

Companion

Fall 2006

Hospice of the Rapidan is a not for profit community based organization providing skilled medical care and social, emotional, spiritual and grief support for people with a limited life expectancy and their caregivers

Virginia Licensed, Medicare & Medicaid Certified

Serving Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Madison and Rappahannock counties

P.O. Box 1715
Culpeper, VA 22701
540-825-4840
www.hotr.org

Founded 1983

Understanding the Medical Part of Hospice Care

When people think of hospice, they often envision caring nurses and other members of the hospice team making a patient comfortable and attending to the emotional, social and spiritual needs of the patient and his or her loved ones, all at the cost of giving up on medical treatment. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, hospice patients receive comprehensive medical treatment, in most cases from a combination of their own physician and *Hospice of the Rapidan's* medical director. What changes is that the treatment goal shifts from curing the underlying terminal illness to comprehensive treatment of the patient's pain and symptoms. Hospice medical treatment includes not only physician and nurse services, but also all medications, medical equipment and supplies a patient needs.

Hospice patients may also continue to receive curative medical treatment for conditions unrelated to their terminal illness. For example, if an end stage cancer patient falls and breaks a bone, he or she will receive full medical treatment for that injury.

Pain management is a particular concern for most hospice patients and their caregivers. People generally fear pain and its debilitating effects. At

Hospice of the Rapidan, we understand the importance of effective pain management and how much alleviating



Hospice still makes house calls

pain contributes to a patient's well being, dignity, and quality of life. A fundamental precept of hospice is the belief that all of us are entitled to die pain free and with dignity. *Hospice of the Rapidan's* medical director and nurses are experts in state-of-the-art pain treatments, helping patients feel comfortable with pain management

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Join us at one or more of the following events!

October

Remington Street Festival
Sat, 14th, 9:00am-4:00pm
Main Street, Remington
 Stop by and visit our booth.

Service of Remembrance
Sun, 15th, 3:00pm
Culpeper United Methodist Church
 1233 Oaklawn Drive, Culpeper

Lunch 'n Learn, Warrenton, Tues, 10th
Lunch 'n Learn, Culpeper, Tues, 17th
Lunch 'n Learn, Madison, Thurs, 19th

November

National Hospice Month

Advance Directive Seminars
County Libraries
 Call for times and locations

Grief Support Group Workshop
Tuesdays
Nov 7th-Dec 5th, 2:00pm-3:30pm
Call for locations, 8:30am-4:00pm M-F

Tree of Lights Celebration
Wed, 29th, 6:00pm
Hospice of the Rapidan
 1200 Sunset Lane, Culpeper
 Light refreshments will be provided

Lunch 'n Learn, Madison, Thurs, 9th
Lunch 'n Learn, Warrenton, Tues, 14th
Lunch 'n Learn, Culpeper, Tues, 21st

December

Holiday Grief Workshop
Tues, 12th, 2:00pm-3:30pm;
7:00pm-8:30pm
Hospice of the Rapidan
 1200 Sunset Lane, Culpeper

Lunch 'n Learn, Warrenton, Tues, 12th
Lunch 'n Learn, Madison, Thurs, 14th
Lunch 'n Learn, Culpeper, Tues, 19th

Understanding the Medical Part

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options. If caregiving requires new skills to assist in the management of a patient's pain or symptoms, family members can count on hospice staff for training.

Recent advances in medical management of pain have been remarkable, and most medical care for pain management can be provided at home where patients are most comfortable. Technology allows for a wide variety of equipment to be installed in the home, reducing the need for hospitalization. When symptoms cannot be controlled at home, inpatient hospice care is provided.

Family members frequently share with us their amazement and gratitude at the dramatic difference effective pain management makes. "My mother

became relaxed, and we were able to talk and share our thoughts with one another once she had relief from her chronic pain. It gave us time to reconnect and the quality of our time together improved so much."

More information about *Hospice of the Rapidan's* medical treatment options and pain management capabilities is available by calling us at 540-825-4840 or from your family physician. We welcome inquiries from patients, family members, or health care professionals interested in learning more.

If you would prefer not to receive future issues of *Companion*, please call Elaine at 540.825.4840 or e-mail her at info@hotr.org.

