



Brattleboro Area Hospice *Newsletter* February 2008

Brattleboro Area Hospice • 191 Canal Street • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
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FROM BETTINA....

Expectations. As very young children we don't have them. Watch an infant "playing" peek-a-boo. A face or toy disappears and then pops up again and the child is delighted. It is later, when we begin to understand cause and effect that we naturally expect predictable outcomes. When we turn the key in our car we fully expect it to start. When we have a date or an appointment, we expect that the other party will be there. But what about the times when our expectations are not met? The car doesn't start or the other person doesn't show? These are times that can challenge us.

And then there are the expectations, the standards perhaps, to which we hold others. Lately I find myself beginning to consider that I hold people to expectations which frankly, they may not know I hold and certainly did not sign on to meet. It may be my wish, my expectation, that another will come through for me because I would for them, but it may not be viable. Am I wrong to want it? No. But to expect it opens up a potential floodgate of letdown and frustration. On the other side, I surely let others down when I fail to meet their expectations of me.

Hospice work offers us many challenges when dealing with expectations. People with dementia

sometimes return to the early childhood experience of each moment being new and without expectation. I have watched a visitor introduce herself to her mother a dozen times in as many minutes and observed the mother happy to meet her each time. The death of someone we love reveals the many expectations we carry of that relationship. We experience confusion after a loss. The phone rings and we expect the voice of the loved one no longer in our life. We have good news and expect to be able to share it.

And so I consider my role as a hospice volunteer and the expectations that I may hold for a client or a family. What I see is that it is not up to them to meet my expectation of a perfect death, to experience their situation in a particular way, or even to appreciate my time and effort. My role is to meet them where I find them and I do that best when my expectations fall away.

I am trying to expect less. Not as a way of giving up or settling, but as a way of appreciating. Will my car start tonight when I leave here? We'll see.

MONTHLY VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

During January's monthly volunteer meeting five volunteers came in and shared thoughts and questions around a number of topics. One volunteer who had previously been with clients on a short term basis spoke about being with someone now who she has been visiting for six months and who is not actively dying. Because the client has dementia, we discussed that affliction as well as the experience of visiting in a nursing home. Another volunteer had had a recent experience where she had to juggle the desires of her client and the advice of the nursing agency. That conversation led us to revisiting our policy on the dispensing of drugs and the fact that as volunteers we can't do it.

It was lively discussion which provided good food for thought.

At the end of the meeting it was suggested that we try having a topic for February's meeting. As that will happen on the day before Valentine's Day, we thought we would ask volunteers to think about bringing something sweet, not to eat, but in the form of a hospice related story or anecdote. As always, you are welcome to come and just listen. Bring your lunch if you like and stay for as long as you can. It is always nice to see you.

Bettina and Ryan

FEBRUARY IN-SERVICE

Movie Night: *Two Weeks*

February 21st, 5-8 pm

Upstairs Meeting Room

Join us on Thursday February 21 for the movie *Two Weeks*. Based on the experiences of film maker and director Steve Stockman whose mother died of ovarian cancer a decade ago, the film is a bitter-sweet story starring Sally Field as the mother of four grown children who return home for the last days of her life.

We will begin the film promptly at 5:15 so that there is time for discussion at the end. Light refreshments will be available, and you can bring something of your own to snack on or share as well.

Please call Bettina or Jennifer at the office to let us know you'll be coming.

NEWS FROM THE SHOP

From Victoria Chertok, Volunteer Coordinator

We have been very busy over the holiday break giving the shop a fresh look and renovating the housewares and children's sections. Our carpenter, Kiqe Bosch, built us nine new shelving units and a snazzy new ski rack. Thanks also to our wonderful volunteers: Kate Stewart, Harriet Tepfer, Jennifer Anger and Heather Lane who painted the shelving which took several days and coats of paint. We'd also like to thank our neighbor, Lester Dunklee, who provided steel for our

new children's room clothing racks. Come on in and take a look at our new shop renovations!

We can always use more volunteers in the Shop, especially substitute cashiers, since several of our regular volunteers are away for the winter months. Please stop by and see Victoria to fill out a volunteer application if you have extra time and would like to lend a hand.

DO YOU LIKE SNAKES?

In a continued effort to match our hospice families with volunteers who might best serve their needs, we try have a solid understanding of your abilities and interests. We know that some of you are afraid of snakes, that others can not be in smoking environments, and that at least one of you can speak Polish.

