

COMPASSIONATE connections



HOSPICE
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

A Place of Acceptance *caring for my daughter at the end of life*

"My daughter Cheri was 43 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer," Jane Story shared as we talked about her loss.

For more than ten years, Cheri Grant pursued traditional and holistic treatments in an effort to cure her cancer. "Cheri came to stay with me in September of 2010. She had fought long and hard and was moving toward acceptance. We talked about her life and her approaching death. I remember asking her, "What got you here, to this place of acceptance?" She answered, "When you are brought to your knees by cancer, you just have to let go."

Jane Story was no stranger to hospice care. Her husband Paul had died while on hospice service 14 years earlier. "Knowing that there are warm, open, giving, loving people to help, it was such a relief. I knew that when Cheri was really failing and needed the support, Hospice would be there for us."

At the age of 80, Jane was physically and emotionally still strong enough to help Cheri through her transition. "It was an amazing time. She was so courageous. As her mother, watching her accept death was the only way I could bring myself to accept what was happening."

Cheri was determined to live as normally as possible for as long as possible. She and her mother shopped, cooked, and even danced together. Tough days ensued, but there were joy and laughter as well.

"Hospice did a great job managing Cheri's pain medication to a level where she could still function. There were a lot of letters she wanted to write and people she wanted to say good-bye to," shared Jane.

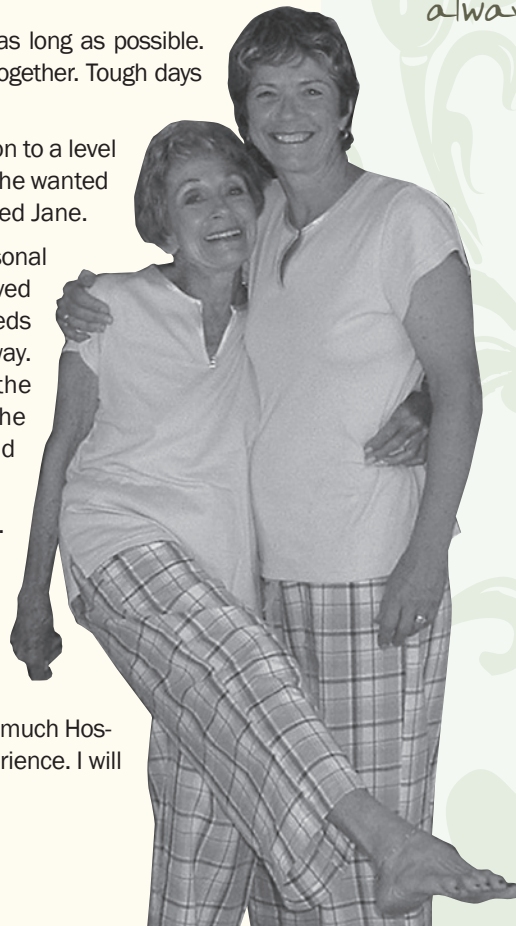
Although Cheri was able to walk and to manage her personal care until just two days prior to her death, Jane was relieved at how quickly Hospice responded once Cheri's needs changed. "A hospital bed arrived and was set up right away. When Cheri needed a walker, it was delivered. All the equipment was there exactly when we needed it. The communication was strong. I trusted Hospice would support us," said Jane.

Cheri wanted to be alert and conscious for her death. That wish was granted. On her last day, Cheri's brother and mother sat vigil at her bedside. "The time is getting close," she uttered. "Am I there yet?"

While Jane Story will always grieve the loss of her daughter, she also celebrates her life. "I want to talk about Cheri's resilience and courage. I want people to know how much Hospice helped to make her death a dignified and gentle experience. I will always be grateful."



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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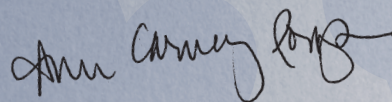
Dear Friends,

In recent months, Hospice of Santa Cruz County refined its mission statement to include the phrase "Patients and families are the guiding force in their end-of-life decisions." What does this mean? This is a constant reminder that while Hospice brings experience and expertise to the bedside, it is important to remember our practice of deep listening. Whatever matters to our patients and their families, matters to us.

Three decades of providing compassionate end-of-life care have taught us that the goals of patients are uniquely individual. Responding to their wishes and ensuring that their safety and comfort are carefully managed remains our daily focus.

