



MISSION  
HOSPICE

# The Caring Line

IT'S ABOUT LIFE

## A Tale of Two Georges: Listening at Life's End

May 2010

Georges Gerard's home in the San Mateo Convalescent Hospital is arranged as he likes it. To one side of his bed is a worktable piled with books, papers and correspondence. On the other side, his nightstand is an impromptu bar featuring his favorite Glenfiddich Scotch, brandy and wine.

Gerard, 86, is dying from a variety of illnesses. A former college language teacher and author, he continues to write essays, which he hopes his executor will publish after his death.

"I'm on my last legs, but no complaints," he says. "I'm still active, I still drink beer (at lunch daily) and George keeps me busy." "George" is Mission Hospice volunteer George Fulvio. He initially agreed in November to visit for an hour weekly. Now, he comes twice a week for two hours at a stretch, just to listen to Gerard's life stories.

**Mission Hospice serves patients in their own homes, residential care and assisted living facilities, board and care homes, and in skilled nursing facilities.**



Hospice patient Georges Gerard (left) and direct care volunteer George Fulvio

"First thing is I'm French," Gerard announces. "I can't hear, and I'm old. Otherwise, I'm almost normal."

Then he launches into his story: Born in Chateau-Thierry, he spent most of World War II working as a prisoner/typesetter in Germany and Poland, including stints in two hard labor camps

*continued on page 3*

## New Internship Program Gives Students Experience

Mission Hospice's new social work internship program is turning out to be a win-win situation for both the students and the organization.

"We're contributing back to the profession by helping to train the next generation of social workers about hospice," said Mission Hospice social worker Marilyn Jankowski, LCSW, one of the students' supervisors. Intern Sonia Estival said many of her classmates didn't know about hospice but she and the other hospice interns – seniors Lydia Cordonero, Brenda Carrasco Haro and Carmen Alvarado and grad student Monique Lunsford – have been able to help educate them.

"There are lots of misconceptions about end-of-life care," said Estival. "I learn every day from our clients. It's very special for me to spend time with patients and to hear their life stories."

Jankowski and another student supervisor, Karri Kaiser, MSW, said hospice patients also benefit greatly from their time with the interns, who come from diverse ethnic and language backgrounds.

The internship program started last fall when Mission Hospice participated in an internship "fair" in the social work department at San Francisco State University. Sonia Melara, undergraduate field supervisor for the school's social work internship program, said internships play a vital role in preparing social workers. "It's where

*continued on page 4*

### Inside The Caring Line

- From the CEO's Desk
- Calendar of Events
- Staff Profile - Sheila Young

Page 2

Page 2

Page 3



## Calendar of Events

- Photography Open Studio Benefit**  
 Saturday and Sunday, May 15-16, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Frances Freyberg, Mission Hospice Director of Development and travel photographer, will host an open studio weekend to benefit Mission Hospice. Photos from her travels to more than 50 countries will be displayed for sale at 856 Partridge Ave., Menlo Park. Proceeds will support patients who cannot afford hospice care. For more information, see [www.francesfreyberg.com](http://www.francesfreyberg.com)
- Soul Stroll for Health Walk**  
 Saturday, May 15, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. For the fifth year, Mission Hospice will host an information table at the Soul Stroll for Health Walk. Come walk the one-, three-, or five-mile course along the beautiful bay front path in San Mateo's Coyote Point Park. For more information, visit the African American Community Health Advisory Committee's website at [www.aachac.org](http://www.aachac.org)
- Bereavement Support Groups**  
 Every Monday from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Mission Hospice office, 1900 O'Farrell St., Suite 200, San Mateo, CA. Open to all members of the community on a drop-in basis. For more information, please call Cindy Carlson at (650) 554-1000.



David and Susan Parkinson (left), Alison Wheatley and Robert Ings enjoy the Second Annual Night of Fun

## From the CEO's Desk

It's been a busy few months for Mission Hospice, and it promises to be even busier in the coming months with a number of changes underway.