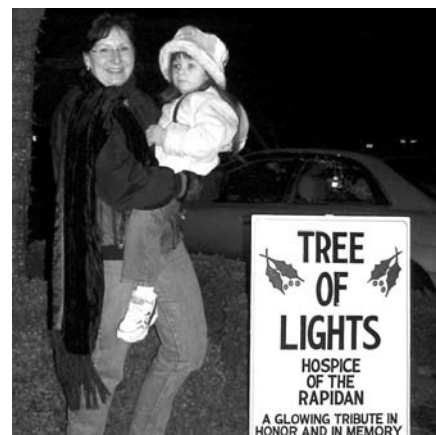
Mark your Calendars for Hospice of the Rapidan's 15th Annual Tree of Lights Celebration

Each year *Hospice of the Rapidan* helps members of the community to honor or remember someone special with a light in our Christmas season Tree of Lights. The lights will be lit at our 15th Annual Tree of Lights Celebration on Wednesday, November 29th in front of *Hospice of the Rapidan's* offices and will shine throughout the holiday season. Yes... we know the weather is still warm and summer is a very recent memory, but we want to remind you to save the date to join us for this uplifting and popular event.

Anyone is welcome to sponsor lights and no prior hospice affiliation is necessary. Sponsorships at \$15 per light or three lights for \$40 help *Hospice of the Rapidan* to care for all terminally ill patients and their families regardless of their ability to pay. White lights recall the memory of someone special, red lights honor individuals or groups who have made a difference, and blue lights honor service men and women. Honorees often include

those who have gone the extra mile in caring for hospice patients, teachers, friends, co-workers and neighbors who have made a difference this year or in the past, as well as firefighters, and service men and women stationed overseas. We can also notify honorees of your gift if you wish so they can attend the Tree of Lights Ceremony.

Please see the enclosed Sponsorship Form and start making your list (and checking it twice...).



Casey and Rose enjoying the 2005 Tree of Lights

Congressman Eric Cantor Visits *Hospice of the Rapidan*

During a trip to meet with constituents in Culpeper on June 5th, U.S. Representative Eric Cantor spent part of the afternoon visiting *Hospice of the Rapidan*. The Congressman met with Executive Director Kathy Clements, toured our offices, and spent some time with families of several patients. He expressed interest in hospice care, the importance of volunteers, discussed what Congress can do to help, and listened attentively to the personal stories of families who have been touched by the care we provide.

Congressman Cantor represents Virginia's 7th Congressional District which extends north from Richmond to Page and Rappahannock Counties, so his district covers all of our service area except Fauquier County. Congressman Cantor, 43, who is running for his 4th term this November, is a member of the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives where he serves as Chief Deputy Majority Whip and is a member of the influential Ways and Means Committee.

The highlight of Representative Cantor's visit was the time he spent with family members of two *Hospice of the Rapidan* patients. He listened as they shared what hospice care has meant to them. Ellen and Gary Moore of Culpeper and Ruth Lewis-Smith of Unionville shared personal experiences about the care their loved ones received from *Hospice of the Rapidan*. Ellen and Gary told Congressman Cantor of the extent of hospice care and

how meaningful it was to both his father and family members overwhelmed with caring for him in his final weeks.



Congressman Cantor 2nd from right with Ruth Lewis Smith and Gary and Ellen Moore

Ruth Lewis-Smith shared how much hospice benefited her late husband and brother and the value of the care another brother is now receiving from *Hospice of the Rapidan*. Ruth also described to Congressman Cantor the difference hospice care has made for her own well being as she became run-down trying to care for her brother while managing all her other responsibilities.

Members of the *Hospice of the Rapidan* community, including our friends and supporters, know these stories are repeated every day. This is what we do. The opportunity to share them with a member of Congress in a position to help make hospice care available to more people was a privilege.

Honor a Hero and Become One Yourself

Traditionally, admission to hospice required a primary caregiver; someone who lived with the patient and was available to attend to his or her daily needs and ensure safety. As a result, patients who lived alone or with a spouse in frail health were denied the benefit of hospice care at the end of their lives. This is not uncommon as one third of people over age 65, the population from which most hospice patients come, live alone.

