



Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health

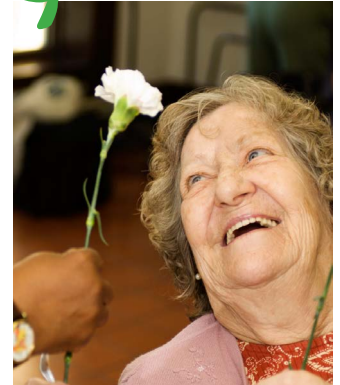
2015

Annual Report

To Our Dear and Valued Donors,

On behalf of the Hospice Advisory Board and our dedicated staff, we would like to take this opportunity thank you for your incredibly generous support of Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health. Without you, we would not be able to continue to carry out our mission:

To provide compassionate hospice care and grief services to individuals and families facing life-threatening illness or the death of a loved one in partnership with the communities we serve.



2015 was a year of growth for many of our Hospice programs and we want to share a few highlights with you about services we have had the privilege of providing in our communities this past year, with your support.

We have a deep and committed belief that grief services will be provided to our hospice families and the larger community as needed and at no charge. This year we saw an increase in participation from both family and community members for these services. We treasure being able to offer grief support without charge and it is evident that those we have the privilege of working with are equally as grateful. Recently a grief services client spoke for many of the people we serve when she wrote, **“It was most helpful to be able to receive grief counseling without the added stress of budgeting for it.”** At a time of such vulnerability and immense family stress, it is wonderful the community knows that we are here for them.

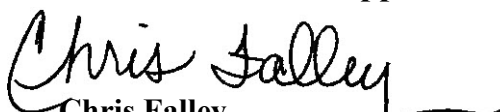
Since 1997, our Sonoma communities have seen us as an important resource in difficult times. The day after Thanksgiving, a young woman visiting for the holiday, walked into Hospice of Petaluma seeking help for her aunt. She said she thought her aunt was on her deathbed and her uncle had been trying to cope. **“Can you help?” We could, and we did.** Your ongoing support helps us know we can continue to do so.

Last year we saw a 10% increase in patients we were able to care for, and 97% of those families reported they would absolutely recommend Hospice to others. 100% of the families stated they had enough instruction to provide care to their loved one.

A large part of our ability to serve our Hospice patients and their families is due to our exemplary volunteer program. In 2015 we trained a new class of 50 volunteers and provided over 3,000 hours of caregiving, more than 2,200 hours of grief support, and 700 hours of fundraising. Due to the commitment of our dedicated volunteers, and our loyal donors, we did a year-long study of community needs. As a result, we are now ready to implement a new, and much-needed program that will serve the members of our communities in a way no organization in Sonoma County has before.

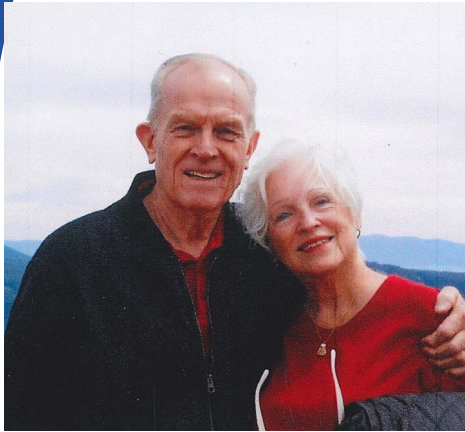
With you, our wonderful donors, and our extraordinary team of staff and volunteers, we are able to continue to provide these important services. When patients and families are facing a life-threatening illness or the death of a loved one, we are deeply committed to accompanying them in all the ways that they need us.

Your support makes this possible. Again, we thank you!


Chris Falley
Director of Hospice Services


Barbara Mackenzie
Chair, Hospice Advisory Board

The Donor Impact: Gypsy & Peter Grauert



Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health was built and is sustained by you, our donors and community members, who make selfless contributions of time, talent and funding. Our patient care, grief support and community education services are directly impacted by your dedication. In this spirit of giving, Gypsy and Peter Grauert are cornerstones of our organization.

Throughout the years, their incredible generosity has supported Hospice in countless ways. They have sponsored numerous events, contributed to building both our Petaluma and Santa Rosa offices, have given hundreds of hours of their personal time to our volunteer program, have been members of our Hospice Advisory Board and have dedicated themselves to acting as advocates of our programs throughout Sonoma County.