Dwight Wilson  
Chief Executive Officer

First is the upcoming launch of the Advanced Care Program, which will allow us to provide home care for patients who are not yet ready or eligible for hospice care. Once we receive licensure for this program, we will update our logo and colors and change our name to Mission Hospice and Home Care. You can expect to see these changes later this spring on our website, and in the next edition of the newsletter.

Also, due to the growth of the organization, we are moving this summer to new offices at 1670 South Amphlett Blvd., Suite 300, San Mateo. This new space will accommodate our additional staff and services, and also allow us continued growth, all at a very favorable lease. We are very excited about this impending move.

I'm also thrilled to welcome new board members Kate Breaux, Gail Brown, Marlyn Bussey, Karen Chee and Betty Stern, along with many new Auxiliary and Direct Care Volunteers. Dr. Gary Pasternak will be rejoining our staff in August to develop a palliative care program.

All of these changes will help us to better serve our patients and provide quality, compassionate care at every stage of a life-limiting illness.



Stefano and Elena Quilici on the dance floor at the Second Annual Night of Fun

Our continued goal is to help patients and their families maintain the highest quality of life during this challenging time. As many of you know, significant cutbacks in both county and state services severely impact our underserved population. The age group that's been hardest hit is between 50 and 64, and these people are often without insurance and don't qualify for MediCal. Over the past year, we've seen a 50 percent increase in the number of free hospice days that we provide, as well as a needier population that relies on our Transitions program for free social service and volunteer support.

Donations, grants and events such as the recent Second Annual "Night of Fun" in March support these free programs and help provide care for those who cannot afford it. The event drew some 200 Mission Hospice supporters, who enjoyed a delicious dinner, live music and dancing at the Peninsula Italian American Social Club in downtown San Mateo. The event raised more than \$20,000 to support those patients who cannot afford hospice care. Please join me in thanking Stefano and Elena Quilici, Pat and Mavis Dianda, Pietro and Marcella Quilici, John and Roberta Bernat, Angelo and Angie Fanucchi, and Emil and Lois Giannoni for hosting this fun and successful event!

## Staff Profile

## Sheila Young – Board Chair



### Sheila Young – The Nutshell

#### Career:

- Attorney, 1986-present
- Owner-Investor, 1983-present
- Urban planning consultant, 1978-1986

#### Education:

- BS in Social Science, St. Louis University
- Master's in Urban and Regional Planning, San Jose State University
- JD, Golden Gate University

#### Personal

- Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio
- Five adult children

Sheila Young still practices law from time to time, but says her real profession these days is being a grandmother to her two grandchildren and serving as chair of the Mission Hospice Board of Directors. Young began her position as chair in January after serving on the board for the past four years.

“My goal is to help the organization build on its recent growth and success, and provide a higher level of patient care through new services like the Advanced Care Program,” she said during a recent interview. “While we expand to serve more patients, it’s important for us to maintain the unique feel of a small, quality boutique hospice.”

She’s excited about the upcoming launch of the Advanced Care Program, which will provide skilled nursing, medical and rehabilitation services for patients who have serious illnesses but are not yet ready or eligible for hospice care. The Advanced Care Program will complement the Transitions Program, which provides pre-hospice patients with social and volunteer support.

“Together with our proven hospice program, the Advanced Care and Transitions programs allow us to serve patients at every stage of a life limiting illness,” she explained. “We can now provide a continuum of care that extends for the duration of a patient’s chronic healthcare needs.” Mission Hospice expects to begin the pilot phase of the Advanced Care Program early this summer.

Young was recruited to the board by Mary Chigos, a close friend and immediate past board chair. Over the years, she’s valued both the opportunity to “give back” to the community, and the fun times spent with other board members, volunteers, the Auxiliary and the Mission Hospice staff.

“There’s something very rewarding about working with this amazing group of people,” she said. “They all bring different ideas and knowledge to the table to help the organization grow. They all have so much to give.”

