



Then & Now

The Southeast Texas Hospice celebrates twenty-five years of caring for the terminally ill of southeast Texas this year. Founded in 1979 by a small group of concerned friends, the hospice continues to thrive today. As part of its twenty-fifth celebration year, the founders will be writing articles for the newsletter throughout the year. Rev. William Manger wrote the first article and Joan Lyons writes for this edition.

Hospice has moved forward to embrace the health care system in the United States and is ever improving to better serve the needs of the terminally ill and their families. In keeping up with all the latest advances, I rarely take the time to look backwards. This 25th year has brought many occasions to take a backward glance.

Twenty-five years ago the hospice office occupied the living room of founder Peggy McKenna's house. Now it occupies 4500 square feet at 912 W. Cherry, Orange, Texas. Six individuals staffed the office and cared for all the patients. Now there

are 17 employees. One issue remaining the same over the 25 years is the community of volunteers who helped support the hospice initially are still needed today to accomplish the many projects needed for office operations and for patient/families.

In 1979 there were only 20 hospices in the country. Today there are over 3000. The Southeast Texas Hospice cared for 16 patients in 1979. Now our hospice cares for over 200 patient/families a year. Last year hospices cared for over 850,000 terminally ill persons nationwide. In 1979



Peggy McKenna, RN and Joan Lyons

our only hospice nurse was Peggy McKenna, RN. Today there are eight hospice nurses meeting the needs of the terminally ill twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

In 1979 there was no HIPPA, no Medicare for hospice, no Medicaid for hospice, and every insurance

Hospice is another word for love

by Joan Lyons

One of our first patients was a 65-year old woman with breast cancer. She received exquisite burn-care from her 40-year old daughter who had recently given birth to her first daughter. Our patient did not want to take artificial

medicine because it was against her religion. When the Hospice nurse explained that morphine was a natural plant which relieved pain, she agreed to take it—became virtually pain-free, and continued to enjoy life with her

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by Mary McKenna, Executive Director



company would say, "what hospital did you say you were with?" Today the Southeast Texas Hospice is not only Medicare and Medicaid certified, but it also bills electronically for those services. In 1979, the bills were hand typed on 5 x 8 cards. Today, the Southeast Texas Hospice contracts with almost every major insurance company serving the Golden Triangle area. What a difference 25 years can make.

In 1979 the major annual fundraiser was a bake sale earning a maximum of \$200 that was used to pay the phone and pager bills. Today the Mystery Dinner Theater is hosted annually by volunteers in the community. Over 300 people attend with over \$5,000 raised annually for the hospice indigent service fund.

Through the years the hospice staff and board members have participated  
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# Good Grief...

by Patricia Coppage,  
LSW

<http://crossingthecreek.com>

*"I'm not afraid of dying, it's what happens before I die that worries me."*

Occasionally something comes along that seems too good to be true and turns out to be just what you hoped it was. That's the case with *"Crossing the Creek,"* a free resource available on the Internet at <http://crossingthecreek.com>.

The author, **Michael Holmes, RN**, is a nurse who has worked many years with dying people. He wrote this easy-to-understand explanation of the dying process to share with all terminally ill patients and their families. We've been doing just that, sharing this resource with our patients and their families and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

While this publication does not take the place of our hands-on approach to patient care and caregiver education, it is certainly a valuable resource that they can refer to after our visits to the home.

In *"Crossing the Creek,"* **Holmes** covers all the general themes in the dying process, those things that are common to all, regardless of the

diagnosis. Addressing these common themes makes this tool helpful to all dying patients and to their caregivers. He calls it the *"basic nuts and bolts of the physical dying process."* This general description of what to expect certainly does help to reduce the anxiety and fears that most of us have about the dying process. As my own father once told me, *"I'm not afraid of dying, it's what happens before I die that worries me."*

*"Crossing the Creek"* covers everything from appetite and respiratory changes to fear and grief. So check out <http://crossingthecreek.com>.

Print up your own copy of this free guide to the dying process or share it and help someone you know who is going through that most difficult time of their life.

## Hospice is another word for love

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family, daughter, and her new granddaughter. Life in three generations was radiated with joy and peace as the grandmother watched her daughter nurse her first daughter. That is love.

Another female patient was a 93 year-old woman who lived in a trailer next to her daughter's home in the country. She was very clear about what she wanted me to do after she died. She wanted me to dress her in a new nightgown, cover her head with a poke bonnet, and cover her feet with new, clean socks because this was a proper way for her to meet her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I agreed. Then she asked one more favor. Could I please read one Psalm, her favorite. Of course, I agreed but laughed to myself when I learned that the Psalm she asked me to read was the longest one. She died gently, wearing her prescribed clothing.

One of our earliest patients was a woman who could not swallow her food, so we devised a formula which her care-giving husband could make and feed her circumventing her

esophagus. She liked to bargain with God. *"Dear God, please let me live until Easter,"* then *"Dear God: please let me live until my granddaughter receives her First Communion,"* *"Dear God, please let me live until Mother's Day,"* then Thanksgiving, then Christmas. She lived a longggggg time, happy, loved, and cared by all.

Not all our patients wanted to live. She was young in her early 20s. She did NOT want to live. She was angry at God, the world, her young daughter and us. As a young child she was sexually abused by her father and hated all people, especially men. Death brought her peace.

Hospice care embraces both the patient and family. This older woman had Alzheimer's disease plus damage from a stroke. She received exquisite care from her son who, in turn, needed care from us to provide respite time for relaxation. Her son and daughter bathed her in love.

