

We proudly announce the opening of the County's only hospice house

As San Mateo County's first hospice program, Mission Hospice began in 1979 by offering all-volunteer hospice care for patients in the San Mateo area. Over the years, as the community's needs have grown, we've added professional staff, and expanded our services to include Advanced Care and our Transitions program.

We are proud to announce that we have just completed our continuum of care by opening the County's only hospice house, a beautiful property in San Mateo. We can now offer support for patients in the last weeks of life who need intensive, round-the-clock hospice care that cannot be provided at home. The house also offers short stays for terminally ill patients whose caregivers need a few days of respite.

Support for the whole family

As with all of our care, the focus at Mission House is on patient comfort and family support. In addition to professional medical staff to provide 24-hour care for the patients, our team includes social workers, bereavement counselors, spiritual counselors, and volunteers to support families throughout the end-of-life process. Board chair Judy DiPaolo knows first-hand how important this kind of support is for families with a terminally ill loved one, particularly when the illness comes on suddenly. "I see it with other families –



Our new hospice house, on 16th Avenue in San Mateo, offers a peaceful, homelike setting for patients in the last weeks of life.

they aren't prepared, they are overwhelmed, they are emotionally devastated, they don't have a place to go," she says. "Hospitals are not designed to provide terminal comfort care, so having a hospice house in our community is really the ideal solution."

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Grace Belsky, age 105: Finding beauty all around her



Grace Belsky, 105, visits with her daughter Gracie and volunteer Will Holsinger in the Mission House living room.

In 1910, no one would have predicted that the sickly infant raised in a fifth-floor New York City walkup would go on to become a great-grandmother. But Grace Belsky, now 105 and one of our oldest hospice patients, is full of surprises.

Having survived a long string of childhood illnesses, Grace eventually fell in love with the neighbor boy who carried her skates. They made a striking couple – the 6' 2" George alongside Grace, just 5' 1".

But by the time of the Great Depression, Grace's father was out of work – and so were George and his father. Grace, an accounting manager at AT&T, was the only one in either family with an income, and she became the sole supporter of the two families.

Grace's job, like many at the time, was reserved for single women. Her income was critical, so when George and Grace got married, they hid it from everyone, including their families and – importantly – her employer.

Grace's irrepressible smile is extra broad when she tells the story of their wedding day. The couple snuck out on a rainy day in 1932,

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Milestones and new challenges

Dwight Wilson, CEO



2016 promises to be quite a year for Mission Hospice & Home Care! In January alone, our organization has already passed two major milestones.

The first is a milestone that would make our founders very proud: earlier this year, Mission Hospice cared for our 10,000th patient. This huge number is a testament to the early vision of our founders, as well as to the dedication and hard work of the many, many people in our community who have been a part of this organization over those years. It's thanks to you that Mission Hospice has been able to offer compassionate, personalized care for all who need it, regardless of their medical coverage or ability to pay.

We marked our second milestone, our 37th anniversary, last month with a community celebration in Menlo Park. At the event, we honored former board member and long-time supporter Kate Breaux, recipient of our 2016 Lotus Award. We also presented the 2016 Special Recognition Award to the Sequoia Healthcare District, which has committed \$1 million to Mission House. Both Kate and the District were early supporters of our hospice house project, and we were pleased to publicly recognize their leadership.

I'd also like to recognize the leadership of event chair Martha Melton and the Mission Hospice Auxiliary volunteers for hosting the 19th annual Bridge Day & Luncheon, a truly fun fundraising event. This hard-working group of women raised more than \$200,000 last year to support our patients and programs, and we are most grateful.

As we begin February and look to the rest of the year, we are focused on raising awareness and capital funds for Mission House. As you might imagine, this project has already generated a lot of enthusiasm, and for good reason – the hospice house fills a longtime need in our community. With your support, we are so very happy to finally offer a homelike alternative right here in San Mateo for patients whose end-of-life comfort cannot be managed in their own homes. – DW



Upcoming events

New Volunteer Training Sessions

Saturdays (February 20 and 27, March 5 and 12) from 10am-3pm and
Thursdays (March 3 and 10) from 6-8pm

Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo

These training sessions will prepare you for being a Direct Care volunteer for our patients and families. To sign up or learn more, contact Volunteer Coordinator Craig Schroeder at 650.532.2323 or cschroeder@missionhospice.org.

