Serenity HospiceCare

FALL/ WINTER 2017

NEWSLETTER

your source for insight and inspiration

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SERENITY FEATURE

Hospice, An Overview

By Director of Patient Care, Jenni Thorn, RN

No matter the circumstances, it is never easy to accept that a loved one has reached the end of their life. This applies as much to our elderly as it does to a loved one stricken in the prime of their lives. But this process can be made exponentially easier when caring, trained professionals are there to help in those final months, weeks, and days. The grief and burden of caring for a loved one in their final days is immense, and hospice care can help alleviate some of the weight of that burden.

Though it is never an easy decision, a time comes when we have to choose comfort over cure. This distinction is made when a doctor determines that the prognosis for life expectancy is 6 months or less, and decides that hospice care (providing relief from symptoms and stress of a serious illness) is the most humane route for our loved ones. This is when hospice care can be utilized. No more late night Emergency room visits and endless trips to the doctor, which only exhausts an already weary patient, as well as the caring family member. Hospice care is implemented in the home, and in the environment where the patient is most at ease, and surrounded by those they love.

Hospice criteria is a 6 month or less prognosis, but that is an educated guess. Often times, a prognosis is viewed as a promise or a guarantee, but this is not the case. Prognosis is a fluid estimate that can be impacted by a variety of other issues, such as the age of the patient, the will of the patient, other illnesses as well as environmental factors. In hospice care, we don't want people focusing on this "educated guess", or the time their loved one has left, but rather on the "quality" of time their loved one has left.

The model of care that hospice follows is entirely directed at the comfort of the patient. Largely, pain and dyspnea (difficulty breathing) are the biggest offenders as far as discomfort in a hospice setting. Additionally, hospice works with any issues that cause the patient discomfort such as bowel and bladder issues, the activity level of the patient and the care required for them, and the emotional and spiritual well-being of the patient and family. The latter issues cannot be dealt with if pain and dyspnea are not controlled. The medications used for pain and dyspnea are typically powerful medications that cause a level of fear in patients and families, which is understandable. Bringing up words such as Morphine and Methadone may terrify

(continued on page 2)

Thankful Hearts!

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

"Thankful for a healthy, loving family. Thankful for the sun and the happiness it brings me." – Mary Kay
"My son, family and the privilege to work for hospice." - Bree
"Being a part of this amazing team!" – Tricia
"Memories" – Claudia
"I'm thankful for Rosco" – Patti
"My wonderful husband"- Robyn
"I'm thankful for a supportive writers group. Parkland Writers' Circle has become another family and I'm so blessed to be a part of them." – Sherry
"For amazing coworkers who I also consider friends." – Gayla
"Thankful that God has let me nurse in a ministry." - Unknown
"For having the best job in the world." – Danielle
"My grandsons, family and Mountain Dew." – April
"I am thankful for my brother and 3 kids, for Jenni and Jackie giving me a great job, and I'm thankful that I get to help people." – Amanda
"Thankful for family. Thankful for every year with my grandparents." – Brandon
"For everyone here. They are all so wonderful and make me feel loved!" – Dianna
"Thankful for another day to be a blessing to others." – Jackie
"A job I love." – Beth
"Good health (myself and family)." – Jenni
"I am thankful for the opportunity to minister to people in need of comfort each and every day." – Scott
"Cuddling with my precious husband while we watch Star Trek" – Jenna
"I'm thankful for God and his love for me." – Colleen
"Thankful for friends and family." – Dr. Bird
"I am thankful for my healthy, safe children." – Mary
"I truly am thankful each and every morning for the wonderful place I get to work. It's been an amazing blessing to me and my family, and the wonderful people I work with make it a pleasant and happy workplace. It's been the best blessing this year." – Rachael
"I am thankful that my kids know the Lord and hear His voice, and follow Him. They are all serving. Britt – missionary, Ethan – youth pastor, Holly – wife of asst. youth pastor." – Lori
"The opportunity to work at a job that makes a difference and to have such amazing staff to call family. " - Shelley

Hospice, An Overview, continued from page 1

even the bravest of souls. The reason for utilizing these medications is because you can get predictable results that help the patient be comfortable after other medications have failed to do so.

