


HEART-TO-HEART

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HEART OF HOSPICE 

Butterfly Release: Executive Director: Jodi Goatcher

A caterpillar, a chrysalis, and suddenly—a butterfly. Beauty from the depths—soaring towards eternity. A metaphor for transformation. Death itself is a transformation, and that's one of the reasons Heart of Hospice Foundation sponsors their Butterfly Release. Butterflies symbolize hope—for those who die, and for those who remain behind.

This year, the Butterfly Release will take place in Jackson Park (Hood River) on May 16-- the Sunday af-



ter Mother's Day. Remembering last year's Butterfly Release, Heart of Hospice director Jodi Goatcher said, "It was truly amazing and very moving. It was a time to connect and share and allow some healing."

As people gather in Jackson Park this year, they will hear live music, followed by a couple of short, inspirational readings. Then, the names of those who are being remembered will be read. "People can come to the stage and read the name of their loved one, or they can submit names for us to read," said Jodi.

After this meaningful ceremony, everyone is given a butterfly to release. For a while, these blithe spirits flutter about, landing on people and brightening the grass. They land on the



blooming rhododendrons and entertain the crowd before they flutter off into the gentle blue sky.

Last year, many of the children in attendance were enthralled, and members of our energetic Heart of Hospice youth group (YoHOHs) were kept busy painting their faces.

There is no charge of any kind to attend this release. "Some people make donations," Jodi said, "and that is lovely and much appreciated. But it's not the reason for the

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Jodi (cont)

Butterfly Release. This is a community service event not a fundraiser.”

A gentleman from The Dalles, whose wife had died eight months earlier, said that releasing his butterfly was the single most healing thing he had done since the loss of his wife. A man with three little

children came because their dog had died, and they wanted to read its name. It made the children feel much better and validated their grief.”

“Our goal with this community event is to facilitate healing in a meaningful and beautiful way by bringing together

those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. It’s our reason for existence.” said Jodi. “The butterflies are simply our way of saying that we understand grief, and we’re here to help.”

For more info on our Butterfly Release, please contact our office at 541.386.1942.

The Front Line: R.N. Karen Lee



Heart of Hospice nurse Karen Lee visited a woman who was within days of dying. Suddenly, the woman, whose eyes were closed, smiled joyfully and pointed across the room. Her whole face shone. “This woman had a strong faith,” remembers Karen. “I just knew that at that moment there were angels in the room!”

That’s the kind of experience that drew Karen to Hospice work in 1993. She has worked in many areas of nursing during her long career, but she feels it is a very special honor to be with people during their last days and hours. “When you are with a dying person, you know that you are very near to that other world we all wonder

about. I have had patients who have come back from near-death experiences. From that moment on, they no longer fear death. I have seen patients go through changes from fear and anxiety to a place of acceptance and peace in their process. I really appreciate being able to help people through this important transition. Sometimes the patient accepts the dying process, but the family doesn’t. Then *that’s* where our work is,” said Karen. “It’s all about being present to what is happening in the moment and knowing where we can assist.”

“Our nurses are the backbone of Hospice,” said Jodi Goatcher, HOH director. “As case managers, they

oversee and coordinate all of our patient care. Each and every staff member plays a vital part, but the nurses are the ones who pull all those professionals together into a united team. Karen has a special place in my heart,” she went on. “She is so serene. To me, she embodies the ideal image of Heart of Hospice.”

When Karen is not working she enjoys studying alternative healing, gardening, animals (she volunteers for PROD), and travelling. One of the highlights of her life was the year and a half she spent backpacking around the world, submerging herself in other cultures.

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Heart of Hospice Foundation: Executive Dir. Cathy Carter Hospice House

I have been involved with HOHF for almost 3 years. I have always been drawn to philanthropic work and have been involved with many fundraisers in my life. I choose my benefactors carefully as it is important to me to give to those that are in the greatest need and organizations that are "true" non-profits. By that I mean most, if not all, of the donations go to the intended recipients, not to the administration.

