

Companion

Summer 2006

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

Virginia Licensed, Medicare & Medicaid Certified

Serving the counties and citizens of Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Madison and Rappahannock

P.O. Box 1715
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www.hotr.org

Founded 1983

Hospice of the Rapidan's **First Golf Tournament A Shining Success**

The 5th Annual Lions Club Golf Invitational, held May 22nd at the Country Club of Culpeper, raised over \$15,000 to benefit the Lions Club and *Hospice of the Rapidan*.

This was *Hospice of the Rapidan's* first year participating in this terrific event, which is sponsored by the Culpeper Host Lions Club. The number of golfers, sponsors and volunteers increased dramatically from prior years, due in large part to the involvement of *Hospice of the Rapidan*.



The RFS Team of Warrenton playing their best game ever

subscribed...112 golfers representing more than 20 regional businesses participated. As usual, only a few played below par golf, but everyone had above par fun.

Once the scores were tabulated, the foursome of Win Carithers, Lou Ann Carithers, Charlie Pence, and Rick Boswell of Culpeper won the tournament, which was played in captain's choice format. The team of Ken Born Sr., Ken Born Jr., Dick Opal, and Carlos Montenegro of Warrenton representing Born Commercial took second place and the team of Phil Ferlazzo, Mark Ferlazzo, Jeff Ferlazzo, and Lucio Tonizzo Culpeper won the third place prize.

Everything about the day was outstanding. The weather was perfect, the course was in great shape, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day while helping to raise funds for our two worthy organizations. Building on the success of prior Lions Club tournaments and the enthusiasm of *Hospice of the Rapidan* supporters, the event was over-

Many people and area companies contributed to the success of the tournament. Four *Hospice of the Rapidan* volunteers helped keep things running smoothly on tournament day, led by Reid Anderson who also serves as President of the Culpeper Host Lions Club. Many businesses in our area also

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Join us at one or more of the following events!

September

Saturday 2nd, 2006

Taste of the Mountains

9:00am-5:00pm rain or shine
Main Street, Madison

A street festival celebrating our mountain heritage, stop by and visit our booth.

Tuesday 5th, 2006

Washington Redskins Raffle Drawing

3:00pm
Hospice of the Rapidan
1200 Sunset Lane, Suite 2320, Culpeper

Saturday 10th, 2006

Orange Street Festival

9:00am-5:00pm rain or shine
Main Street, Orange
Stop by and visit our booth.

November

Wednesday 29th, 2006

Tree of Lights Celebration

6:30 PM
Hospice of the Rapidan
1200 Sunset Lane, Culpeper, VA
Light refreshments will be provided

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

Golf Tournament *continued from pg 1*

participated either by buying sponsorships or providing goods and services which helped ensure the success of the tournament. All the sponsors are listed below (our sincere apologies if we missed anyone). Each of them has been generous in their support of *Hospice of the Rapidan*, so we ask you to keep them in mind.

We would like to recognize certain sponsors for their generosity. Herman Neece of Minuteman Press in Warrenton donated all the printed materials for the tournament. Patty Allen of KPR Signs, Inc. of Catlett donated the embroidery on the golf towels. Steve Raggio of Raggio Advertising Products donated the tournament bags and Jared Dean of Superior One Hour Heating and Air Conditioning donated golf balls and tees for the participants.

Safeway, FoodLion, Giant Food Stores also generously supported the tournament with refreshments. We extend our



Tournament winners Win & Lou Ann Carithers, Charlie Pence, and Rick Boswell of Culpeper

heartfelt thanks to the many regional inns, B&B's, wineries, restaurants, and other businesses that gave generously *continued page 5*

Hospice of the Rapidan & the Culpeper Host Lions Club 2006 Golf Tournament Sponsors

Silver Hope and Service Sponsor

Born Commercial, LLC
Minuteman Press

Hospice Benefactor Sponsor

Battlefield Ford
Chrysler of Culpeper
Renee Carisio-Farber, M.D., PC
KPR Signs and Embroidery
Marshall National Bank
Merchants Grocery Co., Inc.
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative
Second Bank and Trust
Trigon Development
Virginia Commonwealth Trust Co.

