



APR-  
JUNE  
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# NEWSLETTER

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## Chaplain's CORNER



*"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." (Job 1:20-22)*

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The Bible tells of a saint named Job. Job was seen as God's standard in that day as there wasn't any man as God-fearing as he was. But more than that, he was also seen as man's standard of goodness since in that day no one was as kind and wise as he was. However, he was touched by a great loss. A trial of storms and raiders wiped out his family and possessions, while he was still reeling from the first attack, a second came and wiped out his health. Then came the third blow – his friends turned on him in the midst of his grief. After each storm reports came in to Job and after all the reports were in he acted in a very interesting way...

1. Job rose from his chair
2. Job tore his coat
3. Job shaved his head
4. Job fell down
5. Job worshiped God

We see Job's grief turned to worship. While he was on the ground emptied of all happiness, possessions and health; Job remembered three key words, "God is Good". But how does one

worship God when his life is crumbling all around him? How do you find good when you are surrounded by nothing but grief and loss? It is at this time that we need to rely on our God more than ever. To trust Him and turn to Him for answers and comfort.

It is easy when grief and loss hits us to turn from God or even to get angry with Him. Job did not go this route in dealing with his immense losses though. The bible takes us through his sadness in ripping his coat and shaving his head, (An unmistakable custom of mourning – like wearing black or an arm band). Job did not try to put the best face on a bad situation, but immediately following these outward signs of grief, he falls down and worships God. He remembers right away that God is there walking with him on the course his life has taken.

To remember God in your time of hurt will bring a measure of comfort. True, it does not immediately replace the loss, but the healing process can begin when God is placed above the issue we are facing. God is always there to comfort and console us and He looks for us to lean on Him when our lives are capsize

(continued on page 2)

by loss, to trust Him and His ways when we cannot see the forest for the trees. God makes Himself real to the broken and hurting if they look for Him because He is there for each and every one. Grief is not something that can be overcome in days, or sometimes even years but when you walk with God during it He will make a way for you to cope and be able to move forward each and every time. Sometimes this is in those that God has placed around us – like our staff at Serenity who

are present at bedside as well as after the passing of our patients. Other times it is in signs that people look for – one of my favorites was a patient in Ste. Genevieve who said that God told her He would send butterflies and bluebirds to her family after she passed as a sign to let them know she was ok and it was great to hear stories of how butterflies surround their porch daily in a show of faithfulness from God. Either way, it is great to know that a loving God has not left us to wallow in grief; but

to rise above it instead and see how good He is – as well as how blessed we are, each and every day, to be called His.

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*Scott Edgar is our Serenity HospiceCare Chaplain and visits patients in the 8 counties we serve. He provides the spiritual support that is so vital to end-of-life care. Scott is a valued asset to our entire interdisciplinary team.*



## Good INFORMATION

### When is it Time for Hospice Care?

By Jenna Firehammer

No one wants to have the discussion about a loved one going on hospice, and yet we hear day after day that families wish they would have chosen Serenity HospiceCare sooner! These precious families are finding that our support team, and the extensive care we provide, is just the relief they need when they are overwhelmed by a terminal diagnosis.

We frequently see aging husbands or wives caring for terminally ill spouses with limited resources, struggling to manage doctor's appointments, medications and issues like incontinence and immobility. They can't make it on their own, but they don't realize that help is available, at no cost to them, from a team of devoted hospice workers.

We see residents in nursing facilities who could benefit so much from the additional support services provided by hospice. Our Serenity HospiceCare team can come and work right alongside the facility staff to give each terminally ill patient the very best care possible, but sadly, many patients and families are unaware that this extra level of care is available in the nursing home setting.

We see busy adult children putting everything on hold to care for mom or dad, doing everything in their power to keep their loved ones at home despite the challenges of caring for someone with a terminal diagnosis. We see desperation. We witness caregiver fatigue. We hear the cries for help. Families in these circumstances so often say that they feel like they are drowning and just want to get their heads above water, but Serenity is here to throw out the life-preserver.

The Serenity team steps into these situations and immediately begins relieving pressure, giving guidance and support, and putting a care-plan into action. Doctor visits and copays are eliminated as care is provided in the home by our medical staff. We cover most prescription costs and delivery of necessary medications.

Serenity HospiceCare provides medical equipment, incontinence supplies and even sends a CNA 3 times a week to bathe our patients and provide personal care. Our social workers counsel families and assist with final arrangements. Our chaplain provides spiritual care and counseling, and a loving team of volunteers offer companionship.

