



Ellen Fletcher volunteering at the 2009 Bike to Work Day. Photo by Richard Masoner.

Bike activist independent to the end

Ellen Fletcher, a former Palo Alto City Council member who led the town's transformation into a nationally recognized bike-friendly community, was a very independent person. As a child in Nazi Germany, she learned to take care of herself in foster homes and an orphanage before emigrating to London in 1938 via the Kindertransport program, recalled daughter Terry.

In England, she took up the bicycle, which she continued to view as a major source of transportation when she attended Hunter College in New York and later in Palo Alto, where she started being politically active in the 1970s. Terry recalls that it was sometimes hard for her mother to tell that she was important to other people, even her family, "but she knew her activism mattered to people."

So it wasn't surprising that Ellen, who also had a son and another daughter, wasn't initially receptive to hospice care because she thought it was for "when you can't care for yourself at all." Terry said her mother only agreed to hospice when her lung cancer symptoms became more painful and she needed more help.

"She talked a lot about wanting to die," recalled Terry, adding that stopped shortly after Ellen met with Mission Hospice & Home Care nurse Jane Tobin.

"Basically, she was feeling so intensely uncomfortable physically that she was desperate to be relieved of it all," said Tobin. "She wasn't able to breathe, speak, concentrate, or even have normal mobility due to her illness. This was intolerable for such an intelligent, active woman. I offered symptom relief choices for her to accept, or not."

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Understanding spiritual care as part of hospice

Hospice care is known for including palliative medicine – the relief of symptoms and pain. But it also includes spiritual care; indeed, a number of studies and medical organizations recognize the importance of addressing patients' spiritual pain as a part of total health care.

At Mission Hospice & Home Care, our professional hospice staff includes chaplains Rev. Linda Siddall, Rev. Don Mulford and Rachel Rosenberg, as well as spiritual care volunteers from a number of religious backgrounds. Our integrated compassionate care includes spiritual support expressly tailored to the patient's needs and wishes.

While for some, spirituality equates with religion, spiritual care includes any beliefs, practices, and relationships that help people find meaning, comfort, and hope. This may include meditation, family and friends, writings, music, nature, and art.

Spiritual care has been a critical part of hospice care from the beginning. The founder of modern hospice, English physician Dame Cicely Saunders, considered it essential to address a patient's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual pain: "Spiritual care is not an optional extra for the dying."



Mission Hospice & Home Care recently held a professional development workshop to help our teams learn more about understanding and addressing patients' spiritual pain. Richard Groves, a former hospice chaplain and cofounder of the Sacred Art of Living Center in Bend, Oregon, spent the day with medical staff, social workers, chaplains and volunteers, sharing

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Looking back to the beginning

Dwight Wilson, CEO



Thirty-four years ago, Mission Hospice was founded by two women with vision and commitment: Marguerite (Mac) Nash and Helen Lagen. Last month, Helen celebrated her 100th birthday. The Mission Hospice board and staff would like to take this occasion to thank Helen publicly for her steadfast dedication to creating the first nonprofit independent hospice in San Mateo County.

From the beginning, Mac and Helen were committed to ensuring that everyone in our community could have compassionate end-of-life care. Thanks to them – and to our generous donors – we are able to serve all who need care, regardless of their medical coverage or ability to pay.

It's amazing to see how Mission Hospice has grown since 1979, and how much we continue to grow today. To me, this indicates that our community members value quality care. In fact, right now, we're expanding our staff and our offices so we can care for even more patients.

This spring, we welcome Cindi Gill as our new Advanced Care Director. We also welcome ten new Direct Care volunteers who successfully completed our training program this spring. Mission Hospice's programs absolutely depend on our volunteers, who go above and beyond for our patients and their loved ones.

As our organization grows in order to serve even more people, we remain as committed as ever to ensuring that all of our neighbors and friends have access to exceptional, compassionate care. This is the best honor we know for Mac and Helen. – DW

Upcoming events

Soul Stroll for Health Walk

Saturday, May 18, 2013, 9am-1pm
Coyote Point Park, 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 Committee's website at www.aachac.org.

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-1 pm 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.

Would you prefer an email newsletter?

Just email your name and mailing address to Frances at 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.



Mission Hospice co-founder Helen Lagen.

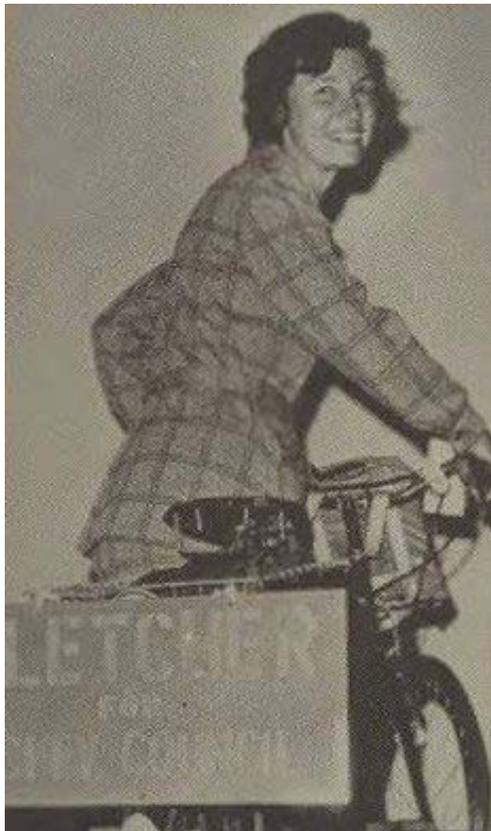
Spiritual Care, *continued from front*

his extensive knowledge about identifying and addressing spiritual suffering and pain in patients and caregivers.

