

The Success of the Dreamcatcher Dinner & Auction

Our 14th annual Dreamcatcher Dinner and Auction was held at Galley Beach on Sunday, June 17th - a beautiful evening and our highest attendance yet!

Many, many thanks go to all of the "Dreamcatcher" volunteers from the community as well as our Trustees who helped to make this a tremendous evening for all, and to our Honorary Chairpersons, Peter and Sarah Monaco, for their generosity and loyal support over the past several years. We wholeheartedly thank the event Underwriters and Sponsors whose loyal support is so important to our financial success.

Each year a table of ten is sponsored and reserved for our dedicated Hospice volunteers; we once again thank Great Point Properties for making this year's Angel Table possible.

A new item at this year's auction was an amazing collaboration of several island landscape companies and the students of the Nantucket New School who will be planting hundreds of daffodil bulbs along the Milestone Road in honor of Hospice and all that it means to our community. Yellow "daffodil cards", each with a value of \$250, were available to all who attended the auction and happily a sea of yellow cards was seen when Raphael introduced this auction item raising a total of \$21,500 for Hospice.

A traditional highlight of the evening is Raphael Osona's signature auction item, the Memorial Sunset. Rafael asked for donations for the sunset in memory of a loved one; the generosity and emotion that was expressed by each bidder as they dedicated their donation was heartwarming. There were 15 "sunset" bidders who donated a total of \$16,000.

After teasing about retirement, Raphael asked for donations of \$500 dedicated to the Hospice volunteers who work so hard during the year- this was great fun...30 bidders raised \$15,000.

For the 3rd year, we set aside one of our live auction offerings and dedicated the income to our sister hospice in Cradock, South Africa which, through our recent donations, has become a fully independent hospice.

Again we thank the Nantucket community, not only those who attend but also all of our local businesses who year after year generously donate many of our wonderful auction items and in-kind services in support of our main fundraising event. The evening was superb and the auction was a great success.

Marla Ceely Lamb Cancer Transportation Fund

Thanks once again to the dedication and work of Marla's family and friends and to the generosity of the people of the community, the Marla Lamb Fund continues to thrive and serve over 60 people a year. The success of the annual Mother's Day Dinner & Auction, the calendar fundraiser organized and produced by Marla's daughter, Meredith, as well as the many memorial gifts that were given throughout the year, keep this valuable fund supported. So many people express their appreciation for how much the fund benefits the community and continue to remember it for special projects and events. We are very grateful to all who've contributed and, of course, to Marla's family and friends! It is a great tribute to Marla.

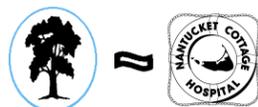
We would like to express sincere thanks to Cape Air/Nantucket Airlines, Island Airlines, the HyLine, and Marine Lumber, for all of their assistance with the transportation needs of our patients. And as always, we sincerely thank those families who have directed that memorial contributions be made to Hospice Care of Nantucket Foundation or to the Marla Ceely Lamb Fund. Because of these donations, we are able to continue to provide serves free of charge.

Hospice Care of Nantucket Foundation

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Hospice Care of Nantucket Foundation is a not-for-profit tax exempt public charity.



A Partnership in Caring

Funded by the Hospice Care of Nantucket Foundation, the hospice program is operated as a department of the Nantucket Cottage Hospital. Hospice is a specialized health care program, dedicated to providing excellent physical, psychological, social, and spiritual care to persons with life-threatening illness and their families.



Hospice Currents

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Annual Report of Hospice Director Charlene Thurston, RN, ANP

As we complete another year, we look back and see that our services have continued to grow and evolve, and, we hope, help our patients more and more deeply. During this time, we've provided full hospice services to 25 terminally ill patients during their last phase of life, palliative care services to 26 clients in earlier stages of illness, caregiver support services to 28 caregivers, and bereavement support to 30 families. Through our Tapestries Program, 4 children and their parents attended the groups, while several others were helped through individual and/or group sessions with parents, teachers, grandparents, and friends. Through this program we also work with school and friend communities to help children and families who are affected by losses of people close to them. Our patient care volunteers provided 350 hours of service, both one on one, and in our Tapestries Program.

