



Brattleboro Area Hospice Newsletter

March 2007

Brattleboro Area Hospice • 191 Canal Street • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
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"If we just worry about the big picture, we are powerless. So my secret is to start right away doing whatever little work I can do. I try to give joy to one person in the morning, and remove the suffering of one person in the afternoon. If you and your friends do not despise the small work, a million people will remove a lot of suffering. That is the secret. Start right now."

~Sister Chän Khöng

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: Shirley Squires BAH Volunteer Since 1998

After I began volunteering with the AIDS Project, I heard about Hospice. I wasn't sure if it was something I could do; it was so different. I had never thought about my own death before. The training and things that were brought up in it really touched me a lot. I realized that I won't be here forever, not that I dwell on it, but it brought it into my awareness. I'm more aware of and better understand the dying process now. I got so much out of the Hospice volunteer training. I learned a lot about myself, about how different people are and how to deal with different types of situations and people.

I've learned so much about nursing and caregiving and what is really involved when someone is dying and needing care. To be part of that for someone is really rewarding when it is so hard on everyone; you can just be there for them.

I've also learned to not get too involved or attached; what not to do as well as what to do. Now I just know. I was scared at first. I didn't know what to look for or if I'd be able to handle this. I know now that I can. I'm no longer scared. I automatically know now what to do; it comes naturally rather than someone having to tell me.

I get as much or more out of volunteering for Hospice. It is really rewarding to know that you're doing something in such a difficult situation. I wish that I knew about Hospice when my family members were ill and dying. It would have really

helped. I never heard about it then. Now I tell friends or people I meet, so they can be sure to know it's available. Being a Hospice Volunteer makes me more aware of life and not putting off some things. I seldom put things off anymore. If I think of visiting someone I know is ill, I do it now rather than wait.

When I'm volunteering, I find that even if I'm visiting with someone that doesn't know who I am, doesn't even remember me from one visit to the next...they really appreciate you being there for them. You just know. You know when someone wants you there or if they don't. There was a case where I invited the patient to come to see my nativities. For months afterward he talked about building me a museum for them and would ask about the progress of it. I assured him each time that everything was fine and then for three months he didn't say anything. The subject was just dropped. Two days before he died he asked me about it, and it took me a bit to realize what he was asking. I assured him they did a great job and he died the next day.

The Hospice Room at Eden Park is so tremendous. It is so great to have a place like that. So often people at the end of life can't be home for one reason or another. I have found it is so comforting having the staff and volunteers right

continued on next page

VOLUNTEER PROFILE, *continued from page one*

there if anyone is needed.

If you're not really there, if you don't want to be with a patient, it shows up. So I've learned to back off when I need to, to take care of myself. BAH is

one of the greatest organizations. You have to have a great group of people for it to work and they do. The community would be lost without it.

WORKSHOP NEWS from Bettina...

On a cold Saturday in early February, about 25 people gathered in Shelburne, Vermont for a day long workshop about caring for our own dead. Led by Elizabeth Knox, the founder of Crossings which is a resource center for home funeral care, the day involved consideration of laws as well as the specifics of caring for a loved one at home after death. Elizabeth makes the point that while this is viewed as a new movement by many, it is actually a throwback to older, more traditional ways.

Very few of the people in attendance were involved with Hospice. Rather they were husbands, wives, parents, children and community members wanting to know more about home funerals and how to care for someone after death occurs. Beginning with a list of fears and potential drawbacks to holding a home funeral, Elizabeth took us through the steps involved and reminded

us that any or all of them might be used depending on the circumstances a family is facing. While she admits to a certain amount of funeral home bias, Elizabeth's ultimate goal is to educate the public so that we know what our rights and choices are.

If you are interested in learning more, we have the PBS video called *A Family Undertaking* which can be borrowed from the Hospice Library. We also have Mark Harris's new book entitled *Grave Matters* in which he considers the benefits of green burials both experientially and economically. You can also visit Elizabeth's website at <www.crossings.net>. Additionally, Brattleboro Area Hospice will host a discussion about alternative funerals as part of the Wellness in Windham County series on April 30th. See April's newsletter for details.

EXCITED ABOUT A DITCH?! YOU BET!

On a cold February day, our dream of many years came true when we beheld the beautiful ditch pictured right. As many of you (and your sodden feet) have witnessed, our garden had the tendency to become swampy. But no longer! Thanks to grant money from the O'Reilly foundation, we were finally able to have a ditch constructed which diverts the water from the hillside to the right of the garden.



YOUR DONATION WILL HELP US COMPLETE THIS PROJECT!

