



MISSION
HOSPICE

The Caring Line

IT'S ABOUT LIFE

January, 2009

Anniversary Celebrates 30 Years of Compassionate Care

When Mission Hospice celebrates its anniversary in February, we will be celebrating 30 years of giving San Mateo County residents the resources to live the last part of their lives with choices.

Of course, a huge part of those resources are the many professionals, volunteers, donors, staff and others who have worked with Mission Hospice over the past three decades. We will especially honor two people – Marian Soss and Carol Gray – who have made enormous contributions for many years (see profiles below). Please see the Calendar on Page 2 for details.

Hospice care has undergone huge changes since Mission Hospice started. In 1979, few Americans had heard of hospice care, much less used it. Today, hospice care is covered by all health care insurance programs – including Medicare – and nearly 40 percent of all Americans receive hospice end-of-life services.

Mission Hospice, the first hospice program on the Peninsula and only the second in the entire Bay Area, started as a volunteer organization. It became a Medicare-certified agency in 1995 and now has a full staff of paid professionals in addition to its large volunteer staff. Today, several hospice programs operate on the Peninsula, but Mission Hospice remains the only independent hospice that serves only San Mateo County residents.

Mission Hospice started with a commitment to providing end-of-life services at no cost to patients. That continues today as donations and grants help support patients not covered by insurance or Medicare, or when insurance doesn't cover the real cost of providing service, as often happens.

Since its founding, Mission Hospice has served thousands of

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Special Recognition for Carol Gray

When Carol Gray was a young nurse at Stanford Hospital, she regretted that her duties left her little time to sit with terminally ill patients. She had just started seeking a local hospice to work in when she learned the first hospice program on the Peninsula was starting in San Mateo and was called Mission Hospice.

For the next six months, Carol volunteered as a nurse. She became the organization's patient care coordinator in 1980 and, starting in 1988, its second executive director. Her 25 years at Mission Hospice saw the organization's evolution from a grass-roots, nearly all-volunteer program to a professional organization which still includes a significant volunteer component. Carol directed and oversaw Mission Hospice's transition to becoming a Medicare-certified hospice in 1995.

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2009 Lotus Award to Marian Soss

Marian Soss, this year's recipient of the Lotus Award for outstanding support of Mission Hospice, graciously combines a personal passion with her longtime support of Mission Hospice's work in San Mateo County.

Most recently, she dedicated the profits from a new book, *Let Love*

Abide, The Marian Soss Sampler Collection (available at www.inthecompanyoffriends.com) to Mission Hospice. The book, published last fall, is a testament to Marian's love of needlework samplers. It's also a memorial to her mother-in-law, Rose Soss, who gave her first sampler as an engagement gift, and to her late husband, Dr. Thomas Soss, who joined Marian both in collecting samplers and in supporting Mission Hospice.

The collection includes many rare and beautiful pieces, including one

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Calendar of Events

- 30th Anniversary Celebration**
Sunday, Feb. 8, 4 to 8 p.m., at the Peninsula Golf and Country Club, 701 Madera Drive, San Mateo. The event will include presentation of the 2009 Lotus Award to Marian Soss, a longtime Mission Hospice supporter, and a special recognition to Carol Gray, RN, MPA, former executive director. Please RSVP to (650) 554-1000. \$50.
- Bereavement Support Group**
Every Wednesday 6 to 7:30 p.m., Mission Hospice offices 1900 O'Farrell St., Suite 200 San Mateo.
Open to all members of the community.
For more information, please call (650) 554-1000.
- Auxiliary Bridge Tournament**
Friday, Jan. 30, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Peninsula Golf and Country Club, San Mateo.
Call (650) 554-1000 for details.
- Volunteer Training**
Saturdays, Jan. 31, Feb. 7, 21 and 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and two Thursdays, Feb. 12 and 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Hank Nourse at (650) 554-1000 or hnourse@missionhospice.org for information or to register. The spring volunteer informational meetings will be April 14 from noon to 1 p.m. and April 14 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. with training sessions starting April 25.
- Caring for the Dying Seminars**
Part 1: "What Every Caregiver Should Know," Saturday, Feb. 21, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Part 2: Compassionate Practices, Saturday, March 21, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. \$10 per person per session. These programs also will be repeated in the summer and fall. For reservations and locations, please contact the Rev. Linda Siddall, Mission Hospice chaplain and program facilitator, at (650) 554-1000 or L.Siddall@missionhospice.org
- Night of Fun**
Mission Hospice of San Mateo Benefit, March 27, sponsored by the Peninsula Italian American Social Club, 100 North B St., San Mateo. See details on Page 4.
- Death and Hope**
Spring Forum focusing on how the whole family - especially adult children - can cope with end-of-life issues. April 16, 6 to 9 p.m., dinner. Hendrickson Auditorium, Mills-Peninsula Health Center, San Mateo. Continuing education credits available for nurses and social workers. Call (650) 554-1000 for information or to register.

