

## “Team George” at patient’s side

Mission Hospice & Home Care staff first got to know Dr. George Desalernos, 88, a retired dentist, when his wife of 50 years, Lois, became a patient in 2010.

After she died in 2011, George participated in one of our grief support groups and sought additional bereavement services. More recently, he entered the hospice program himself. Physically infirm from end-stage Parkinson’s but mentally acute, he’s come to count on “Team George” to keep him mentally engaged with his needs and care.

“The nights are long but the days are longer,” he said during an interview, “but the volunteers and staff from Mission Hospice bring a shot of sunlight into my otherwise unexciting routine.”

Social worker Roby Newman has been involved with George during most of his journey. He was Lois’ social worker, witnessing George’s twice-daily visits to his wife in various care facilities.

“His devotion to Lois clearly deepened my commitment to George,” said Newman, who has helped George complete a “life legacy” autobiography for his family and close friends. George was Half Moon Bay’s community dentist for several decades until he retired



*George Desalernos with Mission Hospice volunteer Chuck Fontenot.*

in 1991. Afterward, he and Lois handed out roses to passers-by in downtown Half Moon Bay as a way of expressing their thanks to the community. The couple also raised three children and has four grandchildren.

*...continued on page 3*

## Lotus Award presented to Auxiliary volunteers June Field and Alice Flynn

At Mission Hospice, patient care takes a village – those involved in direct care, as well as those dedicated to behind-the-scenes support and fundraising. Two very special members of that village – both a part of the Mission Hospice Auxiliary – were honored in January with the Lotus Award.



*Past chair Maryann Raab (L) with Lotus Award winner June Field, CEO Dwight Wilson, Lotus Award winner Alice Flynn, and Board chair Judy DiPaolo at Mission Hospice’s 35th anniversary celebration.*

At last month’s 35th anniversary celebration, the award was presented to not one but two individuals whose volunteer fundraising service on the Mission Hospice Auxiliary over the years has been exemplary: June Field and Alice Flynn.

Lotus Award committee chair Kate Breaux said that these two women, both of whom have been leaders in the Auxiliary for many years, are representative of a fabulous group of volunteers who have worked hard to support the work of Mission Hospice. “It’s really hard to think of the Auxiliary without June and Alice – they are both so supportive and so dedicated.”

June Field joined the Auxiliary in 1994 when she retired after many years of teaching kindergarten. “I didn’t even know what hospice was when I joined – but my friend Flo [Tyler] asked me to join her in this fabulous group,” says June. “It’s such a nice group of people – we really have fun together.”

“From the inception, June was involved in all aspects of the Auxiliary,” said Kate. “Her positive spirit and attitude make everything seem possible.”

Over the past 19 years, June has done everything from ordering supplies, handwriting bereavement

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## Support for serving our community

Dwight Wilson, CEO



Mission Hospice & Home Care really is both **of** and **for** our community – something I'm reminded of when I have the good fortune to thank our many donors. Your contributions make it possible for Mission Hospice to care for everyone in our community, regardless of their insurance coverage or ability to pay – something to which Mission Hospice has been committed from the very beginning.

I'd especially like to thank the members of our Leadership Circles, those generous individuals who made gifts of \$1,000 or more. While our limited space here doesn't allow us to recognize personally every one of our donors, we appreciate gifts of all sizes.

As more and more people recognize the value of compassionate end-of-life care, we anticipate that 2014 will bring even more need for our services – in our Hospice, Transitions, and Advanced Care programs. Our professional staff, board of directors, and volunteers are ready to serve even more patients and families in the coming year.

We are proud of our 35-year history as a trusted, local, nonprofit – a legacy we honored at last month's anniversary celebration. An important part of our community tradition is the Mission Hospice Auxiliary, and the amazing group of volunteers who work tirelessly to raise funds to support the care we provide.

We recognized with the Lotus Award two of these stars in our community, Alice Flynn and June Field. Their commitment is unparalleled, and I am so pleased to call them both colleagues and friends.

I also wish to thank our 2014 Community Award recipients, the organizers of the annual "Night of Fun" at the Peninsula Italian American Social Club:

## Upcoming events

### New Volunteer Informational Meetings

**Tuesday, February 25, 2014**, 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 spring training session.*

### Sixth Annual Night of Fun

**Saturday, March 29, 2014**, 6pm

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

*Enjoy a special Italian dinner, raffle, silent and live auctions, and dancing to the live music of the Lou Roselli Band. For more information, please call Angie Fanucchi at 650-341-1577.*

### Bereavement Support Group **NEW DAY AND TIME!**

**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.*

**SAVE THE DATE! Fall Gala • Sat., October 11, 2014**

*Elena & Stefano Quilici, Mavis & Pat Dianda, Angie & Angelo Fanucchi, John & Roberta Bernat, Pietro Quilici, Lois Giannoni, Grace & Paolo Quilici, Mauro Quilici, and Karol & Jerry Podesta. With support from Dan Ferlizza and the PIASC, this group will host the sixth annual dinner and dance benefit for Mission Hospice on Saturday, March 29.*

*I'd like to recognize Maryann Raab for her leadership and guidance these past two years as Board Chair, and welcome new chair Judy DiPaolo. Finally, I'd like to thank George Thomas, Kim Ladd, and Peggy Andrews, who step down after years of service on the board. – DW*

## Celebrating 35 years of compassionate care



*More than 200 friends of Mission Hospice celebrated at our 35th Anniversary Celebration at the Peninsula Golf and Country Club on January 26.*

*At left, 2014 Community Award winners Stefano & Elena Quilici and their family; top right, Thelma Kromhout and outgoing board member George Thomas; bottom right, past Lotus Award winners Adella Harris ('05) and Marian Soss ('09).*

*Many thanks to everyone who joined us for this big celebration.*



## Lotus award ...continued from front

letters, and helping organize the Auxiliary's annual fundraising gala. She served as the Auxiliary President three times.