Regardless of age, most patients prefer to remain at home, even in the face of a terminal illness. *Hospice of the Rapidan* recognizes how strong the pull of "home" is. With the help of our supporters we strive to make it possible for patients who live alone or with a spouse who is not physically able to be a primary caregiver to still receive the

benefits of hospice while remaining in the comfort of familiar surroundings and in control of their lives.

This requires careful planning and strong case management. Serving patients without a primary caregiver requires more visits from our nurses, staff and volunteers, and closer monitoring of their symptoms and needs. None of these added costs are covered by Medicare or private insurance, so our ability to care for these patients is a direct function of the financial support we receive from the community. These patients are often turned away by other hospices, but *Hospice of the Rapidan* is dedicated to providing the finest hospice care possible, not just the minimum services mandated by Medicare. We rely on support from friends like you to live up to this promise.

In this issue of Companion is a form with which you can sponsor lights on our Christmas season Tree of Lights in memory of someone special or to honor those who have made a difference in your life. By generously sponsoring a number of lights or making a separate contribution you can become the hero who makes a difference in the lives of patients without primary caregivers. It is rare to be able to honor people you care about and help others you have never met at the same time. I urge you to take advantage of this opportunity, which represents so much of what hospice is all about.

Kathy Clements
Executive Director

2006 Butterfly Celebration

Honoring and Remembering Those We Love

Hospice of the Rapidan was delighted to host a growing number of friends, supporters, families and loved ones of patients we have had the privilege to serve over the years at its 4th Annual Butterfly Celebration, held on June 11th in the beautiful formal gardens at James Madison's Montpelier. This springtime event is a tranquil tribute to the life and joyful memory of loved ones living and past.

Following a message by *Hospice of the Rapidan's* Chaplain Denise Vogt, the names of those remembered and honored were read to the accompaniment of harp music. The service was capped by the ceremonial release of 100 Monarch butterflies, many of which briefly alighted on the hands and clothing of participants before flying off in the freedom of the late Spring afternoon. Many guests lingered to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the formal gardens in a spirit of remembrance.

butterflies in honor or memory of loved ones and friends. Your support does much to help *Hospice of the Rapidan* fulfill its mission of providing compassionate and dignified end-of-life care to all who need it regardless of their ability to pay.



Ann Frazier, a long time member of our staff, and a well dressed friend releasing butterflies.



The late Senator Vance Harke's widow remembering him at the 2006 Butterfly Release Celebration

The Butterfly Celebration has become part of *Hospice of the Rapidan's* ongoing community outreach program highlighting the services of the Grief Department led by Craig Wilt. *Hospice of the Rapidan* offers grief support to anyone touched by the pain of loss, free of charge, regardless of prior hospice affiliation. Butterfly celebrations are now held by a number of hospice organizations, and they can be found across the country each Spring.

The success of this year's Butterfly Celebration, like that of most *Hospice of the Rapidan* events, was due in part to the involvement of many dedicated volunteers. They included Star Rothrock, Sue Hurt Shifflett, James Shifflett, Libby Born, Lil Jacobs, Christina Taylor, and Susan Sandlin who played the harp. Ruth Pavlik our Volunteer Coordinator, and Craig Wilt our Grief Coordinator read the names of those remembered. Thank you also to those at James Madison's Montpelier, especially Phyllis Johnson, for arranging the lovely setting for the event. Most of all, thank you to all who sponsored

the event. Most of all, thank you to all who sponsored



Grief Care Program Provides Comfort When Needed Most



Craig Wilt, always ready to help

Hospice of the Rapidan's grief care program touches many lives for months and sometimes years after the loss of their loved one. Craig Wilt, our dedicated Grief Care Coordinator, frequently hears from our patients' loved ones. Here is an example of the kind of letter that reminds the whole staff of the difference Craig's efforts make.

Dear Mr. Wilt,

I received your letter & booklet about grieving today and read both. Those thoughtful words are very helpful and are totally on target.

Your organization performs an incredibly important service for people who suffer the loss of someone near and dear to them.

I thank you and the dear ladies of the staff who were so very kind to my wife Palma, me and our family during Palma's last weeks.

