

# VolunteerConnections

## AGENCY UPDATES

### Name Change:

During the next several months, we will be finalizing the transition from the name *Hospice of Larimer County* to *Pathways Hospice*. Hopefully the letter that you received explained much of the background, process and reasoning behind the choice of this new name.

We welcome your thoughts and feedback on our name!

In the coming weeks, we will be sending out name badges for you with the new logo. If anyone wants a different picture, now would be a good time! You could email your picture to the volunteer office or call and set up a time to come out and we can snap a new one.



### Hospice Care Center Expansion and New Director:

Two exciting updates from the Hospice Care Center.



*Mark Clem. HCC Director*

Work began in July and finished up in September. After the dust settled, we have 2 new patient rooms (bringing the total to 7) and a beautiful, larger family room. It looks great! The staff is so thrilled to have our wonderful Care Center volunteers to help care for the additional patients and families.

Mark Clem has accepted the position of Care Center Director. He will assume this role during the first week of December. Mark is new to the Care Center but not new to hospice work or HLC. He has been serving in the role of South Clinical Team director since June 2008. Before that, he worked for Hospice of the Valley in Phoenix. Mark is both a Chaplain and a RN and is excited to work with the wonderful staff and volunteers at HCC.

### Website:

Our new website is up and running! Go to [www.pathways-care.org](http://www.pathways-care.org) and check it out. There are several features particularly for current volunteers that I wanted to point out.

- Grief Support and Patient Care progress notes: These documents are now online. You can download/print notes whenever you need them. Volunteer Services will still need to mail out return envelopes.
- Newsletter: The Volunteer Connections Newsletter is now online.

### Coming soon on the website

- Volunteer Calendar of Events: I will soon be posting the calendar of events for volunteers for you to access easily and at your convenience.
- Articles of Interest: I will be posting articles of interest, book reviews, volunteer stories and more in this section.

We want the website to be a tool to keep you informed and connected! If you have any other ideas for things to include in the website for volunteers, let us know!

## VOLUNTEER SERVICES UPDATES

**Integration of Patient/Family Care Volunteers into the Team:** In our continuing effort to integrate volunteers into the care team, we will be beginning a new procedure. Within the first few weeks of each new assignment, patient care volunteers will receive a phone call from the social worker on the case. The purpose of this call is to welcome you to the case, provide any insight they may have and give you the opportunity to answer any preliminary questions that you may have. This is the first time we have done this so we will be working out kinks, I'm sure, and I will be excited to get your feedback on how this is going. For all patient/family care volunteers, I have included an updated team photo page with this newsletter.

**Teleconferences:** Just a reminder that HLC hosts monthly teleconferences that HLC staff and volunteers are welcome to attend. Check out the back of this newsletter for details on upcoming topics. These are lunch-time gatherings, so you are welcome to bring your lunch.

**Vigil Volunteer Corner:** We passed our six month anniversary on the Vigil Volunteer program. The program is building momentum and the on-call staff is *so pleased* to have this to offer families when there is a need. It has made a huge difference when it has been needed! Having said that, demand is still sporadic and because of this, the patience of our Vigil Volunteers is greatly appreciated. Next year, we will begin to have dedicated Vigil Volunteer discussion groups and mailings specific to topics around this unique program. If you are interested in more information about becoming a Vigil Volunteer, contact the volunteer office.

## READING LIST

*Suggested reading for hospice volunteers.  
Prepared by library volunteers Louise Vance,  
Sally Korshak and Nancy Beardslee*

### **How We Grieve. Relearning the World** by Thomas Attig

This book presents stories of grieving, listening and responding. The use of vignettes takes the reader along to understand the individual coping styles.

### **The True Work of Dying**

by Jan Bernard and M. Schneider

A practical and compassionate guide to easing the dying process. Examples of actual experiences are provided that can help the dying person and demystify the last stage of life.

### **The Four Things that Matter Most**

by Ira Byock

This book provides common sense ways to nurture relationships. Important chapters include ones of forgiveness, thank you, I love you and good bye.

