answer. But if you ask him about World War II, he comes alive. We talk a long time about his experiences and he relives his memories. He isn't a Hospice of East Texas patient. I hope that's okay."

That's okay, Jim. That's more than okay. It's what a service officer does.



A cupcake is Mary's favorite treat. Jim takes her one every day.

## Mr. Keith Ingram • 1949–2012

Keith Ingram was serving as the Chairman of The Hospice of East Texas Board of Directors at the time of his unexpected death on June 18, 2012.

Keith was a faithful and tireless worker for many causes he held dear, and Hospice of East Texas was fortunate to be one of them. A man of deep faith, he approached all that he did as a family man, a hardworking professional and a committed volunteer as a way to serve his Lord. Keith endeared himself to everyone at Hospice by his caring presence, his steadfastness, and his quick smile. We will miss his leadership as our Board Chairman, but we will also miss him as a friend, a mentor and a colleague.





# It's the little things...

Gifts like these are especially meaningful to Hospice of East Texas, a “paying forward” of the kindnesses families have received so that others will feel the comfort of the “little things.”

We are often quoted as saying that “it’s the little things” that make nonprofit hospice care so special. The cart in HomePlace is one of those “little things” that can touch a family in a big way, as this letter explains:

*My mother was a patient at your in-house facility. During the week and a half she was there we felt she was at peace. The nurses and staff were so very kind to my mom and also to the rest of my family. It was truly the hardest time in our lives. We just wanted to thank everyone at Hospice for making our mom the most comfortable she could be until she passed the morning of May 24th. We miss her each and every moment of every day, but know she is in a much better place, and she isn't suffering any more.*

*While we were there with our mom the snack cart would come around every day twice a day and provide us with snacks and drinks. We thought it was so kind of them to do that for all the families. We would like to donate this money to help supply some snacks and drinks for the cart.*

Two ladies ministry groups also recognize the unique touch of the HomePlace cart and have included donations of snacks and drinks for the cart as a part of their outreach efforts. The Azalea Gardens Church of God Ladies Ministry and the Original Texas District Association Ministry of Middles Adult Women (pictured here with HomePlace Volunteer Coordinator, Cynthia Ellington, center) are regular contributors to the cart. Their decision to give came because several of them have sat through long days and nights with loved ones at HomePlace. Gifts like these are especially meaningful to Hospice of East Texas, a “paying forward” of the kindnesses families have received so that others will feel the comfort of the “little things.”



Johnnie Baley and the HomePlace cart





Please Join  
**The Hospice of East Texas**

as We Celebrate  
**Thirty Years**

of Extraordinary Care, Compassion and Commitment  
 and Honor

**Members of the Hospice of East Texas Alpha Society**

Thursday, October 4, 2012 • 11:30 a.m.

Harvey Convention Center

Individual Tickets: \$50.00 • Sponsorship Opportunities available.

Please call 903-266-3405 for a reservation.



Hospice of East Texas will mark its Thirtieth Anniversary with a Celebration Luncheon on October 4, 2012 in Tyler at Harvey Convention Center. Highlighting the occasion will be recognition of the members of Hospice of East Texas' Alpha Society, the individuals, organizations and businesses who "from the beginning" created and supported Hospice of East Texas and launched its decades of extraordinary care, compassion and commitment to the people of East Texas.

Join us for this special occasion to celebrate this milestone year and to help Hospice of East Texas raise funds to ensure that the highest quality end-of-life care continues to be available to all who need it.

