



THE SPENCER HOSPICE FOUNDATION

Sharing. Healing. Inspiring.

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Message from the Director

We all face personal challenges that have the potential to change our lives as well as the lives of the people around us. On a daily basis, the Spencer Hospice Foundation supports individuals and families that are facing a variety of difficult circumstances. Whether these challenges are physical, emotional or spiritual, the Spencer Hospice Foundation focuses on easing the burden. In my experiences, the simple act of sharing a life challenge can heal and inspire. In the spirit of sharing, I would like to share my story – a story of faith and purpose.

I was 10 years old when I had my first stroke. The CAT scans confirmed that the terrible headaches I'd been having was the result of cerebral hemorrhage, caused from a lesion in the brain - The more technical term for the lesion, was an Arteriovenous Malformation (or AVM), which is a rare defect, composed of a

tangle of blood vessels and arteries. To complicate things further, my AVM was abnormally large. Most AVM's are the



The firefighters who helped to save her life standing next to Michelle and her husband.

size of a dime to the size of a quarter; mine was the size of a sausage and went vertically into the brain. The doctors said that if we surgically removed the AVM, I wouldn't survive the operation, and if I did, I'd be a vegetable. With little other options, we took the alternative route and I underwent two very intense forms of radiation.

Although my first stroke left me with no physical side effects, the radiation treatments did. Because of the location of the AVM, the radiation treatment zapped the motor strip on the left side

of my brain, which caused permanent paralysis of the right side of my body.

So, suddenly, I was handicapped. I was in a wheelchair, my face was swollen from the steroids, my hair was falling out, and I was totally dependent upon others to care for me. I could no longer write with my right hand, I couldn't feed myself, button my pants, wash my hair or tie my shoes.

The plan was to have a third radiation treatment, but the doctors thought it would cause more damage than good. We explored all the options, but in every scenario, the risks outweighed the benefits. Consequently, a sizable portion of my AVM remained implanted in my brain. It was inoperable and my body wasn't capable of enduring further radiation treatments. When asked what to do next, my neurosurgeon simply replied, "Just live everyday to the fullest." So at the age of 13, that is exactly what I

[see Message on page 2]

Greet the Day the Hospice Way

Greet the Day is a nonprofit organization that provides oncology massage therapy and spa retreats for people whose lives have been affected by cancer. Greet the Day services are provided as a complement to conventional medical care. Services are made possible through a network of resources including therapists who volunteer their time, hosting spas that generously provide their space and resources,



A Greet the Day facial.

and medical professionals who assist with guest referrals. All massage therapists undergo comprehensive oncology massage training, which is accredited through the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Body Work (NCBTMB) as well as the Board of Registered Nursing (BRN).

Similar to SHF, the vision of Greet the Day is to nurture well-being & improve quality of life, which has resulted in a natural partnership initiative between the two organizations. In honor of National Hospice/Palliative Care Month, (the month November) we will be offering a half-day spa retreat in Newport Beach for caregivers who are experiencing burnout.

Volunteer Spotlight

Katherine Tran is a remarkable young woman. Only 19 years old, she has used her talent in film making to give back to hospice. Last Christmas, she documented SHF's "Making the Holidays Brighter" program by recording the generosity of all those who gave. Below is her story.



Michelle Wulfestieg and Katherine Tran

1. What inspired you to want to volunteer with hospice?

At the time I was at Fullerton College taking a sociology class on Death and Dying. Michelle from Spencer Hospice Foundation and Ginger from Hospice Touch were guest speakers on the subject of Hospice. I wasn't quite sure what Hospice was, but when the two of them began to speak of their purpose and mission in end-of-life care with much compassion, I couldn't help feel enlightened and inspired to be apart of it somehow. When they came upon the subject of volunteer work, I offered once class was over to do whatever I could do. I told them I was a film major and they came up with the idea for me to do a video on a construction company who was volunteering during the Christmas holiday for the patients.

[see Spotlight on page 2]

Making the Holidays Brighter for Patients and their Families

The Spencer Hospice Foundation is making the holidays brighter for hospice patients and their families. Last year, 125 people were assisted through this program, either through meals or a special holiday wish, and this year we plan to do the same!