Lions Patron Sponsor

Accent Travel
BB&T
CINTAS, The Uniform People
Culpeper Pharmacy
Culpeper Regional Hospital
GRC Enterprises, Inc.
Maloney and Ward Insurance
Stafford Roofing and Siding Co., INC
The Inn at Meander
Wilderness Medical Practice, Dr. Jerry Stubbe

Hole Sponsors

Best Western Culpeper Inn
Bingham & Taylor Corporation
Shannon Butler, DDS
Capital Assets Financial
Cherry Street Building Supply
Copy Right, Inc.
Culpeper Human Services
Culpeper Wood Preservers
ERA Holden Group Realtors, Inc.
Edward Jones, Deborah Koller
Lawrence Finkel, .D., PC
Found & Sons Funeral Chapels
Gayheart Brothers, LLC
Howard and Lindsay
William C. Humphrey, III
Its About Thyme
Jefferson Homebuilders
Mama Mai Family restaurant
Middleton Inn
Peterson Jewelers
Reynolds Pontiac Caddillac GMC Subaru
Rosson-Troilo Motor Co., Inc.
Delegate Ed Scott
Solutions Recruiting Inc.
Wachovia Corporation
Weichert Realtors, Diana Feldman
Windstar Technologies, Inc.
Young, Nicholas, Branner & Phillips

Celebrating Our Volunteers

Hospice of the Rapidan held its annual volunteer awards luncheon on April 6th at The Best Western Culpeper Inn. The event honored the many friends and neighbors from Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties who contribute their time and energy to helping our patients and staff. The luncheon recognized that *Hospice of the Rapidan* is a special community in which volunteers play a crucial role. It was our opportunity to say, "Thank you" to all those who help with our vital mission, and was a perfect "10" for all who attended.

At *Hospice of the Rapidan* volunteers assist with everything from patient support and comforting families to assistance with events, answering phones, stuffing envelopes and other office support. Few volunteer opportunities offer the satisfaction and spiritual rewards that working with hospice patients provides. Many volunteers have commented that over the years offering a little of their time to help *Hospice of the Rapidan* turned out to be more gratifying than they expected.

This year's luncheon was timed to coincide with National Volunteer Week. In his proclamation dedicating National Volunteer Week for 2006, President Bush declared "Throughout our country, volunteers make America stronger and better by reaching out to help their neighbors in need. During National Volunteer Week, we recognize the millions of individuals who dedicate their time, talents, and energy to making a difference in the lives of others and reaffirm our commitment to supporting these soldiers in the armies of compassion." *Hospice of the Rapidan* followed President Bush's lead by honoring those who choose to make a difference in the lives of others. At the luncheon Executive Director Kathy Clements thanked the many volunteers who make it possible for *Hospice of the Rapidan* to serve the needs of terminally ill patients and their families so effectively.



Sue Hurt Shifflett accepting the Volunteer of the Year Award from last Year's Recipient, Mollie McMahon

A number of volunteers were recognized with awards for their dedication and service during the past year. *Hospice of the Rapidan's* 2006 Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Sue Hurt Shifflett, a life long resident of Orange County. While many volunteers were very generous with their time, Sue's generosity was extraordinary, as was the range of services she provided during the year. She has been checking audiotapes in and out at the county library for patients, making cookies whenever there is a need and

helping to organize events. She took on the time consuming project of organizing *Hospice of the Rapidan's* scrapbook of pictures and articles with great success. Sue even delegated well, sending her husband to events when it was difficult for her to attend. Presenting the award, Volunteer Coordinator Ruth Pavlik noted how impressed she was with Sue's contributions this past year. Making this selection isn't an easy one. All of our volunteers are important to us and make a big difference in our patients' lives.

Libby Born of Warrenton received the Joella Bradshaw Rookie Volunteer Award. She was recognized for providing extraordinary care for a patient by visiting 2-3 times per week, for assisting with the training of new volunteers and for attending various seminars and reading a number of books on hospice care. Patients, staff and fellow volunteers alike acknowledged Libby's extraordinary dedication.

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Volunteer Service Awards

10 Years

Susan Hoyt
Beth Levick
Ward Reiss

5 Years

Mandy Morris
Ralph Smith
Bruce VanNess
Edie Walusek
Frank Walusek

3 Years

Dawn Bartlett
Jean Cantner
Melanie Chambers
Sunithi Gnanadoss
Jean Hagarty
John Hagarty
Wistie Jobe
Donna Josaitis
Theresa Knight
Mary Ann Mangum
Hilary Parker
Bertha Scholten
Barbara Sheridan
Tammy Singh
Yvonne Smuts

100 Hours of Service in 2005

Sue Hurt Shifflett
Bill Corddy
Ruth Downs

1000 Miles in 2005

Bill Corddy
Duke Hagedorn
Nancy Dingle
Libby Born
Ruth Downs
Ward Reiss
Beverly Christiana
Sue Hurt Shifflett

Archie Edwards Stirs It Up to Benefit *Hospice of the Rapidan*

An unusual and thoroughly enjoyable event hosted at the beautiful Claire's At The Depot restaurant in Warrenton raised over \$500 for *Hospice of the Rapidan*. In late April Archie Edwards of Long and Foster Real Estate mixed martinis, popped corks, made spicy margaritas and spilled—I mean poured drinks as “Guest Bartender” at Claire's and all his tips were donated to help support our programs.



