



## Hospice – A Need for Greater Awareness

Two months after Michael's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday he noticed a dull, nagging pain in his hip. He brushed it off as arthritis brought on by college football injuries. When the pain intensified, his wife, Beverly, insisted he visit his physician. It was cancer.

It had started in his lung and had now metastasized to his bones. At the time of diagnosis it was stage four. There is no stage five.

Neither Mike nor Beverly thought it possible that cancer could exist undetected and then manifest itself so rapidly at the terminal stage. They quickly learned there was much more they didn't know about care for the dying.

Mike followed a course of aggressive radiation and chemotherapy. Nine months later, Mike was convinced that the treatments were causing as much discomfort as the cancer. At the suggestion of one of their children, Beverly called the local hospice. It was only after her call that Mike's physician acknowledged that hospice was an option.

The focus on symptom control, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support seemed ideal for Mike and the family. Unfortunately, Mike died three days after his hospice admission—clearly, insufficient time to take full advantage of the many benefits hospice offered.

"Why didn't we call hospice earlier?" That question echoed in Beverly's mind. Most hospice professionals will tell you this is one of

the most frequently heard comments from families they serve.

Predicting the amount of time left for a patient with a life-limiting illness is difficult in the best of situations. No two people respond exactly the same way to medical treat-



*Mike with his wife Beverly; as a senior at Washington & Lee, Mike played in the 1950 Gator Bowl; and creating summer memories with his kids at the shore.*

ments or the illness itself. Physicians cannot be expected to predict a patient's life expectancy.

However, as many of the nation's 3,200 hospice organizations will tell you, far too many Americans are unaware of the option of hospice care when facing a serious illness. Educating patients and families about the full scope of their illness and the range of available options is critical if we are to make informed decisions about our health care.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, a non-profit group representing hospice and palliative care providers and professionals, reports that hospices served more than 885,000 dying Americans in 2002.

"More Americans are using the services of hospice every year," commented J. Donald Schumacher, president and CEO of NHPCO. "Yet, we estimate that for every person who receives hospice, there is another person who would greatly benefit but does not get this special care."

Hospice is not a place but a philosophy of care that provides professional medical services, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support in a caring manner that places the patient and family at the center of care. An interdisciplinary team of medical professionals and trained volunteers deliver care with the wishes of the patient and family always a priority.

Hospice care is a covered expense under Medicare, Medicaid  
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## Greater Awareness

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aid, most private insurance plans, HMOs and other manager care organizations. While most care is provided in the home, hospice is also available in most skilled nursing facilities, long-term care centers, and at inpatient hospices.

Should physicians be stronger supporters of hospice? Should families learn to be their own health care advocates? Both ideas are wise. Improving care for the dying is a responsibility that we must share, professionals and consumers alike.

November 2003 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Hospice Month, an excellent time to learn about choices available for those facing a life-limiting illness. We need to move family discussions surrounding end-of-life decisions out of the halls of hospitals and relocate them to the kitchen table. A clearer understanding of how hospice might have helped her husband earlier might have done so much more for Beverly and her family.

For more information, visit NHPCO at [www.nhpc.org](http://www.nhpc.org) or call 1-800-658-8898. Contact Hospice of the Prairie at 620-227-7209 for information on local resources.

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Hospice of the Prairie offers a support group for those who provide care for a loved one with a terminal or chronic illness. The structure of this group includes an educational topic/lesson, followed by discussion and general sharing of experience, strength, and hope among the members. The Caregiver Support Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the Hospice of the Prairie office and is open to anyone in the community who would like to attend.

Please contact Teresa Stuart at 227-7209 if you are interested in attending the Caregiver Support Group.

## November is National Home Care & Hospice Month!

### HOSPICE IS THE CARE AMERICANS WANT:

- Research by the National Hospice Foundation identifies the top four concerns Americans have surrounding end-of-life care:
  - ♦ Someone to be sure that the patient's wishes are enforced;
  - ♦ Choice among the types of services the patient can receive;
  - ♦ Pain control tailored to the patient's wishes; and
  - ♦ Emotional support for the patient and family.
- Research has consistently shown that almost 80% of Americans would prefer to die in their homes, free of pain, surrounded by family and loved ones. Hospice makes this happen. However, of the 2.4 million people who die in this country

each year, only 25% actually die at home.

