

Larry Barsanti: Helping a World War II veteran stay in his home

Bay Area residents are familiar with the sign on the South San Francisco hillside. But Vasco (Larry) Barsanti knows it better than most – he was eight in 1929 when the concrete letters proclaiming his town “The Industrial City” went up near his home. “As kids,” he remembers, “we used to walk up the hill and slide down the concrete letters on pieces of cardboard.”

Larry still lives just down the hill from the sign, now with his wife, Florence. The couple met just before Larry deployed to Europe in 1942, and exchanged V-mail throughout the war.

By the time Larry was discharged four years later, the two were married. They settled back in his hometown, where they raised two kids.

Times were tight, and Larry went right to work to support his family. He coordinated trains for the Department of Agriculture, spent many years with the South City post office, and had a janitorial business on the side – because, as he says, “you have to



Larry poses with his carbine during his WWII deployment overseas.

have two jobs to put kids through private school.”

Larry didn’t slow down when he retired. He volunteered for nearly 30 years at Mills hospital, doing just about everything he could there. And he’s a huge movie buff, proud to show off photos of favorite actresses and his huge movie collection.

Articulate, funny, and charming, Larry is fiercely independent, but even he admits that, at 96, he is slowing down.

Larry started receiving Transitions support last summer, when his heart troubles made it harder for him to walk and drive. After shortness of breath recently led his caregiver to take him to the emergency room, he began hospice care.

Florence, 91, has dementia, and was admitted to our Advanced Care Program last summer. As her symptoms grew worse, she transferred to hospice care where her team is a steady presence.

The two of them are well-supported by their Mission Hospice teams, including

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Social Work team helps families help themselves

From the Director of Social Work, Karri Kaiser, MSW

Social workers are often asked to explain what we do. My answer is that we help people learn to manage and solve challenges, both emotional and practical. Every day on the job is different, and that’s one of the things I love about social work at Mission Hospice.

“We help people gain dignity and identify meaning, both in the past and in the present.”

Our team provides emotional support, family mediation, life review, and grief counseling. We also help connect people to the financial, insurance, and community resources they need.

One of my roles as the Director of Social Work is to play matchmaker between family and social worker, leveraging individual interests and talents in a way that honors and respects each patient’s values.

The diverse team of 15 social workers at Mission Hospice offers a breadth of expertise, including veterans’ affairs, conflict resolution,



Social Workers Karri Kaiser, Meechal Hall, and Sara Martinez confer about how best to support a patient and his family members.

and bilingual support – we have social workers fluent in Spanish, Chinese, German, and Hebrew.

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Talking about what matters most

Dwight Wilson, CEO



In the past four decades that I've worked in gerontology and hospice, there have been many changes in the way people think, talk, and plan for the last phase of life.

People are reading about mortality: books like *Being Mortal* and *When Breath Becomes Air* are best-sellers.

Hospice care is becoming more and more recognized as a gift, for patients and for families. And people are starting to plan ahead for their future care.

Still, many people are hesitant to bring up the topic; others just don't want to think about the inevitable. But the truth is, the more we talk about what's important to us, the more our families, loved ones, and physicians will understand how to make good decisions for us when necessary.

The catch is, of course, that none of us knows just when we might need that help. Putting off these conversations often means delaying action until it's too late.

That's why the key is to talk about these things – early and often. I completed my first Advance Health Care Directive when I was 50, and I've updated it since, so that it accurately reflects what's most important to me.

We think our exciting new initiative will help others talk and plan. Our **Take Charge** campaign gives you clear, well-defined steps for planning your future care – long before you need it. I'd like to thank Mary Matthiesen, our Community Engagement and Education Director, for leading this, and for sharing her expertise and passion for this work.

As you may have read in our recent fundraising appeal, our nonprofit can provide this kind of important education for our community only because of gifts from our donors. If you'd like to help support our community education and other free programs, please visit MissionHospice.org/donate.

Your support of our compassionate care is what makes Mission Hospice & Home Care so special, and why I'm so proud to be part of this organization and this community. Thank you. – DW



Hospice House Campaign Update

Donors to our campaign have helped complete a recent renovation to update the facility for our patients and families. With \$4.8 million raised to date, we are looking to complete our

\$6 million goal this year. For information, contact Development and Campaign Director Marsha Eddleman at 650.532.2550 or meddleman@MissionHospice.org.

Upcoming events

New Volunteer Informational Meetings

Tuesday, June 6, 2017 • noon-1pm or 5:30-6:30pm

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

Find out all 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 (June 17 and 24, July 8 and 15) from 10am-3pm and

Thursdays (July 6 and 13) 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.

Advance Care Planning Workshops

various dates, May – August, 2017

Little House, Menlo Park and Coastside Adult Day Health Center, Half Moon Bay

Bring a friend or family member and learn how taking charge of your future care can bring peace of mind – to you and your loved ones. For details and to RSVP, visit

MissionHospice.org/TakeCharge.

Movie night: *Being Mortal*

Friday, June 22, 2017 • 6:30pm

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

We kick off our monthly movie series with the acclaimed PBS documentary that follows surgeon Atul Gawande, MD as he explores the relationships of physicians to their dying patients. **Free!** Register at MissionHospice.eventbrite.com.

