Special Edition Honoring Our Veterans
Veterans Day, Nov. Illi

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A Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

Volume 4, Issue 3





Honoring & Caring For Veterans Workshop
Tuesday, November 16, 2010
8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Riverpark Inn, 350 S. Freeway, Tucson, AZ
(I-10/Broadway)

Featuring Deborah Grassman, RN, MS, NP

VA Medical Center Bay Pines, Florida

Join Deborah Grassman, author of *Peace at Last: Stories of Hope and Healing for Veterans and Their Families,* for an exciting learning opportunity that presents age-old concepts in a new and refreshing way. Deborah Grassman will talk about ways that dying veterans and their families are affected by the military culture.

If you are a veteran, know a veteran, or care for a veteran, you will be both inspired and educated by stories that will open your mind and your heart to ways that you can enhance healing at the end of veteran's lives.

This event includes a continental breakfast, workshop, lunch, opportunity to meet with professionals caring for Veterans in the community as well as meeting the presenter and author, Deborah Grassman.

FREE FOR VETERANS

\$10 FOR GUESTS OF VETERANS

4.5 CEU's available for clinicians, \$75

REGISTER BY CALLING 520-205-7557

## **FAMILY CORNER**

#### **Lupe Trieste Is New Director**

Lupe Trieste has assumed the role of Director of Hospice and Palliative Care, effective August 22, 2010. Lupe has led hospice programs on the east coast and throughout the southwest for nearly 20 years. She succeeds Bonnie Knobloch, who recently retired from the position.

A former associate at Carondelet St. Mary's Hospital, Lupe returns after working in a variety of leadership roles in several large hospice programs. She served as the Director of Clinical Services at Metropolitan Jewish Hospice in Brooklyn, New York and also as an Executive Directors at another hospice.

As Hospice Regional Clinical Director for CLP Healthcare's Western Region, Lupe was responsible for the regulatory compliance of 10 programs across the southwest.

Lupe is a graduate of Pima Community College, where she earned an AND in nursing, and the University of Phoenix, where she received a BSN. She is certified in Hospice and Palliative Care.

"We appreciate the unique role of leaders and associates who provide hospice and palliative care. Lupe will play a critical role in leading our team and expanding these services," noted Winnie Fritz, CEO of St. Mary's and Holy Cross Hospitals.

Welcome Ms. Trieste to our family and our mission of compassion, comfort and care. Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care has been serving Southern Arizona for over 33 years.

### Honoring Veterans at End of Life: Serving Those Who Served

By Jacqueline Kern, PhD, RN, ACHPN Clinical Associate Professor / The University of Arizona

November 11<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day. In November, Americans honor veterans for their sacrifices and service to this country. As of today, there are 23 million living American veterans who served from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Of these millions, more than 1,800 die each day. It is fitting and proper that the needs of this courageous group of Americans be given special consideration at end of life.

Military service is a life-changing experience. The remainder of a life can be shaped by time spent in the military. This impact is well-captured in the motto: "Once a Marine, always a Marine." While this motto is specific to the U.S. Marine Corp, a strong military identity holds for soldiers, airmen, and sailors as well. Moreover, family members of veterans often link themselves to a military identity. To support veterans and their families during hospice care, an understanding of the implications of a military experience is crucial.

First, each branch of service has its own unique culture. The cultures of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Reservist, and Guard are different. While each veteran's experience in the military is unique, understanding the veteran's military culture can help hospice care providers (and others) better meet the needs of the veteran and family at end of life.

Second, just as each branch of service has its own distinctive culture, each era of service has unique characteristics that can dramatically impact the veteran. Although all combat environments are stressful, physical and emotional experiences during a specific time of service can

produce distinctive effects on the veteran for years. While World War II veterans are now over 80 years old (and at risk for all the diseases of aging, such as heart and lung disease, cancer, and dementia), many were exposed to infectious diseases, nuclear weapons residues, and chemical agents during wartime, which continue to affect health even late in life.

Likewise, many Korean War veterans experienced wounds, infectious diseases, cold injuries, and chemical exposures. With aging, conditions such as diabetes worsen the chronic effects of these war-related health problems.

(Cont. next page)

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

#### Carondelet Hospice & Palliative Care Wish to honor our Veterans

Margie Davis, RN

Gregory McGilvery- US Navy 20 years

Today, three out of every ten living veterans served in Vietnam. The Vietnam War was unique in that it was the first time America failed to welcome its veterans back as heroes; this took a psychological toll on many veterans of this era. Post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, and hepatitis C became common. Exposure to pesticides and herbicides, most notably Agent Orange, was frequent. Health conditions that are now linked to wartime exposure to Agent Orange include nerve disorders and cancer.

Over two million military personnel served during the Gulf War. Potential exposures in this era include chemical and biological agents, smoke, parasites, and uranium. Currently there are service men and women in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Blast injuries, burns, amputations, brain injuries, and post-traumatic stress disorder are common. Though medical care has never been better, many veterans are returning from 21<sup>st</sup> century combat areas with significant war-related health problems that may last to the end of life.

A third and very important consideration in the care of veterans is the personal military experience of the veteran. Many veterans take great pride in their service, feeling that they contributed substantially to something meaningful. Despite the trauma of combat, many veterans feel they made a positive difference in the world. This author's mother served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, and throughout her life she reflected back proudly on her experiences as a WAVE. Other veterans, however, do not see their sacrifice as having made any difference, which can lead to troubling psychological consequences. Some veterans openly discuss their service years with family and friends, but many do not talk about painful memories. Families may have no idea of the depth of anguish and suffering their beloved veteran endured. Yet, at end of life, these memories can surface as the reality of the veteran's own death approaches.

As frailty grows with declining health, sometimes the veteran's ability to suppress painful memories weakens. Excruciating recollections can become overwhelming. A family may be shocked at the depths of emotions that are unleashed. When there are indications that painful memories are surfacing, the hospice team can be a resource with counseling geared for veterans and their families.

The Veterans Administration (VA) is aware of the needs of veterans at end of life. The VA now covers comprehensive hospice services for all enrolled veterans either through a community hospice provider, such as Carondelet Hospice, or from a Veterans Administration Medical Center. Eligibility for most VA benefits, including hospice care, is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. To enroll in the VA system, a veteran's service history is reviewed by a VA Veteran Benefits Officer located in VA facilities (in Tucson at 3601 South Sixth Avenue). Terminally ill veterans can have their enrollment expedited, sometimes within 24 to 48 hours.

It is appropriate that veterans who served this country with courage and commitment be given the honor they are due. At the end of life, providing excellent hospice care is one way to repay the debt that is owed to veterans for their service to America.

# 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 care giving
- 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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## **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, 2010

Green Valley- December 14, 2010

Nogales-December 14, 2010