

Bereavement support groups help rebuild lives

Bereavement is a long-term process – something that begins even before a person dies. At Mission Hospice, our social workers help patients and families understand the emotions they experience as they anticipate death and loss, support them through the entire hospice process, and provide grief support after the death.

We offer individual bereavement counseling for our patient families, and drop-in support groups for patient families and community

in Redwood City, Gloria Gutierrez facilitates the County's only Spanish-speaking bereavement support group.

The groups, which typically vary in size from about four to ten participants, meet for 90 minutes. While many find that sharing their experiences is helpful, others may choose to just listen if they don't wish to speak. Regardless, support group members find that being around others is both comforting and healing.



"It's one thing to hear a clinician tell you that your feelings are normal, but it's much more powerful to hear from others who are experiencing the same struggles."

– Mission Hospice Social Worker Tracie Pyers

members. Groups meet in San Mateo every Tuesday night (led by Roby Newman) as well as on first and third Saturday mornings (led by Tracie Pyers). On Wednesday nights

Janise Belson, a resident of San Mateo, came to a Mission Hospice support group as a community member who had been attending the Mills Hospital support group

until it ended. She found that although everyone's experience and expression of grief is different, sometimes group members "described what I was feeling, but couldn't put into words myself. That helped me understand my emotions."

Social Worker Pyers, who has been facilitating groups since 2001, says this is one of the most important parts of the support group. "It's one thing to hear a clinician tell you that your feelings are

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Ray and Cathy Martini married in 1977 and shared a life together on the Coastside.

Ray Martini: Honorable to the end

Ray Martini didn't think he would make it through the Invasion of Normandy by Allied forces during World War II. But he survived those D-Day missions, two of the 50 he flew during the war.

Today at age 93, he is honored by his country and by the French, who awarded him the Legion of Honor Medal in 2011. Deputy Consul General Corinne Pereira quoted French President Nicolas Sarkozy during the presentation when she said:

"You are the symbol of the America we love; the America that defends the highest spiritual and moral values; the America that fights for liberty, democracy and human rights: open, tolerant, and generous America."

A member of what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation," Martini was born in 1920 in San Francisco and grew up in Moss Beach, where his father farmed Brussels sprouts and ran a public hall that hosted all kinds of events, including indoor roller skating.

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*It really IS
about life*
Dwight Wilson, CEO



The phrase “it’s about life” is far more than a simple tagline for Mission Hospice – it’s what drives everything that happens here.

Whether it’s January’s Bridge Day and Luncheon put on for the 17th successive year by our amazing Auxiliary volunteers, a birthday cake brought in by colleagues, the “Night of Fun” fundraiser organized by members of the Peninsula Italian American Social Club, or a graduation celebration for our recent class of volunteers – the warmth, compassion, and sense of community created by every single person involved with Mission Hospice is what makes this organization so special.

On any given day, the vast majority of our staff and volunteers are side by side with patients and families, throughout the San Mateo County area. But a core group of us spend a fair amount of time in the office, focused on community outreach, education, staff and volunteer training, and ensuring that we are following best practices to provide the highest quality end-of-life care.

The life in our office here in San Mateo is bustling even more than usual as we expand into new space to accommodate our growing staff. Today’s Mission Hospice is significantly bigger than it was in 1979 when our dedicated founders moved into our very first office space, provided by the American Red Cross chapter in Burlingame. But the purpose – helping people live each day to the fullest – remains constant. It really is about life. – DW



Some 160 people attended our Auxiliary’s 17th Annual Bridge Day and Luncheon, which raised more than \$14,000 for Mission Hospice patients.

Support Mission Hospice while you shop!

We now have two new easy ways to add support for our patients. When you shop through **Smile.Amazon.com**, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to Mission Hospice.

Register any one or all of your existing grocery loyalty, debit, or credit cards at **www.eScrip.com**, and select Mission Hospice & Home Care as your beneficiary – our eScrip Group ID is **500044005**. Participating merchants will donate to Mission Hospice.

Upcoming events

Bereavement Support Group

Tuesdays from 6-7:30pm, 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. We also offer a Spanish speaking support group at St. Anthony’s Church in Menlo Park from 6-7:30pm on Wednesdays. For more information, please call 650-554-1000.

Photography Open Studio Benefit

Saturday, May 10 and **Sunday, May 11**, 11am–5pm
856 Partridge Avenue, Menlo Park
Mission Hospice Development Director and travel photographer Frances Freyberg Blackburn hosts an open studio benefit event – all proceeds, and a raffle of original art, will support Mission Hospice patients.

Soul Stroll for Health Walk

Saturday, May 17, 9am-1pm
Coyote Point Recreation Area, San Mateo
Come walk the one-, three-, or five-mile courses along the beautiful bayfront path. For more information, visit the African American Community Health Advisory’s website at www.aachac.org.

New Volunteer Informational Meetings

Tuesday, September 16, noon-1pm or 5:30-6:30pm
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo
Interested in volunteering? Find out more, and sign up for our fall training.

Our Auxiliary’s Fall Gala: **Rock Around the Clock!**

Saturday, October 11, 6pm
Peninsula Golf & Country Club, 701 Madera Drive, San Mateo
Save the date for the Mission Hospice Auxiliary’s annual Fall Gala – dinner, dancing, and live and silent auctions, all to benefit our programs and patients.

Support groups...continued from front

normal, but it’s much more powerful to hear from others who are experiencing the same emotions,” says Pyers.

“We need to let people sit with their feelings. Here, people can say whatever they think,” says Pyers. Support group participants share experiences about how to talk with family and friends about financial matters and other concerns, learning to handle tasks their partner used to manage, and the emotions of day-to-day life.

