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NEWSLETTER

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From the DIRECTOR'S DESK



The Changing Face of Hospice Care

by Executive Director, Shelley Layton, RN, MHA, FACHE

When you think of hospice, it might not initially be the most pleasant of thoughts or images in your head. However, over the years hospice has become an extremely important part of our healthcare system. Hospice services focus on comfort, rather than treatment or cure, and they offer emotional and spiritual support for loved ones.

The number of hospice programs in the United States continues to rise over the past few decades, from 1 in 1974 to 5,800 in 2013. Last year, a recorded 1.5 million individuals were cared for in hospice compared to 25,000 in 1982 (NHPCA).

I have been the Executive Director at Serenity HospiceCare for three years now and no amount of orientation into the hospice industry was as impacting as time spent with hospice nurses in patient homes and nursing facilities watching as they delivered end of life care. This work is difficult, endless, emotionally exhausting, and yet inspiring, rewarding and ultimately life changing for the caregiver, as well as the patient.

I have witnessed how influential end of life care can be for our community, for the everyday American facing death.

Here are five ways hospice and palliative care programs are changing lives and the face of hospice today:

1. They're Opening Up the Conversation About Death

Death is the only guarantee we have in this world, yet it's the toughest subject to talk about — it's taboo. But the silence is what ends up hurting our loved ones the most. A person nearing death deserves the chance to talk about everything; from what they are terrified of to what kind of memorial service they desire. Hospice environments pave the way for those chats, giving patients and their loved ones the space to talk about the uncomfortable stuff.

2. They Make Us Think Twice About Invasive Treatments

Unfortunately, a lot of modern medicine includes treatments that can cause unnecessary pain and discomfort. Sometimes rather than going back home to the patient's most comfortable location, they can become impatient in ICU's where they receive unwanted and expensive medical procedures. Hospice services help us realize that there comes a time when cure is no longer possible and we should instead focus on relief of symptoms and stress. This is not to say

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Serenity FEATURE



The Serenity Barber Visits Stockhoff

By Jenna Firehammer, Volunteer Manager

Serenity's very own Brandon Leach, RN and Director of Quality, is bringing smiles and shaves to the Stockhoff Memorial Nursing Home. Brandon volunteered to help Stockhoff's Activities Director, Tracy Bacon, facilitate a "Barber Shop" for the male residents a few months ago. As a Registered Nurse, Brandon has always enjoyed giving personal care to patients and thought that this was a perfect way to treat the fellas to something special. The men enjoyed receiving a free haircut and shave and the buzz quickly spread around the facility as residents and staff stopped to check out what was going on. The Barber Shop was a huge success and Brandon and Tracy decided they had to make it a monthly event.

Women in nursing facilities are frequently treated to manicures and facials, so providing the men with an authentic barber experience is a fantastic way to make them feel pampered as well. Brandon dresses the part in suit pants and a vest with a white-collared shirt and his hair slicked with a perfect 1950's barber shop sheen. He talks with the residents as he tends to their grooming and makes them feel important. Watching the exchange brought tears to my eyes a couple of times.

Brandon works a 40 hour week at Serenity HospiceCare as Quality Director as well as teaching and facilitating in-ser-

vices, making patient visits when needed and supporting office staff by creating databases and training employees to utilize the appropriate software.

In addition to his devoted work for Serenity, Brandon is a loving husband to his wife Kari and vested father to 3 beautiful girls. He is also very involved in ministry at his church and is an avid outdoorsman. With so many obligations and commitments, it is commendable that he finds time to volunteer at Stockhoff.

When asked why he is so devoted to bringing the Barber Shop to the residents, Brandon said, "I thoroughly enjoy serving these gentlemen and realizing that something as simple as a haircut and shave can really brighten their day."

Plans for future Barber Shop events include bringing along masculine décor to help set the perfect atmosphere for the men Brandon serves. Serenity is also planning to solicit the volunteer services of retired barbers in our community to assist Brandon in shaves and haircuts. Eventually, we hope to have our Barber Shop services in many facilities in the area.

Serenity HospiceCare is devoted to providing the very best end-of-life care possible and we strive, as an organization, to build strong relationships within the communities we serve. Volunteerism is a large part of making that happen. Not only



does Serenity recruit volunteers to help make this happen, but our administrative staff has a strong devotion to volunteering our own time as well, as Brandon has exemplified.

Serenity currently has over 30 devoted volunteers who make visits to patient homes and nursing facilities. They read to patients, they sing, they say prayers and they allow patients to reminisce which is so important at end-of-life. It provides the patient with much needed companionship and socialization and brings comfort in the final stretch of his or her journey through life.

Volunteering is also beneficial to those of us who volunteer. Studies have shown that volunteering expands our social circle, enhances our relationships, encourages physical activity and gives a wonderful sense of well being. Volunteering is an excellent way to stay connected in our community and to have a true sense of purpose.

