

Mission House: Helping families make memories until the very end

One of the many reasons Mission Hospice opened a hospice house for our community was to create a homelike place for people who can't stay in their own homes - and where they can spend time with their loved ones at the end of life. We love to hear from families that Mission House is a relaxing, peaceful place where they always feel welcome.

This is true even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because each private room has its own outside entrance, families can visit safely. They can also enjoy time together in the lovely back yard.

Despite the masks and other protective gear, the house is still filled with smiles, stories, music, laughter, and tears.

"We continue to provide a safe and comfortable space for patients and families to be together," says Stephanine Gaspar, Mission House Program Manager, "even during the pandemic. There's really nothing like it."

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Jill Smith and Sandy Heick (in center) deliver a batch of blankets they've made for patients to Mission House Home Health Aides Waranyasiri "Goi" (L) and Rosalinda (R).



Patricia and Francis reminiscing about his childhood in Holland.

Listening is the greatest gift we can give

Patricia Matthews, longtime Direct Care Volunteer and recipient of the 2020 Special Recognition award, explains: "All persons needs to feel that their lives had purpose, and that their time here has mattered. It is an honor to bear witness, to be a keeper of memories, and to be entrusted with patients' stories." In her nearly 20 years of service, Patricia has heard many.

Even though memory loss is a challenge for some patients, hope can come in unexpected places, as it did for Patricia's patient Francis. He could never remember Patricia's name, but he knew that she visited regularly, and called her "my faithful Friday visitor."

Having lost some 50 years of memories - including those of his marriage and children - he still enjoyed sharing stories of his life growing up in Holland and his journey to the U.S. Patricia took Francis on a virtual walking tour of his hometown

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We've moved!

We're happy to announce that we've found an updated office in a more convenient location.

Just two miles from our old space, Mission Hospice is now at 66 Bovet Road in San Mateo, near El Camino and Highway 92.

Our phone number remains 650.554.1000.

Remembering Adella Harris and Marian Soss

Two beloved members of the Mission Hospice family passed away in 2020. Mission Hospice is stronger today because of these two women, both of whom are deeply missed.

Adella Harris, RN, was instrumental in so much of our work from the very beginning. In recognition of her outstanding support, she was the recipient in 2005 of our organization's first Lotus Award, and in 2009, she was named a lifetime honorary board member.

Marian Soss, our 2009 Lotus Award winner, was an early member of the Mission Hospice board of directors and a charter member of the Auxiliary. Marian combined her passion for needlework samplers with her longtime support of Mission Hospice, donating the honoraria from hundreds of talks about her collection, and the proceeds from her book *Let Love Abide*. 🐣



Listening to patients' stories... *continued from front*

in Holland, and he was able to find his home, his father's bakery, and his school. "He was so delighted," says Patricia. "He thought it was magic!"

Patricia is fluent in French and Italian, and she loves it when she can share her Italian heritage with her patients. "Sometimes we travel to their countries via books, scrapbooks, family albums, or the iPad. Sometimes I bring a particular food, or we listen together to opera. Both food and music can be evocative and can bring back meaningful memories."

One of Patricia's patients, a lovely Italian woman in her 90s, asked Patricia where her family was from. "I told her she would never have heard of it, although it was close to Lucca. I said the name of the village. She put her hands to her cheeks, and tears came to her eyes. It was the village where her father had come from - my grandparents must have known him!"

Another Italian patient, Clara, lived to celebrate her 100th birthday. Patricia says Clara "was an inspiration because



Patricia and Clara celebrating Clara's 100th birthday.

she chose joy each day. She embraced life, and did not look at what she had lost, but at what she still had."

One day, Patricia mentioned to Clara that she and her husband were planning

a trip to Italy. "When Clara casually mentioned how wonderful it might be if I went to visit her family, I had to do it."

Without knowing just which bakery was owned by Clara's family, Patricia and her husband somehow found it - and were immediately embraced and kissed, as Clara was the beloved matriarch of the family. "They gave us pastries and we shared an aperitivo. It was such a special opportunity for all of us."

