



Brattleboro Area Hospice Newsletter

October 2009

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

Gospel Night at the Latchis

The 2nd Annual gospel concert to benefit BAH will be held on Saturday, November 7 at 7:30 at the Latchis. Last year's concert was sold out, so if you don't have your tickets yet, you'd better hurry on down to Experienced Goods to buy them now (or order online at Brattleborotix.com).

This year promises to be even more exciting than last. The internationally acclaimed Kuumba Singers of Harvard College are returning with their vast repertoire of music that stretches from African call and response to contemporary hip-hop. They will be joined by Vermont's own Montpelier Gospel Choir for more traditional gospel fare, the BUHS Madrigals under the direction of Patty Meyer (who last year brought down the house) and special guests, Moonlight Davis and the Gospel Stars, an act guaranteed to get you up out of your seat and grooving in the aisles.

So clap, tap, sway and sing your way down to Experienced Goods to buy tickets for this fun benefit event.



Introducing...

Experienced Goods Home Furnishings

We're opening another store! Experienced Goods Home Furnishings at 53 Elliot Street will provide additional green-minded shopping in Brattleboro, offering unique home decor.

In 1989 two volunteers, Alison Macrae and Kris McDermet, started raising money for Brattleboro Area Hospice through yard sales. Seeing the success of this new venture, they decided to open a small shop in Harmony Parking Lot by the name of Experienced Goods. After many expansions and being in the capable and caring hands of several managers, in 2006 the shop moved to the current location at 77 Flat Street.



As Experienced Goods continues to grow and the community continues to seek change, the decision was made to explore a slightly new endeavor. We will be returning to our roots on Elliot Street to open a second shop. Experienced Goods Home Furnishings will feature affordable furniture, linens and other home decor with an emphasis on reuse, recycle, and refurbish. Karen Zamojski, a staff member at Experienced Goods, will be managing the Elliot Street store with the help of familiar faces from Flat Street. We hope to be open by

mid to late October and we look forward to seeing you in the new shop as well as continuing to see you in our beloved Flat Street store. We welcome your quality donations as always!

Brattleboro Area Hospice is a non-profit, community supported, United Way agency.



In Memory of Ed: Labyrinth Walk & Circle Dance

Tuesday, October 13, 2009, 9:30am – 12:30pm

At the McDermet's in West Brattleboro

(Heavy rain? Meet at the Hospice Office)

Ed Softky's unexpected death on October 9, 2008, stunned friends, acquaintances, and the other participants in the fall Bereavement Volunteer Training in which Ed was also enrolled.

Kris and Stewart McDermet have offered their gardens, fields and labyrinth as a place to gather, reflect and share in a Circle Dance led by Hope Jinishian, Ed's friend and a volunteer from that training. Another friend of Ed's, Sarah Pirtle, will play harp for our labyrinth walk. Please feel welcomed to join in this circle, whether you knew Ed in life or not. For Ed: the more people to sing, dance and celebrate with, the better!

You are invited to meet at our 191 Canal Street office for carpooling to the garden and labyrinth site off Sunset Lake Road. Carpools will leave the hospice office at 9:10am, Tuesday, October 13. If you'd like to participate in either or both of these sessions or have other questions, please RSVP to Shirley, Melissa or Elizabeth at 257-0775 or at brattleborohospice@myfairpoint.net. For those coming from west of Brattleboro, call for directions and you can meet us there!

The Power of Meditation is the Power of Attention

by Cheryl Wilfong

I've been reading *The Grace in Dying: How We Are Transformed Spiritually as We Die* by Kathleen Dowling Singh. Here's what she says about meditation.

"The power of meditation is the power of attention.... We live our normal lives with our attention squandered, wandering, dashing here and there, lured by sensation and desire, repelled by aversion, and dispersed haphazardly in the world of form. When that attention is ingathered... its

power begins to be revealed."

On the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, we have a wonderful opportunity to gather at the Hospice office at 5:10 to sit for 20 minutes in stillness with each other. This is an opportunity to stop dashing about and focus for a few moments on our true nature. Afterwards, we discuss a reading for 30 minutes and then send you on your way by 6:00.