For Christians, hospice volunteering is an opportunity to live out our mission and to put our faith in action. When we invest our time and extend compassion to those in need, we are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and answering His call on our lives.

Volunteering for Serenity HospiceCare doesn't require a huge time commitment. Those volunteers who make patient visits commit to 2 visits per month and they can be set up at the convenience of the volunteer's schedule. Many volunteers visit more often or have more than one patient that they visit, but it is up to their discretion and the availability of their time

Serenity also has opportunities to volunteer in other areas as well. We welcome volunteers to facilitate activities at nursing homes. Some give facials and paint nails. Some call Bingo or assist with other games. Some put on tea parties, or sing and play instruments for residents.

We also have volunteers who mow lawns and do other home and yard maintenance. Some do cooking and light housekeeping. Several of our volunteers are veterans who visit other veterans. This is a remarkable way to honor the service of patients who have served in all branches of the military. They benefit from the sense of camaraderie they experience and the recognition they receive for their service to our country.

Other volunteers at Serenity prefer assisting the administrative staff with office support. They do filing and shredding, fold brochures and make phone calls. Some assist with PR by making visits to deliver treats to facility administrators on behalf of Serenity or attend expos and health fairs to educate the community about the services we offer. When it comes to hospice volunteering there is certainly something for everyone.

If you, or someone you know, may be interested in volunteer opportunities at Serenity HospiceCare in our Barber Shop, or in any other capacity, please contact Jenna Firehammer (573) 747-4616.

"I thoroughly enjoy serving these gentlemen and realizing something as simple as a haircut and shave can really brighten their day."





The Changing Face of Hospice Care (continued from page 1)

that everyone should resist traditional treatments and immediately welcome the dying process — every person is different. However, in some cases treatments can diminish the quality of life. Hospice allows patients to choose to say no.

3. They Provide Access To A More Diverse Group Of Professionals

Because having a terminal illness is muddy water to wade through, it's helpful to have seasoned professionals by your side who have visited the terrain many times before. In addition to doctors and nurses specialized in end of life care, hospices offer countless programs in fields such as social service/family management, grief counseling, and chaplaincy. Hospice is about serving the person, not the illness. It's about quality of life, which can be just as much about family and faith as it is about medicine.

4. They Give People The Chance To Say Beautiful Goodbyes

Hospitals are usually hectic, sterile places where machines are beeping loudly and unknown people enter the room at every turn. The hospice environment is made wherever the patient feels most comfortable: home, a loved one's home, a nursing home, etc. The patient is in charge of their environment. It is our goal to help people die with dignity; giving the patient opportunities to say all their farewells to family and friends. Medical professionals and counselors do everything they can to make sure the space is set for anything the family needs, ahead of time, whether it's reconciliation or joyful memory sharing.

5. They Help Us All Feel Less Afraid

Before the hospice services we know today came into existence in the 1970s,

there weren't many learning materials that helped us make sense of the end of life. Thankfully, over the years we have begun to see the release of numerous books, instructional texts, documentaries, and even pod casts on the subject. Patients and their loved ones have access to a number of publications that give them hope in the dying process. Documentaries like 'Being Mortal' by Atul Gawande on PBS, and essays like, "Yellow Taxi" by Eve Joseph let us know we aren't alone in watching someone we care about near the end of his/her life. These pieces also allow us to educate ourselves on what's going on in the healthcare system. Most importantly, though, they remind us that we all will face death one day — and we don't have to be so terrified of it.

Shelley Layton is the Executive Director of Serenity HospiceCare. Her leadership and passion for end-of-life care are truly invaluable to our organization.

Serenity's Upcoming Events

Volunteer Meetings
Local - January 18
Ste. Gen - January 23

•
Healing Hearts
Bereavement Support Group
Jan 23

•
Family Lifestyle Expo
Centene Center
January 27-28



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MARKETING MINUTE

Serenity Welcomes our New Director of Marketing, Ursula Warren

Serenity HospiceCare is delighted to welcome our new Director of Marketing, Ursula Warren. Ursula comes to us with extensive experience in Marketing and Fund Development from her 7 years of service at Parkland Health Center. She also has a prestigious background in local leadership from her years as Executive Director of both the Farmington Chamber of Commerce and Union Area Chamber of Commerce. She has worked as Membership Manager and Convention Planner for various national organizations as well. Ursula completed a four-year program at the University of Arizona in Tucson in Not-for-profit Management and is certified through the United States Chamber of Commerce as a Not-for-Profit Executive. This impressive history of career and education made her an excellent choice for Marketing Director at Serenity

Ursula's decision to come on board at Serenity was based on two important factors. First, she has a fervent passion for the mission of hospice. She experienced it with her own loved ones on three occasions and has seen, first hand, the beautiful work that hospice does for patients and their families. It is a mission that she

believes very strongly in and wanted to be a part of. Secondly, she became acquainted with Serenity HospiceCare during her time with the Farmington Chamber of Commerce. Ursula is quoted as having said, "Serenity's reputation in our community, and the integrity and level of excellence that they hold themselves to, have made them an organization that I've long admired and respected." When the Marketing Director position became available at Serenity, Ursula knew it was more than just a perfect fit; it was the realization of a dream.