We've participated in two international efforts over the past year. Last October, I had the good fortune of serving as a member of the People to People Ambassadors Program's delegation on hospice and palliative care to China and Tibet. As I've reported before, it was a wonderful opportunity, made possible by a special gift, and highlighted the importance of blending psychological, spiritual, and physical care through the use of western medicine, psychosocial and spiritual support, and complementary therapies. We also have continued our efforts to help Cradock Hospice in South Africa, through on-going e-mail correspondence and through a financial gift, from a special item at our Dreamcatcher Auction, specifically identified for this purpose. Through the efforts of our Board Member, Sandy Knox-Johnston, we have facilitated linking Direct Relief International with the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa and they are now planning to extend their support of medications and supplies to hospices throughout Africa.



Tree of Remembrance Service



The annual memorial service, will be held this year on Sunday, November 18th, at 4PM, in the gazebo garden of the Jared Coffin House. As we share music and companionship during a brief ceremony, placing scallop shell ornaments with names of those we wish to memorialize on the tree, we find a place, at the start of the holiday season, in which to honor and remember loved ones who have died. After the service, we will gather for refreshments in the Living Room of the Jared Coffin House.

All members of the community are welcome to participate in this very special event. Scallop shell ornaments will be provided, but other weather-proof ornaments are welcome as well. We hope you'll join us.

Regarding educational opportunities, we supported professional development for staff from other departments and agencies. For example, we sponsored 3 staff members from Our Island Home and Hospice to the annual New England Hospice & Palliative Care Conference, and more recently, 7 staff members from the hospital, Visiting Nurses, Our Island Home, and Hospice to attend a day-long seminar on Alzheimer's Disease offered here on the island.

An area of our work that has grown significantly over the past year has been our palliative care service for persons in early, often even curable, stages of life threatening illness. As we've stated so often, our hospice is very different from most others, in that we focus not only on the needs of the terminally ill, but also on the needs of persons living with any stage of a serious illness. For several years, we've been trying to encourage persons with early stages of illness to access our services, which could greatly enhance their well-being, but patients often are fearful, thinking that to use services of a hospice program, implies that they are terminally ill. This year, we have finally seen a substantial increase in the number of clients in this category, and welcome the opportunity to serve them. A combination of educational information, emotional support, practical assistance and nurturing body-centered therapies like massage or yoga, has been very helpful in optimizing well-being and the opportunity for whole person healing. This level of integrating care of mind, body, spirit

is, in our opinion, key to truly serving a person with illness well.

The upcoming year will be an interesting time of transition for the hospital with a new CEO and its new affiliation with Massachusetts General Hospital. It will remain to be seen how these changes will affect Hospice. We give sincere thanks to Lucille Giddings, as she leaves the hospital, for her support and good stewardship over the past eleven years.

As always, we acknowledge our colleagues in other hospital departments and community agencies, with whom we share the care of our mutual clients, and, again, express our sincere thanks to the Board of Hospice Care of Nantucket Foundation for its tireless efforts and unflinching support to maintain this program.

Board Transitions

We extend our deepest thanks to outgoing Board members:

David Boyce

Gloria Grimshaw

Wendy McCrae

Jo Zschau

And sincerely welcome our incoming Board Members:

Gene Collatz

Jennifer Shepherd

Mary Smith

Nurturing the Spirit

A quiet evolution is taking place in how we care for our patients in Hospice Care of Nantucket. Fully committed to a holistic approach to care, in the truest sense of this often inappropriately used word, we have recognized that caring for the person means attending to body/mind/spirit. For years, we, at Hospice, have hoped to integrate high quality conventional medical treatment for pain and other physical and psychosocial symptoms with complementary modalities, such as, massage, meditation, yoga, etc. Two and a half years ago, we found the right person to add to our staff to help us expand our abilities to do so. By hiring Nan Strelnitski, MS. R.N., with her background in psychiatric & mental health nursing, combined with her skills as a yoga instructor and her personal characteristics of gentleness, compassion, and commitment to service, we have been able to add a dimension of care that profoundly nurtures our clients, at a level that is much deeper than that achieved by most systems of health care.