All of these services are provided and yet our patients never receive a bill. We are one of the few non-profit hospices in the area, and uninsured and under-insured patients are fully covered by generous donations, grants and fundraising.

Patients are eligible to go on hospice services when they have been given a life expectancy of 6 months or less, are no longer undergoing curative treatments for their disease, and when hospice has received an order from a referring physician.

Once a patient comes on our service we put together a care plan, implement all support services and help our patients make the most of every day they have left by setting goals and crossing items off the bucket list.

We are here to provide peace of mind when it matters most.

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*Jenna is our Volunteer Manager, recruiting, training and leading our amazing team of volunteers and representing them in our weekly interdisciplinary team meetings.*



## I Want to Say I Lived

By Sherry Howard

I read an article once that said the average person has five great friends in their lifetime. Five individuals who will be with them through every stage in their life. That article, I feel, rings true. There are four women who I call my best friends and have made my life worth living. I'm young enough to believe that my fifth is still out there waiting to be discovered. Thirty, twenty-two, fifteen, and seven totaling seventy-four years of friendship. One perfect gift for every stage.

Perhaps I was naïve to think that those friendships would be there when my time is up. I had no reason to believe otherwise. There's this reoccurring dream I have where I finally get to have all my friends in one place and introduce them to each other, being that none of my friends live near each other. In February, that vision evaporated when one of my dearest friends was taken from this earth at the young age of forty-six.

Her death was a shock, and still is.

One of the best memories I have of her is the day her daughter graduated high school. We watched as her daughter marched in the processional wearing her

red cap and gown. She was so proud, a mother who did everything for her children, working her hardest to get them prepared for life after graduation. Her daughter was in the choir and at one point they came forward to sing an acapella version of "I Lived" by OneRepublic.

I can still hear the words as they sang them that day. "I did it all. I owned every second that this world could give. I saw so many places, the things that I did. Yeah with every broken bone, I swear I lived."

Maybe I remember this moment because the words hold true to the life my friend had. She loved to have the sand between her toes and had a seashell collection that bordered on obsessive. She screamed when her idol, Yadier Molina, hit a home run and never missed a Cardinal's game. Most importantly, she loved her friends and family with all her heart. She didn't just exist, she lived. And through the imprints she left behind, her essence lives on today.

The friendships we make in this lifetime are not guaranteed from day to day. Things can change in the blink of an eye and when you least expect it. I'm so blessed to have

four beautiful friendships with people that truly understand and love me unconditionally. For three of those, I can't wait to see what the future holds and I hope that we're still holding strong in thirty years.

For the friendship I mourn, I will not take for granted the life I have left. I'll smile every day, turn the volume up and soak in the lyrics, read the book, light up when my daughter dances, jump in the rain puddle, chase the dream, write the novel, love with all my heart, accept people as they are, laugh, cry, remember.

When my time is up, I don't want to look back and say I merely existed, I want to say I lived.

(Written in memory of Candace Ricketts, earthbound friend of fifteen years, in my heart eternally.)

*Sherry is our Medical Records Manager and excels at organization and efficiency. She does her job with excellence, playing a critical roll in patient admissions and enabling our entire staff to have patient information at our fingertips.*





May 6-12

**NATIONAL  
NURSES  
APPRECIATION  
WEEK**



Pictured from Left to Right: Director of Patient Care, Jenni Thorn, RN, Holly Hampton, RN, Claudia Jones, RN, Danielle Schultz, LPN, Executive Director, Shelley Tracy, RN, MHA, FACHE, Mary Dahmm, FNP, and Rachael Callahan, RN. Not pictured in this photo are: Brenda Johnston, RN, Patti Dailey, RN, Jackie Mehner, RN, Crystal Crocker, LPN, Leesa Kennon, RN & Chrissy Lashley, RN



June 14-21

**NATIONAL  
CNA  
APPRECIATION  
WEEK**

Pictured from Left to Right: Bree Counts, CNA, Tricia Storie, CNA, Amanda Duncan, CNA, Abril Lober, CNA and Colleen Dunn, CNA



# LOCAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON



# STE. GEN VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON



# Serenity's Upcoming Events

## Carter's Clubhouse Children's Grief Support Summer Camp

August 3-5

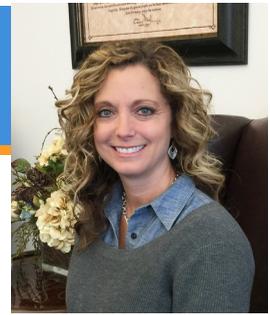
### Volunteer Meetings

Local - Jul 18

Ste. Gen - Jul 23

# CARTER'S CLUBHOUSE

Our Second Annual Carter's Clubhouse Grief-support Summer Camp is right around the corner! We are all looking forward to taking another group of boys and girls to YMCA Trout Lodge in Potosi. While these kids are swimming, hiking and zip-lining, they will also be doing special activities to help them share their grief and continue their healing journey.



