

Hospice volunteer shares simple pleasures, offers a gentle presence

Paul Smith has long been drawn to the continuum of life and death. "I don't separate the two," he says. "It's all life." So when he learned about hospice work, he says, "I knew it was something I wanted to get involved with. The area around end of life is a place where I feel I belong."

"What I like about this time of life is that you cut through all the stuff that really doesn't matter."

Since completing our volunteer training in 2005, Paul has been a gentle, supportive presence by the side of nearly 100 patients and families. His compassion and intuition make him the kind of volunteer who reaches people in special ways.

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Volunteer Paul Smith and patient Doris Gregus enjoying one of their weekly Japanese mango milk teas in our hospice house.



From the Chief Clinical Officer, Lisa Deal, RN, MPH, ScD

Palliative care helps prevent and treat suffering

Many professionals who care for people with serious illness are now practicing and promoting palliative care – care that helps anticipate, prevent, and treat physical, emotional, and/or spiritual suffering.

Palliative care supports quality of life for anyone dealing with a chronic or terminal illness, regardless of whether the patient continues to receive aggressive therapy. It's a wonderful tool in the medical toolkit for helping people live their best lives, and meet their own goals of care.

The term palliative care can be confusing, because it can take many different forms. Palliative care specialists come from a range of disciplines, and include doctors, nurses, social workers, and spiritual counselors. Together, they address sources of distress such as pain, depression, insomnia, shortness of breath, nausea, or anxiety. Palliative care experts can also help patients and families understand their illness, their choices, and advance care planning.

Here at Mission Hospice & Home Care, our interdisciplinary teams have always worked together to provide palliative care that focuses on what matters most to patients for their quality of life. Hospice is perhaps the best-known kind of palliative care – relief of suffering for those in the last six months of life. But palliative care can be given at any stage of a disease, and goes beyond hospice.

Our Advanced Care Program is for patients with a life-limiting illness who may be pursuing aggressive treatment, such as chemotherapy. Our teams offer in-home palliative care, including skilled nursing, rehabilitation, and medical social work services to support both patients and their families. And for patients who are in between Hospice and Advanced Care, our Transitions program provides emotional support and nurse consultation focused on maintaining quality of life.

If you are a professional or a family member with questions about how palliative care could benefit someone you know, our Clinical Outreach team would be happy to talk to you – please call us at 650.554.1000. 🍌

*Reaching into
our community*
Dwight Wilson, CEO



Regardless of whether a patient is in Hospice, Advanced Care (our palliative home health care), Transitions care, or at Mission House, we work closely with his or her primary care physician to coordinate care.

Our community physicians are often the first to know when someone with a life-limiting illness could benefit from our care. And they know from experience that referring their patients to hospice as soon as they are eligible can greatly improve their quality of life.

This is why our Clinical Outreach team of nurses and social workers are out in the field every day, meeting with physicians throughout San Mateo County and northern Santa Clara County to provide information that will support the best possible care for their patients. I'm pleased to announce that Anthony Lupian, LCSW, is now leading this growing team.

Members of our Clinical Outreach team are often the first to meet with potential patients and families, explaining our care, how it fits in with the care they're already receiving, and how Medicare benefits work. Thanks to our bilingual staff, we're making a special effort to reach Spanish speakers and other communities that might not know the relief that can come from planning for end-of-life care.

Our Clinical Outreach team also works closely with our Community Engagement and Education staff, speaking to community groups, and educating medical professionals, on topics ranging from palliative care to advance care planning.

Our organization was founded by two San Mateo residents who saw the need for this kind of compassionate end-of-life care in our community. More than 38 years later, we're still reaching out to our community physicians and neighbors who need our care – every single day. – DW

MILLS-PENINSULA MEDICAL CENTER PRESENTS
THE MISSION HOSPICE AUXILIARY FALL GALA

**Diamonds
& Denim**

Dinner, dancing, & auctions
to benefit our Hospice House Campaign

Saturday, October 7, 2017 | 6pm
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Foster City

Tickets \$150
MissionHospice.org/fallgala | 650.554.1000

Upcoming events

New Volunteer Informational Meetings

Tuesday, September 26, 2017 • noon-1pm or 5:30-6:30pm
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo
Find out about volunteering with Mission Hospice. No RSVP needed. Questions?
Contact Craig Schroeder at 650.532.2323 or cschroeder@MissionHospice.org.

New Volunteer Training Sessions

Saturdays (October 7, 14, 21 and 28) from 10am-3pm and
Thursdays (October 19 and 26) 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 Craig Schroeder at 650.532.2323 or cschroeder@MissionHospice.org.

Movies@Mission Hospice

Thursday, September 28, 2017 • 6:30pm • Voices of Grief
Thursday, October 12, 2017 • 6:30pm • Through Our Own Eyes
Thursday, November 9, 2017 • 6:30pm • Death Makes Life Possible
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo
Our free series of films about how we live and die continues –with popcorn!
Details and registration info at MissionHospice.eventbrite.com.

Stories that heal: Weekend writing workshop with Ann Randolph

Saturday, September 30 & Sunday, October 1, 2017 • 9:30 – 4:30
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo
Learn how to tell your story of life and loss in this small-group writing workshop with the award-winning author and teacher Ann Randolph. Fee \$320; register at missionhospice.eventbrite.com.