According to a 2007 NHPCO study that looked at Medicare beneficiaries with some of the most common diagnoses leading to death, found that patients who received hospice services lived on average, 29 days longer than those who did not receive hospice care. (https://www.nhpco.org/press-room/research-shows-patients-may-live-longer-hospice-and-palliative-care) Most likely this is because the treatment of pain and dyspnea in a hospice setting can actually increase the lifespan of a patient because they are able to comfortably care for themselves, and lift their spirits because they can spend quality time with family.

What hospice does not do is hasten or cause death. This common misconception is one that continually creates barriers between patients and appropriate treatment. Unfortunately, most patients during the dying process become unable to communicate effectively. Nursing assessment becomes the only way a patient can tell us they have discomfort with signs like rapid pulse, increased blood pressure and increased respiratory rate. This is typically the time that families become alarmed because what they see is a loved one sleeping. The family cannot always see the objective signs of pain, and it is the nurse's responsibility to teach the family what that means. I believe that this is an area for concern for all hospice providers because this is the pivotal point in whether or not the family can see the value in the care provided. This is also the point that people develop the misconception that medication is being given to end a life. Education at the bedside is critical, but also ongoing teaching from hospice admission is important so this phase is not a surprise.

Aggressive treatment stops and life starts again. I have heard many patients tell me that they wish they had went on hospice sooner because they are able to do so much more than they could during aggressive treatment. A frequent aspect of aggressive treatment is the lab and radiology testing. A question for patients and families is: what do they plan to do with that information? If it has been determined that there is no further curative option, is it reasonable to put the patient through the discomfort of the procedure? Are we repeating the same process because that's always what we did before? What will this change for the patient? Of course there are components that some testing is important to the comfort of the patient. Testing to check for infection and provide the appropriate antibiotic, testing to make sure medication is working. However, these tests can be done at the bedside, rather than going to the hospital. This ensures that the patient is comfortable in their own environment without the burden of transportation and the challenges that come with that.

Hospice offers many benefits at the end-of-life. Probably the most important is the open dialogue about the fact that it is the end of life. People who face end of life tend to become more honest with themselves, as well as their loved ones and have a newfound ability to truly prioritize what is important to them. When symptoms are controlled, the patient can focus on mending broken relationships, make apologies for those whom they have hurt, express and receive gratitude, and sometimes just do something they love one more time. That is the goal of hospice. The patient's goal. It's truly that simple. Beyond having pain, dyspnea, bowel and bladder issues controlled, the real goal lies in helping with the business of living as well as possible. If we can control the symptoms, we can foster the patient and family to accomplish what they truly want to do. It's so much more than just symptom management. It's about how hospice can help you live.

Jenni is a passionate Nurse and an excellent administrator; devoted to ensuring that our Serenity HospiceCare patients receive the very best care that we can provide.

The Essence of the Serenity Dove

By Sherry Howard

"When angels visit us, we do not hear the rustle of wings, nor feel the feathery touch of the breast of the dove; but we know their presence by the love they create in our hearts."

– Mary Baker Eddy

The Dove is well known as an iconic symbol of peace and love, but for me, as a Serenity HospiceCare employee, the Dove is so much more. Ask anyone who works for Serenity why they work for this hospice company and you'll hear a story of someone called to do something more. Myself not excluded.

At a time when I found myself at a crossroads, I sought the guidance of a higher power and asked for a sign to let me know that I would find my way. I heard my sign on a Sunday afternoon. My mind filled with worry as my life course presented me with many challenges I wasn't sure I could face. My computer stirred to life and a song near and dear to me began to play. The soft rock beat of "Calling All Angels" by a band called Train filtered through the speaker. I stopped in my tracks to listen.

