

Passages

A PUBLICATION OF HOSPICE OF GREEN COUNTRY, INC.

Fall 2005

It's a Wonderful Life

Jean Hawkins trimmed her snow-white bangs, put on make-up and ironed a bright pink shirt to prepare for her Life History video interview with Hospice of Green Country volunteer Christi Johnson. She also prepared by gathering old photos and jotting down a few highlights of her inspiring and lengthy life.

A hospice patient's Life History video incorporates music, old photographs and a personal interview with the patient into a format that preserves their unique story for future generations to enjoy.

Jean was born in Eldorado, Kansas on October 29, 1924. One of Jean's favorite childhood memories is of her second-grade debut as "The Fairy Queen" in a musical production by the same name.

"I can remember to this day doing that little step dance across the stage," she laughs. Jean still has the organdy costume she wore, which her mother sewed, along with the pair of glittery fairy wings that her father crafted.

Just as September 11, 2001 forever changed our country and most people's lives, so also did the traumatic events of December 7, 1941.

"Pearl Harbor affected everybody," she recalls. "There were ration stamps and you could only buy one pair of shoes a year. You had to skimp on sugar and butter, but cutting back on gasoline was hard. I couldn't get out and drive just for fun! But it was all for the war effort, so we just did it."

At age 20, she joined the United States Women's Army Corps (WAC) with two other girls from Bartlesville.

"I thought I'd join the WACs and see the world! But no, we were sent to work at the army hospital in Chickasha, Oklahoma," she laughs.

While performing clerical duties in the army hospital, Jean met her future husband, Thomas Hawkins, a soldier from Mississippi. Like most wartime couples, theirs was a small church wedding. They began their married

life together in Bartlesville in 1945 – first living with Jean's family due to the wartime housing shortage, then a garage apartment until the couple and their three small children outgrew the space.

Jean recalls receiving her first washing machine from her parents after their move to a larger home. "It was really thrilling to get a washing machine. Of course, I still had to hang the clothes out to dry but that was no big thing," she said. Until then, Jean had washed her family's clothes, including infant diapers, on a washboard by hand!

Sadly, Jean's beloved husband of 23 years became seriously ill with pneumonia and a perforated ulcer, and he passed away on January 10, 1968. At the time, they had six children. The three oldest were grown and living on their own, but there were three children still living at home when Jean became a widow.

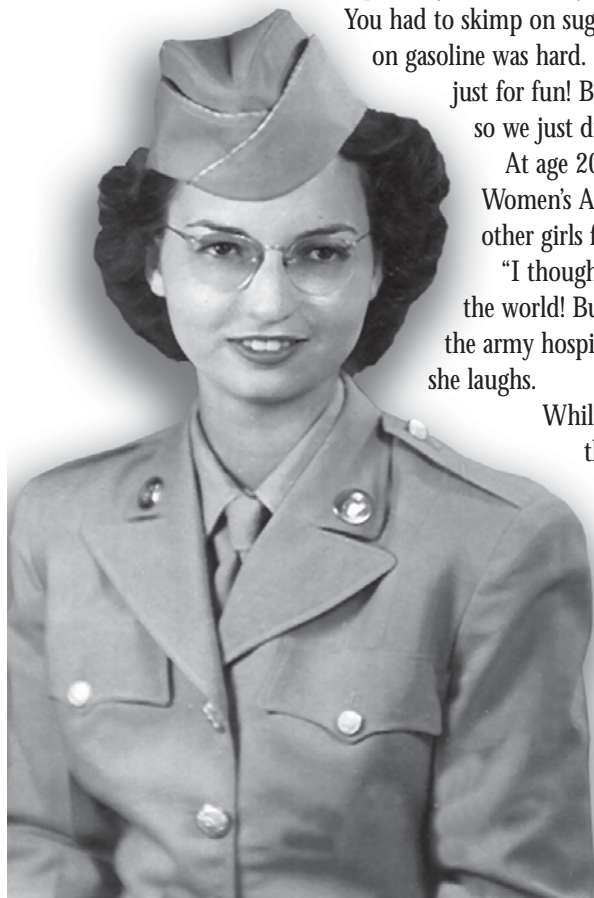
Jean, who had begun working in 1960 for Tulsa Rig & Reel (now known as Flintco), managed well. For 24 years she worked full-time, kept house and took care of her children. At Flintco, she worked as a secretary to several engineers and enjoyed the work. "I did a good job and had good bosses. Flintco was very good to their employees and would give nice bonuses," she adds.