- NHPCO reports that only 10% of all patients who died under hospice care in 2001 died in a hospital.
- Hospice and palliative care addresses the major concerns of most Americans.

### HOSPICE CARE IS NOT LIMITED TO SIX-MONTHS OF SERVICE:

- While many insurance companies, as well as the Medicare Hospice Benefit, require that a terminally ill patient have a prognosis of six months or less, there is not a six-month limit to hospice care services.
- Hospice eligibility requirements should not be confused with length of service.

## Tell Your Story!

Capture your life, experiences, wisdom, and traditions for loved ones and future generations on a LifeDisk™.

- Record your message as it can only come from you, with your personality and spirit so that they will know the real you.
- Non-threatening, comfortable process where you can organize your thoughts and digitally record them in a variety of ways.
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- **No risk!** If you are not happy with your LifeDisks, return them and the small fee for this service is refunded. No hassles! You are loved and your life matters to others.

For more information, contact:



Hospice of the Prairie, Inc.  
2010 1st Ave.  
Dodge City, KS 67801  
(620) 227-7209

- A patient in the final phase of life may receive hospice care for as long as necessary when a physician certifies that he or she continues to meet eligibility requirements.
- Under the Medicare Hospice Benefit, two 90-day periods of care (a total of six months) are followed by an unlimited number of 60-day periods.

**INCREASING AWARENESS IS VITAL:**

- While the number of Americans receiving hospice and palliative care grows each year, NHPCO estimates that for every patient who receives hospice, another patient could benefit from the comprehensive services hospice provides but does not receive this special care.
- In 2001, NHPCO statistics reveal that 34% of hospice patients died within seven days or less, often an inadequate time for the patient and family to take advantage of the range of available services.
- Many people are unaware that hospice care is available for nursing facility residents.
- Lack of awareness of hospice means that too many Americans still die alone or in pain. Too many patients are being referred to hospice care too late, or not at all. And too many families are left without bereavement support.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has indicated that expanding the reach of hospice care holds enormous potential benefits for those nearing the end of life, whether they are in nursing homes, their own homes, or in hospitals.



The gift of *Peace of Mind* may be the most important gift you give your family, and yourself, this holiday season.

- Four out of five Kansans will not die suddenly. When Kansans are unable to tell us what kind of care they want to receive:
  - Families face tremendous stresses
  - Critical decisions must be made
  - Emotions run high
  - Conflicts between family members often emerge
- Advance Care Planning lets YOU decide what kind of healthcare you will receive - while you are still healthy and free of crisis or pressure, and your family members will have a clear guide to follow if you become seriously ill.

Hospice of the Prairie, Inc.  
invites you to a *free*  
**Community Seminar**

**“Healthcare Directives”**

Thursday, November 6  
7:00 p.m.

Dodge City Public Library  
1001 2nd Avenue • Dodge City

*Pre-registration is preferred*

**620-227-7209**

(A Notary Public will be present for those who wish to complete Healthcare Directives at the seminar.)

**AMERICANS ARE AGING:**

- Today, there are more than 40 million Americans over the age of 65; in the next thirty years that number is expected to double.
- People over the age of 85 are the fastest growing segment of our population.
- It is estimated that there are more than 72,000 people who have reached 100 years of age. In the next fifty years that number is expected to reach 834,000.
- It is estimated that fewer than 25% of all Americans have completed advance directives that tell their family and physician what their wishes would be should they face a life-limiting illness.

**VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

Hospice of the Prairie will host a Volunteer Training in January 2004, on a date to be announced.

Participants of the training are not obligated to become a hospice volunteer; the training is simply an opportunity to learn more about hospice care and other related topics. Those who choose to be a volunteer can pick from a wide variety of roles, which include: being a friendly visitor to patients at home or the nursing home, working in the office, making deliveries, making bereavement calls, and more!

Those interested in learning more about the Volunteer Training can contact Nancy Renner, Volunteer Coordinator at 227-7209.

[www.hospiceoftheprairie.com](http://www.hospiceoftheprairie.com)

## MEMORIALS...

Hospice of the Prairie, Inc. wishes to thank the following for their contributions in honor of their loved ones. Their generosity will help enable Hospice to continue to address the physical needs of our patients, as well as to assist with the spiritual and psychosocial needs that arise during this time for both the patient and family. We believe that this support enables life to be lived as fully as possible, even though dying is imminent.

