

# life times

FALL 2010



## *one more time* one more time . . .

For William Taylor, fishing has been a way of life. He spent much of his working life as a fishing guide, taking clients to the best spots on East Texas lakes, sharing his knowledge and assuring them of a good catch.

But fishing wasn't just a way to make a living. Mr. Taylor just plain loved to fish, and whether he was working at his job or on his own time, he was drawn to the water. A stringer full of fish was satisfying, of course, but it was more than that. The quiet time spent by an East Texas pond, surrounded by trees and warmed by the sun was a time a man could catch his breath, slow down his thoughts, enjoy the beauty and the quiet.

Since his admission to Trinity Rehabilitation and Care Center in San Augustine, Mr. Taylor has missed the water, and he has missed fishing.

When he shared his thoughts with Anna Cooper, his social worker from Hospice of East

Texas, that was all it took!

On a warm spring day, Mr. Taylor went fishing one more time. With him were Willard Birdwell, a Hospice volunteer, Brother Sonny Scarbrough, a local pastor, and Jessica Henderson, Hospice's Director of Community Outreach for Deep East Texas. Brother Sonny had plenty of tackle and knew a friend with a stocked pond that was easily accessible for Mr. Taylor's wheelchair. Jessica loaded up snacks and drinks, and Mr. Birdwell brought the worms.

It was a perfect afternoon, the lake shimmering in the sun, not too much conversation, a really good catch. Everyone in the group appreciated the special moments together and the joy on Mr. Taylor's face as he reeled in fish after fish. When they returned to the Care Center, Mr. Taylor was very, very tired, but he was also very happy, and he had a question for the fishing crew from Hospice. "Why did you choose me?" he asked.

Why, Mr. Taylor? Because at Hospice we know that every day is a gift, a treasure not to be wasted but to be spent doing what brings meaning and joy. Because we knew that going fishing one more time mattered to you—and so it mattered to us at Hospice of East Texas. Because you are our patient, Mr. Taylor, and it is our honor and privilege to share these days with you, no matter their number, and to make them the best they can be.



# ode to Ms. B



Teddy Roosevelt was President when Ms. B was born. She lived for 102 years.

Over her lifespan she was a daughter, wife, mother grandmother and friend to many. Her last years were spent in a wheelchair. Her body was withered and twisted, with tiny legs too weak to allow her to walk. She was almost completely deaf and squeaked like a mouse when she spoke, but she would always smile and be happy to have visitors.

The night she died, her biological family was not able to come to her death bed, but we came, her family of friends and her caregivers. We came, we cried and we kissed her goodbye. And on that night, not long after Ms. B's flickering candle went out, I saw a brilliant falling star in the dark summer sky. Like her life, it shown brightly for a short while, then flickered and disappeared.

One hundred and two years reduced to an instant, in the infinity of time and space. A poignant and sobering reminder of just how fleeting life can be.

Sweet, sweet Ms. B., we will miss you and we will remember you . . . always.

Darline McCraw, RN,  
BSN, Hospice of East  
Texas, HomeCare  
Case Manager

# i don't do enough . . .

I don't do enough . . .

And how could it be that Valerie Hardy doesn't do enough? She has a busy life as a wife, mother and grandmother and as a vice president at American State Bank. Born and raised in Arp, Valerie's only employer has been the bank. . . since she was 18 and fresh out of high school. As Valerie says, she has "worked all over the bank", and all over the community, in her son's school and activities, and in her church, as a volunteer.

Why add Hospice of East Texas to her full life and her many commitments? "There's just something about Hospice that has always pulled me," says Valerie. Twenty five years ago, she and her husband had Hospice care at home for her mother-in-law, and it was a wonderful experience. "One year, I made a New Year's resolution to get involved with Hospice," says Valerie, "and it took me a year to really make it happen."

Four years later, Valerie Hardy adds "Hospice of East Texas volunteer" to the long list of things that fill her life. She leaves the bank on Thursdays and works the front desk at HomePlace every Thursday evening. "Everyone knows that Thursday is my Hospice day," Valerie says. "If they need me, they know where to find me."

