

Hospice associates plan supply trip to Zimbabwe

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Five local women will begin a journey of more than 9,000 miles today to visit the Bulawayo Island Hospice in Zimbabwe.

The women, representing Pathways Hospice of Northern Colorado, will deliver nearly 200 pounds of medical and caregiving supplies to the staff and patients at their sister facility in Africa.

Hospices throughout the world provide compassionate end-of-life care for patients and their families.

"They are enormously excited for us to come," said Nancy Jakobsson, director of grief and loss counseling at Pathways.

"They have a very small staff, with

a couple of nurses, a social worker and a director. Much of their local support disappeared when many of the more affluent people, who could help, left the country."

Jakobsson will be joined by Georgia Torson, who served on the board of directors of Pathways for nine years; current board member Jane Anderson; Sarah Van Etten, volunteer director at Pathways Counseling; and Wilma Feeley, a Pathways Hospice nurse.

The women are paying all of their own expenses for the trip.

The local hospice first connected with the African hospice two years ago through the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa, an affiliate of the U.S.-based National Hospice and Palliative Care organi-

zation and the National Hospice Foundation.

"Conditions have gotten better there, and this is the best time for us to go," Jakobsson said.

"This is a fact-finding exchange. We're there to learn. We want to get a firsthand look at what their needs may be and how we can help."

Jakobsson said she has felt overwhelmed by the outpouring of good wishes from people wanting to donate.

"We're closer together in the world now," said Jakobsson. "It's great when we are able to touch someone in another country with special needs. People are really generous."

A fundraiser held at the Chapungu Sculpture Park at Centerra raised

\$9,000 that will assist the Zimbabwe hospice in providing nursing and other care. The money will be distributed to the hospice through FHSSA.

One challenge of the trip has been packing. The women can take no more than 18 pounds of personal items each, to allow them to carry the donated supplies in their luggage.

Among the items they will deliver are medical supplies (excluding prescription medication, which is not allowed), over-the-counter medicines, catheters, diapers, clothing, blankets and books for children.

"We have a substantial amount of medical equipment that will go with us as well," Jakobsson said.