### **The Needs of the Dying**

by D. Kessler  
This is a guide for bringing hope, comfort and love to life's final chapter. Kessler provides a vocabulary that helps people communicate with each other at this time of life.

### **Life Lessons**

by E. Kubler-Ross and D. Kessler

Experts on death and dying teach about the mysteries of life and living. The stories provide examples for the themes of: the importance of play, finding one's own power, loving relationships, and self compassion.



## Fall Parties -

On two beautiful fall days, volunteers gathered together to socialize, share stories and be thanked for their wonderful service to the patients, families and staff of Hospice of Larimer County! Thank you to those who attended. A big thanks to Linda and Gerry Coyne for hosting the south team party and Michele Desnoes for hosting the north team party. I do like having these parties in a backyard setting. Would you like to host next years' get-togethers? Ask the volunteer office for details (it's easy and fun!) Disclaimer: pictures are from parties 2007, which were fun too!

## **VOLUNTEER EDUCATION: WORKING WITH APHASIC PATIENTS**

**What is Aphasia?** Aphasia is an acquired disorder that impairs a person's ability to process language but does not affect intelligence. You have most likely worked with an aphasic patient during your volunteer service with HLC. Aphasia impairs the ability to speak and understand others. Many people with aphasia also experience difficulty reading and writing.

**What Causes Aphasia?** The most common cause of aphasia is stroke. Brain damage, infection, head injury, dementia, or a brain tumor can all cause aphasia.

**How Do You Communicate with a Person With Aphasia?**

- Give the person with aphasia time to speak and do not finish the person's sentences unless asked.
- Be sensitive to background noise and turn off competing sounds such as radios or TVs where possible.
- Be open to means of communicating other than speech eg. Use drawing or gesturing.
- Confirm that you are communicating successfully.
- Be honest. Let them know if you can't quite understand what they are trying to communicate.
- Maintain a conversational manner appropriate for an adult.
- Include the person in conversations when there is a group.
- Ask for their opinion.

It is important to remember that they are communicating with you whether it makes sense or not. What they are doing makes sense to them so it is our job to try and understand in order to respond in an appropriate manner. Often this simply takes time, patience and the willingness to "learn a new language."

**Does Aphasia Affect a Person's Intelligence?** No. A person with aphasia may have difficulty retrieving words and names, but the person's intelligence is intact. It is the ability to access ideas and thought through language - not the ideas and thoughts themselves that is disrupted.

## **VOLUNTEER STORIES: SUGGESTIONS FROM VOLUNTEERS ON WORKING WITH NON-VERBAL OR VERBALLY IMPAIRED PATIENTS**

**Volunteer Mary Lu Lovett** tries breathing activities. "Maybe we can start with some breathing today to make you feel better. For example, I breathe loudly to help the patient entrain with me and get some oxygen to the brain. Most patients are shallow breathers. I feel I have had a great visit if the patient takes a deep breath and sighs. It's alright to change your plan if something isn't working. Make an adaptation to the activity to make it work better. Don't be afraid to do things that don't work." For example, with one patient, Mary Lu experimented with art. "Tape paper to a foam core board to make the project more accessible to the needs of the patient. If paint isn't working switch to markers. I remember attaching a marker to Janet's hand so she could draw. It brought a sense of humor to the situation."

**Volunteer Art Rooze.** "I worked with someone who could speak with clear words, but was entirely non-coherent. I listened and responded and spoke to him as if he were making complete and total sense. He always seemed to respond to this, in turn, with appropriate hand gestures, facial expression, eye contact, voice inflection, and occasionally some bits of humor, and lots of words, even though his words did not cohere. Despite his severe mental limits, he was very obviously aware that I was taking what he said seriously, in the same remembered way that people had always taken him seriously in his earlier life."

