



# Brattleboro Area Hospice *Newsletter* September 2006

Brattleboro Area Hospice • 191 Canal Street • Brattleboro, Vermont 05301  
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"We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been - a place, half-remembered, and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community.

Somewhere, there are people to whom I can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power.

Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done.

Arms to hold us when we falter.

A circle of healing.

A circle of friends.

Someplace where we can be free."

~ StarHawk

## From Bettina...

At the end of July, I had the opportunity to attend the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's conference on volunteerism. People, mainly women, from all over the country gathered in Denver to meet and learn from one another. I sat next to people from large hospices with hundreds of volunteers and others from agencies in small rural areas where everyone knows everyone and anonymity is difficult to impossible. Yet regardless of the challenges, each volunteer coordinator claimed bragging rights about having the most amazing volunteers and each was looking for ways to honor, appreciate and support her volunteers as they do the work of serving clients and their families.

While there were many worthwhile sessions at the conference, I was specifically

touched by the presenters from the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco. Redwing Keyssar and Eric Poche are the Care Coordinator and the Volunteer Coordinator respectively. Their manner with one another was comfortable and respectful. When joking about Eric's not having a cell phone on which he could be contacted, Redwing said, "Sometimes I would just like to know where you are," to which he replied, "That's okay. I know where I am."

When we are with another, whether sitting quietly by the bedside, in a home with the TV going, or in a nursing home room with a roommate or two, it is always good to remember to turn off our potential distractions be they mechanical or internal. The grocery list, the

*continued on next page*

## From Bettina...continued

doctor's appointment, the question that conversation left me with; as much as possible it is helpful to put them aside. Then we can attend to what is being said with words or with a sigh, through a look or by a look away. When we know where we are, the person

we are with will know it too, and frequently it is only our presence which is really needed.

Thanks to all of you who volunteer and are present in so many ways. Take care of yourselves as you do the work of caring for others.

Bettina

## When a Loved One is Bedridden: How to be a Caring Companion

Monday, September 18, 7:00-9:00 PM  
Sponsored by Brattleboro Area Hospice  
Location: Brew Barry Conference Center,  
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

Towards the end of life people often need to spend a great deal of time in bed, and their needs change over time. What comfort and care can we offer to a loved one at this time? This evening's session will offer ideas for simple, comforting activities that anyone can offer from interactive projects such as collage making and letter writing, to quieter less active therapies such as massage, poetry, and music. Consideration will be given to varied stages and levels of illness, being with those who may be experiencing forms of dementia as well as how to bring our awareness to the changes that occur as death approaches and guides what we offer.



To register for this free event, call Brattleboro Area Hospice at 257-0775.

## A Note from Wren...

Many things have combined to create a significant change in the schedule which makes up my life. After much discussion and patience on the part of Susan, Bettina, and Beth, we have come up with a plan for my schedule this fall which will include a leave of absence from BAH. During August I will intermittently be at BAH due to family, travel and conferences. Throughout the month of September I will be working full days on Thursday and Friday. At the end of September I will be taking a three month (unpaid) leave. During this time Beth will be covering all clients. The current client census, the increase in hours in both the Care Coordinator's position as well as the Education & Volunteer Coordinator position allows for this leave to be feasible.

I deeply appreciate everyone at BAH for negotiating this leave with me. I particularly appreciate Bettina and Beth for creating this time. It allows for what we hope will be a graceful transition

and possible ending in my time as an employee of BAH. For the next several months I plan to take the message of our training home: to actively listen to my internal as well as external messages, to be with the unknown of the future, holding the connections that have been developed close to my heart knowing that these bonds continue. It is an honor to work with you all in service of our clients and families.

Karen (Wren) Gore

AMERICAN LEGION HOSPICE FUNDRAISER  
Talent Show, Dinner, Drinks and Dancing  
Saturday, September 23, 5:30-12 pm  
All proceeds to benefit Brattleboro Area Hospice  
Tickets \$15/person, VIP Ticket \$30/person  
Buy tickets at the Legion or at the Hospice office at  
191 Canal Street

# WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

## Fundraising Events in September, October and November

We have three fundraising events coming up this fall...that could really use some volunteer energy!

Volunteer at an event, for the **American Legion Hospice Talent Show Fundraiser on Saturday, September 23**: volunteers are needed for one and two hour blocks from 5-9 pm to do various things such as sell tickets and sell food at the Legion. They have generously offered to donate all the money from this event, which is expected to sell out!

Provide Food Items for our **Coffee Break Fundraiser at the Welcome Center on Sunday October 1**. Volunteers are needed to provide items such as baked goods and sandwiches which can be dropped off at our office the week before. NOTE: you can also donate money and we will purchase apple cider donuts from a local farm—these are very popular with people who visit our table at the Welcome Center.