Belson’s experience with the support group inspired her to go through training to become a bereavement volunteer with Mission Hospice. For almost ten years now, she has reached out to family members by phone, and co-facilitated the Saturday group.

“I felt that there had to be a purpose to all the pain I went through. If I can use it to give back to other people, then it has a purpose. At the time, I didn’t think I’d ever get through it,” said Belson. “One of the things you learn from the group is that you do.” 🐾

Ray Martini...continued from front

Having heard that plumbers made the astounding sum of \$12 a day, Martini was two years into an apprenticeship program when Japan attacked Hawaii and the U.S. entered the war.

When he turned 21 later that month, he joined a friend taking the test to enter the U.S. Air Corps. His friend failed the test, but Martini passed. He enlisted the following February and was sent to England for training and later flew missions over France and Germany. He recalls in a video on YouTube (<http://bit.ly/1gxJux0>) that he was shot at 35 times and walked away from a crash landing in England. Of the 27 men he trained with, he was one of only nine to make it back from the War, returning to the U.S. in 1944. He left active duty in 1945, after turning down a promotion that would have required another 20 missions.

"I told them I'd rather go home alive as a captain than as a major in a coffin," he said. Then he got on with his life, working as a plumber on the San Mateo Coast and operating plumbing businesses. He has a son, Mark, who has compiled his father's wartime photos and letters into a book.



Fighter pilot Ray Martini, a member of the 411 Fighter Squadron, received a number of honors for his service in World War II.

He was a widower when he married his second wife Cathy, in 1977. Now 92, she recalls that she wasn't looking to get married again after she was widowed. "You have a good guy once, why look for another?" she recalls thinking. But one day Ray came

into the bank where she was working and asked for a date. She agreed – and they were married a couple of years later.

"I'm a strong blooded Irishwoman and he's a bull-headed Italian," she says. "He's what the Italians call *testa dura* (hard-headed)."

Now, Ray Martini's time is drawing to a close under the care of his wife, friends, a live-in caregiver and Mission Hospice & Home Care. His friend and Mission Hospice volunteer Bob Lindberg recommended they join the program as it became increasingly difficult to get Ray to medical appointments. Cathy Martini says it's tough to need outside help and to let strangers into her home, but it means that Ray doesn't have to be in a nursing home.

Caregiver Saane "Nonie" Schaaf appreciates that Mission Hospice staff is always available when she needs them.

"They come right away," she said. "When I first learned about hospice, I thought it was something to get people ready to die. Now, I know it's about helping people live." 🐾

Ray died peacefully on March 9 in his home in Half Moon Bay, shortly after this article was written.

Annual Night of Fun at the Peninsula Italian American Social Club

Revelers at dinner-dance raise funds for Mission Hospice patients

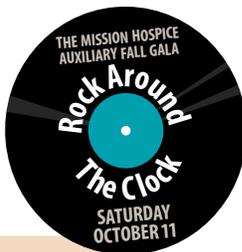
The Peninsula Italian American Social Club hosted the sixth annual "Night of Fun," welcoming 250 people who enjoyed a great dinner-dance on March 29.

This year's event, held in memory of Emil Giannoni, raised more than \$33,000 to support Mission Hospice patients.



Mille grazie to Dan Ferlizza, the Peninsula Italian American Social Club, and the planning committee – Stefano and Elena Quilici, Pat and Mavis Dianda, Angelo and Angie Fanucchi, John and Roberta Bernat, Pietro Quilici, Lois Giannoni, Paolo and Grace Quilici, Mauro Quilici and Jerry and Karol Podesta – for a fun and successful event. 🐾

Photos by Frances Freyberg Blackburn – many more are at www.Facebook.com/MissionHospice



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 • 650.554.1000

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**INSIDE: Support groups help rebuild lives
Remembering patient Ray Martini
Photos from the Night of Fun!**



FROM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK, MARILYN JANKOWSKI, LCSW

Caring for the caregiver



The nine
Medical
Social
Workers
at Mission
Hospice &
Home Care

are integral members of our multidisciplinary patient care teams. With each patient and family from the beginning of care, we strive to set a tone of caring, support and expertise. We provide information about community resources, help navigate complex systems like Medi-Cal and long-term care insurance, and assist with future planning, such as completing advance healthcare directives. Often the most important services we provide are problem solving and supportive counseling to the patient and their family, friends, and caregivers.

Because patients' family members and friends often play very important roles in

caregiving, we also pay a lot of attention to how well they are doing – caring for the caregiver. In fact, we consider the physical, emotional and spiritual health of caregivers to be as important as the well-being of the patient.

We encourage caregivers to:

- Tend to their own health
- Get plenty of sleep and eat well
- Exercise regularly
- Find ways to relieve the stress that accompanies caregiving
- Seek and accept help
- Know their limits
- Accept and talk about their grief

Being a caregiver can be stressful, emotional, and exhausting. Finding ways to take care of oneself while caring for another can be challenging. Our Medical Social Workers help caregivers develop coping abilities, manage family relationships, and recognize sources of stress – as well as find

ways to relax. We also help caregivers learn to grieve, both before and after their loss.

It's important for caregivers to identify what they need or want help with. Some people find it difficult to ask for – and accept – help. We can help them understand and articulate what they need, and help identify those who can share or lift the load.

Whether it's bringing in another member of the hospice team, offering support from Mission Hospice volunteers, or referring to an external resource, our Medical Social Workers help caregivers find ways to alleviate stress and get a break. Our goal is to help our patients' families understand how to care for themselves as well as the patient during this important time and to improve the quality of life for all involved. 🐾

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 facebook.com/missionhospice