Claire Lamborne and Archie Edwards serving up donations

Claire Lamborne, proprietor of Claire's At The Depot, invites business and community leaders to “work” as guest bartenders for the benefit of local organizations on most Wednesday nights. A friend suggested the idea to her a year ago, and Claire liked it as a way to help support local charities

which, she said, “are so vital to our communities.” The tips earned by guest bartenders are donated to benefit organizations chosen by them, and

Hospice of the Rapidan is honored to have been selected by Archie. As he said that night, “You folks do wonderful work and I couldn't think of a better organization to help.”

The many friends of both Archie and *Hospice of the Rapidan* who were at Claire's that evening were very generous. In addition to enjoying some fine food, atmosphere, and creative libations mixed by Archie, they opened their hearts and wallets to benefit our patients. We are grateful to all of you who stopped by, and especially to Claire and Archie.

Golf Tournament Gifts

Chateau DuReaux Wine Rack
Country Café
Country Cookin
Culpeper Town Police
Dairy Queen
Foster Harris House
Golds Gym
Gray Ghost Vineyards
Hopkins Ordinary B&B
Knakal's
Lucio's Restaurant
Luigi's Restaurant
Lynne Dice, Massage Therapist
Mama Mai
Meadows Farms Golf Course
Middleton Inn
Oasis Winery
Orioles/Yankees Tickets, compliments, Chris Neal
New Dimensions Serving Platter
Niko's Grill and Bar
Pete's Pizza
Rappahannock Cellars
Rite-Aid
Ruby Tuesday's
Sharp Rock Vineyards
South Wales Golf Course
State Farm Insurance, John Willet
Subway

Gifts Of Music

Life is an amazing journey. Even though I have traveled many miles in my 50 plus years, I'm still sometimes surprised at what I find around the next bend in the road. One of the most rewarding surprises has been my experience volunteering for *Hospice of the Rapidan*.

I grew up in Orange County; have lived in North Carolina, New Orleans and San Antonio; traveled in South America and Europe; and have now come full circle back to Virginia. During my twenties I worked as a psychiatric attendant and group therapist. Then I earned my Registered Music Therapist credential and had a private practice as a music therapist in San Antonio.

In 1993 I returned to Orange to help my parents through their last years. Their passing marked the end of one phase and the beginning of another. I wanted to get back to music therapy in a low key way, and when I learned about *Hospice of the Rapidan* I got in touch and in 2005 trained as a volunteer. I now provide music therapy for hospice patients in their homes.

Simply making a regular visit of any nature to a hospice patient is usually a welcome and much appreciated event. For them it's a change of pace, an act of fellowship, and an antidote to the sense of isolation that can develop. I started out using a guitar and singing hymns, and then branched out into

a few old standards. Lately I've been taking along an alto flute for variety.

Music helps people feel alive and often even sedated patients can have moments of alertness and pleasure rocking or swaying to music. Softly singing along or tapping a toe re-engages patients with the world and with the delights of life. The emotional power of music is well known. For patients with a musical background, music therapy can lead to some recovery of musical skills that may have languished. For others this kind of activity can be highly invigorating, as it opens a new window at a time in their life when other doors are closing.

Music can also have spiritual impact for many people. Those who have sung hymns all their lives have a ready store of spiritual wisdom to draw upon either by simply listening or singing along. Many of the well-known hymns and spirituals speak directly to the situation of hospice patients and their families.

My experience as a volunteer with *Hospice of the Rapidan* has been very rewarding. On a personal level, it has been a wonderful way to do a little something for the community where I so enjoyed growing up. As a music therapist, it has given me an even deeper appreciation of the healing gifts of music.

Lyle Sanford

A Hospice Story

Dear Ms. Clements:

Today I received your letter and survey. When I started to answer the questions on the survey, I realized that I really couldn't answer these questions as well as some others since my husband was only with Hospice for 4 days before he died. However, I am able to make some other observations that I hope will take the place of the questionnaire.