The ditch is just stage one of our garden renovation project, which will include a flat stone area for gatherings, a path suitable for wheelchairs, a handicapped parking space, and a stone wall created by Dan Snow! But these next steps will not happen without more funding, and while we have received some assistance for this project, a local foundation recently declined our request, so we continue our quest to raise the money to finish this project. If you would like to support the renovation of the Hospice Memorial Garden, please send your donation to us at 191 Canal Street, Brattleboro, 05301. Make sure to indicate that the donation is for the garden project.

CELEBRATING ONE YEAR ON FLAT STREET!

On the first day of February we celebrated our first year on Flat Street! We had a great day of music, refreshments and sales. Thanks to the community for coming to celebrate with us and for your ongoing support of our mission. Special thanks go to Cindy Hellmann and Greg Flatt, for the great tunes, Beth Newman for face painting, Taylor for Flowers for your sweet gesture of

providing us with balloons, and Kris McDermet and many others for cookies extravaganza! Experienced Goods is one of those rare places that attracts a diverse group of people who come together to support a common goal of good for the whole community. We look forward to many years of service ahead.

These are a few of our favorite things...at the shop!

*Teapots and hoses and whiskers and moo moos
High chairs and pocketbooks and usable snow shoes
Mixers and blenders and the goodies they bring
These are a few of our favorite things*

*Sofas and rockers and desks with their chairs
Coffee tables, bookcases and nice shoes in pairs
salt shakers and pepper shakers and sparkly rings
These are a few of our favorite things*

*When the dog bites
When the bee stings
When I'm feeling sad
I simply go to Experienced Goods
And then I don't feel so bad*

*Linens from the attic, shovels from the shed
High chairs and low chairs and the frame of a bed
Old Books and new books and Lamps and wings
These are a few of our favorite things*

*Clean out your attic
And your basement
And your garage too
And bring us the things that you no longer need
And then there will be lots to sell and do!!*

Things are looking a little bare in the shop, so if you have any inclination to clean out your kitchen cabinets, your tool shed, the boxes in the attic, please think of us! We would so appreciate any donation you might bring us during this slow time of year.

Thanks from Experienced Goods

LIVING WITH GRIEF: BEFORE AND AFTER THE DEATH

Hospice Foundation of America's 14th Annual Teleconference

Thursday, March 22, 2007, 1:30-5 pm

Conference Center at The Brattleboro Retreat

Moderated by Frank Sesno, the teleconference will feature a panel of experts who will explore the most current theoretical perspectives on loss and grief as experienced by people throughout a life-limiting illness and by survivors after the death.

Following the teleconference from 4 – 5 pm, participants will have the chance to ask questions and engage in conversation with a panel of local professionals including BAH staff Elizabeth Pittman, Bereavement Care Coordinator, and Beth

Newman, Hospice Care Coordinator; Ellen Curley, co-owner of Vermont Blessings crematory, Susan Tarolli of the United Church of Putney and others who have experience in the community working with bereavement issues.

Light refreshments will be served and CEUs are available. The teleconference begins promptly at 1:30, so doors will open at 1:00 to allow time to sign up for CEU's. To register for this free event, call Brattleboro Area Hospice at 257-0775.

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Calendar

March 1 and 8, Thursdays, 5:30-7:00 pm. Bereavement Support Group.
Facilitated by Elizabeth Pittman.
March 5, 12, 19, 26, Mondays, 3:30-5 pm. Good Grief Children's Program
for children 8-10 yrs old. Facilitated by Elizabeth Ungerleider.
March 5. Volunteer Report Forms due.
March 6, 13, 20, 27, Tuesdays, 12:15-12:45 pm. Silent sitting at Hospice
Office. Information: 257-0775.
March 14 and 28, Wednesdays, 4-5:30 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support
Group. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.
March 19, Monday, 5:30-7:30 pm. Board of Directors Meeting.
March 22, Thursday, 1:30-5 pm. Hospice Foundation of America's 14th
Annual Teleconference: Living With Grief: Before And After The Death,
Conference Center at The Brattleboro Retreat.
Late March or early April, NEW Loss Writing Group beginning. Facilitated
by Muriel Winter Wolf. Call Melissa (x108) or Elizabeth (x 104) for details.

- **SAVE THE DATE:** Thursday, April 5 will be the premier of Camilla Rockwell's film "Holding Our Own" at the Latchis, focusing on how we support those dying in the Brattleboro area through the work of Hallowell and Deidre Scherer. Look for more information in the April newsletter, and the Brattleboro Reformer.
- NEW 8-week bereavement group beginning late March/early April if there is sufficient interest. Dates and times TBA.

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