*God bless you all,
D. M., Culpeper*

A Hospice Story

My sister and I were residents of the assisted living facility at Orange County Nursing Home. She became ill in December, 2005 with pneumonia and congestive heart failure, and after a bout in the hospital returned to the skilled nursing facility at OCNH. We were no longer roommates, but at least we were right down the hall from each other.

Within a few months she developed pulmonary problems and was diagnosed with lung cancer. The doctors told me she likely had around two months left. I was not in any position to properly care for my sister, as I need some assistance myself, so she was referred to *Hospice of the Rapidan*. They not only stepped in to make my sister comfortable and help her make the most of her remaining time, they in effect assumed the role of her primary caregiver in close association with the medical staff at OCNH. They made sure someone was there to do all the little things I would have done myself had I been able to.

I am so glad my sister was at OCNH, which both of us called home, during her final months. I know she would have been miserable in the hospital, and this way I could see her any time I wanted. I was very impressed at how well *Hospice of the Rapidan* and OCNH worked together. It made a big difference.

The tender loving care my sister received from the nurses, staff and volunteers of *Hospice of the Rapidan* was a godsend. They knew exactly what they were doing, were always attentive, and always sensitive to what both of us were going through. She received much better care and personal attention than she would have gotten anywhere else, and most importantly of all, *Hospice of the Rapidan* and OCNH together made it possible for my sister and I to be together right to the end. That meant the world to both of us.

Sincerely,
Nancy H., Orange

Family Members Thank *Hospice of the Rapidan*

Every week we receive comments from family members of patients we have helped care for. From time to time we like to share some of them with our readers and supporters. We hope you find them as uplifting as we do.

"The hospice team was a blessing to me. They treated my wife like a family member, while I was going through one of the worst periods of my life. I will always thank them for that."

"We could not have done it without you. Your nursing staff went above and beyond my expectations. Everyone I spoke to with hospice was kind, courteous, helpful, compassionate and caring. God Bless you all."

"Everyone was great. This was more than a job for them. They displayed genuine concern and compassion towards my mother. She was also treated with utmost respect and dignity. Mother even referred to Angela as her "angel. Thank you one and all."

"The care given could not have been better. The doctor, nurses and staff and all of hospice were fabulous and kept him comfortable and content to the very end—the family is very grateful."

Culpeper Chamber Of Commerce Honors *Hospice of the Rapidan*

On Friday July 21st the staff of the Culpeper Chamber of Commerce wore their admiration for *Hospice of the Rapidan* on their sleeves...literally. As part of a program in which the Chamber's staff wore T-shirts recognizing a noteworthy organization or business each Friday during the summer, *Hospice of the Rapidan* was delighted to be so honored, and if we say so ourselves, the shirts looked terrific on everyone!

Many thanks from all of us to Kelly Ward, Norma Dunwody, and Pat Baisden of the Chamber staff.



Chamber of Commerce staff wearing *Hospice of the Rapidan* shirts



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Contact us at www.hotr.org
or call, 540-825-4840

Determining Prognosis for Hospice Care



Dr. Eve Bargman, Hospice of the Rapidan's Medical Director

Doc, how long do I have?

This question can make any physician uncomfortable for a variety of reasons:

- it's a very important question
- we can't answer it reliably, and
- patients and loved ones often respond with stories of others who lived far longer than their doctors predicted, which challenges our competency.

Certifying patients for hospice care, which requires a prognosis of six months or less, can evoke that same discomfort. How can we look into our

murky crystal balls and tell someone they have six months to live? Fortunately no one, including Medicare, requires the six months prognosis to be accurate, only that it be reasonable. The key requirement is that the patient has clear indicators of a poor prognosis, which is an easier standard to work with.

Some of those indicators are well known. A patient whose cancer spreads aggressively despite full therapy—or all the therapy he or she can tolerate—clearly qualifies for hospice care. But with other illnesses we may miss signs of end-stage illness. In a recent study in which physicians were asked how long they expected their hospice patients to live, physicians were overly optimistic by a factor of five. And the data revealed that the longer a physician had known his or her patients, the farther off the prognosis was. This suggests that we should consider hospice for patients earlier than we historically have.

