

Mission Hospice & Home Care team honors World War II veteran

Nicholas Ioimo had a good day on Veterans' Day last fall. Mission Hospice & Home Care staff brought him a special red, white, and blue flower arrangement with an American flag and read him letters from local schoolchildren expressing their gratitude for his World War II service.

Social worker Meechal Hall said Mission Hospice honored about 30 veteran families in this way, but it seemed especially meaningful for Nicholas, who at 94 is suffering from dementia. A handsome man with a full head of silver hair, he was particularly lively that day, although his sons say he never really liked to dwell on his military service in Germany, France, and Italy.

He's no longer at war, but he and his family are fighting to ensure that his last days are as comfortable as possible. He gets veteran's benefits, and it was his VA doctor who suggested Mission Hospice & Home Care to the family. He lives in the family home he has occupied for decades in Redwood City with his youngest son, Tom, 52, a part-time gunsmith.

Caring for Nicholas takes teamwork. Mission Hospice provides regular visits from a nurse and social worker; the VA provides a caregiver for three hours a day, five days a week. Older son John, who is retired from the Redwood City School District, helps out when he can, but he has some recent health issues of his own. Nicholas' two other sons, also both retired, live farther away, but help when they can.

"Mission Hospice is such a blessing," said Tom. "Meechal provides different kinds of support and I can text Leilani (Mission Hospice RN) any time. She brings supplies and comes by almost every week."



Nicholas Ioimo surrounded by his support team (L to R): Social worker Meechal Hall, his sons John, Tom, and Nick, and Leilani Santos, RN.

Tom says his father was one of those men who always seemed to be working. Starting at age 10, he sold papers and shined shoes in his native Bronx to help his Neapolitan immigrant family during the Great Depression; he had to leave school in the 8th grade. Even as a

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Announcing: Our Hospice House Campaign

Mission Hospice & Home Care has launched a capital campaign to build San Mateo County's first hospice house. This

home. Our Hospice House will support patients and families as they transition through the end-of-life process. With a focus on the family, a hospice house enables loved ones to spend time together in a private environment while the staff provides for the patient's physical needs.

Although hospice houses are common in other parts of the country, California lags behind, and San Mateo County has none. After several years of research and discussions with other medical professionals, Mission Hospice has determined that San Mateo County needs and would fully utilize a 12-18 bed hospice

house for terminally ill patients. Completion of the Hospice House will require significant time, effort and community support. We are in the planning stages, and finding an appropriate site is an important next step. We are looking for a location in mid-San Mateo County that is approximately two acres with a peaceful and accessible setting and appropriate zoning for our needs.

Our team is fortunate to be working with Matrix Architects, an award-winning firm that has designed and built dozens of hospice houses around the country; their

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**Hospice House
Campaign**

MISSION HOSPICE & HOME CARE

peaceful, home-like setting will provide round-the-clock hospice care for patients who can no longer stay in their own

Looking forward

Dwight Wilson, CEO



Many of our patients receive hospice care in their homes, where they are most likely to be comfortable. However, staying at home is not an option for all patients. To truly serve our community, we need a facility that offers a peaceful, homelike setting for those who can't receive hospice care at home.

I am thrilled to announce that we have officially launched our campaign to build the only hospice house in San Mateo County. This facility will allow our amazing staff and volunteers to do their best work, making the transition for patients and families as comfortable as possible.

The passion and leadership for this effort has been building for several years now, and I am pleased to say that we have formalized our commitment. With the leadership of our Campaign Co-Chairs Mary Chigos and Dr. Stephen Weller, working alongside Capital Campaign Director Marsha Eddleman, we are embarking on a major project that will positively affect thousands of people in our community. This campaign will be neither quick nor easy, but we are confident that the end result will be fully worth the effort.

Mission Hospice has been caring for the patients in the San Mateo County area for 36 years, and we continue to grow to meet the needs of our community.

We served more than 1000 patients in 2014 – nearly four times the number we served just five years prior. We recently hired our 100th professional employee: Anthony Lupian, MSW, who is coordinating our growing Transitions program. These are meaningful milestones for an organization that started with a 1978 meeting in Helen Lagen's dining room.

As we celebrated our organization's anniversary in January, we honored people whose support of Mission Hospice has been extraordinary. Our former chaplain Rev. Walter E. Johnson, M. Div, shares our dedication to caring for patients and families, and we were proud to see him receive this year's Lotus Award.

The 2015 Special Recognition Award was presented to the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, St. Joseph Commandery, an organization that has been serving the sick and needy since the 11th century. We are most grateful for their generous gift of \$100,000 to purchase iPads for our clinical team to use in the field, and to upgrade our IT infrastructure to support that service.

Looking back at our history gives us great perspective on our future. We are energized by and committed to a future that adds a hospice house to our continuum of care here at Mission Hospice. —DW

Visit www.MissionHospice.org/events-news/history to learn about our history and see photos from our archives.

Upcoming events

New Volunteer Informational Meetings

Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 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 February and March training sessions.

New Volunteer Training Sessions

Saturdays (February 21 and 28, March 7 and 14) from 10am-3pm and
Thursdays (March 5 and 12) from 6-8pm
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo
To sign up, contact our Volunteer Coordinator Hank Nourse at 650.554.1000 or hnourse@missionhospice.org.

Seventh Annual Night of Fun

Saturday, March 28, 2015, 6pm
Peninsula Italian American Social Club, 100 North B Street, San Mateo
Join members of the Peninsula Italian American Social Club for this event benefitting Mission Hospice and in memory of Eddie Andreini. To buy tickets, call 650.341.1577.

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.

