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OUR MISSION

Hospice of Green Country, a non-profit, community-based, multi-cultural, multi-faith, United Way agency has been dedicated to providing compassionate and quality end-of-life care to patients and families — regardless of ability to pay.

www.hospiceofgreencountry.org



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Carving Out a Place in the World

For years, Brad would spend hours sanding and shaping raw and exotic woods into fantastic pieces of furniture; works of art that fill some of the most beautiful spaces in Tulsa. His hands carefully smoothing down splinters; hands so steady and sure.

“Building something is like putting together a giant jigsaw puzzle,” Brad explains, “It’s all about finding the pieces and figuring out how to put them together. Life is kind of like that,” he said almost to himself.

Raised by his immigrant grandparents in Oakland, California after his parents public battle with alcoholism led to their divorce, Brad was mostly left to his own devices, picking up, as he called them, “sick ideas” about life.



“I was all about any alternative lifestyle,” says Brad, “I took my first drink when I was thirteen and discovered that people paid more attention to me when I drank. I was driving fast cars and coming home drunk, but when I came home, I would still lay my head down in my grandfather’s lap and watch TV.” A child living a dangerous adult lifestyle.

After watching his class graduate from high school from a nearby balcony, punishment for smoking a cigarette at school, Brad worked odd jobs, and continued drinking, even experimenting in drugs.

“My grandfather was a very serene man,” remembers Brad, “he raised canaries if that tells you anything,” he laughs, “but it only took one time for him to look at me from over the newspaper to let me know I needed to straighten up.”

Brad’s ideas about life and human nature were cultivated in a turbulent time. The 1960’s were a hotbed of new and different ideas; ideas that entice those not mature enough to think for themselves.



Brad continued on page 3

hospiceEvents

Mark Your Calendar

Wednesday & Thursday October 1 & 2

The State Hospice Conference

Marriott Hotel at 71st and Lewis Ave.
Tulsa, OK

Sunday, October 5, 2 p.m.

Tulsa Memorial Service

St. James United Methodist Church
5050 E. 111th St. South
Tulsa, OK

Thursdays, October 16, 23 & 30

6 pm - 9 pm

Tulsa Area Volunteer Training

2121 S. Columbia Ave. Suite 200
Tulsa, OK

Saturday, December 6

8th Annual Stay-at-Home Tea

An imaginary afternoon of tea & conversation

For more information,
please call (918) 747-2273

HOSPICE OF GREEN COUNTRY STAFF

Dala Jarolim, MD Medical Director
William Smith, MD Medical Director
Frances Haas, DO Assist. Medical Director
Lorena Arista
Rita Bassett, CHHA
Marsha Bolding, RN
Cleshona Brewer
Pete Brown, CHHA
Kathy Bryson, RN, BSN, CHPN
Joan Crager
Glenda Crook, RN
Farrah Davis, CHHA
Jeanean Doherty, RN, BSN
Tracy Duckworth, RN, BSN
Chaz Gaut
Trena Hermes, LPN
Karen Hines, RN
Jacinta Jones
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Cherl Larkin, MSW
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Tamra Moore, RN
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Kiesha Pride
Barbara Ritter, LPN
Nikki Shelton, MDiv
Julie Sissom, RN
Deb Sodergren, BSW
Donna Stidham, CFRE
Rev. Delana Taylor McNac
Irene Veuleman, CHHA
Joe C. Williams



Hospice of Green Country, Inc.

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(918) 342-8191 Fax

Southwest Office

19 N. Main
Sapulpa, OK 74066
(918) 224-7403 Phone/Fax

www.hospiceofgreencountry.org

Volunteers: The Heart of Hospice

Dedicated individuals are honored locally and nationally

Volunteers are the heart of any organization the size of Hospice of Green Country. Without those selfless individuals who give of themselves wholeheartedly on a daily basis, our philosophy of providing quality and compassionate care wouldn't be possible.

Saying 'thank you' to those who give themselves so generously is a difficult task and honoring them is just as difficult.

Each year the staff at Hospice of Green Country organizes a volunteer appreciation banquet in an attempt to show our gratitude for a job well done.

This banquet also showcases volunteers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty and provided our patients and staff with an extra helping hand.

This year's 'Heart of Gold' winners were John Dewey, Aaron Duckworth, Steve Sackett and Helia Ward. From driving supplies to a terminally ill patient whose electricity had gone out during the ice storm to filling in whenever asked, these special volunteers showed how compassionate the human spirit really is.

"Our awesome volunteers never cease to amaze me with the grace and compassion that they share," says Joan Crager, director of volunteer services, "The amount of time they give to our patients, families, staff members and each other is incredible. I'm honored to work side by side with them."