### **Blanche Bergkamp**

Bill & Rita Bergkamp  
Walter & Aldine Maier  
Mr. & Mrs. John Maier  
Mr. & Mrs. Les West

### **Colleen McKinney**

Ruth McAlexander  
Frank & Dorothy Morrison  
Marjorie Shearer  
Bill & Glorinda Shearer

### **Jack Eckles**

J.W. & Frances Van Blaricum

*"Thanks for all your help with Dad. You guys from top to bottom were great. Your tenderness and caring was a true inspiration. May God bless all of you."*

### **Ed Vest**

First National Bank of Cimarron  
Crotts Aircraft Service  
Coast Road Runners Motorcycle Assn.  
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Thomas & Judith Claar  
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Robert & Sonya Hughes  
Judy Kuhn  
Clifford & Linda Morton  
Mildred Norton  
Mary Rinehart  
Ron Sidebottom  
Warren & Alexis Wallis

### **Forrest "Jim" Trent**

Carl & Letitia Brasher

### **Vida Woodworth**

Dona Warshaw

*"We do not know how we could have done without your help in the last weeks of [our loved one]'s life and especially the last few days. The books you sent on the death experience and the grief experience have helped us all understand a little better."*

**DONATIONS...**

Hospice of the Prairie wishes to thank the following for their generosity. These contributions help Hospice further its mission.

Boot Hill Feeders  
 Volunteer Assistance Ministry,  
 Ashland, KS  
 Jewell, Marilyn & Megan Murry

[www.hospiceoftheprairie.com](http://www.hospiceoftheprairie.com)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Oct 9 Adult Grief Support Group
- Oct 14 Caregiver Group
- Oct 14 Volunteer Inservice
- Oct 15 Bereavement Lunch
- Oct 23 Adult Grief Support Group
- Oct 28 Caregiver Group
- Nov 6 "Healthcare Directives" Community Seminar
- Nov 11 Caregiver Group
- Nov 11 Volunteer Inservice
- Nov 13 Adult Grief Support Group
- Nov 19 Bereavement Lunch
- Nov 25 Caregiver Group
- Dec 1 Memorial Service & Tree Dedication
- Dec 2-29 "Celebration of Life" Tree
- Dec 9 Caregiver Group
- Dec 9 Volunteer Caroling
- Dec 11 Adult Grief Support Group
- Dec 17 Bereavement Lunch
- Dec 23 Caregiver Group

*Please remember that attendance at any our groups is open to all persons and is free of charge.*

**INSERVICE**

Hospice of the Prairie offers monthly inservices to our volunteers and staff to broaden their awareness and knowledge of hospice related issues. The wide range of topics covered during the meetings can benefit those attending, both personally and professionally. We welcome anyone in the community who would like to attend.

Our next inservice is October 14, and is offered at 10:00 am and 7:00 pm. The topic will be "Prairie Home Health Services and Universal Precautions," presented by **Jennifer Cardone, RN.**

Please contact Nancy at 227-7209 if you would like to attend one of our inservices.

**SPEAKERS BUREAU**

Need a speaker for your church, civic group or club? Hospice of the Prairie offers a variety of topics through the Hospice of the Prairie Speaker's Bureau. Topics include advance directives, home health care, helping children cope with loss, hospice care, and caregiving. The Speaker's Bureau can work with you to meet the needs of your group. If interested, please call 620-227-7209.



The "Celebration of Life Tree" — your tax-deductible contribution to Hospice of the Prairie, Inc. will illuminate a symbolic light on a beautiful holiday tree. You may dedicate your light in honor of someone you admire or in memory of someone you miss — names will be on display with the tree. Brighten the holiday season by helping us *Celebrate Life!*

December 1 Dedication & Remembrance Ceremony, First United Methodist Church, 7:00 pm (Please RSVP to 227-7209 if you wish to attend)

December 2 - 29 On display at Village Square Mall

-----  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please use the back of this form for additional names)*

Notify someone of your gift:

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ gift notification cards.

*Please mail \$10.00 for each light requested to:*

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 P.O. Box 1208  
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