Writing Through Loss Support Group

Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm, **April 15-June 3, 2015**
Mission Hospice & Home Care, 1670 South Amphlett, Suite 300, San Mateo
This eight-week group helps grieving adults explore how creative writing can help express and move through grief. No writing experience necessary. Free of charge. For more information, please call 650.554.1000.



This patient room in a hospice house designed by our partners Matrix Architect shows a comfortable, home-like setting that supports patient care and also accomodates family visits.

Courtesy Matrix Architects

Celebrating 36 years of compassionate care on the Peninsula



Photos by Frances Freyberg Blackburn. Find more photos at www.MissionHospice.org/photo-gallery.

Nearly 200 friends of Mission Hospice celebrated our 36th anniversary in January. Many thanks to all who joined us!

At left, members of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem Knights Hospitaller, St. Joseph Commandery accept the 2015 Community Award. Below, Board President Judy DiPaolo (L) with Lotus Award winner Rev. Walt Johnson and his wife Esther.



Hospice House Campaign ...continued from front

input is critical as we search for a site.

This is the first capital campaign in our organization's history, and we are thrilled to have volunteer leadership from Campaign Co-Chairs Dr. Stephen Weller and Mary Chigos, who have put together an equally dedicated Steering Committee.

We've also welcomed to our staff Capital Campaign Director Marsha Eddleman, who comes to us with years of professional development experience with Jean Weingarten Children's Center, San Mateo Public Library Foundation, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and Samaritan House.

With a campaign goal of \$20 million, the committee has secured leadership gifts from each member of the Mission Hospice Board of Directors. The Board has also committed \$2 million from board-designed funds, and the Sequoia Healthcare District has offered a \$1 million grant toward the project. The Mission Hospice Auxiliary and many individuals have also made generous contributions to the campaign.

Our momentum is strong, and you will hear more about the campaign as it develops. For more information, or to get involved, contact Capital Campaign Director Marsha Eddleman at 650-554-1000 ext.162 or Meddleman@MissionHospice.org. 📍

Hospice House Campaign Steering Committee

Mary Chigos, Co-Chair
Dr. Stephen Weller, Co-Chair
Yolanda Crosby
Kevin Gilmore
Diane Marcus
Dr. Robert Roe
Patricia Wyrod
Sheila Young

Nicholas and his team ...continued from front

married man, Nicholas along with his wife, Florence, often worked both day and nighttime jobs.

The couple raised four sons in Redwood City. "My pop was not into hunting and fishing like we were, but he always supported everything we did," recalled Tom. "He was a good father. He made sure there was food on the table, clothes on our backs, and a roof over our heads."

Tom said his father maintained his lifelong passion for softball, playing for the Redwood Senior Softball League until 2 ½ years ago, when he was diagnosed with Lewy body disease, a form of dementia that often includes hallucinations. That was the first time that Nicholas was treated for a chronic health condition.

"If I could afford a full-time live-in caregiver, I would have one, because this is hard," says Tom, who also helped care for his mother before she died in 1999. It's the nature of his father's illness that he can be paranoid. "He doesn't actually get aggressive, but he gets mad at us," Tom said, adding that he believes his father also suffers from war flashbacks. "He used to sleep with a baseball bat because he thought there was an intruder."

Occasionally, Nicholas goes into the hospice unit at the VA Hospital in Menlo Park so that Tom can have a week's respite from caring for his father. That unit was developed by Mission Hospice CEO Dwight Wilson before he left the VA to join Mission Hospice.

Caring for the family is an important part of patient care. "In order to best serve our patients, we have to include both the family and caregivers," says Meechal. "Honoring the contributions of our military veterans is just one of the ways we strive to support the whole family." 📍

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

**INSIDE: Announcing our Hospice House Campaign!
Care team honors World War II veteran
Photos from our 36th anniversary party**



Long-time chaplain Walt Johnson receives Lotus Award

For more than three decades, Rev. Walter E. Johnson, M. Div. and his wife Esther have supported Mission Hospice just about every way possible. They have been Leadership Circle donors for many years. Esther, a Mission Hospice Auxiliary volunteer since 2000, is now a sustaining member. And Walt has ministered to many, many patients and families, including conducting burials at sea. A private pilot, he has performed nearly 1,000 such ceremonies.

In honor of his lifetime commitment, Walt received the Mission Hospice Lotus Award at our 36th anniversary celebration in January. The award was created in 2005 to recognize individuals who have shown outstanding support of Mission Hospice. Kate Breaux, Lotus Award committee chair, said that the committee is grateful for Walt's many contributions to Mission Hospice. "Walt's positive nature, calming presence, and supportive thoughts have been a gift



to so many patients – as well as staff."

As chaplain at Peninsula Hospital for 30 years (and at Sequoia Hospital before that), Walt was an early supporter of the hospice movement. "I've had a growing commitment to helping people die well," he said, "and to die with a sense of personal dignity and connection to their families."

When he retired from the hospital in 1995, it seemed natural that he would become a chaplain for Mission Hospice, where he served for 12 years. And he's not done yet. "I'm addicted to ministry," he says, laughing. "I feel so fortunate to be a minister because I can continue practicing even though I'm not formally hired somewhere."

Witty and warm, Walt is a good listener, and loves to tell a story – especially one with a laugh. "Many people assume that dying is dark and dreary," he says, "but there's an amazing number of times when there is laughter and light. Two things indicate that

a person is dying well – one, that they can laugh, not take themselves so seriously, and two, that they have a sense of gratitude."

And he feels thankful for his life's work. "I have profound appreciation of the patients and the families who allow us to be with them at such a personal and meaningful time in their lives," he said. "To me, it is an honor to be in people's homes at these poignant moments."

The many of us in the Mission Hospice family who have been touched by Walt's warmth and ministry feel that gratitude as well, and congratulate Walt on his well-earned honor. 🌸

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