One area about which we could use more information has to do with your willingness / comfort level in visiting people with Alzheimer's or dementia. We are experiencing some increase in requests for volunteers to see clients with this profile, and it would be helpful to know where you see yourself on the continuum from not at all

comfortable to unsure to very comfortable. Your input will help us to serve our clients more efficiently and also to know how we might better support your needs as a volunteer. Additionally, if there are changes in your life that are impacting your availability (making you either more, less or not at all available) that would be very helpful information for us to have. You can call or e-mail any specifics and we will update your file.

Thank you for taking the time to volunteer and also for keeping us informed as your life takes you on its path.

Bettina and Ryan

"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."

Elizabeth Kubler Ross

VALENTINE BOSTON GETAWAY RAFFLE

Win a romantic weekend in Boston at Experienced Goods, in a raffle with all proceeds benefiting Brattleboro Area Hospice. Tickets are \$1 / each, 6 for \$5, and are for sale at the Shop register.

The winner will receive two nights at a duplex apartment near the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and Symphony Hall, along with a basket of delicious goodies—champagne, chocolates, appetizers and cookies—for their romantic weekend in the city. The winning ticket will be drawn on Tuesday, February 12th, just in time to give the prize to your sweetheart on Valentine's Day. Information: 257-0775.

MID-WINTER COLLAGE WORKSHOP AT RIVER GALLERY SCHOOL

32 Main Street, Brattleboro

Wednesday, February 20, 9:30- 11:30 am

RSVP to Jennifer at 257-0775 as this workshop has limited space

Come assemble a collage of remembrance or self-nurturance, of inspiration or whatever you choose. Materials will be provided though you may bring your own found objects from nature or copies of photos and mementos of loved

ones. Marilyn Allen of River Gallery School and Elizabeth Pittman will facilitate. Address questions to Elizabeth, 257-0775 x104.

RSVP ADDS VALUE TO VOLUNTEERING

In addition to the general rewards of volunteering, (below), RSVP members are working together to build a stronger community: RSVP volunteers are members of an organization designed to serve the needs of the total community. The RSVP organization makes a special effort to get volunteers the work they want when they want it, almost any place in the community. RSVP will help with training and placing as required. RSVP volunteers receive community recognition awards for accumulated time for all the different non-profits for which they work. RSVP volunteers automatically receive supplemental accident and liability insurance coverage while volunteering, up to \$25,000, from the time they leave home until they return.

Most importantly, RSVP membership does not subtract from a volunteer's work with any other organization, it only adds value. Plus, all can enjoy the general rewards of volunteering. These include:

1. The opportunity to use your personal skills and talents in new ways
2. Knowing that your actions make a difference
3. Knowing that you are helping to build a better community
4. Potentially, gaining a better understanding of your own capacities and stretching your experiences
5. Gaining personal confidence by helping other
6. Building a broader community network of relationships and friendships

Brattleboro Area Hospice

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Assistant Manager
Beverly Miller
Assistant Manager
Hannah Dancing
Ellen Graham
Eric Morgan
Imelda Reilly
Store Assistants

Calendar

February 4. Volunteer Report Forms due.

February 4–March 24, Monday, 5:30-7 pm. Eight-week General Support Group. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards. (New group forming if there is sufficient interest.)

February 5, 12, 19, 26, Tuesdays, 12:15-12:45 pm. Quiet sitting at Hospice Office. Information: 257-0775.

February 9, Saturday, 10 am-12 noon. "Second Saturdays" Gathering. Come to make valentines and socialize with other individuals and families who have experienced the death of a loved one. For adults and children. Facilitated by Elizabeth Ungerleider and Elizabeth Pittman.

February 11 & 18, Monday, 3:30-5 pm. Good Grief Children's Program. A six-week program for 5-7 yr olds who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Facilitated by Elizabeth Ungerleider. Registration is necessary.

February 13 & 27, Wednesday, 4-5:30 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.

February 13, 12:30-2 pm. Monthly Volunteer Support Meeting, BAH Downstairs Kitchen Meeting Room.

February 14 & 28, Thursday, 6:30-8 pm. Bereaved Parents Support Group. Facilitated by Lynn Martin.

February 18, Monday, BAH office closed for holiday.

February 20, Wednesday, 9:30-11:30 am. Mid-Winter Collage Workshop at River Gallery School. Facilitated by Marilyn Allen and Elizabeth Pittman. RSVP to Jennifer, 257-0775.

February 25, Monday, 5:30 pm. Board of Directors Meeting, Hospice Office.

Brattleboro Area Hospice
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Brattleboro, VT 05301
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