Jean retired from Flintco in 1984 at the age of 60, but she stayed active in her retirement years. She did crafts, joined a few ladies clubs, took dance lessons and traveled extensively, often by herself. A few of Jean's favorite memories include spending Christmas Eves with several generations of her family under one roof. Her 80th birthday, last October, was another special time, when her children threw a huge party in her honor. Favorite among her recent memories, however, is Jean's "trip of a lifetime" which took her on a 15-day tour and cruise of Alaska. During that journey, Jean cruised above the Arctic Circle, "where it's daylight all the time."

Wonderful continued on page 3.



Jean as
The Fairy
Queen.



◀ Jean as a U.S. WAC.

Seasons & Celebrations

Although the calendar seasons change, appreciation and gratitude are always in season.

As Stephen Levine writes in his book, *A Year to Live*, "Gratitude is a way of seeing, or being. It is a state of mind of thankfulness. It is our highest form of acceptance. It increases our appreciation for life."

To show our appreciation for our hospice volunteers, we celebrated National Volunteer Week on April 22 with a very special banquet at All Soul's Unitarian Church.

The Heart of Gold is the highest award Hospice of Green Country presents to individuals who go above and beyond as a volunteer. It is a special award and can be received only once in a lifetime. To date, only 47 volunteers have received this award in the past 17 years.

This year, Heart of Gold Awards were presented to: Dr. Jody Anderson, Christi Johnson, Patti Lennox, Carol Saveth, Sue Smith, Sue Young and Lizzie, Sue's dog.

Staff Awards are presented to Hospice of Green Country staff members in recognition for their outstanding support and encouragement of the organization's volunteer department. Winners of this year's Staff Awards were: Dr. Jacob George, director of spiritual care; Jacinta Jones, accounting clerk; Pam Kieslich, Claremore office manager; Debby Raskin, director of human resources and Deb Sodegren, social worker.

Congratulations to all who do so much to help us! Thank you all for choosing to give your time and energy to Hospice of Green Country.

- Our outstanding volunteer in-services have been a highlight of the past few months. Special thanks to our guests Vickie Clouse, RN, and Cherl Larkin, MSW, who were our featured speakers in May, at "Living Life With No Regrets: Planning for the Unexpected." Special thanks for our July in-service go to our guest speaker Rev. Elizabeth Johnson-George, who spoke about her recent inspiring work as a volunteer in Sri Lanka for the tsunami victims; and to our volunteer panel of experts David Blackburn, Sue Young and Irene Veuleman.
- We offer another special acknowledgement for all the hard work donated by employees from various companies who helped make the September United Way Day of Caring so memorable.
- Hospice of Green Country, the beneficiary of a \$25,000 charitable contribution from the 2005 Tulsa Run, is seeking volunteers to help with the Tulsa Run in various areas of service, including: Tulsa Run office help (Oct. 17-26 in 2- to 4-hr shifts); Runner's Packet Pick-up (Fri., Oct 28 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.); Tulsa Run Finish Line Festival (Sat., Oct 29 from 7 a.m. to noon) to work at the Finish Line; Runner's and Fun Run Tents serving candy bars/refreshments; Info Booth; Children's Area, and Trash Pick-up. Call our volunteer department (747-2273) to volunteer.

Whatever the season, we have many volunteer projects from which to choose. Remember that our Remembering Others Volunteer Event for our patients will occur on Saturday, Dec. 10. Call Benelle or Jeannie for more information on items needed for those projects. ✨

Benelle Reeble, Ph.D., CVA is director of volunteer and bereavement services.