Provide a luscious dessert or volunteer during the event at the **Marta Gomez and Trio Concert on Saturday, November 4**. BAH is bringing marvelous Latin jazz singer Marta Gomez and her trio to Brattleboro to celebrate Dia de los Muertos. During intermission we will be selling desserts; volunteers are needed to provide cakes, cheesecakes or other luscious desserts beforehand or to sell desserts from approximately 8:15-8:45 pm on the day of the concert.

Please contact Jennifer at 257-0775 for more information or to sign up and help Hospice.

## Create Your Own 'Inheritance Experience'

By Marney K. Makridakis

Last Monday evening, my husband Tony shared with me his regret and sadness for having lost touch with his connection to his relatives from Greece, and his connection to the Island of Crete, where he spent so much time growing up. I tried to help, telling him that it was never too late to connect again, and that perhaps he could make a trip there soon. He quickly said that it was unrealistic to think of a trip to Greece; he couldn't carve out the time away, it would be too expensive, and it would be too awkward after all these years....etc. etc.

The next morning, we got a call that his father had passed away, suddenly and completely unexpectedly. His father was visiting his hometown in Greece at the time. Within hours, Tony got on a plane to go to Greece for the burial, where he has been ever since. The Universe works in mysterious ways.

During the brief phone calls we've shared since he's been gone, Tony has shared how wonderful it has been to connect with his relatives, with the people of the village, and with the ocean where he swam as a boy. He has shared his enchantment of the simple, slow-paced lifestyle, and the superlatively

generous nature of everyone in his family that has obviously been passed down to another generation, as all of the cousins he grew up with now have children of their own. He has said it's like no time has passed, even though he hasn't been there in many years. The power and importance of this trip is evident. He said to me yesterday, "I can't believe that my Dad had to die in order for me to make time for this. I had to do it, and it ended being so easy, and so wonderful. This experience is my inheritance.

I'm sharing this story in case there is something that you are putting off because there doesn't seem to be enough time, or enough money, or "the timing isn't right". Maybe it's a place to visit, or a person to connect with, or a paintbrush to pick up.

As I witnessed last week, dire circumstances can force our hand to make the impossible suddenly possible. But it doesn't have to come to that. We create our own circumstances every day, and we can open doors to possibility with merely a whisper of belief. What better way to celebrate life than to create an "inheritance experience" for yourself.

Thursday, September 14, 4:00-5:45 PM

**Nutrition for Your Loved One who is Ill**

*THE CAREGIVING PUZZLE – WORKSHOP TO HELP YOURSELF HELP OTHERS*

The Gathering Place, 30 Terrace Street, Brattleboro

For information or to register, call 257-0775, and leave a message for Cheryl Richards.

## Brattleboro Area Hospice

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*Store Assistant*

## Calendar

**September 1, Friday**, 5:30 pm. *Gallery Walk Celebration.*

**September 4, Monday.** Office closed for Labor Day

**September 5.** Volunteer Report Forms due.

**September 5, 12, 19, 26 Tuesdays**, 12:15-12:45 pm. *Silent sitting in Hospice Library.* Information: 257-0775.

**September 7,14, 21,28, Thursdays**, 5:00-6:30 pm. *Loss Writing Support Group* facilitated by Muriel Winter Wolf, for those who have previously been in a bereavement support group.

**September 8, Friday.** Patient Care Training in Wilmington begins.

**September 9, Saturday.** BMH Health Fair (BAH sharing a table with VNA this year)

**September 12, Tuesday.** Patient Care Training in Brattleboro location begins.

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

**September 14, Thursday**, 4:00-5:45pm. The fourth in Caregiving monthly series, on Nutrition, at the Gathering Place. Facilitated by Cheryl Richards  
Call 257-0775 for information and to register.

**September 18, Monday**, 5:30-7:30 pm. Board of Directors Meeting.

**September 18, Monday**, 6:30-8:30 pm. *When A Loved One Is Bedridden: How To Be A Caring Companion.* More information elsewhere in this newsletter.

**September 23, Saturday.** *American Legion Fundraiser*, 5:30-12 pm.

**October 1, Sunday.** *Coffee Break Fundraiser*, Welcome Center, I-91.

## NEW BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

If you are interested in any of the following groups, please contact Elizabeth Pittman at 257-0775 for more information:

- **Bereaved Parents Support Group**--If there is sufficient interest, a new four-week group will meet October 5, 12, 19, and 26, Thursdays, 5-6:30 pm, facilitated by bereaved parents Linda and Graham Gordon. There will be no meetings for this group in the month of September.
- **Parent/Sibling Loss Support Group** forming, evenings this fall, 5:30-7 pm, dates TBA.
- **Traumatic Loss/Survivor after Suicide Group**—If there is sufficient interest.
- Possible **Children's' Support Group** forming this fall.

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