In this issue, we introduce HSCC's Rapid Response Team (RRT) to you. The RRT was created to provide a concentrated level of medical and social work support to families who choose our service in the last days of a loved one's life. You will also learn about our HUG (Healthy Understanding of Grief) on-campus teen groups—an aspect of our HUG programming that has won national recognition for its innovative approach to delivering essential grief support to vulnerable teens in our community.

We are grateful for the generous outpouring of support we receive from our contributors, Hospice Angels, the Friends of Hospice, and our foundation partners. You are the backbone that allows us to do what we do best—care for the living at the end of life. You have my deepest gratitude.



Ann Carney Pomper
Executive Director



HUG On-Campus Program Brings Relief to Grieving Teens



"You and your loss matter," urges Silvia Austerlic, HSCC's Latino Cultural Liaison and Grief Support Specialist. "Healing is possible, and it comes from within. Reach out. There is help."

Silvia is talking to a group of students at Aptos High School, just one of the local schools participating in Hospice of Santa

"I wasn't sure how it would be to talk to someone I didn't know about my grandma. But I feel better... like I'm lighter."

Cruz County's pioneering on-campus grief support groups. A component of Hospice's HUG (Healthy Understanding of Grief) program, groups are offered at both high schools and middle schools and integrated within the mainstream school day. This unique program provides teens with a safe place to cope with their feelings of loss without having to forego the normalcy of adolescent life or familial responsibilities.

"Sharing feelings with peers helps them to realize they are not alone in the experience," says Silvia. "It minimizes isolation and promotes healthy dialogue."

Groups meet once a week during a floating one-hour school period for six weeks. Each week centers on a unique topic associated with loss, such as Telling My Story, Memories and Remembering, and Common Grief Reactions. Teens participate in group discussion, creative writing, games, and other activities to help them identify and connect with

their thoughts and feelings.

Silvia believes that providing adolescents with grief education makes a profound difference.

"A few weeks ago, a mother called me to say thank you. She indicated that her daughter was more loving, happier. The group helped her to validate her connection with her father who had died."

Coordinating grief groups during the mainstream school day is a challenge. Silvia works closely with school counselors, health educators, and administrators. "At each school, there is a gatekeeper, one person who is really advocating for the program. Without them, it wouldn't happen," offers Silvia. "Gatekeepers have an ongoing relationship with the students...they know what is occurring in their lives. When grief is an issue, they now know support is available."

At the conclusion of a Watsonville High Teen Grief Group, Silvia asked, "What did you learn about grief?" One student responded, "That it's a natural part of life, and it's good to let it out, but in healthy ways." Another responded, "I learned that it takes time to get through a loss. We all need help at some point. I am meant to be a happy person."

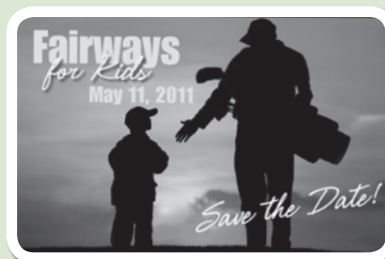
HUG program activities, including the on-campus grief groups, are entirely funded by proceeds from the Fairways for Kids Golf Classic, by private donations, and grants from philanthropic foundations. Recently, the Hospice Foundation of America acknowledged the program's innovation with a national award.

For more information on HUG services including on-campus teen grief groups, contact the HSCC Children's Grief Support Program Coordinator Cherie Alexander, LMFT, at 430-3000.

Green Begets Green

Fairways for Kids Golf Classic Raises Funds for HUG Program

Polish your clubs and grab your tees! The Friends of Hospice 11th Annual Dr. Rich Shapiro Memorial Fairways for Kids Golf Classic is on the horizon. On May 11 avid golfers and hobbyists alike will join in the fun at the Seascape Golf Club. Event chairs Ginny Clark and Ginny Solari Mazry and their wonderful group of volunteers are planning a full day of activities along with their co-hosts, the



Seascape Ambassadors, a group of golfing aficionados who are dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of golf through charity. A favorite among golfers, this fun-filled day starts with a BBQ lunch and includes 18 holes of golf, contests, a buffet dinner and a silent auction.

Proceeds from the Fairways for Kids event help to underwrite a portion of HSCC's

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Guardians of End-of-Life Care

Each and every day, Hospice Angels preserve our community's access to end-of-life care by financially contributing to the ongoing work of HSCC. Angels pledge \$1,000 or more a year for three consecutive years.

