Fall 2009

A Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

Volume 3, Issue 3

## When the News Is Bad

By Jacqueline Kern, PhD, RN, ACHPN

Clinical Associate Professor / University of Arizona

When the physician comes into the room and says, "I have some bad news," life abruptly changes. The bad news may be the chemotherapy isn't working, or the heart muscle is growing steadily weaker, or the cancer is growing without restraint. When the physician's prognosis is grim, it is bad news for the hearer (a patient or family/friend, or both). At once, a feeling of unreality or numbness can arise. "This can't be happening to me" is a common thought. The bad news can be almost too big and too momentous to believe. This reaction begins the process of grief.

Once the numbness has passed, the patient is confronted with the awareness that a process beyond his or her control is having a significant impact on the quality and the quantity of the rest of life. The life that was expected and the dreams that were hoped for are no longer possible. Immediate losses and the anticipation of more losses can be devastating. Anguish, despair, anger, and depression are common reactions that can overwhelm all who are involved. Things can look hopeless. Grief can be painful and pervasive.

However, within the grief experience, there can be a re-framing of hope. And, as hope is re-framed, the pain of grief can be lightened. An idea, a value, or an important relationship that has been taken for granted often comes to the forefront. While all people will die eventually, most people do not put much, if any, thought into how they want to live in the last days, weeks, or months of life. When a terminal diagnosis is given, it can be the green light to focus on what is most important in a person's life. Priorities often change when one knows that the remainder of one's life will be unexpectedly brief. The preciousness of life, family, friendships, and love becomes very apparent. With a new perspective of the brevity of life, hope can be reframed and new, achievable goals are often formed. (continued page 3)

## Save The Date!

**National Hospice Month 2009** 

Please join us in our free, weekly Workshop Series 2009

November 4: Five Wishes, presented by Tara Norris, 6-7pm

November 11: Practical Pain Management, presented by Dr. Karen Chandler, 6-7pm

November 18: Hypnotherapy & Hospice, presented by Bonnie Knobloch, 6-7pm

November 22: Candlelight Vigil, 6-7:30pm (no reservation required)

All workshops require reservation and are held at the Carondelet Hospice Inpatient Unit, 1802 W. St. Mary's Rd.

Please call 520-205-7557 for more information or to make a reservation.

Hospice Inquiries Admissions and Patient Support (520) 205-7700 Charitable Gifts Carondelet Foundation (520) 873-5000 Events (520) 205-7557

In-Patient Unit (520) 205-7700

#### ~Letter From Our Director~

From Our Director~

As we enter our Tucson Greetings. fall, we see barely discernable changes in the light and shadow that signal the change in the seasons. Such is the cycle of our lives.....

We experience many seasons before we leave this world. I have been recently touched by the chaos and struggles in the lives of many of our patients Finding dignity and and families. meaningful memories in the midst of turmoil and strife can challenge all of Hospice strives to create a calm us. and peaceful sanctuary in these situations, allowing opportunities for families and patients to find comfort, resolution and forgiveness. Therein lies the true healing nature of our work.

May each of you find peace and forgiveness in your life.

And for our patients....

The Journey begins.....They are

waiting

Be still..... Be still in the center of your passing

All is peace. All is done.

Seek the light, the light everlasting..

**Bonnie Knobloch**, **Executive Director** 

## **FAMILY CORNER**

### **New Volunteers**

Please extend a warm welcome to our newest volunteers!

Lynne Booth

**Andrew Flores** 

Sherry Hill

Kathryn Lewis

Phillip Manzano

Denise Morrison

Tiffany Robb

Jonathan Tang

Kristina Abril

**Donald Crowley** 

Nir Herlinger

David Loui

Andrew Maynard

Anthony Melrose

Priya Okun

Joanna Vega

Mike Collins

Franck Hannallah

Jeong "JJ" Jung

Jennifer Mallari

Martha Montano

John Neilson

Nan Slattery

Shelby Walker

Sami Boleyn

Janel Green

Kristi Jamison

Courtney Magness

Alexia McKenzie

Sang Moon

Ruth Rosenstein

Please welcome Sharie Boyd, RN, BSN, our new Clinical Educator/Performance Improvement Coordinator. Originally from Minnesota, Sharie graduated nursing school in 1989. She has been involved in hospice for many years. Sharie spends her free time boating, surfing, and jet skiing. Welcome Sharie!