This year also marked a first for the volunteers at HGC: nine volunteers, Ann Box, David Canahl, Joe Garrett, Elisabeth Ham, Cathy Harris, Jacqueline Rago, Donna



Saying 'thank you' to those who give themselves so generously is a difficult task and honoring them is just as difficult.



Rice, Terri Wantiez and Janice Wolak were bestowed the United States Presidential Volunteer Award.

"This has been an amazing year for our dedicated volunteers," continued Joan, "To be recognized nationally for their service is outstanding."

The award is based on certain criteria set by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation and was given in honor of National Volunteer Week, thanking those who give their time and talents to improve the communities around them.

Hospice of Green Country volunteers perform duties ranging from office work to assisting patients, all to ensure that our mission of providing quality and compassionate care is in no way diminished.

Last year alone, HGC volunteers gave 4,793 hours, drove 47,107 miles and saved the agency over \$189,000. If you or someone you know would like to assist terminally ill individuals and help ensure they live their last moments with dignity, please call (918) 747-2273.

Brad *continued from page 1*

"I joined the army reserves and found that I really thrived in a structured environment. There were always ways to sneak around and drink and do other things I shouldn't, but that was a good time in my life."

After the reserves, Brad worked for a lumber yard making deliveries, but still struggled with addictions that continued to play a major role in his life and addictive behavior was at the forefront of his life for over twenty years. A functioning alcoholic, Brad made several life altering decisions during his battle with alcoholism: a move from California to Oklahoma, marriage to a woman who also struggled with alcoholism, their subsequent divorce and finally his decision to seek treatment.

"My wife left me because in a moment of clarity I told her that she had a drinking problem, never realizing I had one myself," said Brad.

"When she left, it destroyed me. My sister was my anchor during it all. I called her up and told her I realized I needed help too, and obviously, she was leery. She asked me if this was really what I wanted; to think about it and call her back when I was sure. I called her back, and she told me that she would send me somewhere where I could get my life back together. I've been sober ever since."

Nearly twenty years of sobriety has allowed Brad to perfect his passion for woodwork, designing and building pieces of furniture and cabinetry for some of the most distinguished residences in Tulsa.

"I did some of the woodwork for the remodel of the Skelly Mansion and some other houses in town," said Brad, "I had my own shop, and have had several apprentices. I'm really proud of the work they do."

Brad is very active in his recovery and mentors and speaks to those fighting addictions. "It's important to share your story," says Brad, "you never know what you'll say that can inspire someone."

The twelve step tradition used by Brad and countless others focuses on a positive attitude and living in the moment, values that help them control their addictions and live each day without being dependent on substances.

Recently Brad entered another stage of his life that prompted a bit of reflection. "I kept going to the doctor because they thought I had pneumonia, but tests finally showed I had lung cancer."



Brad decided to pursue aggressive treatment, a decision that proved fruitless. The cancer was later discovered to have spread, and Brad was forced to sell his shop, move into an assisted living facility and was admitted to Hospice of Green Country.

"I've done a lot of thinking over the past few months," says Brad, "I belong to a group called cancersucks.com and they distribute a book called Courage. It's filled with quotes to help you get through this time. Quotes that really make you think. It's a pretty amazing organization."

Today the steady hands Brad used to build magnificent pieces of furniture are shaky and unsteady, yet through it all, he has the attitude of a champion.

Hospice of Green Country provides Brad with a customized care plan and medication to keep him comfortable during this difficult time.

"His attitude remains incredibly positive considering all the changes he's had to endure in such a short amount of time," remarks Brad's HGC social worker Linn Kuhnel, "He's dealt with so much in his life, and yet he still wants to help others overcome addiction and get their lives on track."

"I'm glad you asked me to be profiled in this story," he continued, "because if I can help just one person recover from the damages that drugs and alcohol do to your body and to your family, then I'll know I've done something right."

"I'm so glad Hospice of Green Country is here," remarked Brad, "I don't know how I would do this without you guys."

Brad Smith passed away on September 8, 2008.

The Many Faces of Grief

When we hear someone talk about a personal experience of grief, it's easy to assume they have experienced the death of a family member or friend. While this is perhaps the most talked-about example of personal grief, there are other types of loss that can impact you or someone you love profoundly.



Loss of a Pet

Many people have experienced love and unconditional acceptance through a relationship with a companion animal. Pets provide faithful companionship and affection, something we all long for as human beings. In contrast to the ups and downs of human relationships, pets give their owners a sense of stability and purpose in their lives. When an individual experiences the loss of a pet they feel close to, the resulting grief can be as profound as that of the loss of a friend or family member. Sometimes people feel embarrassed or awkward about the grief they experience after the loss of a pet. Well meaning friends and family may try to minimize or shame people out of their grief, and this makes it even more difficult to process. The grief is real to the pet owner because the loss is real. Minimizing the loss only adds to the pain.