The next day, someone handed me a slip of paper with Serenity written on it. A Google search later, I had my first view of the Serenity Dove. Yes, we have a symbol that represents us; a white dove holding a branch, encased in a blue heart. But that's not the Serenity Dove I speak of. I'm talking about the visible evidence of the holy spirit, employees grasping the hands of those on the verge of crossing over, stories of caring for not just the body of a person but their soul, guided by a power more than human.

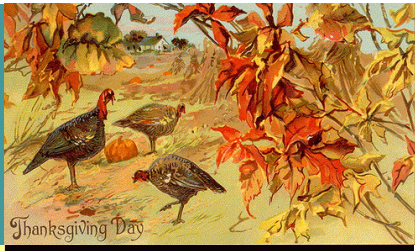
A lightness appeared in my heart and, after meeting with the faces behind the Serenity Dove, I knew I was on the right path. I found a group of people seeking their why, their purpose, the reason they got out of bed each day. I'm blessed to be part of a not-for-profit organization where we're able to put helping people at the top of our priorities. We have the opportunity to share with the world our love for the gift of life in all stages.

Serenity is not selling a service that you can buy in a pretty bow-tied package. Instead, we offer help and hope during one of life's toughest moments. We have compassion and empathy, staff that lead with their hearts, putting the needs of the patient above the industry. Many of our staff become extensions of our patients' families because they love and care for those families as if they were their own. Thus, encompassing the truest essence of the Dove that lives inside each of us.

The Dove is not just an iconic symbol throughout history or the logo of Serenity HospiceCare. It's also a feeling, an atmosphere, a kindness, a greater love, a flutter in your heart. It's spread to you though the hands of a nurse, the unconditional support of a social worker, the prayers of a chaplain, the thoughtfulness of an aide. Sometimes it's a voice on the other end of the line whose greatest desire is to help you. The essence of the Dove is something that every Serenity employee embraces because they were called into action by someone greater.

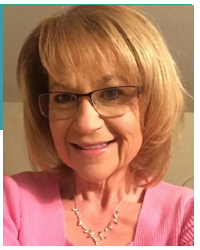
Sherry is our Medical Records Manager and excels at organization and efficiency. She does her job with excellence, playing a critical roll in patient admissions and enabling our entire staff to have patient information at our fingertips.

Serenity Thanksgiving



Every year our staff takes time to share a Thanksgiving meal and reflect on the many precious patients we have cared for throughout the year. We go around the table and each Serenity HospiceCare employee lights a candle and shares a memory of a patient who is no longer with us, who touched his or her heart in a special way.

Serenity's MARKETING MINUTE



New Year, New Plan

By Ursula Warren, Director of Marketing

It seems that as each year draws to a close, we humans tend to take stock of where we are, and where we want to be, going forward. In business, it's really not much different. A new year brings an opportunity to switch gears, a time to alter our plans in order to get us closer to our goals.

As the marketing team looks forward to a new year, we are planning to sharpen our focus, and hone our strategy for telling the beautiful story of the work we do. We recognize that people receive information differently than they used to. Fewer people receive the newspaper on their front lawn, and more are looking to receive their information online. We also realize that a large percentage of people get information on the world around them through social media.

Our marketing plans for 2018 reflect these new realities. You will see less of the traditional "advertising" that Serenity has historically used, and more digital and relationship marketing. We believe that people are more likely to choose Serenity HospiceCare for themselves and their loved ones by hearing about and experiencing the love we show to patients and families, than they are by reading a billboard. We believe that building personal relationships with people and sharing our values of loving others unconditionally, while providing the very best care, will carry our message to those who need us.

Daily, we hear stories from our staff about the ways that they care for and love on our patients. They don't do it for the recognition, or for the "atta boy!" They do it because they truly love our patients, and because they are called to care for others. They do it quietly, behind the scenes. They impact patients and their families' lives in ways that can't be expressed in an advertisement. They are stories that need to be told.

Beginning in January, we hope to tell those stories, all year long, through video on social media and our website, as well as other venues. We plan to share the stories we hear all the time in our office, along with the reasons why each of us do what we do.

Our marketing theme for 2018 will be centered around love. We hope you enjoy our new approach, as well as the stories we share over the course of the year. We can't wait to share the love with you!