November is the 25th anniversary of National Hospice and Palliative Care Month and this year's theme is "Preserving a Legacy...Treasuring Moments". For thirty years hospice has been changing the care for patients and families confronting life-limiting illness. Carondelet Hospice, as the first hospice in Arizona and one of the first in the nation, has been serving the communities of Southern Arizona for thirty-two years, carrying on the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. In honor of this long legacy of providing specialized end-of-life care, Carondelet Hospice will again promote its annual purple ribbon campaign. Purple, the color found at the far end of the color spectrum, has customarily been

associated with honor, spirituality, and self-esteem. It serves to remind us of the right all people have to live with dignity and respect, even to the last moment of their lives. All associates whose lives have been touched by hospice are encouraged to wear a purple ribbon throughout the month- which can be obtained by contacting Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care.

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

#### (continued from Cover Story)

The mission of hospice is to support the formation of those new goals and, with creativity, the realization of those goals. As an example, an early celebration of a hoped-for event may be prepared. Family and friends might plan a Christmas in October. Or, if a patient's desired trip to the ocean is now not possible, perhaps a few hundred pounds of sand, a beach umbrella, and taped sounds of crashing waves can be brought in for a last beach party at home. The possibilities are as varied as the creativity of patients, families, friends, and the hospice team.

With the prospect of dying ahead, a patient may choose to leave a legacy to comfort loved ones in times to come. The hospice team can be instrumental in supporting the creation of a legacy. A patient may write letters (or dictate letters to a writer) to be read weeks, months, or even years after the death. For example, a dying mother may leave a letter to her son to be read on his wedding day. A list of favorite things or a recorded biography may be created and left as a meaningful remembrance. When dying interferes with original goals, there are often alternative goals that can be meaningful.

Reflections upon one's own faith and beliefs can provide hope. Whether a person is a church-goer or not, most people have given some thought to what happens after they die. Religions and spirituality provide a foundation for these ideas and can be an enormous source of comfort at the end of life. Religions and spirituality usually propose that the end of this life is not the final end and there is some other existence to which one transitions after death. At the end of life, one is faced with the very real concern that *whatever* comes after death is approaching fast. Often the experience of facing death uncovers a depth of courage and faith that was unknown before.

Often goals become simple. Sometimes all that is wanted is a gathering of loved ones to reminisce about the good, the funny, and even the tough times that have been shared. Speaking words of gratitude and affection, and sometimes forgiveness, has never been as important as at this time. Faith in and hope for a new life after death often becomes the basis of one's last weeks of life. There is hope at the end of life: the things that are most important become vivid and treasured. In the last chapter of one's book of life, the ending can be written with authenticity and love.

For further reading on dealing with grief, an excellent resource is <u>Understanding Your Grief</u> by Alan Wolfelt.

## **Annual Tree of Memories**

Year after year, Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care celebrate the loved ones we have lost in a beautiful ceremony each December. Our evening begins with the creation of memorial stars; handwritten messages to loved ones, placed on our tree. We read the names aloud to honor those who have passed this year and years before. Together, we sing, we remember, and we congregate with one another to cherish the memories we have. If you would like to attend one of our Tree of Memories this December, please call 520-205-7557 to get placed on our invitation mailing list.

Tucson- December 8, 2009 6:00pm- Doubletree Reid Park

Green Valley – December 15, 2009 2:00pm – Green Valley Community Church

Nogales – December 15, 2009 6:00pm – Holy Cross Hospital Chapel

Hospice News is published by Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care 630 N. Alvernon Way, Suite 361, Tucson, AZ 85711. Questions or comments, email tnorris@carondelet.org

# When to Consider Hospice Care

- The patient has sought treatment in an emergency room or been hospitalized for diseaserelated episode twice in the past year
- The physician is receiving an increased number of calls and requests from family caregivers
- Family members appear to be overburdened with or fatigued by caregiving
- After hospitalization, the patient cannot return home and is admitted to a nursing facility
- The patient has had a weight loss of 10% or more in the past six months
- The patient's appetite has been steadily declining, unrelated to any other medical condition

To initiate a
hospice consultation
or for more
information about
Carondelet Hospice
& Palliative Care,
please call 205-7700



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#### The Gift that "Gives Back"

Gifts are used to advance the mission of Carondelet Health Network, to help purchase equipment, enhance facilities, expand services, fund staff education and to reach out to meet the health care needs of our communities throughout

Southern Arizona.

You can also give by visiting the Carondelet Foundation Website at: www.carondelet.org/foundation

☐ <b>Yes</b> , I would like to make a gift to Carondelet Foundation to support the mission of Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care.			
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Amount: \$ Check #:			
□ Visa □ MasterCard □Amex Card #			
Expiration Date/ (month/year)			

Mail this form to: Carondelet Foundation 120 N. Tucson Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85716