"Being a hospice volunteer has given me some of the richest moments of shared humanity in the most intimate of deep physical and spiritual moments one could ever imagine," says Patricia. "It is an honor and a privilege to accompany a patient on the last part of their journey in this life." 🐣

To learn more about volunteering with Mission Hospice, join us for an online info meeting on March 23. You can find details in the enclosed Community Connections guide or www.MissionHospice.org.

Helping families make memories at Mission House... *continued from front*

While stays at Mission House are typically just a few weeks, the house truly does become a home to many who pass through its doors. Some of them have been so moved by their time at the house that they have found generous and creative ways to give back.

*"This is their time.
We create that space
for them."*

- Stephanine Gaspar,
Mission House
Program Manager



Each month, we've received a donation of blankets lovingly handmade by San Jose resident Jill Smith after we cared for her husband Kyle last year. Together with her friend Sandy Heick, Jill has been making blankets in a variety of colors and patterns to provide extra comfort to our Mission House patients - and to serve as a memento that families can keep.



Daniel Capps (R), along with his brothers David (L) and William (not pictured) were relieved to find a place for their mom at Mission House.

Jill explains that she was inspired to make these blankets for Mission Hospice with "thanks for the loving, special care you gave to Kyle, and to me as well. I couldn't have done it without you all!"

Others share the feeling that Mission House was a wonderful surprise. "As soon as we came to the front door, we knew this

was totally different from anything we had imagined, said Daniel Capps. "Mom had her own room; it was probably the closest to coming home without being home."

The house has inspired other creative efforts. King's Mountain resident and longtime painter Vibeke Gade has been a volunteer with the Mission Hospice Auxiliary since 2012. As President of the Auxiliary since 2018, Vibeke has led the group in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to help open and maintain the house. Last fall, after all that Vibeke has done to support Mission Hospice, we were able



Vibeke Gade created this beautiful painting of Mission House as a way of sharing how much it had meant to her family to have the support of the Mission Hospice team during her husband Robert's final weeks.

to support her family during her husband Robert's final weeks. Afterwards, Vibeke was inspired to sketch Mission House, as a way of sharing how much it had meant to her and her family.

"What's special about Mission House, especially this year," says Stephanine, "is that family members can visit any time, any day. We even allow them to sleep over, so they can be together in the last moments of life."

"This is their time. We create that space for them." 🍌

Events during the pandemic

Due to continued restrictions on gatherings, we will not be holding our Anniversary Celebration or Bridge Day and Luncheon in 2021.

However, in the coming months, we have a wide range of virtual events planned. See the enclosed **Community Connections** guide for more information.

66 Bovet Road, Suite 100, San Mateo, CA 94402
www.MissionHospice.org ■ 650.554.1000

Mission Hospice & Home Care serves patients and families in the San Mateo and Santa Clara County area with quality, compassionate end-of-life care and education. Founded in 1979, our local, independent nonprofit has supported thousands of patients and their families through illness and bereavement. Donations from the community support our exceptional care and educational programs, and help us serve people regardless of their medical coverage or ability to pay.

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

INSIDE: Making memories at Mission House
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Auxiliary's first virtual Fall Gala is a success - thank you!



Thank you to everyone who participated in the Mission Hospice Auxiliary's first virtual Fall Gala, Diamonds & Denim, on October 10. We're thrilled to announce that the event raised nearly \$250,000!

Attendees joined our live event online, bidding on the fabulous auction items from a smartphone or a second computer.

Many thanks to our generous sponsors, as well as to event hosts John Loder and Mission Hospice board member Mary Chigos.

None of this would have been possible without Gala Co-Chairs Yolanda Crosby and Vibeke Gade and our wonderful Auxiliary volunteers, all of whom enthusiastically embraced the challenge of holding an event during a pandemic to raise the important funds needed to support our patients and families. 🍷



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