From the CEO's Desk

As we look into the New Year, many of us may wonder how we made it through 2008 given its many uncertainties. I believe many people felt the same about Mission Hospice a year ago. Yet, through all of our challenges, we are looking at celebrating our 30th anniversary in February. Mission Hospice is one of the oldest hospices in the Bay Area and we are the ONLY independent non-profit hospice in San Mateo County.



Dwight Wilson
Chief Executive Officer

Our survival and success come from the outstanding support we have received from over 1,200 donors in 2008. Another 75 individuals donated over 3,800 hours last year to the care of dying individuals and their families. It is with this support that we celebrate our 30-year anniversary Feb. 8 at the Peninsula Golf and Country Club. You should have received your invitation by now and I hope you will respond and join us from 4 to 7p.m. If for some reason you did not receive an invitation, please call us at 554-1000 and talk with Irene Kanturek about the details of the celebration.

I also would like to introduce you to our newest board member, Maryann Raab, a retired real estate broker. She comes to us from Portola Valley. We are very excited about having her on the board. Maryann has a lot to offer and we are looking forward to her leadership and upcoming contribution to the Mission Hospice program.

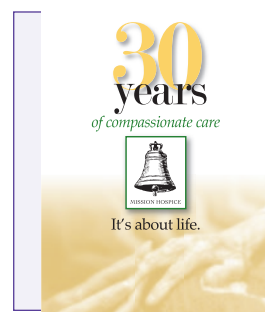
Finally, I would like to announce that our new volunteer training program begins Saturday, Jan.31 (See calendar). If you know anyone who might be interested in volunteering for Mission Hospice, please let them know.

I hope you all had a great holiday and please accept my best wishes for a Happy New Year.

30 Years of Compassionate Care (continued from page 1)

patients. That doesn't include all the family and friends who also benefit from hospice's holistic approach, which includes follow-up grief support, community education and a myriad of other services that indirectly impact the terminally ill patient. New programs include the Transitions pre-hospice program and special outreach to diverse communities. Staff and volunteers also work with patients who live in nursing homes and other facilities in addition to those living in private homes.

Mission Hospice was started by Marguerite "Mac" Nash, who became the organization's first patient, and Helen Lagen, who continues today to support Mission Hospice as a life member of the Board of Directors. They incorporated Mission Hospice in March, 1979, with the help of Dr. Pierre Salmon, Evelyn Grant, Edith Morris and Helen Campbell. Their contributions created an ongoing tradition of compassionate care that continues to this day at Mission Hospice.



Please join us for our
**30th Anniversary
Celebration!**
(see calendar for details)

Staff Profile



Dr. Gary Pasternak - The Nutshell

Career

- Associate Medical Director, Mission Hospice, 2007-present
- Former Medical Director, Mission Hospice
- Assistant Chief, Primary Care, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center

Education

- Fellowship, Center for Palliative Studies, San Diego Hospice, 2009
- Chaplaincy Institute for Arts and Interfaith Ministries, Berkeley, ordained 2007
- UC Berkeley, MPH public health, 1987
- UC San Diego School of Medicine, MD, 1983

Personal

- Married. Two adult children

Dr. Gary Pasternak: Associate Medical Director

Dr. Gary Pasternak's commitment to hospice care goes far beyond his job as associate medical director at Mission Hospice. He has provided pain control (palliative) care in locations as remote as rural India and the nomadic regions of Tibet on medical missions sponsored by religious organizations.

Later this year, he'll be doing a fellowship at the Center for Palliative Studies at the San Diego Hospice, which tends to almost 1,000 patients a year and leads efforts to enhance palliative care internationally. Working at the San Diego hospice will allow him to provide hospice care both to in-home patients – the model at Mission Hospice – and in an inpatient hospice care center.