**Gayla Sisk, MSW, LCSW**  
Director of Social Work



**Mary Huck**  
Volunteer Since January of 2009

*"Mary has a heart of gold  
and a smile that warms  
hearts everywhere she goes"*

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Mary is a precious volunteer who has been with Serenity for over 9 years. She is a sweet and caring woman who shares God's love with everyone she meets.

Along with visiting hospice patients, Mary also helps with Bingo and other games and activities at area nursing homes and faithfully prays the Rosary for the residents there as well. She also helps with health fairs and other community events by representing Serenity and talking about her experience as a hospice volunteer.

Last year Mary celebrated her 90th birthday, but she doesn't let that slow her down! She remains active in her parish, her community and of course, her hospice. Not only is Mary a prized volunteer at Serenity HospiceCare, but she is also a wonderful baker. One year she baked over 300 batches of cookies and she is always happy to bring a few dozen to our Serenity events

and meetings. She is the proud mother of 8 children, one of whom is a precious daughter with a diagnosis of Downs Syndrome and Mary is very involved with the home where her daughter resides. Mary also enjoys bowling and watching her daughter bowl in the Special Olympics.

When asked what Mary finds most rewarding about being a hospice volunteer, she replied that in this season of life, as a widow with all of her children grown and out of the house, it gives her an opportunity to share her compassion with others.

Mary has a heart of gold and she warms hearts everywhere she goes. Her smile always lights up the room, bringing joy to patients, Serenity staff members and her fellow volunteers. We are so blessed to have her on our volunteer team and we hope we have her around for many more wonderful years to come.



# Carter's Clubhouse

2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GRIEF SUPPORT

## SUMMER CAMP

A FREE PROGRAM FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN.  
APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 4TH.  
LIMITED TO 35 CAMPERS.

### CAMP INFORMATION

AGES: 7-16

DATES: AUG 3-5

LOCATION: YMCA TROUT LODGE

HOSTED BY: GAYLA SISK, MSW, LCSW  
OF SERENITY HOSPICECARE

HURRY! THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 4TH!

**TO MAKE A DONATION OR REQUEST AN APPLICATION,  
PLEASE CALL CARTER'S CLUBHOUSE  
AT (573) 701-2504  
OR VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE**

# Inspirational moments

## Embracing the Season

When we are little children we often dream endlessly about growing up. We want to go to high school, we want to get our driver's license and a job, then get married and maybe have kids of our own. We long for the next season of life, and the next, and the next; until one day we realize we have arrived. We are grown ups, and that sought-after freedom and experiences we longed for when we were little are now tempered with the many responsibilities that adults have to shoulder. Then we begin looking to the future; retirement from the job that consumes so much of our time, the coexisting joy and sadness of the empty nest, the glory of grandchildren and the uncertainty of all that awaits us at the end of life. The seasons come and go as one fades to the next. Sometimes our looking forward with anticipation is traded in

for backward glances, over our shoulder, longing for our younger years, and still the seasons come, whether welcomed or disdained.

Seasons are inevitable. We can neither hasten them, nor slow them down. We cannot pray them away nor wish them into lingering. So all that is left to do is to embrace them. Paul said, in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." If we can be taught, just as the Apostle Paul, to find contentment in every season of life, then we invite God to bring joy, peace and blessing to even the most difficult seasons. The young parents can find delight in the laughter of their children amidst sleepless nights, spilled milk and an arsenal of Legos on the floor. The empty-nesters can dry their tears on their way out of town as they set off on a

new adventure together. The aging woman can forget her wrinkles and arthritis for a while as a beautiful newborn grandchild is placed in her arms. The grieving son who lost his father can find meaning in passing on to his own children and grandchildren all that his father passed on to him.

What season do you find yourself in now? Are you longing for the past? Are you looking to the future with anticipation or dread? What might God what to accomplish in your life during THIS season and how can you best embrace your current circumstances?

*Lord, please help us learn to be content, whatever the season.*



Join the Healing Hearts monthly grief-support gathering, free and open to the public.

**4th Monday of every month**  
11:30 a.m. at Serenity HospiceCare

Led by Gayla Sisk, MSW, LCSW of Serenity HospiceCare & Serenity's Bereavement Coordinator, Amy Parker

**RSVP: 573-431-0162**

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