Greeting people as they come into HomePlace is work that Valerie finds very meaningful. "So many people have a conception of what a hospice facility is like," she says. "They think it will be dark and gloomy and sad, but HomePlace is just the opposite. If they are coming here for the first time, I want them not to be nervous or afraid."

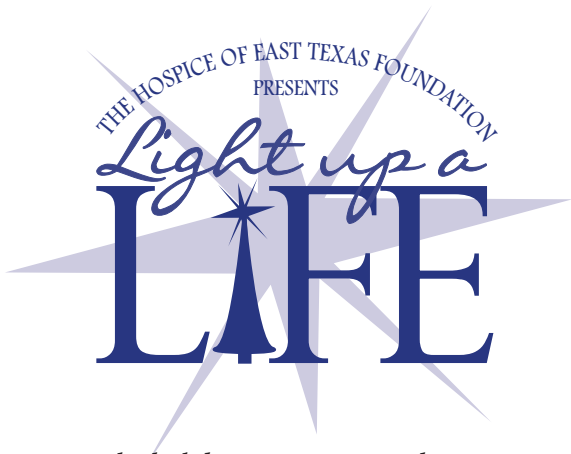
Valerie recognizes the importance of the front desk at HomePlace. "It helps for people to see someone sitting here when they come in," says Valerie, "especially if it is the first day, and they are here to admit someone they love. I want them to feel welcomed."

But HomePlace isn't all Valerie does as a volunteer. She also visits Hospice patients in their homes, currently serving two patients who reside in nursing homes and one who lives in his own home. "All my patients are glad to see me, especially those I visit in nursing homes. At the end of life, for whatever reason, people are often alone. . . but they still love company. I am so happy to be with them."

Valerie recently posted a message on her Facebook wall, encouraging all her friends to join her in volunteering for Hospice of East Texas. "It humbles me every day," she says.

At Hospice of East Texas, we are humbled by Valerie's service. . . and by anyone's standards, she is certainly "doing enough."





IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF A FRIEND OR RELATIVE



IN HONOR OF SOMEONE  
WHO LIGHTS UP YOUR LIFE



AS A HOLIDAY GIFT IN HONOR  
OF FAMILY, FRIENDS OR  
BUSINESS ASSOCIATES

As the holiday season approaches, we hope you will consider supporting The Hospice of East Texas by making a contribution to Light Up A Life, the signature fundraiser that has been an essential source of private donations for our programs for more than twenty years.

As you honor your friends or remember your loved ones, your gifts to Light Up A Life provide the

financial support essential to Hospice of East Texas' ability to offer extraordinary care at the end of life at no direct cost to patients and their families.

Watch your mail for Light Up A Life materials. What better way to give than to make a contribution that will directly touch the lives of people who need our care and compassion?

*dear hospice,*  
**dear hospice,**

I cannot express how grateful my brother and I are to have had staff from Hospice of East Texas to care for our mother during her illness. Her final 18 days on earth were spent in her own home, and we are grateful for this, as it was our mother's request.

Due to the equipment, medications, and care provided by Hospice of East Texas, my brother and I were able to care for our mother at home. Saying "thank you" just seems too little to say to the staff that tended to our mother. Deborah Palmer, RN and Tonya Anderson, CNA provided wonderful care to Mom. They always treated her with the utmost dignity and kindness and provided support for my brother and I as well.

Special thanks go to Dr. Tom Beets who came out and made a house visit to see mother. I can't tell you how very much it meant to my brother and I to have Dr. Beets say, "You all are doing a good job of taking care of your mother." Sometimes we doubted that we were doing all that we could for Mom, but Dr. Beets alleviated those doubts and fears. Dr. Beets is truly one of the most kind and caring doctors that we have ever met, and we are truly grateful to him.

Once again, the caring staff of Hospice of East Texas has blessed our family. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for everything. We will most definitely recommend Hospice of East Texas for anyone seeking services.

