

## Making the most of every day

Kathy McFarland, 63, figured it was all over in mid-May when her doctor told her she only had another two or three weeks to live and she was referred to Mission Hospice & Home Care.

"I thought hospice was because I was dying," Kathy said during an interview in mid-June. "They called to manage my care at home and I found out it doesn't mean death; it means quality of life."

This became evident early in her hospice care when she mentioned that she wished she could go to the family townhouse at Lake Tahoe one more time.

"The hospice coordinator said, 'We can make that happen,'" Kathy recalled, adding that her doctor suggested she stay no more than two days because of the altitude. "The hospice people said I could stay as long as I wanted. I was flabbergasted that they would do this. All we had to do was bring my supplies. They set it up for a nurse to come from a hospice in Tahoe every morning to hook up my IV."

Kathy and John, her husband of 40 years, ended up staying a week.

*...continued on page 3*



*Kathy and John McFarland with their beloved dogs Buck and Sage.*

## FROM MEDICAL DIRECTOR DR. KEN BARNES

### Early referral to hospice means better quality of life

While most people know that hospice care is for the end of life, patients often ask me what this means in practice. When should a patient be referred to hospice?

Hospice care may be appropriate at any time during a life-threatening illness. Because the Medicare Hospice benefit (enacted by Congress in 1982) provides

coverage for those thought to have six months or less to live, many people correctly think of this as the definition of hospice. We have found that the quality of life of patients and families is highest when the patient is in hospice care for as long as possible.

When the decision to start care is late, both patient and family can suffer unnecessarily.

Unfortunately, patients are entering hospice care later and later – a nationwide trend we are also seeing here at Mission Hospice. Across the country, more than half of all patients enter hospice care with fewer than three weeks to live, and 10% receive hospice care during the last twenty-four hours of life.

While our hospice teams provide valuable comfort, support, and symptom management (for example, to manage pain and shortness of breath) in these final weeks, patients and families often tell us that they wish they had known about or taken advantage of our services earlier.

***Entering hospice care is not giving up – it is an opportunity for patients to truly live the last months of their lives.***

The reasons for late referral are complex. Physicians can be overly optimistic about how long a patient might live. Both physicians and patients may want to fight the illness and not "give up," an

*...continued on back page*



*A legacy of  
compassionate care*  
Dwight Wilson, CEO



*In times of transition, many of us reassess our relationships, our priorities, and our values. Sometimes this reassessment moves us to make contributions that will last beyond our lifetimes.*

*In the last few months, we have learned that four generous individuals have left estate gifts to Mission Hospice. These gifts will allow our organization's professional staff and volunteers to care for patients in the years and decades to come.*

*One bequest came from the widow of a former Mission Hospice patient; another is from a long-time supporter. All four were touched by Mission Hospice in a meaningful way, and we are proud to continue our tradition of individualized, quality care as a legacy for all of them.*

*To recognize the generosity and foresight of those who have included Mission Hospice & Home Care in their estate plans, we have established the **Mission Hospice Legacy Society**. If you have made plans to support our work through your will, trust, annuity, retirement plan, or IRA, please let us know – we would like to thank you.*

*These estate gifts came from people who were looking to the future. We are doing that ourselves, as we expand to meet growing demand for our services.*

*For the past two months, we have been caring for an average of more than 100 patients per day in our hospice program – more than ever before. We have increased our direct care staff, adding several nurses, a social worker, a home health aide, chaplain, and a bereavement counselor to our team.*

*This growth is only possible because of your support. Thank you for being an important part of our mission to provide compassionate care and comfort when needed most. – DW*

## Upcoming events

### Bereavement Support Group

Wednesdays from 6-8pm, or 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10-11:30am  
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo  
*Open to all members of the community on a drop-in basis. For more information, please call 650-554-1000.*

### New Volunteer Informational Meetings

Tuesday, September 17, noon-1pm or 5:30-6:30pm  
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo  
*Interested in volunteering? Here's your chance to find out more and sign up for our fall training session.*