**Hospice of East Texas Alpha Society**

Founding board, volunteers and supporters who "from the beginning"  
 created and supported The Hospice of East Texas

**Mrs. Evelyn Lake and the Lake family • The Junior League of Tyler, Inc.  
 East Texas Medical Center Regional Healthcare System  
 Trinity Mother Frances Hospitals and Clinics  
 The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler**

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*First Board President*  
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 Paula Bates  
 J. Lindsey Bradley, Jr.  
 Terry Childers  
 Laura Collins Hays  
 Glenn Collins

Stan Champion, M.D.  
 \*Carolyn Ewbank  
 Cindy Kidwell  
 Gary Kimmel, M.D.  
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 The Reverend Tom Loden  
 Marianne Long  
 \*George Pearson

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 Kathryn Thames, R. N.  
 Ray Thompson

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D'Anna Wick  
*Founding Executive Director*

**Incorporators**

D'Anna Wick  
 Glenn Collins  
 Holly Boyd

**Key volunteers**

Margo Adams  
 Rick Jett  
 Maudean West

*\*deceased*

**Special Thanks to the Thirtieth Anniversary Committee**

Debbie Roosth, Chair • Paula Bates • Suzanne Curtis • Sherry Dunn • Holley Howard • Ann Lake  
 Fritter McNally • Nita Meads • Karen Wallace • D'Anna Wick

## Thirtieth Anniversary Sponsors

Many thanks to the following generous Sponsors of Hospice of East Texas' Thirtieth Anniversary who have made commitments thus far.

For information on luncheon reservations or sponsorship opportunities, contact Nancy Lamar, Vice President—Community Relations, at 903-266-3402.

### Rose

In memory of Evelyn Lake by Ann and Peyton Lake

### Oak

A.W. Riter Jr. Family Foundation  
The Rogers Foundation

### Azalea

Anonymous  
Lowery Donor Advised Fund at ETCF

### Pine

## Austin Bank

The R. W. Fair Foundation

### Magnolia

Henry & Peters, P.C.

In memory of Keith Ingram by The Board of Directors of Hospice of East Texas and Marjorie Ream and Steve Cohen, M.D.

**HENRY & PETERS, P.C.**  
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### Camellia

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Kenneth W. Porter

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Certified Public Accountants

Robyn Rogers and Bob Rice

Debbie and Steve Roosth

Texas Bank and Trust

Tickie West-Brand in memory of  
Col. William Brand, Jr.

D'Anna and Paul Wick

## Thirtieth Anniversary Sponsorship Opportunities

### \$2500 - Magnolia

- Recognition at all anniversary events, in all media and publicity
- Recognition in HOET newsletter and Anniversary Calendar
- Reserved seating for 6 at Celebration Luncheon

### \$1000 - Camellia

- Recognition at anniversary event, in all media and publicity
- Recognition in HOET newsletter and Anniversary Calendar
- Reserved seating for 4 at Celebration Luncheon

### \$500 - 30th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon Sponsor

- Recognition in luncheon materials
- Reserved seating for 4 at Celebration Luncheon

### \$250 - 30th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon Host

- Recognition in luncheon materials
- Reserved seating for 2 at Celebration Luncheon

### \$50 - Individual tickets

# Celebrating 30 years

of Extraordinary Care,  
Compassion and  
Commitment.



This is why hospital beds have wheels ... so that a patient and his son can go outside on a warm summer morning and enjoy the garden from one of the porches at HomePlace!



Vanessa Hayward is an eight year old on a mission – to provide comfort to those who are sad, lonely or ill. Vanessa donates her uniquely designed and hand-made “pillow buddies” to Hospice of East Texas and other organizations.



The Medical Records Department loves its volunteers.



Chassidy Lewis serves food and lots of love in the HomePlace Soda Shoppe!

“Dear Staff and Volunteers,

Thank you for all you did for us while Richard was in your care. Especially thank the young woman in the little restaurant. She helped us when we needed it the most. I am not talking about the food. I am talking about her cheerful conversation.”



Tonya Norris honored the memory of both her grandfather and her daughter's great aunt by making beautiful quilts in their memory. Both were patients at HomePlace where the tradition of a quilt on each bed continues to provide comfort to patients and families.



You are never too young! Otis Brooks (pictured here with his wife, Barbara) will celebrate his 92nd birthday in October and is still a dedicated Hospice of East Texas volunteer in Henderson, TX.