Mark it on your calendar. Join us.

Helping Your Loved One Age Successfully

Monday, October 26, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at the Brew Barry Conference Center, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

Presented by Nancy Lord, RN, BSN, Vermont Dept of Health; Janice Malin, LISCW Geriatric Specialty; Jessica Emerson and Claudia McCarthy, Case Managers, Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont

We are living longer, and it can be a wonderful! Successful aging involves a number of choices and challenges, which are best dealt with early when everyone involved has a chance to assess the situation and their own needs. At this session, we'll watch a 15 minute video about a local wom-

an's choice to move closer to town, and discuss an array of issues—driving and transportation, mobility in the home, care of the house, financial and medical needs—that we and our loved ones may face while growing older. Register for this free session by calling 802-257-8877.

What a Father Should Be

By Lynn Martin

Barbra Streisand was singing, "Happy Days Are Here Again." Up to now I hadn't been aware of the music except as background to keep me awake as I drove into the dawn. I had automatically flipped a tape in as I started off, instinctively avoiding a silence to be filled with my own thoughts, and the sound of Aunt Phyllis' voice coming out of the darkness last night. "Your Dad died. You had better come as soon as you can." There are few things that actually stop the world. Death can. The incongruity of Barbra's song set me to giggling hysterically, and then to crying so hard I had to pull over until it stopped. I turned the tape off with a blind hand, cutting her off in mid-note. Exactly as my Dad had died. "He was talking to a friend. Suddenly threw up his hands and collapsed," was Aunt Phyllis' description.

I tried to imagine it and couldn't. My Dad was such a passionate talker, refusing to let a subject go until he thought he'd converted you to his point of view. Have you ever watched two red squirrels meet on a feeder? Their bodies tremble with indignation. Every hair bristles with electricity. Their outrageous chattering seems louder and longer than such small bodies can withstand. I always expect them to fly into a million pieces like an over-wound mechanical toy. My Dad was like

that. But it was only words. Dad was really quite gentle and basically intimidated by the world. It took me years to understand he was a fatherless boy. The first outrage was when his own father left his mother. Dad was ten years old. His father simply disappeared. They never heard from him again. This was the emotion behind his outbursts. No wonder every hair stood on end. The other reaction was to be a father I could count on. He was not going to disappear on his children.

This meant holding on to a job even when it was boring and tedious. This meant not taking risks. That's why he never bought a home of his own. What if he couldn't keep up the mortgage payments? What if the bank foreclosed and the house disappeared? What if? What if? I wince to think that as a teenager I saw this as cowardice. And yet this carefulness was rooted in his conception of what a father should be. And he was true to his own vision. He was there. I did always have a father. He came home every night. Such an incredible gift.

The irony is, he had to disappear, disappear forever, for me to put it all together, in a car by the side of the road, to the tune of "Happy Days Are Here Again."

Hospice Memorial Garden News

Penfield Chester, who has been our able Hospice Gardener through the rains of this summer is passing trowel and hoe along to Betsy Bates (see below.) We appreciate Penfield's garden-beautifying efforts, wish her well in her new endeavor running the Yoga Studio in Shelburne Falls, and are really glad we'll continue to see her in various volunteer roles with BAH.

We are pleased to announce that longtime volunteer Betsy Bates has agreed to become the new Gardener, both at the BAH office and at the Hospice Memorial Garden, but she cannot do it alone: read on!

"Hi, I'm Betsy Bates, the new Gardener. I've been a Hospice Care and Experienced Goods volunteer for 22 years. Some of you may know me from Walker Farm, West Hill Shop, Grafton Ponds and Dragonfly. Gardening and gardening together is a lot of fun. Whatever kind of gardener you are, from mildly curious to well-seasoned, I'd like to meet you: so Come Volunteer! Mondays, October 5 & 19 from 2-4pm are garden workdays. Of course you are welcome to come when it works for you. And let Elizabeth (elizabethhospice@myfairpoint.net) know if you'd like to be on the garden volunteer email list. Thank you!"

