Volunteer’s View

On January 14, 2007, my oldest daughter suffered a stroke due to the rupture of a brain aneurysm. She survived the initial effects but was in and out of the hospital for several months and was placed in a nursing home in September 2007, where she eventually developed pneumonia and passed away on December 28, 2007.

While I was taking care of her in the nursing home, I realized how many patients have no one to visit them or see to their individual needs and was made very much aware of how physically strenuous and mentally stressful a caregiver’s position can become. I know I will never heal from the loss of my daughter, but I felt the need to be useful again since I am retired and I decided volunteering for hospice care might be the place for me.

Volunteering at Hospice of the Shoals has been good for me, because I have been able to do a variety of office jobs, to work with patients and their families, and to meet many interesting people who also want to help wherever they can. My most enjoyable time was the visits I made to a patient at a local nursing home. I did the ‘Journal Jar’ with her and just before her 90th birthday we had completed the jar and her life story. Sadly, she passed away before I could give it to her in booklet form, but I presented it to her family at her visitation, and they said they felt as if it were a gift from her. This family’s appreciation and the kindness of everyone involved with Hospice of the Shoals makes me glad I have decided to volunteer. It’s a good feeling to know you have made a difference in someone’s day!

—Ruth Carpenter

“Grief never ends… but it changes. It’s a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith… it is the price of love.”

- Unknown

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Upcoming Events:

W.C. Handy Festival
W.C. Handy Festival is coming up and Hospice of the Shoals is ready! On Monday July 20th, we will be one of the sponsors for the Big Band at the Florence Mall at 6:30 pm. We will have a booth set up and would love for you to come by and see us. On Thursday July 23rd, we are having a fundraising concert with the Five Jets. T-shirts and cookbooks will be available for purchase at this event. The concert will be held at the Shoals Theater at 7pm. Tickets are available at our office and will be available at the door. We look forward to seeing you there!

‘Bullets in the Bathtub’ Dinner Theater
It’s almost time for our murder mystery dinner theater again! On October 8th, we will be having a 1920s fundraiser at George’s 217 in Sheffield. Be ready to have a lot of laughs and solve this crazy murder mystery while dressed in your flapper dresses and gangster suits!

Christmas Concert
Christmas is coming and with it great music. December 4th, we will have our annual Christmas concert. We are looking forward to a great show with lots of variety. We hope you will be looking for more information as this concert gets closer!

Additional Information
If you are interested in any of our events, call (256) 767-6699 or email kcreasey@hofts.org for more information. We would love to see you at all of our events.
Gone From My Sight

“I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then someone at my side says: “There, she is gone!”

“Gone where?”

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side and she is just as able to bear the load of living freight to her destined port.

Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at the moment when someone at my side says: “There she is gone!” There are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: “Here she comes!”

And that is dying.”

-Henry Van Dyke

Celebration of Life

Every year, Hospice of the Shoals takes a day to remember our patients that we have lost over the last year. At our Celebration of Life, we honor these patients and their families by celebrating the life they had and remembering the good times. This year, we had Heath Butler entertain us by singing and playing his guitar, and David Rushlow, our chaplain, spoke to the family members about life.

We provide a table for family members to bring in pictures and mementos that bring back fond memories of their loved one. It is such an inspiration to see so many treasured items of these special men and women. One family brought in a handmade fiddle that their loved one had made. It was a wonderful way to celebrate who their loved one was and how they will be remembered.

To close our celebration, family members wrote messages on floating lanterns and sent them up to be read by their loved ones watching over us. All in all, it was a wonderful day to celebrate life.
Who we are:
Hospice of the Shoals provides meaningful, compassionate care to patients with a life-ending illness and their caregivers in Colbert, Franklin, and Lauderdale counties, regardless of their ability to pay, and is continuously expanding its services to meet the growing needs of our community. Its qualified and dedicated employees and volunteers provide comfort and dignity to the patient while meeting their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Founded in 1992, Hospice of the Shoals was the first hospice in the Shoals area and is the only not-for-profit agency in the area.

Let us hear from you!
The main goal of our newsletter is to help educate our community about who we are at Hospice of the Shoals and what we stand for. If you would like to get involved with Hospice of the Shoals as a volunteer, we would love for you to come in and talk with us or call our office (256)767-6699. If there is something you would like to see in our newsletter, please email your suggestions to kcreasy@hofts.org.

5 Common Myths of Hospice

#1 Hospice is only for people with cancer.
Nationwide greater than one-fifth of all hospice patients have a diagnosis other than cancer. Hospice of the Shoals also serves patients and their families that are coping the end-stages of chronic diseases, like emphysema, Alzheimer’s, HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular and neuromuscular diseases.

#2 Hospice care is expensive.
Medicare and Medicaid, as do most private insurances, have a hospice benefit. This benefit covers the cost of comfort care medicines, medical equipment, and supplies that are related to the patient’s primary diagnosis and is in their plan of care. Financial assistance for those that do not have insurance coverage is based on need. Hospice of the Shoals provides services regardless of a patient’s financial situation.

#3 Hospice is for when there is no hope.
There is always hope. Hope for a day without pain or other distressing symptoms. Hospice of the Shoals staff and volunteers encourage the patient and family to make the most of each day, taking advantage of the good days by sharing and remembering the good times in the past and dreams of the family for the future.

#4 Hospice patients cannot live longer than six months.
Once an individual becomes a Hospice of the Shoals patient, he or she continues to receive hospice services for as long as they remain appropriate, as certified by their doctor, and they elect to remain in hospice regardless of the length of time.

#5 Hospice patients are not permitted to be hospitalized.
All Hospice of the Shoals patients with conditions requiring inpatient care, whether hospice related or not, will have access to inpatient care at one of our contracted facilities. Hospice of the Shoals will continue to service the patient and family during the hospitalization.