Ursula Warren is the Director of Marketing at Serenity HospiceCare. Her leadership in promoting our organization is invaluable.

Spreading Holiday Cheer

Serenity Hospice Care staff and volunteers came together and made some adorable hand-painted ornaments to hang from miniature Christmas trees to be given to each of our patients.

N O V E M B E R

national Hospice MONTH

Hospice is not just for the last few days or weeks of life. Early admission to Hospice allows for pain and symptom management and support for patient and family so they can make the most of the time they have left.

Hospice month cooking contest

1st Place Scott Edgar

2nd Place Jenna Firehammer

3rd place Tricia Storie

Our Team of Judges from the Community

Serenity Volunteers came together this fall to cook and deliver homemade chicken noodle soup to all of our in-home patients and fresh baked cookies to our nursing home patients.

Serenity's SOUP SHOP

Special Recognition

Serenity would like to recognize Patti Daily, RN and Colleen Dunn, CNA for outstanding achievement in patient care! These two are an amazing team and always go the extra mile to care for our patients just like family.

What are our patients and families saying about Patti and Colleen?

#love

"MY HUSBAND AND I ARE SO PLEASED WITH PATTI AND COLLEEN. HIS FACE LIGHTS UP WHEN THEY ARRIVE. THEY COULDN'T BE DOING ANY BETTER."

"On a scale of 1 to 10 I give the Serenity team taking care of Mom an 11! Patti and Coleen are doing an amazing Job. We are so pleased with mom's care and our experience could not be better."

"Colleen and Patti are all so special in our book. We call them 'our girls.' The good Lord sent them to us and they take such a load off of our shoulders. I promised my husband that I will do everything I can for him for as long as I can, but I could never do all of this on my own. We couldn't ask for better staff and we are so thankful for Serenity."

"I WAS HAVING SUCH A HARD TIME GETTING MY HUSBAND OUT OF BED IN THE MORNING BY MYSELF AND COLLEEN REARRANGED HER SCHEDULE TO COME TO US FIRST THING IN THE MORNING SO SHE COULD HELP ME. SHE HAS BEEN SUCH A BLESSING TO US."

"MY HUSBAND GETS EMOTIONAL AND CRIES EASILY AND I HAVE SEEN PATTI PUT HER ARM AROUND HIM AND HUG HIM WHEN HE GETS LIKE THAT."

"He adores Patti and Colleen. They are like his angels. They walk in the room and his face beams with happiness. They are doing an amazing job!"

Hospice is not about dying.
It's about LIVING
and making the most of the time we have left.

Serenity's Upcoming Events

Carter's Clubhouse Children's Grief Support
Monday Jan. 2

•

Volunteer Meetings
Local - Jan. 17
Ste. Gen - Jan. 22

•

Healing Hearts Bereavement Support Group
Monday, Jan 27 at 11:30am

HOSPICE CARE ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE BY PROVIDING PAIN AND SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY.

Volunteer Spotlight

Jeannie Basler

Volunteer Since October of 2014

"Jeannie is a devoted volunteer who always has a warm smile and a very willing heart!"

Jeannie is one of our faithful volunteers from Ste. Genevieve who is very active in her community and beyond. She is a Eucharistic Minister and very involved at her parish as well as with Serenity HospiceCare. She has been willing to go the "extra mile" for us, quite literally, by covering our Perryville patient visits, which has been a huge help to our volunteer program, allowing us to fulfill volunteer requests from patients in outlying areas that we might not otherwise be able to be reach with volunteer services.

In addition to visiting hospice patients and residents in our outreach program, Jeannie also helps facilitate nursing home activities on behalf of Serenity as well as assisting the Serenity Marketing Department with PR efforts. Jeannie is an excellent spokeswomen for hospice care as well as hospice volunteering. She also takes part in special patient projects like this year's Serenity Cookie Shop which provided a dozen delicious fall cookies delivered by volunteers to each of our nursing home patients in the 9 counties we serve.