Through the months of November and December, SHF will be providing patients and their families with special holiday requests. We will be granting things such as a Thanksgiving dinner, a Christmas tree, toys for children in the home or a special holiday wish for patients in need.

This is a wonderful opportunity to help enhance the quality of life for those with a life limiting illness. We encourage hospice staff and volunteers to begin identifying patients who may benefit from this program. To request a form to participate, please e-mail us at info@spencer-foundation.org. If you are interested in donating to this program, we are in need of gift cards to grocery stores, Boston Market, Target and Walmart, in any amount. Monetary donations are also welcome!

Submissions will be accepted from November 1st through December 12th.



A Thanksgiving meal



Making the Holidays Brighter Recipient



Making the Holidays Brighter Recipient



A final family portrait



A Christmas dream come true

Message [continued from page 1]

decided to do.

Over time, my paralysis improved to the point where I was able to walk with a slight limp and lacked only the fine motor movement in my hand. Yet despite my disability, I played volleyball in high school all four years, I traveled the world, met my wonderful husband, graduated from college, started career in hospice, and attended graduate school. I discovered that when I'm living on purpose, things begin to happen at all levels including professional, emotional, and spiritual.

Then, just when I thought I was living on top of the world, my worst nightmare came true. On January 4th, 2008, My AVM once again ruptured, but this time, it nearly took my life.

On the night of my second stroke, I had just finished my thesis for a Masters in Organizational Leadership through Chapman University just an hour earlier. My husband noticed that I didn't look right and asked if I was feeling to. I said "No" so he drove me to the fire station two blocks from our home. They immediately put me on oxygen as I began going in and out of

consciousness. The last thing I remember was the paramedic saying, "Stay with me Michelle! Michelle, stay with me."

I woke up from my comma eight days later. I felt an overwhelming sense of peace, and I knew that God was all around me. Remarkably, the doctors successfully removed the once inoperable AVM the night I was rushed to the hospital. They say that this is something most people don't survive and they are amazed at my recovery.

I am now back to work full-time and have been astounded by the by the incredible support that many of my hospice colleagues, volunteers, and Spencer Hospice Foundation supporters have given me during this difficult time. I would like to thank everyone, from the bottom of my heart, for all of their prayers and good wishes of love.

There is no doubt that I still have more work to do on this earth. I hope you will join me in the coming year as we work to enhance the lives of terminally ill patients and their families, and provide education in end-of-life care.

Blessings to each and every one of you,

Michelle Wulfestieg

Look What Your Contributions Have Done!

- Over 2,000 SHF educational newsletters have been sent to the community.
- Educated 30 people at the Brea Kiwanis Club, explaining the myths and facts of hospice.
- Spoke at Fullerton College to 60 students, in a death and dying class.
- Hosted a Lunch and Learn featuring Janet Edmunson, author of "Finding Meaning with Charles: Caregiving with Love through a Degenerative Disease"
- Educated 15 staff at Downey Care Center on hospice care.
- Distributed educational material to 150 people at Prothero Mobile Estates health Fair.
- Extended your contributions to 4 patients and families in urgent need.
- Provided 125 people with meals and gifts during the holidays.
- Provided 2 complimentary spa retreats to caregivers

2. What was the most rewarding thing about making the video?

The whole process gave me a whole new dramatic shift in perspective on my own life. And it all started with signing up for Angie Andrus class, Death and Dying. If I hadn't, I would have never met Michelle and Ginger. I am grateful for meeting everyone that was apart of the video. We all shared a common enthusiasm and aspiration to make a difference in people's lives. It brought me purpose and meaning. Surrounded by the subject of death and dying, it taught me to appreciate life, to communicate more openly with my family and close friends, and to live now--in this present moment--that's all that matters.

3. What was the most challenging?

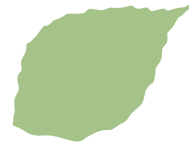
I've never had any experience with the terminally ill. I wanted to make sure I was respectful to the patients and to their family members. Also, I wanted to make sure the interviewees felt comfortable and not self conscience in front of my gigantic camera. Lastly, I wanted the film to be good of course!

4. Being recently accepted into LA Film School, what are your goals for the future?

To learn as much as I can. I believe this is my calling, so, this journey shall be worth while.