Ursula resides in Farmington with the love of her life, Steve Warren, whom she married a year and a half ago. Ursula said that it took them a long time to find one another, but that it was worth the wait. Between them they have 4 children: Brandon (31), Stephen (28), Kate (26) and Adam (16). They also have two precious grandsons: Braden and Parker (both 7), and two more on the way, Liam Jameson (due February 7) and also Luther James (due April 21).

Outside of the office, Ursula enjoys spending time with family,



her church, all things involving football (her son, Adam, plays for FHS) and the arts. She loves to paint, crochet, scrapbook and cook. She also enjoys Zumba, cycling, running and staying as fit as possible. Ursula serves as a VIP Team Leader at her church, Meadow Heights in Farmington. She serves as member of the Board of Directors of the Park Hills-Leadington Chamber of Commerce and she is also a member of the First State Community Bank Focus board. She is a member of the St. Francois County Arts Alliance and has been the Chairman of the St. Francois County Walk to Tackle Heart Disease for 6 years. Additionally, she has also served on the board of the March of Dimes March for Babies for more than 10 years.

Ursula Warren is a remarkable woman and Serenity is blessed to have her on our staff.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

by Jenna Firehammer, Volunteer Manager

This month our volunteer spotlight is on the lovely, Karen Thompson. Karen joined the Serenity HospiceCare team last year and has already proven to be an invaluable asset to the organization. She is warm and welcoming with a wonderful sense of humor and her passion for volunteering is inspiring. Karen has a beautiful and generous spirit and scatters joy to everyone she meets.

Karen truly has a heart for volunteering. She is always willing to take on challenging assignments and handles difficulties with tact and professionalism. She has also been willing to drive to patients in outlying areas that some of our other volunteers are unable or unwilling to reach. This has made her an asset to me as a Volunteer Manager.

Not only does Karen make frequent visits to provide companionship and socialization to our patients, but she is also an avid volunteer both in the office and in any PR assignments which we have given her. She is dependable and we always know we can count on her to represent Serenity and all that we stand for.

Karen finds hospice volunteering rewarding because she was a caregiver for her own mother in all stages at the end of life. Because of this experience, she knows how much it means to have support during that difficult season of life as a loved one faces death. She enjoys being that source of support for others as they walk down that same road. She also enjoys volunteering for Serenity because of the wonderful people she gets to meet.

Besides volunteering for us at Serenity HospiceCare, Karen also mentors elementary school children. Her devotion to both of her volunteer endeavors exhibits a joy in investing her time and compassion in both ends of the life spectrum. Her other hobbies include a remarkable Barbie™ collection, singing and caring for her 2 rescue dogs, Coco and Keesha.

Karen resides in Farmington with her brother, Steve, and has one adult son, Benjamin, in Alabama, who is her pride and joy. She is a remarkable woman, selflessly giving so much of her heart to so many special people. We are blessed to have her as a part of our Serenity family.

Karen Thompson
Volunteer Since March of 2016

"Karen has a beautiful & generous spirit and scatters joy to everyone she meets."



Clinical Connection

Consequences of Late Transition to Hospice

By Gayla Sisk, Director of Social Work/Bereavement



It's an all too familiar story... "Steve" is diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. His physician admits she can't cure the disease but can offer aggressive treatment that might prolong Steve's life. She may do so because she believes in the medical model, the family is persistent or demands it, or she may not have the training for those tough end-of-life discussions that we would all rather avoid. His medical team doesn't bring it up either because they don't want to appear to be admitting defeat or deflate the hope of Steve and his family. Steve will endure the treatments despite their harsh side effects and the toll it will take on his body and what quality of life that remains, in hope that there will be more and better quality afterwards. Steve will continue long after he wants to, due to his family not wanting to give up and no one wanting to have the difficult conversation about his disease being terminal.

Steve will continue down this road until his impending death can no longer be ignored, after prolonged pain, several hospitalizations and ER visits, Steve will be admitted to hospice care only days before dying and his psychological and spiritual needs never having been addressed.

When treatment offers no hope of cure, the patient's quality of life may quickly diminish. The time spent in pain and at hospitals could have been replaced with quality time with loved ones and preparing mentally for the death of their loved one. When

patients transition into hospice late in their illness, the interdisciplinary team does not have the opportunity to work with the family on psychosocial issues. When given the opportunity through early transition to hospice, however, the social worker can work with the patient and family to help reduce fear, anxiety and depression.