### Mission Hospice Auxiliary Gala: South Pacific

Saturday, October 12, 2013, 6pm  
Peninsula Golf & Country Club, San Mateo  
*Save the date for our fall Gala – dinner, dancing, and live and silent auctions, all to benefit Mission Hospice programs and patients.*

### Light up a Life Annual Remembrance Service

Sunday, November 3, 2-4pm  
San Mateo Senior Center, 2645 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo  
*This annual pre-holiday program will celebrate the lives of those who have died and comfort those who remember them. RSVP at (650) 554-1000.*

## Would you prefer an email newsletter?

Just email your name and mailing address to Frances at [ffreyberg@MissionHospice.org](mailto:ffreyberg@MissionHospice.org), and we'll take care of it.

And you can always find past issues of our newsletter online at [www.MissionHospice.org/newsletters.shtml](http://www.MissionHospice.org/newsletters.shtml).

The Mission Hospice Auxiliary Presents  
**South Pacific**  
Dinner, Dancing, Silent & Live Auctions

WHEN Saturday, October 12, 2013 – 6 PM  
WHERE Peninsula Golf & Country Club  
701 Madera Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403  
TICKETS \$135 each

FOR MORE INFO:  
[www.missionhospice.org](http://www.missionhospice.org)  
(650) 554-1000

## Paying for quality care

Our individualized care exceeds the levels covered by Medicare and private insurance. In 2012, Medicare and private insurance covered about 89% of our costs. Generous contributions from the community, funds raised by the Mission Hospice Auxiliary, and foundation grants make up the difference. **Thank you!**

### 2012 gift and event income

- Raised by Auxiliary: **\$170,239**
- Estate gifts: **\$205,640**
- Foundation grants: **\$40,500**
- Donations: **\$400,218**



Volunteer George Fulvio, right, with Georges Gerard, one of the many patients he's gotten to know in the last ten years.

## Kathy McFarland

*...continued from front*

A certified personal trainer and Pilates instructor, Kathy had once expected to hike the Sierras in her 80s given the way she took care of herself. Her mother, father and aunt, all lived into their 80s and were all Mission Hospice patients. It was partly due to their longevity and their poor health that Kathy dedicated much of her life to fitness and wellness.

That plan crumbled in January, 2010, when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. John had retired from banking only two weeks earlier. The illness also forced Kathy's retirement from her long-time work with the YMCA.

The diagnosis set off a 3 ½-year saga that eventually involved 42 chemotherapy infusions using five different drugs, plus nine surgeries for complications related to her initial cancer operation. John became her chief caregiver.

"This guy didn't miss a single treatment, trip to the lab or doctor's appointment," Kathy said, adding that his constancy, loyalty and devotion helped her survive this long. "He's been glued to my side every single day."

The support of their two adult children and her Catholic faith also made a huge difference.

"What's happened has made me even more of a believer," she said, adding she always felt she could choose to be fearful and implode, or to keep going through the pain and discouragement. She believes Mission Hospice has added to her choices.

"I know they would honor my choice to stop eating and let nature take its course if I get tired of all this," she said. "That's emotional and mental freedom." 🍌



## My journey with hospice

*by George Fulvio, Mission Hospice direct care volunteer*

For a few hours each week, I offer emotional support and companionship to patients who are in the final days of their lives. This work has been – along with the birth of my daughter – one of the most spiritual experiences of my life.

When I retired from my law practice in 2003, I knew I wanted to be of more service in some way, but hospice was not even on my mind. At a social function, I ran into a former client who was on the Mission Hospice board and suggested that I would be a good hospice volunteer.

This was not what I wanted to do, but I couldn't stop thinking about it. I hesitated, but with my wife's encouragement agreed to at least start the training classes.

That was almost ten years ago.

When I knocked on my first patient's door, my heart was beating double-time as I wondered what was waiting for me. But I have never felt more welcomed into homes than I am as a Mission Hospice volunteer.

Most people I speak with about hospice say that they don't think they could handle being with people who are dying. I consider it a great honor to be invited into someone's home when life is so real, when

the present is all that matters. In fact, I always ask to be placed with those who are the closest to death because it is with them that I feel my deepest emotions.