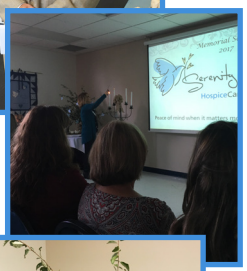
Jeannie is a devoted volunteer who always has a warm smile and a willing heart. She is very engaged in our volunteer meetings and other Serenity activities and she always has words of encouragement to share with the group as well as with her Volunteer Manager. She can always be depended upon to help in any way she is able and she is a valuable asset to our Serenity HospiceCare Volunteer team.

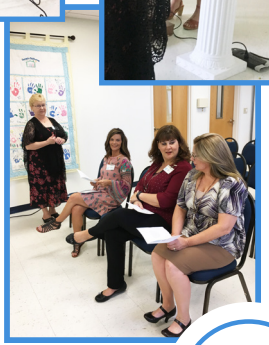
When asked why she finds volunteering for Serenity HospiceCare rewarding, she expressed that she loves interaction with the patients and always feels that she gets more out of it than she gives. Jeannie is a beautiful example of a life spent serving God and others. She demonstrates what it means to give of yourself to those in need and finds great reward in doing so.

In LOVING MEMORY

EVERY YEAR SERENITY HOSTS A BEAUTIFUL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE DEAR PATIENTS WE HAVE LOST SO THAT THEIR LOVED ONES, ALONG WITH OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, CAN COME TOGETHER AND HONOR THEM.

Serenity HospiceCare Memorial Service 2017





Inspirational *perspective*

By Jenna Firehammer

The images of crowded parking lots, busy retail stores bustling with shoppers all clamoring for the best deals and mile-long checkout lines hardly spark the inspiration for quiet reflection. But shouldn't that be the true heart of this season? Taking time to remember the miracle of the first Christmas, when God robed Himself in flesh and came to walk among us, born of a virgin in a lowly stable in Bethlehem and heralded by angel choirs to those with hearts so hungry for the glorious appearing of their Messiah.

Our calendars seem to fill up this time of year with holiday performances, Christmas parties, family gatherings and all sorts of other engagements. We exhaust ourselves, and our bank accounts, running from store to store trying to check off all the items on a ten-foot long shopping list filled with everyone's Christmas wishes. We go on late-night wrapping binges as we attempt to adorn our gifts with shimmering ribbons and holiday cheer. We slave for hours in the kitchen over cookies, pies and treasured family recipes in a flurry of flour and sprinkles and honey-baked hams, and believe it or not, most of us love every minute of it!

But there is such a desperate need to take a break from the parties and shopping and wrapping and baking and simply bow down in adoration of the King of Kings, whose holy birth we claim to be celebrating in all of these festivities of Christmas time. Maybe it is attending a Church service and as you hear voices raised in songs of praise or the preaching of God's Word, your heart captures the remembrance of angel voices heralding the good news that Christ the Savior is born. Perhaps it is a nighttime walk outside in the crisp winter air to look up at the sky and remember the shepherds who followed a star to visit the Newborn Christ, laying in a manger. Or maybe it is sitting in the soft glow of your Christmas tree lined with presents and reflecting on the gift God gave to us by sending His Son, Jesus, to us to save us from our sins.

Whatever affords you a quiet moment of reflection, take that time to escape the hustle of the holidays and enjoy the sacred reprieve of a silent night.

Healing Hearts

A service proudly provided by Serenity HospiceCare

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

Proudly provided by:
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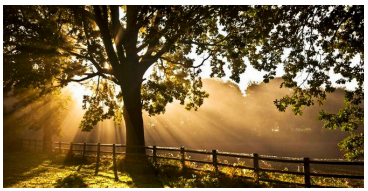

STUDY MATERIALS & REFRESHMENTS ARE PROVIDED, FREE OF CHARGE.

We Honor Veterans

Carter's Clubhouse

A PLACE FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES PROVIDED BY SERENITY HOSPICECARE

Comfort Care
when it matters most

A service proudly provided by Serenity HospiceCare

Serenity HospiceCare

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