Workshop for children touched by cancer

Sunday, March 13, 2016 • 1:00–5:30pm

Peninsula Jewish Community Center, 800 Foster City Blvd., Foster City

This healing arts workshop is for children who have lost a loved one to cancer, or families who have lost a child to cancer. Facilitators will use art, music, and movement to help participants learn to live with loss. Registration required at tinyurl.com/z2rbyl5 or call Purvi Shah at 650.877.2750.

Dying is simple – why do we make it so difficult?

Thursday, March 31, 2016 • 10am – 4:30pm

San Mateo Public Library – Oak Room, 55 West 3rd Ave, San Mateo

This free day-long workshop with award-winning author Barbara Karnes, RN, will explore difficulties that may arise at the end of life, and how to navigate these, keeping the patient and family central. 5 CEUs available. Registration required at MissionHospice.eventbrite.com. For more information, call Susan at 650.532.2396.

Eighth Annual Italian-American “Night of Fun”

Saturday, April 2, 2016 • 6pm

Peninsula Italian American Social Club, 100 North B Street, San Mateo

Join members of the Peninsula Italian American Social Club for this dinner-dance benefitting Mission Hospice. The lively evening will include a special Italian dinner, dancing, raffle, and silent and live auctions. To buy tickets, call 650.554.1000.

Grief Support Groups

Our **free weekly drop-in bereavement support groups** are open to all. English-speaking groups meet in our offices in San Mateo and at the Adult Day Health Center in Half Moon Bay; the Spanish-speaking group meets at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City. For schedule and directions, visit www.MissionHospice.org.

Beginning February 29, we will lead a **six-week support group** for adults who are grieving the loss of a parent. For information, call Roby at 650.931.8236.

Celebrating 37 years of compassion

Nearly 200 friends joined us in January for our 37th anniversary celebration. Mission Hospice & Home Care was pleased to present the 2016 Special Recognition Award to the Sequoia Health Care District, in honor of their support, most recently in the form of a \$1 million grant toward our hospice house campaign.

At left (L-R), CEO Dwight Wilson and Chief Clinical Officer Lisa Deal with Sequoia Healthcare District CEO Lee Michelsen, Director of Programs and Grants Pamela Kurtzman, Board President Arthur Faro, and Mission Hospice Board Chair Judy DiPaolo.

Find more photos at www.MissionHospice.org/photo-gallery.

Our new hospice house in San Mateo ...continued from front

"Hospice is as much about the family as it is about the patient," says outreach nurse (and campaign co-chair) Mary Chigos. Mission House is designed not only for patients but also for their family and friends. It includes places for families to gather, as well as room for overnight guests.

A homelike alternative to hospitalization

Specifically designed for end-of-life care, Mission House allows us to provide excellent care (at a lower cost) for patients at the end of life who would otherwise require hospitalization. "As an oncologist, I am grateful that Mission Hospice has added an additional level of care for my patients who have symptoms that cannot be relieved with in-home hospice care," says campaign co-chair Dr. Stephen Weller. "Our 24-hour care will reduce hospitalizations and allow families to be together, with professionals caring for the patient."

A warm and welcoming environment

The idea of a hospice house is one that has been championed in our organization since the very beginning. In 2015, we

found an exceptional, well-kept 12-bed residential care home whose owners were looking to retire. The house, in the heart of San Mateo, is quiet, bright, and comfortable, with common areas and lovely gardens to provide a beautiful, welcoming environment.

Our hospice house campaign

This ambitious project has been supported from the beginning by our board of directors, who unanimously agreed to launch a \$6 million capital campaign to support the purchase and maintenance of the property, startup costs, and charitable care.

Hospice House Campaign Budget

Property purchase and related expenses	\$3,500,000
One-time startup expenses	\$1,400,000
Charitable care (two years)	\$600,000
Maintenance fund	\$500,000
Campaign goal	\$6,000,000
Gifts to date (Dec. 2015)	\$3,300,000
Amount still to raise	\$2,700,000

Special thanks to our lead donors

Sequoia Healthcare District
Mission Hospice Auxiliary
Mission Hospice & Home Care
Board of Directors
Mills-Peninsula Health Services
Peninsula Health Care District



As of the end of December 2015, we had raised more than half of our campaign goal. Members of our campaign steering committee, together with capital campaign director Marsha Eddleman, continue to solicit major leadership gifts.

In the meantime, because the property is in such excellent shape, we were able to start caring for patients right away, even while we plan minor renovations.

As with all of our services, Mission Hospice is committed to offering care to all who need it, regardless of insurance or ability to pay. We are thrilled that our community has so generously embraced this campaign, and we aim to meet our fundraising goal by mid-2017. 🐾

Visit MissionHospice.org to see photos of Mission House.