Loss of Independence

Elders often grieve the progressive loss of independence that comes with the challenges of aging and declining health. For example, grief related to the loss of driving privileges is often overlooked by family members. Other significant losses that impact elders are the loss of independent living, or the loss of independent mobility due to age related changes or health problems. The significance of these losses is compounded by the speed at which they occur. Multiple losses in a short time can be overwhelming to someone used to being in control of his or her life. Even though an elderly person may understand why these changes are occurring, the emotional toll from grieving the losses can be profound.

Loss of a Job

Job loss, especially when it is unexpected, is one of the most difficult losses an individual can experience. In addition to the

normal grieving process, there are often questions about one's identity and feelings of rejection that surface. Job loss often impacts the financial status of the individual or family, leading to additional stresses. Grief may be ignored or set aside in the midst of finding new employment, but it, too, can be overwhelming if the job search takes time.

The "Empty Nest"

Parents may find themselves struggling with grief after a child leaves home for college or after a marriage. This form of loss often catches people by surprise and it can be a difficult experience for fathers and mothers alike. The immediate change in family dynamics can impact other children as well. Once again, even though the reasons may be understood, the emotional reaction can be overwhelming to a parent who is unprepared for the changes that occur.

Grief continued on page 5

Using Words that Heal

A woman was recounting her life story, "My life turned around in the second grade," she said, "I was born with a facial disfigurement and my classmates teased me unmercifully. But my second grade teacher, Mrs. Anderson, would, once a year, call each child in her class to come to her and she whispered a secret in the ear of each child. When it was my turn, she whispered these words in my ear: 'Oh how I wish you were my little girl!' Those words turned my life around."

How simple! How profound! How powerful! Words that heal. Words that lift. To be the bearer of good news we need a few tips. The New Testament puts it, "You'll do best by filling your minds and meditation on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse."

If you are seething with anger, you won't be as likely to build others up, or even see the possibilities to uplift. More likely, we become separated and isolated. George Eliot put it, "We are all islands, shouting lies to one another across seas of misunderstanding."

If you grew up in a positive family you are truly blessed. If not, and many did not, then you have to refrain and rethink and re-tool.

You'll need to really love and listen. See what is not said by the other. Edmond Albert Day said of basic life revelations three stand out: "When my mother looked into my face and said 'my child'; when I gave my heart to my creator and heard 'my son' or 'my daughter' and when I can look at others and say 'my sister' or 'my brother.'"

What we're getting at is practice. Look. Listen. Get outside yourself. Most people carry some heavy burdens.

A man boarded a city bus with a number of children. They were very unruly. Another passenger was very annoyed by their behavior. He could stand it no more and said to the father, "Can't you control your kids?" The father responds, "You're right, they are acting terrible. You see we just buried their mother, and we're returning home. I apologize for them."

Maybe today you'll have a chance to lift a heavy burden from someone. Mrs. Anderson had the idea, "Oh I wish you were my little girl!"

Excerpts taken from "Bridging the Communication Gap," Dr. Paul Leaming, Tidings Press, Nashville.

Dr. Paul Leaming, DMin serves Hospice of Green Country as a chaplain

Grief continued from page 4

How You Can Help

Give your friend or family member permission to grieve by spending time with them and letting them be wherever they are emotionally. Sometimes the person who is grieving may try to minimize the loss or hide their feelings because they are having a difficult time. Be the friend or family member

who allows them to talk about the loss without judging or silencing them. You can help them most by being a good listener and allowing them to share their feelings of loss whenever they decide to do so. Let your acceptance and your presence bring them comfort. By giving them permission to grieve, you can walk with them through

the grief process by offering your acceptance and your support. Grief is challenging for everyone, but it's a little easier with a companion on the journey.

Rev. Delana Taylor McNac serves Hospice of Green Country as director of spiritual care and coordinator of the Pet Peace of Mind program.

Learning to Live Again

When Jim Huff woke one morning and told his wife JoAnn that he dreamed he had died, it wasn't something she wanted, or expected, to hear.

"I started crying," remembers JoAnn, "but he told me

not to, that everything was ok. He dreamed that as he slipped away, I was rubbing his head," she tearfully recalls. A simple gesture between a husband and wife that calmed them both in difficult times.

The Huffs were no strangers to hospice care and its philosophy. Not only did Jim serve on the board of Hospice of Green Country for five years, and serve as board president his last year, but JoAnn's mother, Helen was admitted to hospice care in December 2007.

"Mom lived with us for eight years until finally we couldn't provide the quality of care she required anymore," explained JoAnn, "we admitted her to the Tulsa Jewish Center where she lived for more than two years. They did a wonderful job and I couldn't imagine what kind of experience it would have been if Hospice of Green Country hadn't been there too."