At our first meeting with Debbi Borgstrom, I realized that your organization was the right choice for my husband and me. I was so overwhelmed with the extent of the services that you offered that I could hardly believe my ears. But best of all, you gave my husband hope—for the first time in many, many months. In fact after Debbi left he told me how much he was looking forward to working with your staff. He was truly happy to know that someone would be there just for him. Thank you Debbi, for doing that for him.

I want to mention Robin Johnson, also. I first met Robin at Overlook. Just recently she called me to tell me of the services you offer those left behind. I also received some literature in the mail. It was so comforting to think that we still had a connection. She also invited me to a Hospice gathering where John's name will be mentioned. Thank you, Robin, for doing this for me.

I also spoke to another Hospice member who called to arrange volunteer visits for John. I'm sorry I can't remember the name, but thanks to her also.

Hope this letter will suffice. You are a member of a wonderful organization. Thank you for your efforts on John's behalf.

Most Sincerely,
M. R.

Golf Tournament *continued from pg 2*

to this event. Golfers who won the prizes you donated are certainly delighted and all participants, golfers and sponsors alike, can also take pleasure in knowing they are helping two admirable organizations.

Finally we would like to thank photographer Tony Christiana of Christiana & Piacesi in Catlett. If you visit his website at www.christianastudios.com and log in with the user name "hospice" you will see over 100 photos taken by Tony on the day of the tournament. These photos are beautifully cap-

tured memories, and Tony has graciously offered them to participants free of charge. Thank you Tony for your generosity, the pictures truly tell the story!



The Stafford Roofing Company Team, representing Stafford and Fauquier Counties

We are already at work planning the 2007 tournament. We would love to hear from people interested in volunteering to help next spring and from companies interested in major sponsorships. And of course, be alert for the announcement of next year's date. We had to turn away some golfers this year and we certainly don't want that to happen to you in 2007!



Nancy Walbridge humbly accepting the prize for worst score from Rich Conwell, Country Club of Culpeper's golf pro

Celebrating *continued from pg 3*



Libby Born accepting the Joella Bradshaw Rookie Volunteer Award from Ruth Pavlik, Hospice of the Rapidan's Volunteer Coordinator

This award is named for Joella Bradshaw who volunteered for *Hospice of the Rapidan* from 1987 to 2002, often serving several families at once, and who also served on its Board of Directors.

Also honored were those who have shown exemplary service over the years. Susan Hoyt and Ward Reiss received awards for 10 years of service. Ralph Smith, and Edie and Frank Walusek were honored for 5 years of service and fifteen other volunteers were recognized for at least three years of service. Three volunteers served 100 or more hours in the past year and eight volunteers drove over 1,000 miles caring for patients and families. Ordinary people making extraordinary efforts to help others are what volunteering is all about.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

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

Broaching The Subject Of Hospice Care

How do we, as physicians, convey hope to our patients at the end of their lives? While the end of life is, and should be, as meaningful and spiritual as the beginning, patients and families understandably react to it with fear and sadness.

At the conclusion of my residency, as I became a rural physician, I embraced the concept of hospice as a valuable resource for my patients and their families. Hospice brings in a team of caring professionals to take family members and the patient by the hand, to lead them carefully through the sometimes complex healthcare maze, and enables all of us, as clinicians, to work towards a common goal: the dignified comfort of our patient. In those final months, each patient and family member has someone to turn to, to talk with, and to share small joys with. We, as doctors, always learn from each patient, but we can also learn from the expertise of knowledgeable hospice teams.

My career was already under way when the hospice movement gained traction in the 1980s and 90s. Learning how best to serve a dying patient rather than trying to cure him or her was a new skill. Physicians have come a long way since then, as evidenced by the emerging specialty in palliative care.

When asked to write for this edition of *Companion*, I paused to reflect on what I have learned about helping patients during this meaningful time of their lives. First, there is no perfect paradigm for how to best address the range of issues surrounding end-of-life. I have found flexibility and listening to be the most effective skills. Social, cultural and faith-based considerations are important considera-

tions for determining when the moment is right to suggest hospice.

If you are not comfortable leading patients to hospice ask another professional to help you. But do not ignore the need for palliative and supportive end-of-life care. Ask a palliative professional or hospice staff to guide you. They will!

My discussion always starts with determining family and patient expectations. While many understand that death is natural and want comfort, support and dignity, others want every procedure exhausted before accepting the imminence of death. I have generally found it best to tailor my recommendations to meet these expectations, within reasonable limits. Once the imminence of death is accepted by the patient and loved ones, clinical priorities shift to assuring a dignified, spiritual and comfortable transition.