Moving beyond medications and talk therapy, offering a manner of compassion, calmness, and unconditional personal presence, combined with gentle touch or body movement, creates a connection with people at a core level, rather than just engaging their intellect. This allows for a deep sense of peacefulness and emotional healing, facilitating a reconnection with our deepest selves, the source of well being. This is very spiritual work, meant in the broadest sense of that word, "tending to the spirit," and we have seen remarkable benefits for our patients who've accessed this service, patients from all walks of life and with a variety of symptoms.

In an effort to explain the impact of this work for our readers, I've asked Nan to share some of her experiences and observations. Her words follow. *Charlene Thurston*

I am grateful to Charlene for her vision to integrate complementary modalities into the scope of Hospice services. For me, it has been an opportunity to bring principles and values held personally into my work life. It has provided a way to integrate my experience in psychotherapy with other complementary health care related practices, yoga and bodywork, thus blending a contemporary model of treatment with those possessing ancient wisdom.

Initially, although I believed in and had experienced the beneficial effects of body

movement, soothing music and gentle touch, I was not certain if people would be open to participate and receive such healing modalities, and to become partners in a healing energy exchange. I did not know how these desired outcomes would become apparent; I only knew that it was my intention to bring comfort by applying these ancient healing techniques.

Our work occurs during vulnerable and frightening times in the lives of those we serve. People can be overwhelmed and unprepared whether living with a life threatening illness, caring for a loved one, or having lost someone precious to them. It is a time which can also be deeply poignant and transformational. This work offers an opportunity to refresh a person's sense of stability and create an oasis from complex care decisions, difficult emotional issues and spiritual distress, by providing occasion for a momentary "letting go" and coming into inner balance, a peaceful state with a renewed perspective.

It is essential in this work to be flexible, "fluid", to modify the treatment modalities in response to the evolving needs of the person. Not being restricted by a certain model of care allows being present and supportive to people as they experience what they are enduring, without the need to put it all into words.

In our "Time Out" group, stressed and tired caregivers are finding relief of tension through gentle yoga and therapeutic touch, with mental focus on the breath. Attention to the breath is fundamental. It creates a discrete single focus for the mind, which helps to quiet stressful thoughts and elicit the relaxation response, characterized by a sense of well-being or equanimity. Often people express relief and amazement as they realize they have been totally "present" during the meeting time, and they describe a feeling of "lightness."

In individual support sessions, which are available to patients, caregivers, and bereaved clients, we offer whatever support modalities that are most comforting to the person. This might include conversation, gentle movement, massage, meditation, etc. What follows are a few examples of how people have responded to these treatments. This feedback has been heartwarming and encouraging.

- My first patient had been sick for a long time with widespread cancer. She was highly anxious, very frightened, and short of breath. From the first session, her muscle tension released, and she began to breathe deeply and slowly. Although she said she wished I could see her every day, she was able to remember and use the relaxation breath between sessions. Over time, simply a light touch elicited relaxation and her tense elevated shoulders

would relax and drop. Eventually, she began to notice when she had returned to her habitual tense state, and was able to relax on her own and breathe more easily.

- Given differences in personality, determining what will most effectively comfort a person can take some time. After several months of visiting and talking with one very dignified and reserved woman, who also was living with widespread cancer, I offered to massage her temples and scalp in order to soothe the pain and itching following shingles. She experienced great relief, and then teasingly scolded me saying "You knew how to do this all this time?" This led to weekly stress reduction bodywork sessions, during which she was able to relax fully. She truly looked forward to these interludes of peace and relaxation during this very stressful time in her life.