Our motto at Mission Hospice is "It's about life", which means to me that although our patients are dying, we can help them live their last days.

People often ask me what I talk about with my patients. My answer is always the same: They set the agenda. My place is to listen and be present with them. Sometimes I may read to them, sometimes feed them, and always I listen to them.

In the end, what I do with them is not nearly as meaningful as the simple fact that I am there. I have so many wonderful memories of my relationships with patients.

As each life nears its end, all that is left for me to do is sit quietly with them. They know I am there, and may show it in a smile or a squeeze of my hand.

Then it is over, and I turn them over to God with a prayer. My work is done with these beautiful souls. 🍌

MISSION  HOSPICE  
& HOME CARE

1670 South Amphlett Boulevard, Suite 300 San Mateo, CA 94402

Nonprofit  
Organization  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 63  
Burlingame, CA

**Mission Hospice & Home Care** serves patients and families in the San Mateo County area with quality care and compassionate end-of-life support. Founded in 1979, we are a local, independent nonprofit that has provided thousands of patients and their families with physical, emotional, and spiritual support throughout the journey from a life-threatening diagnosis through death and the process of bereavement. [www.MissionHospice.org](http://www.MissionHospice.org) • 650.554.1000

**Board of Directors**

Maryann Raab  
*Chair*

Kim Ladd  
*Vice Chair*

Sheila Young  
*Past Chair*

Robert Adams  
*Treasurer*

Judy DiPaolo  
*Secretary*

Andrea Bolts  
Kathryn Breaux

Dr. Gail Brown  
Dr. Karen Chee

Mary Chigos  
Ralph Garcia

Kevin Gilmore  
Jane Lennon

Sheila Littrell  
Danette Magilligan

Betty Stern

Michael Teutschel  
George Thomas

Dr. Stephen Weller  
Patricia Wyrod

**Honorary  
Lifetime Members**

Helen Lagen, *Co-founder*  
Adella Harris

**Auxiliary President**

Yolanda Crosby

To add or remove your name from our mailing list, please call 650.544.1000.

**INSIDE: Early referral to hospice means better quality of life**  
**“My journey with hospice,” by volunteer George Fulvio**  
**Save the date for our fall gala: Saturday, October 12!**



**Just released: Our 2012 Community Report**

Our 2012 annual report showcases our work to provide personalized, compassionate care over the past year. We're pleased to report that our programs, along with our patient satisfaction, have continued to grow. This is all due to the extraordinary contributions of hundreds of Mission Hospice donors and volunteers.

If you'd like a copy of the report, give us a call at 650.554.1000 – or you can download a PDF at [www.MissionHospice.org/annualreports.shtml](http://www.MissionHospice.org/annualreports.shtml).

*2012 by the numbers*

**Hospice**

Total patients served: **391**

Total visits made: **13,690**

Average no. days in program: **39**

Age range of patients: **24 – 106**

**Advanced Care**

Total patients served: **205**

Total visits made: **4,195**

Average no. days in program: **41**

Age range of patients: **24 – 102**

**Transitions**

Total patients served: **93**

Total visits made: **849**

Average no. days in program: **147**

Age range of patients: **46 – 100**



**Early referral important**

*...continued from front*

approach that can deprive the patient from addressing health care directives, mending relationships, or making financial arrangements at the end of life.

Studies have shown that hospice care is most effective when patients are with their teams for months, allowing them to build trusting relationships and participate in decisions about their care. Families have more time to prepare for the changes ahead. We as medical professionals have the opportunity to manage pain and symptoms sooner, helping to avoid crises and hospital stays.

Entering hospice care is not giving up – it is an opportunity for patients to truly live the last months of their lives. By addressing the possibility of hospice soon after a terminal diagnosis, the patient benefits from the physical, emotional, and spiritual care needed to ease his or her transition. We see every day that hospice care gives patients and their loved ones the opportunity to cherish their time together. 🍂