Even with all that they've already given to Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health, they continue to offer their generosity and support. Gypsy and Peter most recently gifted funds that have underwritten the start-up of a new community-based service line which will expand our supportive services to help meet the needs of individuals facing a life-limiting illness. This program will utilize specially trained volunteers who donate their time and offer companionship and support to individuals who may not yet be eligible or, are not ready for Hospice services. In addition, services will include case management and linking participants to care providers, community services and other vital resources. This program is in the very beginning stages of development but, is an incredibly exciting addition to our service line.

We feel incredibly fortunate that the Grauerts feel such love for our organization and especially lucky that their most recent gift is helping us to widen the circle of people in our community who can receive the support, dignity and reassurance they need during times when life may feel very difficult to navigate.

Thank you, Gypsy and Peter, for your ongoing support of Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health.



Aid-In-Dying Law: A Hospice Physician's Reflection

By Dr. Steve Hadland, Hospice Services Medical Director

Last fall, when the California Assembly was debating a law to allow physicians to hasten death in terminal patients, I was asked to research and write a brief article in the journal *Sonoma Medicine* detailing the various ways in which death can be brought about with medical means. Passage of the bill seemed likely, and this was a way of beginning to prepare for a major change in medical practice and ethics. We needed some facts. I began to look into what was known about drugs that might be useful to help someone end their life, and as I did, I began to feel more and more troubled. A knot arose in my stomach and I found I could not continue. There was something in me that couldn't make this into a question of simple data when I hadn't really asked myself the question, "Is this right?"

I've been a hospice physician for many years, and in that role I'd seldom been asked by a patient or a family member to help end life before death came naturally. When I was asked, I simply replied that it was against the law to assist in a suicide, but that I would do everything I could to ease pain and suffering even if those efforts might themselves speed up the dying process. The key in this was there was no intent to cause death, only relieve symptoms. I always found this a sufficient answer and did not believe that more was needed.

The likely passage of an Aid-In-Dying law in California meant that soon I would have the legal right to help a person end his or her life by choice, not by nature. Because I had never considered it necessary, I had never seriously asked myself the ethical question, "Can I participate in such a thing?" When I gave myself a chance to deeply reflect on my own beliefs the answer was, "No. I can't do this."

So, instead of writing an article on medical means to bring about death, I wrote an article about the practice of palliative sedation which described how far hospice can go to relieve pain and suffering without intending to bring life to a quick end. I felt it was important that my colleagues outside of hospice medicine know that the dying process can be managed very effectively, even aggressively to control pain and suffering making it unnecessary to resort to a whole new and ethically controversial practice. I had assumed that most of my colleagues in hospice medicine held views similar to mine, and I was surprised to discover that this was not the case. Actually the majority of the experienced practitioners of hospice care I've discussed this with feel that providing a person with the means to end life is an act of compassion and a recognition of their right to autonomy and self-determination. Further, they added, the very possession of such means would be of great comfort and would very seldom actually be used. The more I thought about this the more I found it a compelling position, and it effectively ended my opposition to the law and its implementation.

*Ethical beliefs are not fundamentally rational.
They seem to come from a deeper source and
are not subject to facile change.*

Still, inwardly, I am left with the same resistance to direct participation in hastening another's death. Ethical beliefs are not fundamentally rational. They seem to come from a deeper source and are not subject to facile change. We see this in our political life with issues like abortion or same sex marriage. Society may change its laws, but individual belief changes much more slowly.

As the End of Life Option Act approaches its moment of real world implementation all of us in the medical world and especially those of us in hospice and palliative care, are having discussions about care at the end of life we've never had before. Just as I have been, my colleagues in hospice are being asked to define and articulate their beliefs about aid-in-dying and to come up with a detailed plan concerning how we will manage the issue when it comes our way, as it will within the year. The very dialogue we are having is one of the positive aspects of the passage of the law in that it has stimulated a deeper inquiry into the nature of our work, the desires and fears of society at large, and our own, often unconscious, beliefs about who we are and what death is. This is an outcome that I hadn't considered before the legislature acted and it could even enrich a practice that is already full of mysteries and surprises.

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Dr. Steven Hadland is a Medical Director with Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health. This article is meant to give insight into the inner monologues many physicians are having regarding the End of Life Option Act and do not in any way reflect the stance that Hospice Services or the Health System have towards this legislation.

Thank You Hospice Supporters...

Thank you to our wonderful and dedication donors. Without your generous spirit and your genuine love for Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health we would not be able to do the work that is so important to our community. We would like to recognize the following members of our community for their gifts in 2015.

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You have given diligently and often over the course of your relationship with Hospice Services. Your gift(s) in 2015 have reached a significant number and we want to acknowledge you for your commitment. Thank you for your unwavering support of our services. Every gift matters and contributes to us being able to continue to serve our community.

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Hospice Services of St. Joseph Health

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