- A middle-aged man who had been the primary caregiver for his father for the past 6 months, came to the Hospice office for "Time Out". I could actually feel the areas where there was release of muscle tension as I administered a gentle massage technique to his feet and upper body. "Thank you", he said, a little tearfully, as our session was ending, "You have no idea how badly I needed that. It's really helped. I was so tied up in knots."

- One elderly woman, who was no longer mobile, and whom I visited at home, had stress and anxiety which were increasing every day and were contributing to gastrointestinal and breathing problems. "Would you be interested in exploring some gentle seated yoga breaths and movements?" I asked. "Isn't that just voodoo?" she answered. We both had a laugh over that. "No, it's not voodoo. It's a practice which has existed for over 4000 years. One of the first things one learns in Yoga is how to breathe." "I've known how to breathe since I took my first breath!" she said. "Yes, but then we often change the "natural" way we first breathed, which was full and deep. I'd like to teach you how to breathe in a relaxed, stress-reducing manner." Once a week for several months thereafter, we practiced Yoga relaxation breathing techniques together. Then one day, she said, "This has been such a great help. I feel so much calmer now, and can really breathe and let go."

How all of this works is still not precisely known, but the response to focused breathing and comforting touch therapies seems to be remarkably powerful in reducing tension and bringing forth a state of well-being. Whatever the mystery, it is a great privilege to transmit the healing benefits of these techniques, validated by centuries of practice. *Nan Strelnitski*

Tapestries

A supportive program for grieving children & their families

Tapestries, now in its fourth year, is a program where young people may come together with other young people and specially trained professionals and volunteers, and have an opportunity to gently process their grief. Through talking, artwork, play, quiet time, and high energy activities, they have a chance to remember their loved one, and to be with others who've lost someone close.

Tapestries, like all hospice programs, is offered free of charge. We thank Nantucket Children's Charity Foundation for the generous gift to partially fund this program.

For more information or to borrow a video of a similar program, please call our Hospice office at 508-825-8325 or email us at: hospice@ackhosp.org.

Upcoming & Ongoing...

Tree of Remembrance Service: November 18th at 4 PM

Coping with Cancer Support Group: Every other Monday, 1-2:30 PM, for persons with cancer and those who love them

Teleconference: Wednesday, April 16th, 2008 at 1:30 PM "Living with Grief: Children and Adolescents"

ANOTHER GRANT FOR COACHING FOR CAREGIVERS

Hospice Care of Nantucket has again been awarded a grant from Elder Services of Cape Cod & the Islands that will partially support the continuation of private consultations, in the home or our office, with a nurse practitioner, for family members who help care for a family member or friend who needs some assistance due to illness, disability, or frailty.

Caregivers can request an overall evaluation of their situation, including an assessment of the person they help care for, and can receive information, support, and education about various topics, e.g., the disease process (including Alzheimer's Disease); managing medications; giving personal care; maintaining safety; planning for future health care needs; caring for themselves while caring for someone else; etc. Referrals for other services may also be made. This program is part of the *Caregivers' Connections Program* which also includes:

- * **Volunteers** – can provide 1 1/2-2 hour/week for respite breaks for caregivers, or can help with errands, transportation, etc.
- * **Time Out** – stress reduction education and/or counseling, in the home or office, which may include talking, learning relaxation techniques, yoga, etc. Thai Shiatsu massage is also available.
- * **Caregivers Support** groups or private sessions.
- * **Alzheimer's Disease Educational Consultations** for caregivers of persons with the disease.
- * **Lending Library** of caregiver-related topics.

DID YOU KNOW.....

in addition to end of life care, our hospice also provides *palliative care*—relief from physical, emotional, and spiritual distress during any phase of serious illness—even if cure is expected?