Pasternak remembers his first encounters with Mission Hospice as love at first sight. "It has been a privilege to work with the Mission team," he said. "Everyone provides the most competent and compassionate care imaginable. Our patients and families are so well-served by our dedicated team."

He became interested in pain control and end-of-life care a dozen years ago when he had patients with HIV who wanted to be cared for at home.

"At that time, there was no formal training in palliative care so we started teaching ourselves," he recalled. Now, palliative-care education is required for all California physicians and a number of hospitals have palliative-care departments.

Pasternak, who is board-certified in internal medicine, hospice and palliative medicine, and occupational and environmental health with added qualifications in geriatrics, also is deeply interested in the non-medical aspects of hospice.

In 2007, he was ordained at the Chaplaincy Institute for Arts and Interfaith Ministries in Berkeley, where he based his ordination sermon on the meaning of Mission Hospice's annual "Light Up a Life" event.

Carol Gray (continued from page 1)

"During the volunteer years, we worked with home health agencies that had paid nurses and social workers to support terminally ill patients," she said. "As a Medicare-certified hospice, we became the home agency providing professional care. We took a great deal of pride in becoming a total care program. We had to jump through a lot of hoops but it was exciting to rise to meet all the requirements for certification."

Carol grew up in Burlingame, where her father was police chief, and attended local schools, completing nursing and public health studies at Stanford. She also earned a master's degree in public administration with an emphasis in health services at Notre Dame de Namur University.

She retired from Mission Hospice in 2003. Today, she is a volunteer involved in a number of activities through her church. She also exercises, travels and spends time with her two daughters and six grandchildren.

"It's wonderful to be available to them now," she says. "I pretty much gave my all to my work for 40 years but it was a wonderful experience. I got to work with and meet the best people in the area. Mission Hospice always attracted wonderful people."

Marian Soss (continued from page 1)

sampler that dates to 1734. For Marian, the visual beauty and artistry of the samplers, mostly created by children, is only a part of their charm.

"I usually picture these little girls sewing the samplers," said Marian, who has two daughters, a son and three grandchildren. "Were they sad little girls? Did they have a sense of humor?"

Over the years, Marian has given hundreds of talks and presentations on her collection, and has donated the honoraria to Mission Hospice. She still averages about one event per month.

An early member of the Mission Hospice board of directors, Marian also was a charter member of the Auxiliary. Marian said she receives her greatest pleasure when she meets people who used and benefited from Mission Hospice services. These meetings have occurred at charity events, other meetings and even chance encounters on the street.

"They always say something similar; 'Mrs. Soss, I know about your connection to Mission Hospice. May I tell you about the wonderful caregiver who helped me through a most difficult time,' or 'I couldn't have survived mentally or physically when my spouse was dying if hospice hadn't been there for me.'"

"I feel this is the finest tribute to Mission Hospice and I feel privileged to be a part of it."



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30
years
of compassionate care



It's about life.

Fun Night!

The Peninsula Italian American Social Club will host its first "Night of Fun" dinner as a benefit for Mission Hospice Friday, March 27 at the club at 100 North "B" St., San Mateo.

The evening will start with no-host cocktails at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7. Diners have their choice of prime rib, roast chicken or salmon served with anti-pasto, salad and rice with mushrooms under the direction of Chef Peter Quilici. Wine and a special dessert from Dianda Bakery also are included.

George Campi and the Lou Roselli Band will provide the music. A silent auction also is planned.

Reservations are \$60 per person and may be made by calling Alberta Del Nevo at (650) 261-0546 or Angie Fanucchi at (650) 341-1577. Checks payable to Mission Hospice may be sent to Alberta Del Nevo, 63 Cebalo Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

Mission Hospice Bereavement Services

- Grief support group – Offered on a walk-in basis Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Mission Hospice, 1900 O'Farrell St., Suite 200, San Mateo. Free of charge to anyone in the community.
- Private counseling – Private one-to-one or family counseling is available free to hospice patient families on an unlimited basis prior to the patient's death and for up to eight sessions after. Those who want to continue beyond eight sessions are asked to pay a fee. Counseling is offered to the general community for a fee. A sliding fee scale is available.
- Education – Brochures and information about grief are available. See the Web site at <http://www.missionhospice.org/griefsupport.htm> for more information.

Please feel free to call Cindy Carlson
(650) 554-1000 with any questions.