Often, the family of the patient doesn't know how to have these difficult conversations with each other. It is the social worker's role to help facilitate these discussions so the family may be able to talk openly about their fears, dreams and concerns. It is important for the social worker to have time to build a trusting therapeutic relationship with the patient and family. That is difficult to do when the patient comes on services so late in life, thus, keeping them from getting all the benefits of having hospice in the first place.

Even when late transitions happen, it is our job to meet people where they are and not judge them based on their choices. At the time, they did what they felt was right for them, and now it is up to the hospice team to have honest conversations about how they wish to spend the rest of the days or weeks remaining and help them move into that direction. Life is messy and rough around the edges, it is really all about standing beside them with compassion and being a comforting presence as their beautiful journey ends.



A Place For Grieving Children And Families
Sponsored by Serenity HospiceCare

Did you know that statistics show one out of every seven kids will experience the loss of a loved one by the time they are 18? That amounts to an astounding number of children left to navigate the emotional journey of grief. Children grieve differently than adults and often this grief goes unrecognized. At Carter's Clubhouse, we work with children where they are in their grieving process. Often, the children who attend our monthly meetings find such comfort and benefit they ask for more activities to be involved in. Because of these requests we are always looking for new and exciting ways to meet the needs of the bereaved children in our area.

If you have any questions you can reach Carter's Clubhouse at (573)701-2504 or if you would like to send a donation, please send to:

CARTER'S CLUBHOUSE

5272 Flat River Rd. / Park Hills, MO 63601

WHAT'S NEW AT THE CLUBHOUSE?

It has long been a dream of Carter's Clubhouse to host a summer camp and in 2017 that dream will become a reality. We are proud to announce that our first annual summer camp will be held July 28 - July 30, 2017 at the YMCA Trout Lodge & Camp Lakewood in Potosi, MO. It is our goal to provide grief support through fun and friendship for 35 campers free of charge. In order for this to happen we are looking to the community for sponsorships. Our sponsorship levels range from \$250 - \$10,000, if you would be interested in supporting our efforts we would love to provide you with a presentation in person about this amazing opportunity.



Chaplain's Corner



New Year's = New Opportunities By Rev. Scott Edgar, Chaplain

A new year always brings with it a fresh start, and I am not just talking about a new set of days to work with. It is a time of new beginnings, new opportunities, and optimism. Here we are two weeks into the New Year's and I must ask: How about that newness? Are you still eating healthy? Still working out? Did you leave that bad habit in 2016? I sure hope you have, but if you are like me; you are probably struggling. It is hard to remake ourselves just because the clock struck midnight on December 31st. The issue with us changing lies inside of us, in that area of our mind we call willpower. Sure, we are all educated and know the right things to say and do for others, but when it comes to ourselves we are a difficult fix. The issue with our willpower is we can so easily override and silence it. Yes, our conscious is always talking to us and attempting to guide us but we also

know where the volume switch is. With just a flip of a mental switch those cookies that would destroy a day of dieting look even more delicious and rewarding or just a little drag off a cigarette would help ease that last annoying nerve. We have all been there and done that. So, the question that begs to be answered is, "How do I truly stop and change?" My answer is an accountability buddy. Someone who you can turn to outside yourself when you feel that temptation to slide back into your old self. Someone who is available for you no matter the time and always has an answer ready. Someone who cares enough for you to tell you the truth and not let you "weasel" your way out of your commitment to self. Who could this be? Friends and family, though a great benefit to have, oftentimes see life in the same rose colored glasses we do, so that would be more like turning

to ourselves. We could go to counselors or even pastors, but again, even those amazing people have office hours and can be difficult to get a hold of in times of distress. So who do I need? Why not Jesus? After all, Proverbs 18:24 states that we have a friend that sticks closer than a brother. I John 5:14-15 tells us that he definitely hears us. In Isaiah there is a listing of names and one of them is Counselor. He would be the perfect one to turn to. So for this New Year's, maybe the best resolution you can make for yourself is to listen and turn to Jesus more. If you have tried the rest, why not now try the best.

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.



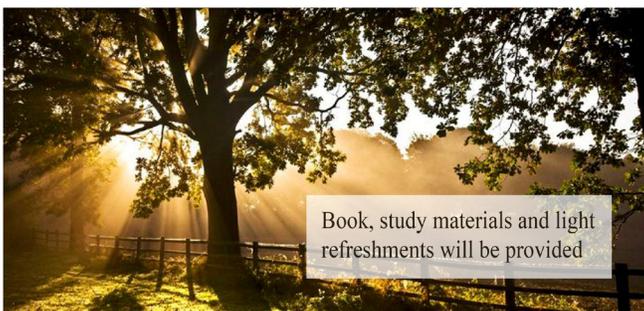
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