



Brattleboro Area Hospice *Newsletter* January 2007

Brattleboro Area Hospice • 191 Canal Street • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
802-257-0775 • E-mail: brattleborohospice@verizon.net

PORTRAIT OF PEACE

There was once a king who offered a prize to the artist who could paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all of the pictures. After much deliberation he was down to the last two. He had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for the peaceful mountains that towered around it. Overhead, fluffy white clouds floated in a blue sky. Everyone who saw this picture said that it was the perfect picture of peace.

The second picture had mountains too. These mountains were rugged and bare. Above was an angry gray sky from which rain fell. Lightning flashed. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not appear to be a peaceful place at all. But, when the king looked closely, he saw that behind the waterfall was a tiny bush growing in the rock. Inside the bush, a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest. She was the perfect picture of peace.

The king chose the second picture. "Because," he explained, "peace is not only in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace is in the midst of things as they are, when there is calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."



THE GIFT RECEIVED

By Lava Mueller, BAH Patient Care Volunteer

The other night I was lying in bed reading a book when I felt the strong presence of a client who had recently died. I could sense her spirit hovering somewhere above me, and I felt honored to receive the visit. I quieted my mind as much as possible and listened to someplace within where I could hear her. And then I felt, more than heard, these words: "Thank you."

But I didn't do anything, I thought. Not much, anyway. I only visited you less than a dozen times, and half the time other providers were already there, taking care of you. And even when it was just the two of us, it was easy and pleasant, and well, you really don't need to thank me.

And then, in the same split second that it took for me to feel unworthy of being thanked, I remembered a lesson I had studied in a spiritual course I am taking. The lesson was on Giving and

Receiving. The premise is that many of us know how to give, and we do it readily and easily, but receiving can be difficult. Perhaps we don't feel worthy. But in this lesson I learned that receiving is giving. It is the most wonderful gift we can give to the person presenting the gift/compliment/service.

So I tried something else: instead of resisting my client's words, I closed my eyes, opened my heart, and let her gratitude in. And in that moment I felt a warmth flood my entire being. It enveloped me; it held me entirely. It was as if a huge wave of love washed over me. And then it was gone. And so was she.

Because I allowed myself to receive my client's gratitude we were both able to serve each other one last time in a most profound way.

Giving is receiving. Receiving is giving.

FROM BETH

In 2006 we served 71 patients and families; the average age was 75, we had 86 active volunteers, there were 161 volunteer assignments and The Hospice Room at Eden Park was used by 19 patients, for a total of 117 days. Below is a comparison of the last three years:

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Clients served:	80	80	71
Average Age:	76	79.5	75
Active volunteers:	84	78	86
Volunteer Assignments:	137	112	161
Eden Park Hospice room use:	7	19	19

The Southeastern Vermont Council on Aging and Brattleboro Area Hospice is sponsoring the final in a series of free monthly caregiver workshops on Thursday, January 11, at the Gathering Place from 4:00-5:45pm. The topic for this workshop is Caregiving at the End of Life. This session will cover physical and emotional changes as the care receiver approaches the end of life. We will cover common feelings of the caregiver, self care, anticipatory grief

responses, changes in relationships and roles, support systems and one's social network. We will discuss maintaining a healthy emotional life as well as balance between work and personal life; community resources will be provided. **Open to ALL interested community members who would like to know more about caregiving. Please call 257-0775 for information and to register.**

*May you, and all those you love,
be so blessed and fortunate
to be surrounded by people
who will help you get untangled
from the things that are binding you.
And, may you always know the joy
of giving and receiving gratitude.*

May we all be happy and create happiness for others.

May we all be free from suffering and from causing others to suffer.

May we all dwell in peace and ease without too much attachment and too much aversion.

I hope you have had a lovely, stress-free, joyful, creative, and simple holiday season.

FROM GEMMA

It is with sweet sadness that I write this farewell note from the Shop to our dearest Libby. As of the end of December 2006, Libby will be moving into a new and exciting chapter of her life as a massage therapist, something she has been working toward for the past few years. I know it will be a great success, as everything Libby does she does with a high level

of commitment, integrity, and caring. Libby's contribution to the shop has been immeasurable.

I will personally miss her gentle spirit, her smile, and her calm and supportive friendship. We send you off, dear Libby, with our best wishes for your success and happiness, many thanks, and lots of love.

Libby is offering readers of our newsletter the coupon below:

Brattleboro Area Hospice
\$15 Off
For the month of January
Libby Garofalo, Therapeutic Massage
Brattleboro Vermont
802-464-4758

-

FROM SARAH SWIFT, OUR NEWEST HOSPICE CARE STAFF

I am excited to have joined the BAH staff as the Hospice Care Assistant. Those of you who I've had the chance to meet or speak with have been very welcoming. Thank you. I am very happy to be here assisting Beth. My first exposure to BAH was my patient care training in 2001; at that time I knew that I'd found a very special community. I have rarely met such a caring, compassionate group of people as those involved with this organization. If I have not met or spoken with you yet, I hope to do so soon. I thought I'd share with you here a bit about myself...