Writing Through Loss Support Group

Wednesdays, August 17 – October 5, 2016 • 6:30-8pm

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

This free eight-week group helps grieving adults explore how writing can help us express and move through grief. No writing experience necessary. For information and to sign up, call Isabel at 650.532.2338 or email istenzel@MissionHospice.org.

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
- **En Español: Miércoles en la noche** 6-7:30pm, Dirigido por la Maestra en Trabajo Social Sara Martinez

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.

Night of Fun supports Hospice House Campaign



The Peninsula Italian American Social Club raised more than \$60,000 for Mission Hospice at their ninth annual "Night of Fun."

Many thanks to auctioneer San Mateo Police Chief Susan Manheimer, and the event planning committee: Stefano and Elena Quilici, Pat and Mavis Dianda, Angelo and Angie Fanucchi, Pietro Quilici, Lois Giannoni, Paolo and Grace Quilici, Mauro Quilici, Jerry and Karol Podesta, Bert and Janice Salvato, Sheila Young and Jim Linehan, and Mary Chigos.



Veteran Larry Barsanti

... continued from front

RNs Mary Clynes and Sandra Stevenson, Social Workers Anthony Lupian and Brooke Rodriguez, Spiritual Counselor Rachel Lopez Rosenberg, Medical Director Gary Pasternak, Home Health Aide Joyce Anthony Uy, and volunteers David Allen and Jill Ivie.

Anthony says that, in addition to end-of-life planning and counseling, the team offers Larry companionship and emotional support. The social workers are also helping the Barsantis find financial resources.

"We're helping Larry reconnect with the VA," says Anthony, "so he can get the aid and resources for which he qualifies. Brooke is making calls to help lower his bills. Our goal is to identify resources that will help them keep their home."

Rachel has been engaging Larry in life review, discussing his memories and the changes he has seen in his long life. They also share a book of daily readings that help Larry, a longtime member of All Souls Church, stay connected to his Catholic faith, even though he no longer attends services. And each Friday, David drives Larry to the grocery store and the library, where he can check out more old movies.

This team is helping both Larry and Florence get the care they need to stay in their South City home, just below the giant sign. Larry loves having the help, saying "Mission Hospice has been very good to us." 🐾

Postscript: Before this story went to press, Larry became in need of intensive hospice care, and moved to Mission House, where he received the support he needed for his final days.

Social work ...continued from front

Mission Hospice thrives on teamwork. Our social work group meets regularly – often with other members of the care team – to discuss cases and work through challenges. We'll discuss potential approaches, role play, and problem-solve, tapping the expertise and experience of the group as a whole. Pre-bereavement and bereavement support is an important part of our job. I'm proud that in addition to our general drop-in grief support groups, we now also offer groups specifically designed for Spanish speakers, those who have lost a parent, those who have lost a spouse or partner, and young widows and widowers. Sometimes people ask me how I can do this work, but it is truly a joy. We help people gain dignity and identify meaning, both in the past and in the present. By listening, we learn something from each patient about this road we will all go down. 🐾

Recently, our social workers have:

- Helped a family find the right residential placement for their loved one who couldn't stay at home
- Led a mediation session to help a family come to terms with a loved one's illness
- Enabled an important last journey for a patient by coordinating care with a local hospice
- Provided pre-bereavement counseling for a patient's adult child with a learning disorder
- Helped an immigrant family navigate the network of local resources in San Mateo County
- Provided grief counseling by phone to an out-of-state family member

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 10,000 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

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INSIDE: Social work team helps families help themselves
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Larry Barsanti: Helping a WWII veteran stay in his home



Gain peace of mind by taking charge of your future care

We make sure that all of our patients have completed advance health care planning, so we can provide care that's based on what matters most to them.

But it's important for *all* of us to talk about and plan for end-of-life care long before it's needed. Unfortunately, many people haven't started that process.

Our goal is to make these conversations, and advance care planning, easier. To that end, we are partnering with other community organizations to offer a range of educational events – including movie nights, seminars, and creative workshops – to help people think and talk about the last phase of life.

We now have a set of tools to help people take charge of their future care and share their wishes with loved ones and physicians.

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning is a process that helps you decide and document what kind of care you would want – and what kind you would not want – if you have a health crisis and are not able to communicate or make decisions. This is important for everyone who is 18 or older.

This process includes thinking about what's important to you, talking about it with those close to you (including your doctor), selecting someone to act as your representative, and completing an Advance Health Care Directive to document your decisions.

Our **Take Charge Toolkit** walks you through the steps of thinking and talking about what matters most to you, choosing someone to make decisions for your care if you are unable, and completing an Advance Health Care Directive to document these decisions.

We're also offering **free advance care planning workshops** in Menlo Park and on the Coastsides to help people gain peace of mind by taking charge of their future care.

This project is a collaboration with Coastsides Adult Day Health Center, Family Caregiver Alliance, Peninsula Volunteers, Inc., Palo Alto Medical Foundation, San Mateo County Health System Aging and Adult Services, Senior Coastsiders, Seniors At Home, Village of the Coastsides, and Villages of San Mateo County.

Join us! Completing advance care planning is a great gift to those you care for – and can bring you and your loved ones peace of mind.

Visit MissionHospice.org/TakeCharge to learn more about advance care planning, download our Take Charge Toolkit, and find upcoming workshops. 📌