# The Gift of Time



On April 17, Hospice of East Texas began its 30th anniversary celebration with ‘The Gift of Time’, an appreciation luncheon for current and former volunteers. Volunteers were lauded with these words:

Volunteerism is where Hospice of East Texas began, and it remains the heart and soul of our work to this day. You give to Hospice of East Texas and the patients and families we serve the most precious gift... the gift of your time.

You answer the phone. You take flowers, send a card. You push the cart in HomePlace, offering snacks and small comforts to families. You do data entry and file reams of paper. You plant a garden, the last garden. You ring the cash register at the Hospice shops with a smile. You sit a long time. You listen even longer. You smile.

You make phone calls to comfort. You sing to bring peace. You catalogue medical records. You come to HomePlace with pets who bring joy to everyone and sort clothes for resale. You laugh with the staff, bringing them laughter as well.

You pick up a prescription, take a casserole. You play with a child. You sit at the front desk at HomePlace on Monday morning or Wednesday afternoon or Sunday after church. You run an errand when your own errands aren't run. You visit a nursing home, reading to a patient who doesn't know who you are and who may not remember you have been there. You leave a card for the family, telling them you were present. You give the most valued gift, the ‘gift of your time’.

Being a part of the work of hospice is a privilege because as participants and witnesses of this work we have the opportunity to experience the fullness of what being truly human beings is all about. Hospice work is a reminder, a daily wake-up call to all of us about what matters and what doesn't.

The reality, for all of us pilgrims on life's journey, is this: Our days are numbered. As a limited commodity, time is precious. One day, there will be no more of it. We should only spend it on what matters most. That you, as volunteers, choose to give that limited gift, “the gift of your time” to The Hospice of East Texas and those we serve is overwhelming to us. Thank you!

D'Anna Wick, Hospice of East Texas' first Executive Director, and volunteer Cathy Reynolds



Barbara Bain, Sandie Propst and Mary Ann Eckert

Volunteers Cindy Blake, Ellen Wallace and Dick Liptak celebrated with 225 volunteers and friends of Hospice.



Two vans of volunteers and staff from Nacogdoches added to the festivities



# Dedication of the Waterfall Garden

The waterfall garden is now a place of peace and beauty enjoyed by patients, families and staff.

On April 22, 2012 Hospice friends and supporters gathered for the dedication of the Hospice of East Texas waterfall garden on the grounds of the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center. Jonna Fitzgerald's mother, Eddie Ruth Lloyd Fitzgerald, had collected rocks for years, hoping to build a waterfall at her home. In gratitude for the care Mrs. Fitzgerald received at HomePlace, Jonna and her family donated those rocks and made the initial gift for the creation of the garden. With help from other donors who caught Jonna's vision, the waterfall garden is now a place of peace and beauty enjoyed by patients, families and staff.

Thanks go also to the other donors whose additional gifts made the garden possible:

**The Friends of Hospice of East Texas  
The Family of Norma Hills  
Ann and Peyton Lake  
Terry and Scott Terry and Family  
Wallace and Patsy Boersma**

A beautiful spring day brought perfect weather and good crowds to the dedication.



The garden's dedicatory plaque expresses the sentiment behind the garden's creation:

**Given in loving memory of  
Truman D. "Blue" and  
Eddie Ruth Loyd Fitzgerald  
by their children  
Randall Truman Fitzgerald  
Jerry Dale Fitzgerald  
Jonna Gail Fitzgerald  
with grateful hearts for the comfort and care  
provided by the dedicated  
staff and volunteers of the  
Hospice of East Texas.  
May the tranquil flow of the water  
provide renewal and comfort  
in a time of need.  
Dedicated April 22, 2012**



Scott Terry speaks from the heart about his family's gift.

Jonna Fitzgerald, whose wish to honor her mother's memory, was the spark behind the waterfall garden's creation



The family of Norma Hills honored her memory with a gift to the waterfall garden.