## A Tale of Two Georges: Listening at Life’s End (continued from page 1)

and the Berlin prison. He managed to escape Berlin a step ahead of the Russian occupation.

Returning to France, he became a prisoner in his own country when his passport was withheld so he would continue to serve as an interpreter. Over the next few years, he lived and worked in Switzerland, Brazil and Canada before landing in San Francisco, a union town where he could work as a typographer. He also met his wife, Hilde, at an international social club in San Francisco. He was 32.

“Who wants to marry young?” he shrugs. “Not me. Too many girls, and I was very weak. I enjoyed life.”

He and Hilde, who was German, were together for 43 years. As the printing business became mechanized, Gerard decided on a career change. He studied French, Spanish and German at UC Berkeley and earned a doctorate in comparative literature. He taught languages at Solano Community College in Fairfield for more than 20 years while he and Hilde lived in Mill Valley, where she managed a private swim club. They used his summer

vacations to travel around the U.S. in their camper and the rest of the world via annual cruises.

After his retirement, Hilde insisted that he write about his life. The result is *Ariadne’s Thread*, Vol. 1 (*They Came Marching In*) and Vol. 2 (*Jails Without Bars*). The 3,000-page book took eight years to write and went into a second printing. Among Gerard’s few remaining possessions is a battered suitcase filled with photos that back up the book and which he intends to go to the Library of Congress after his death.

For Fulvio, a retired lawyer who survived his own bout with cancer in 1993, volunteering with people like Gerard gives him the opportunity to do what he misses most about his law practice – be of service to others. He also finds it a spiritual experience, and, in Gerard’s case, a very educational one.

“He’s taught me about the entire history of language,” he adds. Then, as he turns back to his friend, he asks, “Last time, you had just told me about meeting Hilde. What happened next?”



1900 O'Farrell Street, Suite 200  
 San Mateo, California 94403  
 www.missionhospice.org  
 (650) 554-1000

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit #63  
 Burlingame, CA

**Mission Hospice Board of Directors**

**Officers**

Sheila Young, Chair  
 Danette Magilligan, Vice Chair  
 Robert Adams, Treasurer  
 Maryann Raab, Secretary

**Honorary Lifetime Members**

Helen Lagen, Co-founder  
 Adella Harris

**Auxiliary Co-Presidents**

Glenda Carney  
 Mary Lehmkuhl

**Executive Committee**

Mary Chigos, Past Chair  
 Judy DiPaolo  
 Kevin Gilmore

**Members**

Peggy Andrews  
 Kate Breaux  
 Dr. Gail Brown  
 Marlyn Bussey  
 Dr. Karen Chee  
 Ralph Garcia  
 Sheila Littrell  
 Ann Regan  
 Robert Sawyer  
 Betty Stern  
 Michael Teutschel  
 George Thomas

**New Internship Program Gives Students Experience** (continued from page 1)

they get skills they wouldn't get any other way," she said, adding that students are required to work at least 16 hours a week during the last two semesters of their bachelor's programs.

Jankowski says the program requires a significant time commitment, for both students and staff. "We put in as much time with the interns as they give back, and we all learn in the process," she said. In addition to their training, students receive stipends, made possible in part by a grant from the Sequoia Healthcare District.

Prospective interns were screened carefully to ensure that they understood what is involved in working with seriously ill or terminal patients. Estival acknowledged that she was initially concerned about the emotional nature of the job. "I've felt sad many times but much more often, I'm happy and honored to be with patients," she said. "For the time I'm with them, I feel that I'm doing something valuable and meaningful for that person."

The internship has reinforced Sonia's desire to focus on elder care within her social work career. She recently accepted a position in the San Jose State social work graduate program.

"The students have been outstanding, and they've really grown throughout the program," said Jankowski. "We're wildly enthusias-

tic about the results." In fact, the program has been such a success that Mission Hospice has offered the students post-graduate fellowships for the summer, and will accept new student interns again in the fall.



Social work student intern Sonia Estival (left) and Transitions patient Elsie Schauer