I was intrigued by HOH and how they began this wonderful organization. What I found impressed me. Medical professionals who wanted to administer hospice with a true, caring and rich end-of-life experi-

ence. Their non-profit Foundation was, and is, set up so 100% of all donations go to patients and their families. This was a Foundation that I felt could really benefit from my experience and I felt we were a good fit! Little did I know that within a year I would need those services for my dear and amazing father.

My father's brain tumor was diagnosed far too late for effective treatment. Although he, and my entire family, gave their best effort, we all soon realized that it was too late and he needed to come home from OHSU. His options for care were limited due to the amount of oxygen he required. We were

able to secure the last bed at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital but were told shortly thereafter that we needed "Plan B" in case another patient needed the bed. Providence is a rural Critical Access hospital with 25 beds. Although they support the Hospice philosophy, they are unable to have a "Hospice" room due to their Critical Access restrictions. Thankfully, my father passed away before we needed Plan B.

At HOH, we had been talking about the need and desire for a Hospice House and my father's passing really brought this home for me. I realized what a need we have for a hospice house in the mid-Columbia area. It is



my personal goal to create one. I have been researching and visiting Hospice Houses in OR and WA and learning what to do, how to do it and also... what could be done better!

We are on our way to our goal and I know that my father is helping and guiding every step of the way.

The Language of Flowers with the Odell Garden Club

Every Friday, two or three Odell Garden Club (OGC) members meet at Heart of Hospice headquarters to help create the nu-



merous bouquets that are delivered weekly to our patients. Norma Curtis is an avid gardener and president of the club, and yet she always finds time to get the volunteers together and coordinate the entire effort.

Safeway, Rosauers, and Lucy's Flowers are

among the local shops who donate the flowers. The OGC members often bring greenery from their own gardens, which can be hard to find in the winter months. But they always manage.

"Sometimes we will have 30 or 40 bunches standing in buckets waiting for us to arrange," said

"Our Club has received some very touching thank you notes from patients."

ODELL GARDEN CLUB (CONT)

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Norma. “We pick them apart, sort out those that are too faded to use, and arrange the remainders into two or three dozen new arrangements.”

“Our Club has received some very touching thank you notes from patients,” said Norma happily. “It feels so good! I’m very grateful to our club members for doing this so faithfully. It’s a lot of fun—we get to visit as we arrange flowers and the whole job is done in less than two hours,” she added.

Many thanks to the Odell Garden Club for helping brighten the lives of Heart of Hospice patients and their families.

And thank you, Wendy Best, for your generous help in writing these articles!

Volunteers: Reaching Out..Theresa Perry



Theresa Perry has loved working as a volunteer at Heart of Hospice for the last two years. “It’s so rewarding,” she said. “I visit patients about once a week, read to them, bring them little treats, and form relationships with them— friendships.”

Many of them live at assisted living facilities or adult foster homes, and it means so much for them to know that someone from the community cares about them.

People in their last months are so often in the throes of complicated medical treatment,” she added. “Sometimes what they need is a regular person who can talk about the news, or the weather, or whatever... Something besides blood pressure and diet.”

It adds such a personal touch when volunteers like Theresa get involved with Heart of Hospice patients. It means so much for the patient to feel included and to know that they are still a valuable part of the community. They look forward to Theresa’s visits because they know that she cares. She comes because she wants to come; she will advocate for them and keep an eye out for safety issues. “My parents

and my sister were on Hospice in Nebraska,” she said. “I want to give back some of the wonderful and compassionate care they received.”

Teresa works at Skyline Hospital in the physical therapy department. She and her husband Scott like to be outdoors as much as possible. Theresa likes to mountain bike, road bike, snowboard, work out, and take the dogs for long walks. In short, she’s a busy lady. But not too busy to reach out to people nearing the end of their lives who just want a friend.

In Hospice, we learn that every moment of life is a treasure. Thank you Theresa, and to all our compassionate volunteers for the precious gift of your time.