Acceptance

By Ellen Birx

As you practice acceptance, you grow in your ability to face and fully accept people, circumstances, and things just as they are. Acceptance is not a passive resignation ... not just making the best of a bad situation. It is an active presence to life just as it is.

Acceptance means not pushing away, denying, or excluding things or circumstances that you don't like. It is the process of continually dropping expectations and judgments and accepting what is.

Acceptance expands your vision, acknowledging all aspects of yourself and the world. Nothing is walled off. Total acceptance connects you with everything and helps you experience wholeness.

From Ryan and Muriel, Hospice Care Coordinators

After a brief summer recess from our monthly Volunteer Gatherings, we are resuming in October and will continue throughout the fall and winter. This is a place for volunteers to offer mutual support, discuss a number of issues and have questions answered, and share heartfelt stories and experiences. The gatherings provide all those present with a sense of community and kindred feeling, and gives us a chance to honor the people who invite us into their lives as their witnesses and companions on their journey into the final days of their lives.

If you haven't yet attended one of these gatherings, please call our Office Manager Shirley

to RSVP. Because we discuss substantial issues such as caring for dementia clients, sitting vigil, supervision, confidentiality, and other topics, the gathering qualifies as an In-Service Training. We will be meeting once each month, and will switch between afternoon and evening meetings on alternate months. If you have already attended and would like to come again, please do so—we will be happy to see you again.

In October we will meet on the Thursday the 22nd from 5:30 until 7:00 at the office.

Caregivers Support Group – Answers to Questions about Medicare D

The Gathering Place: 30 Terrace Street

Wednesday October 21, 2009, 5:30 – 7 pm

On October 21, The Brattleboro Caregiver Collaborative will host another gathering for those in the community caring for a friend or a loved one. The topic of this month's meeting which will run from 5:30–7 pm is the Medicare D program which deals with seniors and prescription drugs. A staff member from The Council on Aging will be present to offer information and to answer questions. The meeting is free and open to the public, and adult care services are available upon request. For questions or to arrange for care, call Michelle Grist-Weiner at The Gathering Place, 254 -6559.

"Every one of us is called upon, probably many times, to start a new life. A frightening diagnosis, a marriage, a move, loss of a job...And onward full tilt we go, pitched and wrecked and absurdly resolute, driven in spite of everything to make good on a new shore. To be -hopeful, to embrace one possibility after another - that is surely the basic instinct... Crying out: High tide! Time to move out into the glorious debris. Time to take this life for what it is."

~ Barbara Kingsolver,

High Tide in Tucson

A Thank You to Brattleboro Area Hospice from Rose Watson



My art show, 1000 Lillies.... A Journey through Grief, will begin on Friday, October 2nd and continues throughout the month at Café Lotus on High Street in Brattleboro. Five dollars of every sale will benefit the Brattleboro Area Hospice.

I began drawing and water coloring Lillies as I once again entered into a deep process of grief. The idea of drawing 1000 Lillies was inspired by the children's book, *Sadako and The Thousand Cranes*:

"... If a sick person folds one thousand paper cranes, the gods will grant her wish and make her healthy again." She handed the crane to Sadako. "Here's your first one."

Amazingly enough as I drew my 371st Lilly, a paper crane—head dipped down, wings spreading boldly out to each side and tail folded behind it, emerged from my drawing. I looked back at all my previous paintings and sure enough the very act, which had inspired me, that of folding a thousand cranes to receive a healing, was contained within the heart of my own project. A miracle in itself, one of the first I would discover with my opening to grief.

In the past the wonderful people at Hospice freely gave of their time and love as I cried my heart to happiness while they

helped me heal with their careful understanding and acceptance of my grief.

As I drew and painted I realized, "Wow, I can give some of each sale to Hospice! What a great way of showing my appreciation for everything they have given me!"

I hope you will come and enjoy the journey of 1000 Lillies with me, S. Rose Watson, at the opening reception for my show, which begins at 5pm in the Café on Friday of the October Gallery Walk.

Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring by Henri Nouwen Book Study Group

Thursday Evenings, November 5, 12, 19; 7:00 – 8:30 pm

St Michael's Episcopal Church

Co-Sponsored by St. Michael's Parish Health Ministry Team
and Brattleboro Area Hospice

Henri Nouwen has written extensively about spirituality. In this book, *Our Greatest Gift*, he shares his own experiences with aging, loss and grief. The aim of this three week study program is to use Nouwen's book to explore the spiritual dimensions of dying and to build a sense that dying well and caring well are part of our life together as a community and for many a way of practicing their faith. Nouwen, a Catholic priest, uses Christian language to examine dying and caring, and this program will take a broadly Christian view.

People from other faith traditions, or no faith, are welcome to participate as well. Brattleboro Area Hospice, while not affiliated with any religious organization, is committed to supporting people's spiritual well-being at end of life.

Participation for all three weeks is encouraged but not required. Books will be available for purchase at St. Michael's and at local bookstores. For questions or to sign up to attend, please call the St Michael's Church office at 254-6048.

**Brattleboro Area Hospice
Board of Directors**

Karen Abel
Connie Baxter
Judy Carpenter
Penfield Chester, *Co-President*
Victoria Collins, *Secretary*
Tim Gerdes, *Treasurer*
Greg McAllister
Kris McDermet, *Co-President*
Greg Moschetti
Mike Welch

Hospice Office

Bettina Berg, *Hospice Volunteer
& Education Coordinator*
Melissa Hays, *Bereavement
Volunteer Coordinator*
Shirley Kasanoff, *Office Manager*
Ryan Murphy, *Hospice Care
Coordinator*
Susan Parris, *Executive Director*
Elizabeth Evans Pittman
Bereavement Care Coordinator
Muriel Wolf, *Hospice Care
Coordinator*

Experienced Goods

Thrift Shop

Gemma Champoli, *Store Manager*
Sarah Rice, *Shop Volunteer Coordinator*
Hannah Curtin
Ellen Graham
Assistant Store Managers
Megan Corry
Christopher John
Jen Reichman
Brandi Lyn Younger
Store Assistants

Experienced Goods

Home Furnishings

Karen Zamojski, *Store Manager*
Karen Abel
Sharon Dunn
Emily Freeman
Tom Harris
Store Assistants

Calendar

October 5. Volunteer Report Forms due.
October 5 & 19, Mondays, 2– 4 pm. Hospice Memorial Garden Workday.
Bring drinking water, hand tools and gloves.
October 6, 13, 20, & 27, Tuesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm. Eight-week Living With Loss Support Group especially for those whose parent, sibling or friend has died will meet given sufficient interest. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards.
October 12 & 26, 2nd & 4th Mondays, 6:30 – 8 pm. Bereaved Parents Support Group. Facilitated by Lynn Martin. Call Melissa or Elizabeth to register.
October 13, Tuesday, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm. In Memory of Ed: Labyrinth Walk & Circle Dance. More information in this newsletter.
October 13 & 27, Tuesdays, 5:10 – 6pm. Silent Sitting & Reading/Discussion, Hospice office. More information in this newsletter.
October 14 & 28, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 4:30 – 6:00 pm. Spouse/Partner Loss Support Group. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards. Call Melissa or Elizabeth to register.
October 19, 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Board of Directors meeting, at the Hospice Office.
October 21, 5:30 – 7 pm. Caregivers Support Group – Answers to Questions about Medicare D. More information in this newsletter.
October 22, 5:30 – 7 pm. Hospice Care Volunteer Gathering—bring your stories and questions. More information in this newsletter.
October 26, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. Words for Keeps: Tell Your Story Through Poetry, workshop with Verandah Porche. RSVP required by October 19, call 257-0775 to reserve a spot.
October 26, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Helping Your Loved One Age Successfully. More information in this newsletter.

All of our services are free because of you!

We rely on donations from the community to keep our services free of charge. Help support our work by sending a donation to: Brattleboro Area Hospice, 191 Canal Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301. Thank you!

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

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