What are some of the indicators that suggest patients qualify for hospice? Optimally treated patients with CHF, angina or COPD who still are short of

breath at rest or with minimal exertion generally qualify for hospice care. Patients with dementia who require frequent medical care and assistance with all ADLs, can't stand unassisted and can't say more than six intelligible words are hospice-appropriate, too. And frail, dependent older patients who have lost 10% of body weight in six months, or who have dysphagia and frequent infections, likely meet criteria for hospice.

When suggesting or recommending hospice to a patient or family, we can let them know that these signs qualify the patient for help. The indicators are signs of a six-month prognosis, but their loved one could live for a month or a year. We can also remind them that the prognosis is continuously monitored and that some patients improve and graduate from hospice care.

Regardless of outcome, one of the key benefits of hospice is that family members will receive the support they need and they will know they have given their loved ones the best possible care, in the best possible setting.

Hospice Q&A

Dear *Hospice of the Rapidan*,
I have heard that hospice means giving up medical care and hope. Is this true?
Concerned in Fauquier

Dear Concerned in Fauquier,
Absolutely not. *Hospice of the Rapidan* patients continue to receive excellent medical care, including continuing care from their own doctor, and all needed medications and medical equipment, but the goal shifts to pain and symptom management instead of curative care. The patient's comfort and quality of life are the treatment objectives instead of curing the underlying illness. In

addition, hospice provides social, emotional and spiritual support to help the patient and his or her loved ones learn how to talk about the difficult issues that arise at end-of-life, help facilitate resolution of lingering communication issues, and support caregivers.

We welcome any questions concerning hospice care or end-of-life issues. Questions may be emailed to us at hospiceqa@hotr.org or mailed to us at: *Hospice of the Rapidan*, Hospice Q&A, P.O. Box 1715 Culpeper, Virginia 22701

Letter From the Executive Director



Kathy Clements

Coming home. The notion inspires a range of feelings. Warmth, being loved, anticipation, feeling comfortable, being at ease. Think of an old blanket or a favorite sofa and you know what I mean. For many of us the old adage "home is where the heart is" rings quite true. Home is where we love to be.

Research by the National Hospice Foundation consistently shows that 80% of Americans would prefer to die in their own home if they had a choice. So it seems the pull of "home" is particularly strong as we look to the end of our lives. In our community, *Hospice of the Rapidan* seeks to honor the wishes of many patients and families by making home a place where the last days of one's life can be lived out in comfort, with dignity, and surrounded by love in that most familiar setting.

As the Executive Director of *Hospice of the Rapidan* I have been part of this process of coming home for the final journey many times. This is a unique and often fearful time for our patients and their families. Our care is

focused on making this a time each patient and loved one will consider their own, and the comfort of home contributes greatly to a sense of peace and well being. It is an honor for our staff and volunteers to know that many of our readers have allowed us into their homes and lives at such a difficult time, and that our care makes such a difference.

We are also aware that many hospice patients either live alone or with a frail caregiver. These patients often need more care than Medicare or managed care typically covers. *Hospice of the Rapidan* is committed to meeting the needs of these patients so everyone can spend their final weeks at home in comfort and with dignity. The generosity of our supporters is what makes this possible, so with your help, our dedicated staff and volunteers do everything we can for every patient when they need us the most.

Home is more than a place. It is all the sights, smells, sounds and memories everyone needs so very much as they face the end of their lives. For most of our patients, it is not only where they want to be, it's where they belong.

Kathy Clements, RN, CHPN

Volunteer Profile - Sue Hurt Shifflett



Sue Shifflett helping a young man release a butterfly

When I retired two years ago, I knew one of the things I wanted to become involved in was hospice. When I told people about this, a common response was something akin to "that's very nice, but I could never do that even though I'd like to." I still often get the same reaction today. My response, then and now, is always the same: if you don't

feel you would be comfortable as a patient volunteer, there are many other ways that you can help, including office assistance, fundraising and events, community outreach, and more. If everyone I've said that to was to volunteer with us, we'd be pleasantly overwhelmed!

Although I had no direct contact with hospice before I began volunteering, I was interested in it because I have lost many friends and relatives to terminal illnesses. I had also heard many good things about hospice care (all of which I've found to be true) and wanted to learn more about it.