For me, Hospice fills a deep need to listen and love another into the *"peace which surpasses all understanding."*

## Then & Now

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ipated in numerous events significant to hospice care. They have testified in United States Senate hearings to establish the **Medicare Hospice Benefit**, testified before the Texas legislature to establish the **Texas Medicaid Hospice Benefit**, and helped to found the **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization**, the **Texas and New Mexico Hospice Organization**, and the **National Hospice Foundation**. Through all the years, the one sustaining thread has been the compassion and devotion of everyone associated with the **Southeast Texas Hospice** to provide the best care possible for the terminally ill person and their family. In 1979 and in 2004, the needs of the dying person remain the center and main focus of all activities of the hospice.

**Happy anniversary hospice!!**  
And with the continued help of a very supportive community the next 25 years will bring even more compassion and skill to care of the dying in southeast Texas.



by **Stronnie McBride,**  
Chaplain

# There is a time for all things under the sun

Hospice is that time granted to some for healing life's disorders that creep into a family over the years and that may have stood against the forgiveness of time. An open wound whether intended, misunderstood, or imagined, healed over from the outside but left as a festering wound can be healed by the interaction of the family member(s) involved and, in the case of Hospice, the terminal patient.

This brings to mind the gospel story of the Prodigal Son and what I term his prodigal brother because he would partake in the party the Father had for the son who had come home.

Scripture says there is a time for all things under the sun, perhaps we, the Hospice team, don't always minister as if we are aware of this—of the precious little time we may have to facilitate the wayward ways of a family member, when reconciliation is needed by a patient or family member. It matters not who is wrong or right.

The Hospice patient may be awaiting the return from a long ways off of a family or an extended family member to be reconciled with before death brings the peace Jesus speaks of in John's gospel, as "...the Peace which the world cannot give, but as I give."

As often happens, the repentant family members asks, receives and accepts reconciliation only to find that perhaps a sibling or other family member, will not join in with the family in thanksgiving for the gift of God's Peace that has been given them and is told of in the same gospel verses.

We are all called by the Sacrament of Baptism to be instruments of

peace. As recorded in the Prayer of St. Francis:

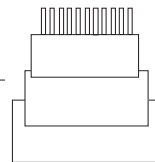
**L**ord make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console.

To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned. It is in dying that we are born into eternal life.

Let us who minister the dying pray earnestly for the gifts of Wisdom, Counsel and Understanding.

AMEN



## Birthdays

June 5 Florence Thompson  
6 Clif Chatlosh  
12 Debra Benjamin  
16 Mary Ann Minton

July 1 Peggy Croto  
6 Bettie Mouton  
Barbara Seaman  
7 Joan Gordon  
8 Dru Chauffe  
19 Cheryl Richard  
20 Dorothy Hagy

August 3 Elizabeth McBride  
25 Carol Culp, RN  
27 Mildred Donna Bluiett  
31 Cristi Harper, RN

September 9 Charlie Bollich  
14 C.M. Marshall  
23 Beverly Minson

## Memorial Service Rememberance

Southeast Texas Hospice's annual *Memorial Service Rememberance* will be held on Thursday, June 24, 2004 at 2 pm. This spiritual service is held yearly in memory of all the hospice patients we have loved and served.

Father Tom Phelan from **St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church** will be the facilitator at this year's service which will be held for the first time in the Parish Hall of **St. Mary's Catholic Church** at 912 W. Cherry St., Orange.

All surviving family members and caregivers of our past patients are invited to attend.

### THE SOUTHEAST TEXAS HOSPICE

Cordially Invites You  
To A

### Memorial Service Remembrance

For Those  
Hospice Has Loved and Served

St. Mary's Parish Hall  
912 W. Cherry  
Orange, Texas

2 PM until 4 PM  
Thursday, June 24, 2004



P.O. Box 2385  
Orange, TX 77631-2385

1.800.749.3497  
409.886.0622  
sth@exp.net

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# Calendar Volunteer Spotlight

- june 7 SETX Hospice Board Meeting**  
12 Noon – Hospice Office
- 15 Volunteer Meeting**  
10 - 11:30 am – Hospice Office
- 23 QAUR/PAC Board Meeting**  
12 Noon – Hospice Office
- 24 Hospice Memorial Service**  
2 - 4 pm – ST. Mary Parish Hall  
912. W. Cherry – Orange
- july 5 Hospice Office Closed**
- 15 Bereavement Support Group**  
Gulf Health Rehab Center  
Conference Room  
6600 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Port Arthur  
10 - 11:30 AM
- 20 Volunteer Meeting**  
10 - 11:30 am – Hospice Office
- aug 17 Volunteer Meeting**  
10 - 11:30 am – Hospice Office
- 19 Bereavement Support Group**  
Della LaFleur's Home  
4240 Wentworth – Port Arthur  
10 - 11:30 AM



by **Belinda Thibodeaux**,  
*Director of Volunteers*

There is a very special lady that comes in faithfully every Thursday morning. She is **Betty Johnston**. Betty joined the volunteer staff a few years ago. She comes in with a big smile and hugs for everyone. She started out helping with different things in the office, but now she enters charge tickets into the computer to assist in billing at the end of the month. She has been a lifesaver.

**Betty** lives in Bridge City with her husband **Bob**, who is also a hospice volunteer. They have three grown

children. **Betty** loves to travel, quilt, garden, and of course, shop for bargains.

*Thank You Betty for all your hard work for Southeast Texas Hospice.*

### Needed: New Volunteers

The **Southeast Texas Hospice** is in search of individuals who want to feel good about themselves. **We want YOU!!** Hospice needs all kinds of volunteers who may want to provide direct care to patients and families, or provide indirect help in our office or as craft volunteers.

Direct volunteers will be trained to learn skills to provide supportive care to terminally ill patients and families.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer is asked to call the **Hospice** office at 409.886.0622 or 1.800.749.3497 weekdays between 8 AM to 4:30 PM.

Hospice Office  
912 W. Cherry • Orange, TX