I am from Maine, although I have been living in Vermont for a while now. My interests and training are in the psychosocial care of the dying and aging and in the hospice movement. For the last few years, I have been making photographic quilts with people who were coming to terms with end-of-

life situations, as a way of honoring their lives and memories. For me, as it may be for some of you, it is through hospice work that I feel most fulfilled. Even in the mundane, practical aspects of this work, there is something more there. It's for this "something more," this chance to simply be with a person during this time that I continue this work. It always felt very solitary to me, though, and it wasn't until I came here that I realized how many compassionate volunteers there were doing the same thing I was doing. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to do this work, and I am delighted to be doing this with such kind people.

Thank you for being so welcoming. I look forward to meeting you.

EXPERIENCED GOODS IS EXPANDING INTO THE WORLD OF eBAY

One joy of shopping at Experienced Goods is discovering the unexpected treasure—that item that you could live without until you found that it existed and is for sale for a few dollars. Don't worry, that will not change. However, we are expanding our world a bit. From the generosity of the community, we have received items that will bring a much higher price on eBay. It is our mission to raise as much money as possible for Hospice so we are experimenting in this new arena.

If you are interested in checking out the items that we have for sale, on eBay our user ID is "vthospice". For those unfamiliar with the process you may follow the steps below:

- Go to <ebay.com>
- In the upper right hand corner of the home page of eBay, hit "advanced search".
- On the left hand side of the next screen, hit "items by seller".
- The next screen will ask you to enter the seller's user ID, type in *vthospice*, then *search* at the bottom of the page.

You may notice that because we are a non-profit, 100% of the sale goes to benefit Hospice, as well as giving the interested buyer our mission statement, thus further educating the public as to our purpose.

In order to put this system into place we have hired Niles Laughner. Niles comes to us not only as an expert in eBay, but also with a wealth of information that is constantly being tapped into here at the shop. Niles has been an antique dealer on and off for twenty years, and specializes in old military paraphernalia (uniforms, insignia, metals, etc), and knows a lot about a lot when it comes to antiques and curiosities. He has been selling on eBay for ten years (which must be almost as long as eBay itself has been in existence) and has already made a few nice sales for Hospice.

Niles grew up in the area (he moved here at the age of six) and presently lives in Keene, NH, where he has owned two vintage clothing stores, most recently "Swank". He is also working on a book, which is the story of an American woman, Margaret Colt, who worked for the American Red Cross during World War II. The book will be the correspondence of Margaret Colt with her family (approximately 500 pages of letters and photos) which is being compiled and will be published sometime in the near future.

We will soon have a bulletin board in the shop that will feature some of the eBay items listed. Let us know if you have any questions or comments about our new eBay service. Just ask for Niles at 254-5200.

HOSPICE MEMORIAL GARDEN UPDATE

With the heroic efforts of our Garden Volunteers, all of the perennials have been removed from the garden and put to bed under a thick blanket of straw. Arrangements have been for the drainage ditch to be dug as soon as the ground freezes, and in the spring the work of amending the soil, building the stone walls and paths, and the replanting of the

perennials will begin. Our hearty thanks to all those who have helped us get this far: Joan Benneyan, Jennifer Campbell, Willow Embry, Lois Keiser, Lerna, Ruth Lane, Mary Rivers, Ann Switzer, and Cheryl Wilfong. Now, rest up because we'll be calling on you again in the spring!!

VOLUNTEER WANTED:

FOR TYPING

From time to time, Bereavement Services could use a volunteer to type up quotes or short passages to be used in the SEASONS newsletter, in the training manual, or for presentation hand-outs. If this is a service you could offer, please call Elizabeth (x104) or Melissa (x108).

FOR SEASONS COMPUTERIZED LISTING

We are also looking for a volunteer to categorize the titles of articles, poems, and quotes according to the issues of SEASONS in which they've appeared. We would like a computerized listing; for instance, Poetry> "Snowbound">Jan-Feb 1999 & 2003. Call Elizabeth or Melissa.

BEING A COMPASSIONATE COMPANION

There are no formulas or techniques that apply to every situation, for each individual's death is unlike any other. Perhaps the only constant can be characterized as one of constant change. But there are some practices, reminders and stories that can help us as we bear witness to the dying—to this most intimate and extraordinary part of life.

"Being a Compassionate Companion" is meant to support and encourage those accompanying people who are dying. In the United States, we tend to see death as primarily a medical event. But it is much more. Its essence is one of relationship: to ourselves, to those we may be caring for (or who are caring for us), and to whatever image of ultimate kindness we hold. This relationship is intense—sometimes frustrating, overwhelming, confusing. But taken as a practice of awareness, the exploration of death can break our hearts wide open and lend power, grace, and fullness to every moment of life.