**Volunteer Shelbie Mestes.** Shelbie worked with a non-verbal patient who suffered from Shy-Drager Syndrome. The patient was alert and oriented though she was extremely limited in what she could say. Their visits were very focused on tactile activities: hand rubs, painting her nails and physical touch. They invented a "Squeeze Game." Shelbie would hold her hand and they would see how hard the patient could squeeze her hand, practice with patterns and repetitions.

**Volunteer Cathy Sloan.** Cathy worked with a patient who struggled with Parkinson's disease and who was non-verbal. After her first visit, she researched and discovered that his family were missionaries so she went to the library and found tapes of old hymns. When she visited next, she played the tapes and he started to sing! Cathy says, "It was so touching, it brought tears to my eyes. Here he was not saying a thing and then he heard this music and he started croaking out the words."

**Volunteer Ann Foorman.** "Some of the most intimate times I have shared with patients and their families have been in prayerful silence. I am always mindful of the atmosphere in the room -- seeking to let there be a quiet, peaceful calm, softening lights and if available, playing soothing music. Actively inquire as to whether touch is welcome: holding hands, gently pressing the feet and ankles, caressing the face, combing the hair. Their feedback is sometimes subtle, but one can perceive the cues of reception. "

# Hospice of Larimer County - Calendar of Events

All events will take place at Hospice of Larimer County, 305 Carpenter Rd unless otherwise noted.

## December 2008

### **Surviving the Holidays After the Death of a Loved One**

Thursday, December 4  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

A presentation for bereaved persons providing ideas to navigate the holiday season. This is a good presentation for volunteers to build empathy towards what your patients and families are experiencing.

### **Abby's Concert Series Christmas Concert of Reflective Music**

Monday, December 15

10:00 am and 5:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church

531 S. College in Fort Collins

Featuring Dave Beegle, Christy French and Chuck Landgraf. Benefit offering accepted by Hospice of Larimer County and Respite Care, Inc.

## January 2009

### **An Evening of Remembrance: Community Memorial Service**

Monday, January 12  
5:30 pm

Annual community memorial service honoring those that HLC has served during the past year. Service includes a slide show, messages from HLC staff and special rituals.

### **Volunteer Orientation**

Wednesday, January 28

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

General orientation of hospice philosophy, history of the hospice movement, general information on Hospice of Larimer County and the role of the volunteer at HLC.

### **The Gifts of Grief**

Thursday, January 29

7:00 p.m.

The Gifts of Grief is a compelling film that explores how a unique group of people embrace their pain, learn to live with their loss and now engage in life with more compassion, courage and awareness. Following the showing, there will be an opportunity to participate in a discussion group. Suggested \$5 donation.

### **Winter Patient/Family Care Volunteer Training**

January 29, 30 and 31

Registration Required

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## February 2009

### **Memorial Service**

Thursday, February 12

8:30 - 9:15 a.m.

A quiet time to gather with other clinical team members and honor those patients that have passed within the last month.

### **Teleconference: "Working with Challenging Families"**

Thursday, February 12

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Offered to staff and volunteers. These are presented by health care professionals who work in hospices across the country. The presentations are organized by the NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.)

### **Volunteer Support/Discussion Group**

Tuesday, February 17

3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

An informal gathering of volunteers, facilitated by a social worker/counselor. The goal is to share stories, ask questions and hear how other volunteers approach situations.

## March 2009

### **"Finding the Sacred at the End of the Long Road: Helping Dementia Patients and Their Families Embrace a Peaceful Death."**

Thursday, March 5

2:00 pm

Presented by Laura Beer, Music Therapist and Maria McLain-Cox, Chaplain

Maria and Laura have created a unique program where they combine music and faith practices to connect and support dementia patients. This is an interactive workshop combining video clips, research information and specific ideas to help caregivers and volunteers enter the world of dementia patients and be with them.

### **Memorial Service**

Thursday, March 12

8:30 - 9:15 a.m.

A quiet time to gather with other clinical team members and honor those patients that have passed within the last month.

### **Teleconference: "Medication Safety"**

Thursday, March 12

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Offered to staff and volunteers. These are presented by health care professionals who work in hospices across the country. The presentations are organized by the NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.)