▲
Hospice volunteers
Sue Young and
Lizzie entertain.



▲ Heart of Gold Award recipients from left to right: Sue Smith, Dr. Jody Anderson, Patti Lennox, Christi Johnson, Sue Young and Lizzie. Not pictured: Carol Saveth.

▼ Annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet on April 22.



Passages MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE: CHANGES OF *Life*

We usually think about changes of life as applying to a loved one or ourselves. However, hospice has a life; it is alive and well in Tulsa. And has it changed!

Hospice began in Tulsa in the late 1970s with an institutional vision and the hard work of colleagues of mine, a devoted doctor and nurse couple, Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Redding, each of whom had experienced their own brush with death. After surviving their personal pain, they went for specialized training in England, where hospice began. After they helped establish the first hospice program in Tulsa, Mrs. Redding (Beverlee) became a founding member, in 1985, of Hospice of Green Country, the community's second hospice.

The local hospice movement has grown since then to include more than 40 hospice programs, and the number of illnesses that hospice programs manage also has increased considerably. Hospice guidelines have relaxed and many more people can now be comforted, cared for, and gently tended during their last months and years thanks to a dedicated and highly skilled workforce of hospice health professionals and volunteers.

My personal road to hospice began, like so many others in hospice, with the sudden death of my father when I was a teenager. Not knowing how to cope or how to grieve sent me in search of learning and helping others get through the difficult time surrounding a terminal illness. Specializing in cancer care ensured that I would encounter many opportunities to do so. Decades later, my mother and our family were able to benefit from hospice care during her last weeks after a stroke, and it was a much "better death."

While the hospice evolution and its change of life have produced new effective methods of pain and symptom relief, development of advance directives and living wills, and the use of sophisticated computerized diagnostics and therapeutics, the heart of hospice is still the personal caring of one human for another. This doesn't change. The touching experience of helping people live until they die allows spiritual growth and life enrichment for both patients and caregivers. My thanks go to the caring people of Hospice of Green Country. ✿

Dr. Dala Jarolim is a medical director for Hospice of Green Country.

Fall 2005

Wonderful *continued from page 1.*

What's it like to be over 80?

For Jean Hawkins it's about quality of life and living each day to its fullest, in her own home, with the love, care and support of her six children, 12 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren. Hospice of Green Country's nurses, home health aides, social workers and chaplains care for Jean's physical, emotional and spiritual needs, as well as providing respite care for her family. Daughter, Ann Jones, recalls how they made the decision for hospice care last December.

"The doctor gave mother six months or less to live. She was not responding to medical treatment, and we were very concerned about her lack of will to live," she explains. "But we were told she could go home and we could arrange to have hospice come in to care for her."

Since then, Ann and her siblings have seen the quality of their mother's life improve significantly with hospice care.

"I can't say enough good things about hospice. Everyone we've come into contact with has been wonderful. They've treated mother with the utmost respect, care and concern. She's the most important thing to them. They've taken so much of the worry and anxiety off of us, and handled things we had no idea how to handle."

Hospice of Green Country is privileged to care for Jean, and to help bring quality to her daily life. "I'm pretty independent," Jean admits, "and get kind of bossy sometimes."

When asked how she would like to be remembered, Jean replies, "That I was generous, caring and that they all know I loved them. And my neighbors will probably say 'she was a pretty good neighbor.' I don't take plates of cookies over, but I compliment them on their new dog and thank them for the tomatoes they give me."

There's no doubt Jean's colorful life stories will continue to be shared with new generations, and her Life History video will become a treasured family keepsake. ✿



Case Manager Kelli Riffe, RN, Jean and granddaughter Stacey.

Life Histories: *Treasured Legacies for Future Generations*

In the course of caring for hospice patients, it's not unusual for members of our professional caregiver team to learn about amazing achievements, adventures or heroic acts that many patients have experienced.

Inevitably, our caregivers and volunteers feel privileged to learn how their patients touched the lives of others, whether through great and noble deeds or through more quiet, but equally inspiring, service to others.