Grace Belsky ...continued from front

riding the subway to New York's City Hall. Grace laughs, "my shoes were wet, and the marble floor was wet, and you know what happened – I fell down on my behind."

Once George found employment, the young couple went public with their marriage. Despite the slippery beginning, it lasted 68 happy years. "We went through a whole lot together," Grace said, "He was the love of my life."

In their retirement, the couple – both in their 80s – drove across the country to live near their only child, Gracie, in San Mateo. In 2010, as a widow and a colon cancer survivor, Grace moved to a residential care facility.

Last summer when her cancer recurred, Grace – together with her internist, radiologist, and daughter, Gracie – agreed not to pursue further treatment. Gracie had seen the relief hospice provided to her husband at the end of his life, and she knew hospice was the right thing for her mother.

So when Mission Hospice purchased the 16th Avenue property last fall, Grace became one of our first Mission House patients. "My mother had severe back and waist pain that caused her to moan and groan. That was my signal to get help, and hospice is where help is found."

Like others in the house, Grace receives the intense care she needs in the comfort of a homelike setting, rather than facing a long hospital stay.

Her care team includes nurse Chris Brady, caregivers Rosalinda Sokhn and Alyce Sabra, LVN Marta Guardado, social worker Anthony Lupian, volunteer Will Holsinger, and spiritual counselor MK Nelson. Her daughter, who visits daily, has nothing but praise for the Mission House team. "They are so loving – they know how to make one's last days special."

And each day, Grace continues to find the beauty around her. An award-winning rose gardener and flower arranger, she always



A young George and Grace Belsky in the early '30s, out on the town in New York City.

has flowers in her room. "The world is beautiful – all you have to do is look for it." 🐾

Grace died peacefully at Mission House just before "Caring Line" went to press.

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 more than ten thousand 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 • 650.554.1000

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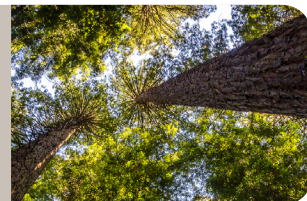
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To add or remove your name from our mailing list, please call 650.554.1000.

INSIDE: Our new hospice house is open!
Patient Grace Belsky: Finding beauty all around her
Thanks to our leadership donors



Steadfast supporter Kathryn Breaux receives 2016 Lotus Award

With her brilliant smile and unassuming nature, Kathryn (Kate) Breaux has been a part of Mission Hospice since our very beginnings in 1979. Good friends with our co-founder Mac Nash, Kate was an early supporter of the organization – and along with her husband Dick, she is to this day one of our most generous, dedicated donors.

Kate's commitment to our work earned her the 2016 Lotus Award, presented at our Anniversary Celebration in January. The Mission Hospice Lotus Award was created in 2005 to recognize individuals who have shown outstanding support of the organization.

Over the years, Kate has found so many ways to support the work of Mission Hospice. She served two long stints on our Board of Directors, including a term as Board Chair in 2005.

"Kate is just a special, delightful person," says Board Chair Judy DiPaolo. "She does things in a very quiet and understated way, and she is very committed. Kate has recruited a number of great board members, and she and Dick have been exceptionally giving of

both their time and their resources."

For many years, Kate served as the chair of the Lotus Award committee, and she was



Mission Hospice board chair Judy DiPaolo and CEO Dwight Wilson with Kathryn and Dick Breaux.

surprised and flattered to be on the other side of the table. Lotus Award committee chair Mary Chigos called Kate "an obvious candidate for the award."

"Kate has helped lead Mission Hospice through years of growth and change," says Mary, "and she was among the first supporters of our hospice house campaign."

Having spent much of her life focusing on young people, as a teacher and a mother,

Kate was initially hesitant to get involved in Mission Hospice. When she was asked to join the board, Kate says, "I thought, well – *life* is my life – not death. But then I realized that death is as much of a part of life as birth is. We're ushering people in and out of the world – and this work is as necessary as helping parents and children grow."

Kate says that all of her work with Mission Hospice has been immensely rewarding. "The people I have met at Mission Hospice have so enriched my life," she says. She particularly enjoyed working with our Director of Spiritual Care, Rev. Linda Siddall, to reach out to faith-based groups, a project that led her to a role on the board of St. James Community Foundation, which supports underserved middle school students in San Mateo.

"Hospice has really helped me with my outlook on life," Kate says. "It sounds clichéd, but I feel that I've taken away much more than I've given. Isn't that always the way," she continues. "You get involved in something to help others, and the good comes back to you." 🍌