If you have a special talent you would like to share with hospice,

such as videography, photography, music therapy, pet therapy, or just providing companionship to those who are terminally ill, please contact us at 888-469-1581.



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Mark your Calendars! OCTOBER 18TH. Walk for Hope. Walk for Hospice



- **Honor:** Hospice honors life by providing comfort care to those who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness.
- **Open arms:** Hospice embraces all patients and their families with open arms, no matter how difficult the case.
- **Pain free:** Hospice helps to relieve physical and emotional pain, allowing patients to die with dignity and respect.
- **Example:** Hospice sets the example for quality, end-of-life care.

Saturday, October 18th, 2008
9am - 1pm
El Dorado Park, Long Beach, CA 90815

The event is sponsored by "Be the Cause"- a community of individuals and nonprofit organizations that create enriching opportunities of service. The entire 5 kilometer route (3 miles) is decorated with hundreds of inspiring quotes, all of them hand-made. You can also expect to find interactive activities along the walk route. What's more is that registration is entirely free with free snacks, free T-shirt, and live entertainment.

The Walk for Hope can optionally be used as an opportunity to raise funds for Spencer Hospice Foundation. To register, go to www.bethecause.org/walksite. Click the "Register Now" button. Then, where it says "I would like to walk in honor of the following organization," select the Spencer Hospice Foundation and enter the amount you would like to donate. A number of nonprofits will be participating in the event, so it's important to indicate that you're walking for the Spencer Hospice Foundation.

Where there's a Will, there's a Way

Remembering the SHF in your will is possible through a planned gift called a bequest. Bequests can be made in a certain dollar amount, a percentage of your estate or a particular item or piece of property (whether it's real estate, artwork or otherwise). You can also make contingent bequests which leaves assets only if certain conditions are met, such as if spouse or other beneficiary does not survive you.

One such bequest was made by Raymond who passed away in March of 2008. The Spencer Hospice Foundation was named in the family trust, wherein upon the death of his wife Barbara, the organization would receive a cash gift in the amount of \$20,000.



Sharing the feeling of helping

When asked why they chose to give to the Spencer Hospice Foundation, Barbara replied, "I was impressed with the quality and dedication that the hospice team provided." Indeed, hospice is dedicated to providing the absolute best quality and most compassionate care to patients and their families by providing pain and symptom management, psychological and spiritual support. This ensures that the patients live out their final days with peace, comfort and dignity.

Yet to our surprise, Barbara decided to give the donation from the trust now, instead of waiting until her death. When asked what made her decide to give the donation early, she said, "I must admit that it wasn't totally altruistic, as I had the opportunity to receive a tax break on the assessment of our estate. However, it also afforded me the chance to see our money put to use the way we intended." Aside from the benefit of an immediate tax break, Barbara and Raymond's kind donation will make

hospice care more accessible to people through community education and provide supplemental assistance for patients who are experiencing financial hardship.

Overall, the Raymond and Barbara have certainly left a legacy. Raymond will be remembered for "his kindness, his generosity, his wry sense of humor, and his loyalty to his alma matter, the University of Southern California."

Although remembering the Spencer Hospice Foundation in your will is a wonderful way to give back, there are other options including:

- Gifts without Loss of Income
- Gift without Loss of Assets for Your Family
- Life Insurance
- Gift of Appreciated Stock

Please contact your financial professional to help choose the appropriate gift. *If you are not connected to a professional, please call us at 888-469-1581 for a list of professional references in your area.*



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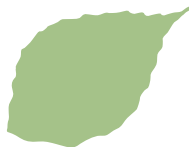
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Who We Are

The Spencer Hospice Foundation is a unique, community based nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing hospice care by providing additional support services to hospice patients and their families.

Established through a bequest given by Mr. Marlyn Spencer, a hospice patient diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, it was his final wish that the gift of hospice be strengthened by helping others like himself, who are isolated and in need.

The Spencer Hospice Foundation aims to support hospice patients regardless of their medical provider by offering education in end-of-life care, assisting patients with special needs, and offering bereavement support to grieving children and their families

We gratefully thank our contributors and sponsors:



Health Essentials

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