This is when you can have the most impact. Instead of saying “There is nothing more we can do,” consider “This is how we can make your loved one comfortable and their remaining time meaningful.” Caring and listening become valuable clinical skills. For many, the spiritual world is crucial, for in belief lies hope. Encourage such patients to speak about their beliefs. As much as anything else, dignity comes from the patient knowing they are being listened to.

I have found hospice to be a valuable clinical tool as patients face the end of their lives. I have learned that a simple touch from a loved one, music, massage or prayer soothes a patient more than one can imagine.

Understanding their death will be painless lessens their anxiety, and knowing they will be cared for attentively and with dignity every day they are alive brings a sense of peace that defines hospice care.

Dr. Randolph and Mrs. Caroline Merrick

Thank-you Lee Ann...from a grateful family

Members of the hospice care team often receive letters of thanks from family members of patients they have helped care for. We like to share some of these letters from time to time in the hope they might inspire you the way they inspire us. Here is a very kind note one of our nurses received recently, which is re-printed with the permission of the family.

Dear Lee Ann,

Thank you so very much for everything you did for my mother and my family. You were always so supportive with both information and emotional support. You always entered our home up beat with concern for our needs, even in the middle of the night.

The work you do is truly a very special calling. You allowed my mother to die with dignity and as comfortably as possible. You allowed me to share the final moments and days of my mothers' life with her. I wasn't sure how I would feel having my mother die in my home. I know it was the right thing to do and my responsibility. Now I know it was my honor and probably the most intimate moment I have ever had.

Thank you for allowing me the time to share with her.

*Most Sincerely,
Christy W.*

Letter From the Director



Kathy Clements

help our patients. I am pleased to use this column to answer these questions.

Your contributions provide more direct patient benefits than most people realize. First and foremost, your contributions make it possible for *Hospice of the Rapidan* to serve the hospice care needs of everyone in Culpeper, Fauquier, Orange, Madison and Rappahannock Counties regardless of their ability to pay. This is a core component of our mission and would not be possible without your continuing support.

Contributions also enable us to provide comprehensive grief support services, none of the costs of which are

In every issue of *Companion*, and several times a year through letters and other appeals, we ask you to help support the vital work of *Hospice of the Rapidan* by making a tax-deductible donation. From time to time people who care about our organization ask why we need donations when many of our services are covered by Medicare and other health insurance plans. Others are curious how their contributions

covered by Medicare or other insurance programs. Serving the needs of surviving family members is central to our concept of comprehensive hospice care.

Your support also enables *Hospice of the Rapidan* to have the flexibility to meet the individual needs of each patient and family at the time they need it most. Medicare, which covers more than 85% of hospice patients, sets the amount they pay based on a minimum level of service. *Hospice of the Rapidan* is committed to doing everything reasonable to meet the needs of our patients and their families, which often involves services beyond those contemplated by the Medicare formulas. Our patients and their families depend on the generosity of the friends and supporters of *Hospice of the Rapidan* to make this possible.

I urge you to keep all this in mind next time you receive a letter from us asking for your help. Few organizations offer donors the opportunity to have their gifts mean so much to those in need as does *Hospice of the Rapidan*. My staff and I welcome the opportunity to discuss how your support of *Hospice of the Rapidan* can help ensure that people in our area continue to receive the best, most compassionate and dignified hospice care available.

Kathy Clements, RN, CHPN

Hospice of the Rapidan Employee Luncheon “Employs a Little Humor”



Executive Director Kathy Clements “hamming” it up with comedienne Allie Bowling

Hospice of the Rapidan recognized and thanked its dedicated staff at the annual employee luncheon on May 11th at the Country Club of Culpeper. Addressing the assembled team, Neil Mairs, President of the Board of Directors, thanked all the employees for their commitment to our mission and devotion to serving others. He recognized that working for a not-for-profit organization like

Hospice of the Rapidan is not for everyone—it requires people with a deep interest in helping others and for whom service is a calling. He described the staff as a team that has set an extraordinary standard of care, compassion, and excellence.

Executive Director Kathy Clements also addressed the staff, crediting them with bringing great comfort to patients and families through their professionalism and dedication. “Hospice care can never be merely adequate. By definition it must be defined by extraordinary care at all times, and that requires extraordinary people like you. We simply couldn’t do our job without your genuine caring, hard work, and belief in our mission.”