# Can we possibly miss out on God's will?



When I worked in the returns department at a grocery store during college, I would often get customers who didn't speak my language, literally. I panicked with the first few, but after a while I was surprised to learn just how much you can communicate with eye contact.

I was reminded of this principle when my volunteer coordinator at the Hospice of East Texas recounted a recent story of a French volunteer. She wasn't sure which patient to place her with, since she was concerned her thick accent might make it difficult for the woman and her patient to understand each other. Turns out, she didn't need words at all. The volunteer was placed with a patient with advanced dementia, so communicating would have been difficult even with the most careful pronunciation. Instead, she entertained her with music and communicated with smiles.

She brought her a flower that they watered together and marked on her calendar when she would be visiting next. To the patient, the volunteer's actions must have said "You are not alone. I care about you." That's why hospice is so special. At the end of life, those two things are really all we want to feel. That patient passed away, and my coordinator was excited to have found a new patient for the volunteer, someone who had lived abroad, had taught French and spoke it fluently.

I've never been one for the God-has-a-specific-plan-for-your-life theory. It tends to keep people paralyzed and afraid, waiting for God to part the clouds and speak from heaven as to what their destiny is. What if we choose the wrong thing? Is our life ruined forever? But God is not a God of fear.

"If God has something specific for you, you'll know, I promise," wrote author Donald Miller on his blog this week. "But if He is setting a box of crayons down in front of you (a box of crayons called life) then by all means draw. He's taught you right from wrong, good from bad, beautiful from profane, so draw. He will be with you, proud of you, cheering you on, so draw. He loves you, so draw in the inspiration of the knowledge of His love. Draw a purpose horse, a red ocean, a nine-legged dog, it doesn't matter. Let's stop being so afraid."

That said, I do think He works with what we choose. I think He takes our red ocean and draws ships and sea creatures. If you speak French and choose to volunteer at hospice, He gives you a patient who speaks French and one who doesn't need words at all. He's that creative. He's that good.

*By Rebecca Hoeffner, Hospice of East Texas volunteer, and religion writer for the Tyler Morning Telegraph  
Published Saturday, July 21, 2012.*

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To the patient, the volunteer's actions must have said, "You are not alone. I care about you." That's why Hospice is so special. At the end of life, those two things are really all we want to feel.



# Hospice Myths: What's true and what isn't?

When the patient's care becomes difficult to manage at home, either physically, socially or emotionally, HomePlace is a wonderful alternative. Its home-like, peaceful atmosphere welcomes patients and families and surrounds them with extraordinary care and dignity.

Even after thirty years of hospice care in East Texas, we find that many myths still persist about what hospice care truly is and what Hospice of East Texas, in particular, can provide to patients and their families. Here are some of those myths we would like to dispel.

**MYTH: Choosing hospice care means giving up.**

**THE TRUTH:** Hospice care is actually aggressive care. The difference is that it is focused not on cure but on the treatment of pain and symptoms. Hospice patients generally have a disease or condition for which there is no cure, but that still means there is much that can be done to help them. The hospice team is armed with a robust array of treatments aimed at managing pain and symptoms and enhancing the quality of life.

**MYTH: Hospice care is expensive**

**THE TRUTH:** Medicare, Medicaid and many private insurers cover hospice care, either fully or partially. Because Hospice of East Texas is a non-profit hospice provider, we bill the patient's payer source and accept as full payment whatever that source pays for the patient's care. No patient or family member receives a bill for basic hospice services from Hospice of East Texas.

Hospice benefits cover many aspects of care, including physicians' and nurses' services, medical equipment, oxygen and medicines related to the terminal illness. This can save most families thousands of dollars, at no direct cost to them.

Hospice of East Texas has a long-standing commitment to serve all who need our care, regardless of their financial circumstances or life's situation. Every day, this means that Hospice of East Texas cares for patients with no health insurance and patients whose health insurance coverage has reached its limit. No patient is ever denied the services of Hospice of East Texas because of inability to pay.