With input from medical professionals and a range of traditions, Groves has developed a Spiritual Health Assessment Tool to help caregivers and patients better understand – and address – the nature of spiritual suffering and pain. Essentially, this scale measures well-being from “extremely anxious” to “completely peaceful.”

Groves equates spirituality with self-awareness – a reflection that includes meaning, forgiveness, relationships, and hope. In *The American Book of Living and Dying*, he draws from Celtic, Tibetan, Egyptian, and other ancient traditions to provide perspective on humans' most basic questions about life and death, and offers tools to help ease patients' spiritual pain.

Groves predicts the coming of what he calls a “conscious dying” movement. “People don't want to die the way their grandparents died,” he says. By contemplating our own death in advance, “we reap unexpected benefits for the rest of our lives.” 🍂



Ellen Fletcher

...continued from front

Tobin said that as Ellen became more comfortable due to the pain management plan developed for her, "she decided to let nature unfurl, rather than feeling the only way out of pain was to die immediately."

Over the months Ellen was in hospice care, her condition deteriorated until she was bedridden. Terry recalls that her mother was very appreciate of the care she received.

"My mother would smile when Jane or Marilyn (Jankowski, social worker) walked into the room," she said, adding that the family was astonished that the Mission Hospice doctor caring for their mother gave them her cell phone number.

"I've never had a doctor give me a cell phone number and tell me to call any time," Terry said.

Ellen Fletcher died last November 7. More than 200 people attended her memorial service. Over half rode their bikes. 🐾

Planning tomorrow's gifts

If you're making plans for your own financial future, this is also a great time to consider the future of Mission Hospice, and what this organization's services mean to you and our community. If you're inspired by our work to provide high-quality care for those facing terminal illness, you have the opportunity to ensure your own legacy as well as that of Mission Hospice.

Including Mission Hospice in your estate plans can be as simple as you'd like. For example, you might consider any of the following:

- Include Mission Hospice in your will or trust
- Name Mission Hospice as a beneficiary of your retirement plan, annuity, or life insurance policy
- Contribute real estate or personal property
- Make a gift of stock
- Establish a Charitable Gift Annuity, Charitable Lead Trust, or Charitable Remainder Trust

Mission Hospice is so grateful to those who have taken steps to support our work far into the future – their foresight and generosity will ensure that we can continue to offer our friends and neighbors the care they deserve.

If you would like to discuss making a planned gift, please contact Development Director Frances Freyberg Blackburn at (650)554-1000 or ffreyberg@MissionHospice.org. 🐾

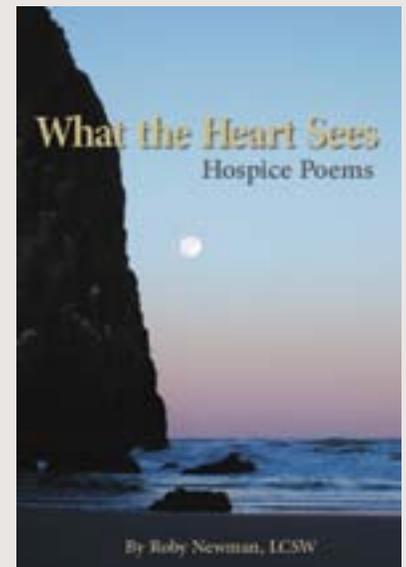


Brief Sky

*You passed among us indiscreetly,
Your dying our measure
Of your life. All the thousand parts
Funneled to a few key
Symptoms, your breath, pain,
The swellings in extremity,
And though we knew you were
More than this
The winding down of you
Was what we had, the birthing
Of a river in reverse.
There is always so much
Undiscovered, we fool ourselves
To say we knew you,
Although such time as there was
Filled a few weeks with small
abundance,
A life reduced to miniature
In bed. We are left
With the sense of something grand,
And how our hands, words,
And hearts met your great
Fragility, a piece of sky cut out
By our caring
And the space you let us in,
Brief, and everlasting.*

From "What the Heart Sees," a new book of poetry by Mission Hospice social worker Roby Newman.

The book can be purchased through Blurb at <http://tinyurl.com/MHPoetry>. Sales of the book will benefit Mission Hospice programs. 🐾



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& HOME CARE

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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: Spiritual care as a key part of hospice
New book of poetry benefits Mission Hospice
Save the date for our fall gala: Saturday, October 12!



Annual Night of Fun at the Peninsula Italian American Social Club
200 people raise glasses and funds



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, Emil and Lois Giannoni, Pietro Quilici, Paolo and Grace Quilici, and Mauro Quilici – for a fun and successful dinner-dance on March 9.

The fifth annual “Night of Fun,” held in memory of Dianne Bacigalupi, Armando Baldocchi, Alfredo Lucchesi, and Irene Lunardi, was attended by nearly 200 people and raised more than \$28,000 to support Mission Hospice patients. 🍷

Italian dinner and flower photos by Frances Freyberg Blackburn