Preparing: There comes a moment when we realize we are about to become a companion of someone who is facing death. Welcome everything,

push away nothing; bring your whole self to the experience; don't wait; find a place of rest in the middle of things; and cultivate "don't know" mind.

Serving: We often set ourselves apart from other people's suffering with our pity, our fear, our professional warmth, and even our charitable acts. Since no real service occurs unless both people are being served--when there is no healer and no healed--"to suffer with others", mindfulness, and simple acts of human kindness like touch and devout listening.

Grieving: We don't "get past" grief, but we can go right through the middle of it and be transformed. With awareness, the journey through grief can lead us to a profound understanding that reaches beyond individual loss. It can open us to the most essential truths of our lives: the truth of impermanence, the causes of suffering, and the illusion of separateness.

(Taken from the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco tape series)

According to the wisdom of Buddha, we can actually use our lives to prepare for death. We do not have to wait for the painful death of someone close to us or the shock of terminal illness to force us into looking at our lives. Nor are we condemned to go out empty-handed at death to meet the unknown. We can begin, here and now, to find meaning in our lives. We can make of every moment an opportunity to change and to prepare--wholeheartedly, precisely, and with peace of mind--for death and eternity. In the Buddhist approach, life and death are seen as one whole, where death is the beginning of another chapter of life. Death is a mirror in which the entire meaning of life is reflected. --Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*

"FIVE PRECEPTS OF HOSPICE CARE"

Precept One: Bring your whole self to the bedside
Precept Two: Welcome everything, push away nothing
Precept Three: Find a place of rest in the middle of things
Precept Four: Cultivate don't-know mind
Precept five: DON'T WAIT

It is rewarding to find someone you like, but it is essential to like yourself.
It is quickening to recognize that someone is a good and decent human being,
but it is indispensable to view yourself as acceptable.
It is a delight to discover people who are worthy of respect and admiration and love,
but it is vital to believe yourself deserving of these things.
For you cannot live in someone else.
You cannot find yourself in someone else.
You cannot be given a life by someone else.
Of all the people you will know in a lifetime, you are the only one you will never leave or
lose.
To the question of your life, you are the only answer.
To the problems of your life, you are the only solution.

~Jo Coudert

THE OFFERING

These woods
on the edges of a lake
are settling now
to winter darkness.
Whatever was going to die
is gone --
crickets, ferns, swampgrass.
Bare earth fills long spaces of a field.
But look:
a single oak leaf
brown and shining
like a leather purse.
See what it so delicately offers
lying upturned on the path.
See how it reflects in its opened palm
a cup of deep, unending sky.

~ Laura Foley

Brattleboro Area Hospice

Board of Directors

Penfield Chester
Sarah Edwards
Nancy Lord
Vice-President
Andrew MacFarland
President
Greg McAllister
Kris McDermet
Tracy Sloan
Treasurer
Ann Switzer
Secretary

Hospice Office

Bettina Berg
*Hospice Volunteer and
Education Coordinator*
Jennifer Hall
Office Manager
Melissa Hays
Bereavement Volunteer Coordinator
Beth Newman
Hospice Care Coordinator
Susan Parris
Executive Director
Elizabeth Evans Pittman
Bereavement Care Coordinator
Sarah Swift
Hospice Care Assistant

Experienced Goods

Gretchen Horton-Knebler
Store Manager
Betsy Hall
*Store Volunteer & Special
Projects Coordinator*
Gemma Champoli
Hannah Curtin
Hannah Dancing
Tracy DeCell
Rachel-Storm Heasley
Niles Laughner
Imelda Reilly
April Sommerville
Store Assistants

Calendar

January 4. Volunteer Report Forms due.

January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Tuesdays, 12:15-12:45 pm. Silent sitting in Hospice Library. Information: 257-0775.

January 4, 11, 18 & 25, Thursdays, 5-6:30 pm. Loss Writing Group. Facilitated by Muriel Winter Wolf.

January 10 & 24, Wednesday, 4-5:30 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.

January 11, Thursday, 4:00-5:45 pm. Caregiving at the End of Life, free workshop at The Gathering Place, more information elsewhere in this newsletter.

January 15. Office closed for holiday.

January 29, Monday, 5:30-7:30 pm. Board of Directors Meeting & Annual Meeting.

For information on other Bereavement Support Groups, please refer to the scheduled events in the January-February issue of the SEASONS newsletter.

Congratulations to Kathy Leo on her new grandson Fin!

Brattleboro Area Hospice
191 Canal Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301
Return Service Requested

U.S. Postage Paid
Non-Profit Org.
BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301
PERMIT NO. 109