In the past two years, I've been involved in many facets of hospice volunteerism and have found them all to be rewarding. The appreciation shown by patients and their families for our services is very gratifying. On many occasions, when I leave a patient's home, I'm in a better frame of mind than when I arrived. The fact that these patients are terminally ill does not affect their personality nor their uniqueness.

Hospice of the Rapidan's community outreach activities present opportunities to answer questions and explain what hospice really is to people. This is essential as so many misunderstand hospice and don't know how much good it can do for so many. Activities such as the yearly art show, the butterfly release and the Christmas tree lighting offer many chances to meet with people, talk about hospice (and *Hospice of the Rapidan*), and contribute to the hospice mission.

In short, the decision I made two years ago to volunteer with *Hospice of the Rapidan* has proven to be the right one for me, and I suspect others would find it as fulfilling as I have.

Redskins Raffle Ticket Winners

Betty Reedy of Amisville and John Kelly of Culpeper were the two lucky winners of this year's Redskins ticket raffle, each receiving four tickets on the 40-yard line, nine rows behind the Redskins bench to the home game of their choice. Nancy, Claire and Ann drew the two winning tickets and join all of us in congratulating Betty, John and their fortunate friends!

This is the 8th year Nancy, Claire and Ann have generously donated these tickets and we are sincerely grateful for their support. This is their way of honoring the difference hospice made to a dear friend of theirs who passed away 8 years ago. We also thank the many volunteers, staff members, and the folks at Black Wolf Coffee and The Shoppes of Mountainwood who helped sell raffle tickets throughout the summer and the many local merchants who allowed us to sell tickets on their

property. The raffle raised more than \$5,000 which will help us provide the finest hospice care possible to all who need it in our area regardless of their ability to pay.



Claire, Nancy and Ann drawing a winning ticket



Redskins raffle ticket winner Betty Reedy, a very loyal fan!

Area Businesses Support Hospice of the Rapidan

A number of businesses in the counties we serve support us by providing their services at no charge. We appreciate "in kind" donations as they reduce our costs, which helps us provide the best possible end-of-life care and grief support to all who need it in our area. We would like to thank Document Destruction of Virginia, located in Ruckersville, for such a donation. This company helps us to destroy obsolete patient records in a way that ensures patients' privacy and compliance with strict government regulations. Businesses interested in learning more about making in kind gifts of their goods or services should contact Nancy Walbridge at 540-825-4840 or at nwalbridge@hotr.org.

From the Community Relations Director



Nancy Walbridge

When I left the business world to join *Hospice of the Rapidan* almost a year ago, one of the attractions was the idea of being part of an organization that always put the interests of its patients first. After coming aboard, it was a pleasure to discover how well the hospice community is organized to ensure the needs of each patient are met.

I have also found that most people do not understand there are different kinds of hospices and what each type offers. Just as different patients have different needs, different kinds of hospices offer different services. As not-for-profit organizations, most of the hospices serving our area stand willing to refer patients to a provider that can best meet their needs. After years in the competitive business world, this kind of cooperation is very appealing to me.

In our area there are medical hospices, all volunteer hospice support organizations, and hospices that are part of area hospitals. Medical hospices, like *Hospice of the Rapidan*, provide the full range of care that most patients expect and need, including medical, psychosocial, emotional, spiritual and grief support. Hospice support organizations fill a different need.

They can serve patients who do not yet qualify for hospice or who wish to continue their curative therapy, but they do not provide any medical care, including pain and symptom management. Hospital affiliated hospices are well positioned to care for patients with special medical needs unrelated to their terminal illness.

Here at *Hospice of the Rapidan*, one of the things we do when a patient is first referred to us (or reaches out to us directly) is to evaluate which type of hospice best suits his or her needs. When appropriate, we recommend a different kind of hospice. Similarly, other hospices refer patients to us when indicated. For example, when a patient receiving care from a hospice support organization needs medical care to manage their pain or symptoms, they are referred to a medical hospice like *Hospice of the Rapidan*.

This kind of cooperation is a breath of fresh air to someone like me who has spent her career in the competitive business world. *Hospice of the Rapidan* understands that people are sometimes confused about the difference between hospices, so we welcome your calls and are pleased to help people understand all their options.

Nancy Walbridge
Community Relations Director