JoAnn took an active role as a caregiver for her mother, while at the same time being a wife. "Jim and I were a good match. I'm very spur of the moment and Jim planned everything out; he was methodical. That combination allowed us to do some amazing things together," she remembered, "We've been all over the world, Croatia, Poland, Indonesia, Turkey to name a few; we house and cat sat in a small town in England and traveled over much of this country."

"The Tulsa Jewish Center, combined with the compassionate care given by Hospice of Green Country was incredible. When Mom finally passed, I know in my heart she went peacefully."



JoAnn was just beginning to deal with the grief surrounding her mother's passing, when circumstances began to worsen.

"Jim had had cancer before," remembers JoAnn, "but he got a clean bill of health just a few months before all this started. One night, he tripped over a suitcase in the hallway, and tore his rotator cuff," she said, "and that required surgery. When they came back and told us his cancer returned, I was devastated."

Jim's cancer had returned with a vengeance. It ravaged his entire body, and sent him into a quick and steady decline.

"I was shocked at the diagnosis, and couldn't believe what was happening. But I think on some level, Jim knew. It was the Marine in him, I'm sure; not wanting me to worry."

"Everyone at HGC was quick to react,"

remembers JoAnn, "and I don't think it was because he was president of the Board of Directors; that's just the kind of service you can expect from Hospice of Green Country."

"Hospice isn't something I would have asked for, but I'm thankful it was available."

A plan of care was quickly implemented, and every effort was made to ensure Jim's last moments were lived comfortably and with dignity.

"[Jim's nurse] Kathryn [McNabb] Rocks!" laughed JoAnn, "she took such good care of both Jim and my mother. She's a gift from God."

"Jim's passing was a beautiful experience; it was very respectful. He was surrounded by love and family and friends. I wish it had happened to someone else though."

Dealing with the loss of two family members can be a trying experience, but JoAnn is keeping her head up.

"I'm getting along as well as one can expect," says JoAnn, "I'm not angry anymore. I still go to the Tulsa Jewish Center every Sunday to visit the residents and volunteer, which helps. I'm discovering I can do things now that I didn't even attempt a few months ago, like bill paying on-line and car maintenance."

"I want everyone to know that hospice care isn't something I would have asked for, but I'm thankful it was available," she continued, "everyone was so great. It was a comfort to know that Jim had the option of dying at home and not in a hospital."

www.hospiceofgreencountry.org



Another summer will soon give way to autumn and I'm reminded of a comment a patient made to me over twenty years ago as I complained about this transition of seasons. "You should enjoy every season; they all have good

moments." This way of thinking and living has value both with the seasons of nature and with the seasons of life.

Many who work with end-of-life issues find they live their lives differently than before they entered this work. With daily reminders of how quickly a life can change, we tend to make the most of our days and share our feelings of gratitude and love with the ones

we care about. The staff and volunteers at Hospice of Green Country (HGC) help patients and families live each day as fully as possible. Our goal is to pay attention to the "small things" and give care without consideration of the time it takes to listen and really hear what the need is that will provide comfort. We want to make this last season of life all that it can be for the individual and their loved ones. The HGC team goes the extra mile to make this happen.

Hospice of Green Country is the only non-profit, community based, multi-cultural, multi-faith, United Way supported hospice in the Tulsa area. We compete daily with over 50 for-profit hospice agencies. Our difference is our 20+ year commitment to our community and our mission of providing compassionate, quality end-of-life care, regardless of ability to pay. Our bottom line is our patients, not profit. If you or someone you know would like to know more about hospice care, I invite you to contact Hospice of Green Country, the experts with a twenty year history.

from the Board President



It has been my pleasure and privilege to assume the duties of board president of this wonderful organization we call Hospice of Green Country. It has also been with sadness that it was necessary because of the loss of our previous president Jim Huff. Jim was lovingly cared for by the staff at Hospice of Green Country. I miss him.

I have served on the board for the past five years, and it was not until this year that I fully realized the amazing task our staff and volunteers perform every day. First through Jim, and then through a close personal friend of 20 years who also became a recipient through our Courtesy Care program, which cares for patients who lack the ability to pay for hospice care. It has been through my friend that I learned, heard and saw first hand the power of what we do for a person who has just received perhaps the most impacting news of his or her entire life.

It is also through him that I witnessed the true importance and meaning of the fact that for people who are not in a position to pay for hospice services, they are still able to receive the same compassionate care. It is only through our generous and caring donors, volunteers, and supporters that we are able to do so. To you I say thank you.

Please feel free to call the caring people at Hospice of Green Country at 918-747-2273 for more information about the programs and services designed to meet each patient and family's needs or visit our website at www.hospiceofgreencountry.org.

www.hospiceofgreencountry.org