—Peggy Munsinger & Don Reid

**HOET** thank you

*"Dear Angels – We'll call you angels because no angel could have been more gentle or kind while our husband and father was in your care. It is a special calling given to those who are diligently working with so much love and care to make the final days or hours of a loved one easy. We'll never forget how wonderful you all were in making us feel at home. You made our worries leave and our dear one comfortable. Our only greater joy would have been if you could have really known him."*

*"Your facility is so clean, so beautiful and so very peaceful! I was most impressed! Each person who helped take care of my aunt was so caring, so soft spoken and very gentle. Thank you! You also took time out of your busy schedule to talk to each of us, answer our questions, and help us any way you could."*

Volunteers Richard Liptak and Ellen Wallace dedicate themselves to helping bereaved family members through HOET Grief Workshops and Support Groups.



Pine Cove Camp Counselors spent a hot summer day washing cars for HomePlace guests as part of the Mission Tyler service day. While at HOET, they also presented camp scholarships to the children of two employees, Susan Crumpton and Lola Sirles



Hospice of East Texas has created a Walk of Friends in the Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners' demonstration garden in downtown Nacogdoches. This walk is similar to the "Walk of Friends" in the gardens surrounding HomePlace, Hospice's freestanding in-patient facility in Tyler. Paved with bricks, the Walk of Friends will be etched with lasting memories, joyful tributes and fond farewells given in honor or memory of friends and loved ones.



Shane Lee, Director of Facilities Management, receives a donation of lantanas from Jordan's Plant Farm for summer planting



Members of The Junior League of Tyler participated in the League's Day of Service by cleaning up flowerbeds and patio furniture at the Pat Oge Center for Living at HOET.

While a senior at Robert E. Lee, Alex Way did two rotations at Hospice HomePlace as part of her Health Science Tech class. Alex had planned to do only one rotation, but she found that HomePlace had a special place in her heart. "My great-grandmother was cared for here, and they were so good to her," said Alex. "There's just no place like it!" Alex is continuing her studies at Tyler Junior College this fall and plans to transfer to Stephen F. Austin.



When Hattie Watson died at HomePlace she was comforted by the homemade quilt on her bed, and her family was touched by its presence. Daughters Martha Yancey (pictured) and Mary Ellen Sheffield created a beautiful quilt in their mother's memory. Its floral pieces came from the smock Mrs. Watson wore at a job she adored, serving as nursery coordinator at her church, First Baptist in Liberty City. This beautiful quilt will now provide comfort to another family, in Mrs. Watson's memory.



The Friends of Hospice of East Texas designated a portion of their contribution toward the purchase of a beautiful quilt art pieces for family rooms at HomePlace.



There are just some things that are important. When a HomePlace patient wanted to see his horse, it was fine for his son to bring it for a visit right up to the patient's window.

*"Thanks to you and all the many other folks at Hospice of East Texas.*

*Thank you for remembering the one year anniversary of my husband's home-going.*

*You have been so helpful during this year, and at times, my lifeline to get me through a day or a week."*

*"This is a note of sincere appreciation for the Hospice Home Aides and RNs that came to my home for the care of my precious mother. There is no word in Webster's Dictionary that can be said – they were just simply great. They made me feel like they were treating a little fragile doll as they did their daily duty. Everyday they left I would go to her bed and say 'Oh Mother, they've got you looking so pretty!'"*

# televisions, monkey grass, and other good things.

It all adds up.

The refurbishment of the Robert M. Rogers Hospice Center and HomePlace in the early part of this year was a huge undertaking. Every surface was repainted, re-floored or redone. Every piece of furniture was replaced . . . all new state-of-the-art hospital beds in the patient rooms, all new tables, couches and chairs in the family gathering spaces, so lovingly and constantly used for more than ten years. A big project with a big budget.

A group of donors looked at the renovation project, and were not overwhelmed by its size at all. "What can we do?", they asked, and they found a piece of the renovation to make their own. Thirty one families committed to the purchase of thirty one televisions - 28 small ones for the patient rooms and three larger ones for the family rooms.

About the same time, Barbara Bain was cleaning out her flower beds and had a mountain of monkey grass that needed a new home. As a member of the Friends of Hospice of East Texas, Barbara was familiar with the gardens around HomePlace and called to see if her monkey

grass could be of use. The Junior League volunteers planted it around the Oge Center for Living when they were on campus for their Day of Service, making the walkways that greet bereaved families welcoming once again.