Last year, Hospice of East Texas provided \$1.2 million in care to patients who had no way to pay for their care. With the support of our partners and friends throughout East Texas, we raise funds to make this care possible.

**MYTH: Hospice is only for cancer patients.**

**THE TRUTH:** Approximately 50% of the patients served by Hospice of East Texas are diagnosed with conditions other than cancer, including heart disease, COPD, lung disease, kidney disease, dementia and Alzheimer's.

**MYTH: Hospice "withholds" feedings so that patients die quickly.**

**THE TRUTH:** Patients are given whatever food or liquids they want until the natural progress of their disease reaches the point at which the patient refuses nourishment or cannot digest food anymore. It is often very hard for families to understand that their loved one's body simply cannot process food or liquid and that "pushing" those things on a patient can actually make them more uncomfortable. The Hospice of East Texas team is well-versed in helping families understand what is best for their loved one as a part of the dying process.



**MYTH: If a patient chooses hospice, they must give up their own doctor**

**THE TRUTH:** Patients receiving hospice care can certainly choose to remain under the care of their own doctor. If he or she chooses, that physician can consult and work with the hospice physicians who specialize in hospice and palliative care.

**MYTH: Hospice is only for the elderly**

**THE TRUTH:** While it is statistically true that most of the patients of Hospice of East Texas are elderly, we also care for people of all ages. Hospice care is for anyone with a life-limiting illness, no matter their age. Hospice of East Texas is the only hospice in our area with a specialized program for pediatric patients, serving approximately 15–20 young patients and their families every year.

**MYTH: Hospice care is only for the last few days of life**

**THE TRUTH:** In general, hospice care is offered to those whose life expectancy is six months or less if their disease process runs its normal course. The reality is that it is often difficult to predict what that normal course is.

The earlier a patient is referred to hospice, the more help they and their family can receive from the dedicated interdisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains and volunteers who will surround and support them and their families.

**MYTH: Hospice is a physical place**

**THE TRUTH:** This myth persists about Hospice of East Texas because we are blessed with our signature inpatient facility, HomePlace. The truth is that hospice is a “type of care”, and it is most often delivered in the comfort of a patient’s home.

Studies show that most Americans, if given a choice, would like to die at home, whether their home is their own, with a relative or in the care of an assisted living facility or nursing home. The support of the Hospice of East Texas team makes that wish a reality every day.

When the patient’s care becomes difficult to manage at home, either physically, socially or emotionally, HomePlace is a wonderful alternative. Its home-like, peaceful atmosphere welcomes patients and families and surrounds them with extraordinary care and dignity.

Confronting the myths about hospice care can be challenging. Invite us to speak to your Sunday School class, civic group or even to those you gather with for coffee each week. Our Community Outreach team is available to you in 23 counties to talk about “myths” and share the good news about how Hospice of East Texas can help your family, your friends and your neighbors.

Hospice of East Texas and Alzheimer’s Alliance of Smith County

## Myths about Elder Law and Long Term Care



**Greg Kimmel**

Attorney At Law  
Allen-Lottman, P.C.

PRESENTED BY   
**Partners in Education**

**Wednesday, September 19, 2012**

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Hospice of East Texas**

4111 University Blvd. Tyler, TX (Meadows Room in the main facility)

Complimentary Pie & Coffee

Greg Kimmel is an attorney at the Tyler firm of Allen-Lottmann, P.C. He concentrates his practice on business organizations, estate planning, elder law, probate and estate administration. Mr. Kimmel is a Specialist in Estate Planning and Probate law, as certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Further, in recognition of his work, national directory of attorneys Martindale-Hubbell has awarded Mr. Kimmel its coveted AV Preeminent rating, indicating the highest levels of professionalism and ethical standards. Recently, **he was named Smith County Young Lawyer of the Year, 2012.**



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903-266-3400 EXT 127**

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