Genovese Night Celebrating Columbus Day

Saturday, October 7, 2017 • 6pm
Peninsula Italian American Social Club, San Mateo
A dinner-dance benefitting Mission Hospice, this lively evening will include a delicious Italian dinner, a Queen Isabella pageant honoring longtime Mission Hospice volunteer Patricia Matthews, and dancing to the Joe Simoni Band. Tickets \$60; call 650-343-7981.

Drop-in Grief Support Groups

Our free drop-in bereavement support groups are open to the community. The schedule is subject to change - check MissionHospice.org or call 650.554.1000.

In our offices in San Mateo

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

- **Tuesday evenings** 6-7:30pm, led by Roby Newman, LCSW
- **1st and 3rd Saturdays** 10-11:30am, led by Tracie Pyers, MSW
- **2nd and 4th Saturdays** 10-11:30am, Group for Young Widows and Widowers, led by Tracie Pyers, MSW and Meechal Hall, LCSW

In Half Moon Bay

Coastside Adult Day Health Center, 925 Main Street, Half Moon Bay

- **2nd and 4th Thursdays**, 4-5:30pm, led by Bethany Berkowitz, RN, BSN and Lynne Siracusa, LCSW (Coastside Adult Day Health Center)

For details on all of our events, visit www.MissionHospice.org.



Hospice House Campaign – Help us cross the finish line!

In fall 2015, our Board of Directors took a leap of faith and purchased a property in the heart of San Mateo’s Hayward Park neighborhood to become the county’s first hospice house. Mission Hospice & Home Care launched a \$6 million fundraising campaign, the largest in our organization’s history.

Our donors have reaffirmed that faith by offering their generous financial support for this project. Together, we opened Mission House, a peaceful, homelike place for patients at the end of life who cannot receive the care they need at home. Here, we can attend



“Words cannot begin to express the gratitude we feel for your having taken care of my mom in her final days. She was totally at peace and surrounded not only by her loving family but also by a nurturing, loving staff.”

to the needs of patients and families, in a warm, private environment.

Thanks to your support, we have just completed a renovation to update the house for our patients and families. Since Mission House opened, staff and volunteers have cared for almost 200 patients aged 26 to 106.

With \$5.1 million raised to date, we expect to reach our \$6 million goal this year. Please help our campaign cross the finish line – you can make a gift with the enclosed envelope or at www.MissionHospice.org.

If you have questions about the campaign or the Hospice House, contact Development and Campaign Director Marsha Eddleman at 650.532.2550 or meddleman@MissionHospice.org. 🐾



Voices of Hospice

Author and Bereavement Coordinator Roby Newman recently premiered *Voices of Hospice*, his readers’ theater presentation, in front of an enthusiastic audience in our office.

In a dramatic and moving reading, a team of 15 readers – all Mission Hospice volunteers and staff – shared the journeys of four patients, their families, and their hospice teams.

Mission Hospice & Home Care serves patients and families in the San Mateo County area with quality, compassionate end-of-life care and education. Founded in 1979, our local, independent nonprofit has provided more than 11,000 patients and their families with physical, emotional, and spiritual support throughout the journey from a life-threatening diagnosis through death and bereavement. www.MissionHospice.org • 650.554.1000

Board of Directors

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

INSIDE: Palliative care helps prevent and treat suffering
From the CEO: Reaching into our community
Our hospice house campaign is in the final stretch!



Paul Smith – A special, gentle presence ... continued from front

“When I first met Paul,” says Mission Hospice LVN Gabrielle Jimenez, “I watched him sit in total silence with an actively dying patient who was very much alone. Even though the two of them sat there without words, the room felt full and the patient was peaceful.”

Paul spends hours each week sitting with patients, talking or simply being present. “What I like about this time of life,” Paul explains, “is that you cut through all the stuff that really doesn’t matter.”

In January, the Peninsula Health Care District honored Paul with a Volunteer of the Year award. Always humble, he immediately turns the praise to others.

“Whatever good I do here,” he says, “I am just a thimbleful of good in an ocean of more good.”

Despite his protestations, he has made profound connections to patients and families. When Paul met hospice patient Doris Gregus, she had little interest in doing anything other than watching TV.

“As we approach end of life, simple pleasures become so pronounced. I like to live with that in mind day to day,” Paul says. “I shared a simple pleasure in my life with Doris – Japanese mango milk tea. She instantly loved it, and this became a precious simple pleasure for us to share.”



Doris and Paul shared those milk teas twice a week. That time together eventually led Doris to confide her fears about dying – something she hadn’t been able to discuss with anyone else.

Paul’s calm nature and ability to be fully present carries into other parts of his life. He meditates daily, and is writing a book to

“When you’re holding someone’s hand as they take their last breath, it’s a most profound experience. It’s a time of deep respect and awe.”

– Paul Smith, Mission Hospice volunteer

help others learn the practice. He’s also a specialty woodworker, creating custom sculptures, furniture, and architectural pieces.

“Paul is one of the most unselfish people I have ever met,” says Gabrielle. “As a hospice nurse, I cannot imagine doing this job without him.”

“Being at the edge of life is everything I thought it would be,” Paul says. “When you’re holding someone’s hand as they take their last breath, it’s a most profound experience. It’s a time of deep respect and awe.” 🍵