Televisions and monkey grass. A meal for a patient's family. An hour of time. A \$25 gift in memory of a friend. A group's day of service together.

Hospice of East Texas cares for more than 325 patients and their families on any given day in a service area that covers thousands of square miles. Our ability to do that is made possible by all sorts of gifts, none of them small, each of them contributing to Hospice's commitment to care for all who need us, regardless of their financial circumstances. Money not spent on televisions can provide medicine for a patient who doesn't have insurance coverage. Money saved on maintaining the gardens buys art supplies for groups of bereaved children.

Every gift matters to Hospice of East Texas.

It all adds up.



## HomePlace TV Donors

JoAnn and Joe Bill Belue	Pam and Mike Jones
Dawn and Lanny Bridges	Kay and Paul Latta
Patti and Hub Coleman	Margaret and John Moss
Libby and Larry Dixon	Suzanne and Scott Myers
Charlotte and Joe Elliott <i>in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Elliott, Sr. and Betty Crow</i>	Peggy and Jim Ryder Tammy Scahill
Karen and Keith Freeman	Debbie and Joe Smith
Janet and Paul Fulmer	Jarvie and Earnie Stroupe
Amanda and Erich Habermehl	Latricia and Joe Sutton
June and Steve Hillis	Suzi and David Teegarden
Sharlotte and Tommy Hyde (Crew Cut)	Pam and Don Thedford
Sherry and Keith Ingram	Serena and Ronald Vrnak <i>in memory of Lucille Stiles</i>
	Chesley and Ted Walters

# a note from marji



Samuel Taylor Coleridge, English poet and philosopher penned the thought, “The happiness of life is made up of

minute fractions—the little soon forgotten charities of a kiss or smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment, and the countless infinitesimal of pleasurable and genial feeling.” Coleridge captures the essence of the human experience; the fibers from which the fabric of life is woven.

I am convinced that the collection of thousands of little things has provided comfort and peace to our patients and those who care for and about them and have made the Hospice of East Texas a better program. To name a few...

- *Answering a call in the lonely middle of the night hours (whether at HomePlace or a triage nurse talking a family member through an approach) to manage pain, or another symptom, eases anxiety and anguish.*
- *A gentle touch on the arm or shoulder, the presence of self, provided by hospice colleagues (staff and volunteers).*
- *Realizing when a family or a colleague needs additional support and providing or arranging for the support.*
- *Acknowledging when one needs additional support and guidance (for we are human) and together creating a culture where it is comfortable to seek support.*
- *Knowing when to just listen!*

- *Driving an hour (or two) to deliver equipment, medication, medical supply or expertise while on call, then doing it again because another patient and/or family has a need, with graciousness and compassion.*
- *Serving the Hospice of East Texas mission, meeting patients and families on their terms, not ours. Each end of life journey is personal and unique.*
- *Valuing our team members.*
- *Knowing that the little things matter, such as searching six grocery stores until the favorite popsicle flavor was obtained or providing a manicure or an unexpected visit because of an intuition of a need.*
- *Challenging each other to do our best, and together creating a culture where it is safe, and expected, to pose such challenges.*

I could continue to expound for hours and pages. The little things contributed by the Hospice of East Texas Board, staff and volunteers have had an exponential positive impact on the lives we have touched; one person, one family at a time. It is an honor and a privilege to serve.

—Marjorie Ream  
President and CEO  
Hospice of East Texas



*“I have been a nurse in Tyler for many years and in various positions. The last seven years have been the most enjoyable and satisfying of my career. I am a RN at Hospice of East Texas HomePlace. We have just completed a total renovation of our HomePlace and it is just simply beautiful and comforting. I usually work two shifts a week and each time I enter the front door, I feel such elation and satisfaction to know that I may bring comfort to someone in pain or comfort to a family member who may be dealing with a loss. Each staff member throughout HomePlace is very dedicated and compassionate. I would like to thank the Management of HomePlace for the opportunity to work for such a beautiful place.”*

—Paula Greenlee



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