As one of the longest-serving members of the Auxiliary, June has become a mentor to newer volunteers, helping them understand the history of the organization's success over the years.

Another long-serving Auxiliary volunteer, Alice Flynn joined the group in 1999 along with her sister Margaret. Like June, she was recruited to the Auxiliary by a friend. As a Pan Am alumna, Alice has been instrumental in gaining the charitable support of World Wings International, an organization of former Pan Am employees.

In addition to serving as president from 2002-2004, Alice has devoted herself to recruiting sponsors for the annual fall gala. "Alice constantly comes up with creative, successful events to raise money to support our work," said Kate. "She really puts herself out there and – like June – has been integral to the success of the Auxiliary."

As it happens, June and Alice are also good friends – something that's common among these hard-working Auxiliary members. "There are so many wonderful women who make the Auxiliary successful," said Kate, and it's really satisfying to be able to honor two special members of this group that works so hard to support the work of Mission Hospice." 🐾

## Team George...continued from front

George joined the bereavement group about three months after Lois' death. "It was a place where there was a common ground," George recalled. "We were all having difficulty in coping with the absence of a loved one. You have precious memories and other people don't want to hear about it anymore. With the support group, the opposite could happen."

When George's health deteriorated to the point where he needed additional help, he said it seemed like a natural extension of the emotional support he had continued

## Thanks to our 2013 Leadership Circle donors

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World Wings International

\* Lotus Award recipient

receiving after his wife's death to join the hospice program.

"Otherwise, I'd probably be stuck in a board and care facility where they'd bathe me and feed me and ignore me the rest of the time," he added. The medical care he receives means he doesn't have to go through the difficulty of regular doctor's office visits, but he says it's the emotional and intellectual support that he finds particularly valuable. Since completing his biography, he and Roby have moved on to discussing and writing about his views on current events and other more philosophic issues.

Other members of "Team George" include nurse case manager Alice Hennessy, bereavement coordinator Cindy Carlson, bereavement counselor Anne Coogan, chaplain Rev. Linda Siddall, social worker Karri Kaiser; volunteers Chuck Fontenot and Larissa Runkle, and medical directors Ken Barnes and Gary Pasternak.

"George has been a real teacher to us, in terms of the grace he shows in facing head-on his body's deterioration and his willingness to engage with his support system," said Newman. 🐾



**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

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**INSIDE: Meet patient George Desalernos and “Team George”  
Lotus Award winners June Field and Alice Flynn  
Photos from our 35th Anniversary Event**



**FROM MEDICAL DIRECTOR DR. KEN BARNES**

**Understanding the Medicare hospice benefit**

The first modern hospice was founded in London in 1967 by physician Dame Cicely Saunders, and the movement spread to the U.S. in the 1970s. Hospice gained significant momentum in this country with the 1982 creation of the Medicare Hospice benefit.

Along with more than 50 million other Americans, most of our patients are covered by Medicare. Understanding this benefit can help them take advantage of a wide range of services to support them – and their families – through the last months of life.



A patient can enter hospice care once a physician determines that the patient has six months or less to live and the patient chooses hospice over aggressive treatment. Medicare covers a broad range of services to manage pain and other symptoms, as recommended by the hospice team. The benefit covers care from hospice nurses and physicians, home health aides, social workers, chaplains, physical and occupational therapists, volunteers, dietary counselors, and other counselors, including those specifically trained in bereavement.

The Medicare hospice benefit also covers the rental of medical equipment such as wheelchairs or walkers, medical supplies, and prescriptions related to the hospice diagnosis. Medicare will pay for hospice care whether the patient is in her own home or in a facility such as a nursing home or board and care home. It will not, however, cover room and board, or the cost of private caregivers.

While most of our hospice patients are in treatment for less than thirty days, they can stay in hospice care as long as their six-month terminal prognosis remains certified by a physician. As patients’ needs or wishes change, hospice care may no longer be appropriate.

Here at Mission Hospice, our Transitions and Advanced Care programs helps ensure a continuum of care for patients who are not ready for hospice, whose health improves during hospice care, or who choose to seek additional treatments not covered by the hospice benefit. Our goal across our three programs is to provide pain relief, comfort, and emotional and spiritual support throughout the last months of life.

Many of our patients are covered by Medicare, but we remain committed to serving all in our community, regardless of whether they are insured or can afford care. We are grateful for the support of our donors, who share our belief that everyone has the right to die pain-free and with dignity. 🐾