"Angels allow us to do what makes sense to enhance end-of-life care," comments Executive Director Ann Pomper. "We are able to adapt our services because we can count on their sustaining contributions."

We are grateful for our esteemed Angels and invite you to join their ranks. For more information about the Hospice Angels program, contact Janet Gluch-Leunis at 430-3086.

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 Anonymous (2)



Pam Kangas, Norma Sacks, Susan Karon



Ed Sacks, Dick Clark, Phil Yule

Jan Walsh, Marilyn Sandow, Allison Niday



Co-chairs Ginny Clark & Ginny Solari Mazry

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HUG program for kids. Dollars go directly to ensuring that our county's young people have access to one-on-one and/or group grief support in English or Spanish. "HUG gives every child and teen an opportunity to grieve in a supportive, nurturing environment," offers Cherie Alexander, HUG Program

Coordinator. "The Friends' support is invaluable in making this work possible." To sponsor this event, or to register your team, go to www.HospiceSantaCruz.org.

Since 1984, the Friends of Hospice auxiliary fundraising group has been setting their sights high. The more than 100 members pool their formidable skills and talents in an effort to raise financial resources for HSCC programs. They achieve their goal by hosting two major events per year, the Fairways for Kids Golf Classic and Oktoberfest, and by donating all the proceeds from the sale of their cookbook, "Cooking with Friends of Hospice." The book retails for \$15, but the calories are free!

The Friends of Hospice would like to make new friends. Please contact membership chair Marilyn Noto at 430-3000 for more information.



Robin Spring, Social Worker; Anne Laurent, Nurse; Dr. Grace Laurencin, Physician; Jori Leslie, Social Worker; Kim De Serpa, Team Lead; Cynthia Elliott, Nurse; Darrin Schultz, Nurse

Introducing the New Rapid Response Team, *because every minute is precious*

A new care team was launched in February to further our mission of compassionate care. The Rapid Response Team (RRT) is specially designed to provide a concentrated level of assistance to patients and families who are expected to be on Hospice care for just a few days. Available seven days a week, RRT ensures that patients and families are well supported during the last days of life.

RRT Clinical Manager Kim De Serpa explains, "We are able to assess a patient's condition and know whether support from the RRT would be helpful. If it is, then we focus on providing expert care as quickly as possible."

While the RRT functions much like the other excellent care teams at Hospice,

it responds acutely to the needs that arise in the final days of a loved one's life. Longer nursing visits are provided to help manage pain and stabilize symptoms. Extended social work visits help to ease concerns that invariably arise as life's end grows near. "Our ability to really support and care for families closely during the final days and hours can be very reassuring," says Kim.

Although Hospice care is available for many months at the end of life, some patients and families may choose to wait until the final days to request hospice services. In some cases, medical circumstances may find a patient in the hospital, yet wanting to spend their final days at home. RRT works closely with our local hospitals, medi-

cal groups, nursing and care facilities to make the transition from hospital to home as smooth as possible.

The Rapid Response Team speaks to HSCC's mission that individuals and families are the guiding force in their own end-of-life experience. Chief Clinical Officer Debbie Owen explains, "If a patient and family choose hospice care in the last few days of life, we want to be as helpful as we can by managing pain, easing symptoms, and giving them as much time with their loved ones as possible."

For the Spanish speaking community, bilingual support is also available through the RRT. "It's added support during this very precious time of life," adds Kim.



Although they are diverse and come from all walks of life, our Legacy Circle donors recognize the importance of end-of-life services and have taken a significant step to ensure that expert, compassionate care is available beyond their own lifetimes. They know they will help bring dignity and comfort to individuals and families when compassionate care is needed most. For more information about becoming a Hospice of Santa Cruz County Legacy Circle Member, please call Cathy Conway, Director of Development, at 430-3073.

2010 outcomes

Provided **46,726** days of hospice care to **762** patients and their loved ones

Delivered **401** days of charity hospice care to the uninsured

Served **358** individuals and their caregivers through the Transitions program

Assisted **1,822** Hospice family members and **336** community members through the grief process

Provided **833** grief support sessions to children and teens

Facilitated **85** educational presentations providing **2,500** professionals and community members with end-of-life education

Collaborated with **8** community agencies to develop an innovative Caregiver Certification Course offered through Cabrillo College Extension

Received over **13,000** heartfelt volunteer hours of program support for a savings of **\$273,240**

Led the countywide initiative to make the Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form a new standard of care in Santa Cruz County



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