Betsy Tuttle one of our Registered Nurses, was recognized for 10 years of service with *Hospice of the Rapidan*. Her name now is proudly displayed on the 10-years of employment plaque in the lobby. Thank you Betsy for your years of dedication to *Hospice of the Rapidan*. Another nurse, Debbi Borgstrom who has been out on maternity leave, joined us with her new baby boy, Nathaniel. Having a new life in our midst invigorated the staff and smiles filled the room!

Following a delightful meal, the staff was treated to the talents and humor of Allie Bowling, business speaker and comedienne. Allie helped everyone see the day to day challenges they face through the distorted lens of humor. She served helpful hints with a large portion of laughter that had many in the room in stitches. As the many people in the room with medical training instantly recognized, it was just what the doctor ordered!



A very happy Hospice of the Rapidan Team

Win Redskins Tickets!

Do you love Redskins football but don't have tickets? How would you like four premium seats 9 rows behind the Redskins' bench on the 40-yard line plus a reserved parking space for the home game of your choice? Well, through the extraordinary generosity of long time *Hospice of the Rapidan* supporters Nancy Garrett, Anne Mattingly and Claire Saint Jacques, we are thrilled to have two sets of these coveted tickets to raffle for two lucky winners!

Nancy, Ann and Claire's generosity is extraordinary. This is the 8th year they have offered these seats to help us raise funds to support the work of *Hospice of the Rapidan*. A dear friend of theirs, Jesse Barton received hospice care years ago and this is their way of acknowledging the difference that care made.

Raffle tickets are \$10 each or three for \$25. They may be purchased by mailing in the order enclosed with this issue of *Companion*, by phone at 540.825.4840, online at www.hotr.org,

at our office, or from many of our staff and volunteers who carry ticket books with them this summer. Winners will be drawn on September 5th at *Hospice of the Rapidan's* offices. Winners need not be present to win, but be sure your name and phone number are legible on your entry! The first winner drawn may choose from any home game of the 2006-2007 season, and the second winner drawn may select from the remaining games.

As always, proceeds from this raffle will help support the many crucial

services we provide that are not covered by Medicare or insurance, including *Hospice of the Rapidan's* program of grief care for surviving family and loved ones and our commitment to provide high quality hospice care to all who need it in Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock counties who need it regardless of their ability to pay. It is gifts like these and other contributions that make it possible for us to continue to provide the high quality hospice care our families deserve.

Good luck!



HOSPICE OF THE RAPIDAN

2006 Redskins Ticket Raffle

Two First Prizes—4 premium tickets on the 40 yardline, 9 rows behind the Redskin's bench plus reserved parking for the home game of your choice
(First ticket drawn gets first choice)

\$10 per ticket or 3 tickets for \$25
Drawing September 5, 2006

Good luck and thank you for your support!



From the Community Relations Director



Nancy Walbridge

I have been part of the *Hospice of the Rapidan* team for a little over half a year now, and without question this is the most satisfying job of my career. It's not the work I do...it's the work WE do. Bringing care, compassion and dignity into patients' homes as they confront the end of their lives is a high calling. While it is our nurses, social workers, chaplain and volunteers who are on the front lines, my role of making

sure *Hospice of the Rapidan* is an active member of the communities we serve is more fulfilling than I ever imagined.

I knew little about hospice before I inquired about this position, and I suspect I am not alone in this. When my mother was near the end of her life seven years ago our family made the decision to bring her home so she could spend her final days in familiar surroundings with those she loved nearby. She only had one day under hospice care, and we all certainly could have benefited from accessing the caring guidance of an experienced hospice team several weeks earlier.

A big part of my role here at *Hospice of the Rapidan* is to share what we do to the communities we serve. I am also delighted to represent *Hospice of the Rapidan* in civic and other organizations that serve our communities in other ways. Publishing *Companion* is one of the ways I help get the hospice message to those who may need it. In the past few months I have had the opportunity to share the hospice story with individuals, groups, the health care community, area newspapers, and even Senator George Allen and Congressman Eric Cantor. Wherever I go I find people are interested in learning more about hospice care, which suggests how vital our work truly is.

A common thread in almost all the stories I hear from patients and families is discovery of moments of joy while memories and love are shared at home. Helping people discover how to smile under these circumstances is the magical part of hospice care. Yes, death is scary. Being able to face it with courage, compassion and dignity is the blessing hospice provides. Helping more people to know this makes me smile every day.

Nancy Walbridge
Community Relations Director