Recording a life history is a poignant way for hospice patients to leave a legacy of treasured memories with their loved ones. Patients reflect on favorite memories from childhood to adulthood, travels and special occasions. Touching stories surrounding personal accomplishments, talents, hobbies, work, marriage and family life also are beautifully shared through the life history process. At a deeper level, life histories can be precious tools for imparting values, beliefs and learned life experiences to future generations – and can be therapeutic by helping patients bring closure to their lives.

"I really enjoy listening to people talk about their lives," says volunteer Christi Johnson. "Many of the patients I interview are from my parents' generation, so their stories are of special interest to me. I especially like hearing about how they met their spouse and about their many years of marriage."

Although hospice volunteers are prepared to ask key questions to help guide a life history interview, their greatest skill involves simply listening as patients tell their unique life stories, in their own way and at their own pace.

"Initially, patients may be somewhat shy to talk about themselves, but I always go to the interview with a list of questions to help draw them out," Christi says.

Video and audio tapes are typical tools used in the recording of a life history. Volunteers also transcribe histories, if requested, preserving them in written form for families to read and hand down to future generations.

Christi, who teaches journalism at Union High School, has volunteered with Hospice of Green Country for more than a year. Initially, she provided respite care for the wife of a long-time patient, but it was during her volunteer orientation that Christi realized her skills in computer editing could be used to document patient life histories.

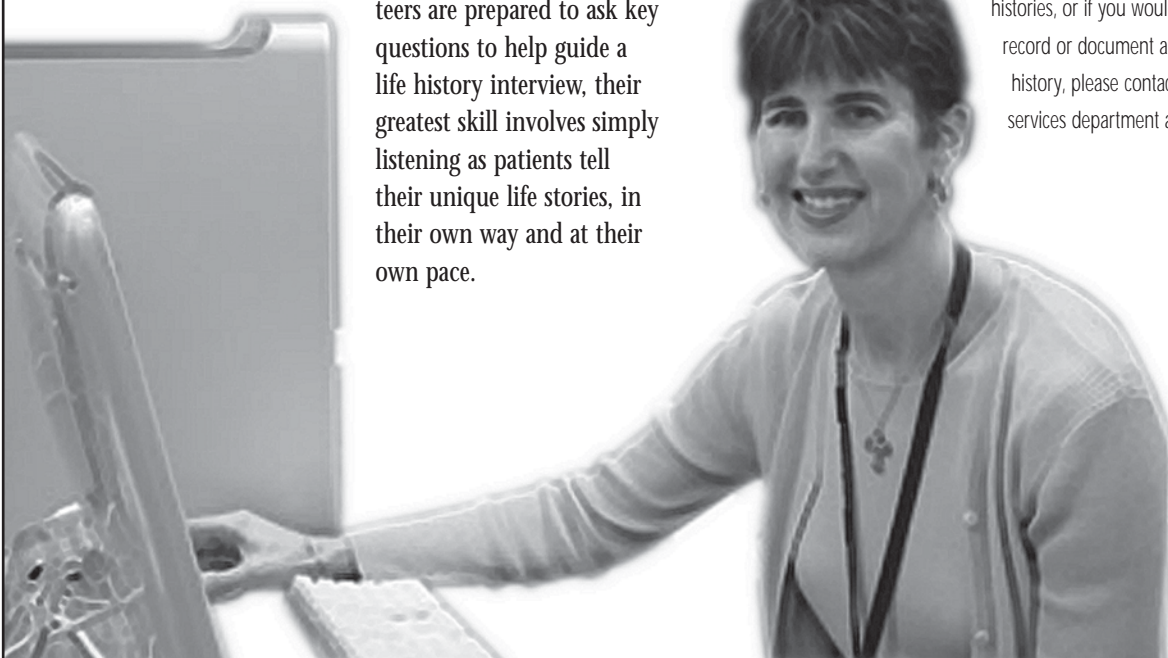
Life histories that are video taped may include up to 20 still pictures in addition to the patient's personal interview. Music that was popular during a patient's life, or that is meaningful to the family, may also be incorporated into a video life history.

Christi prefers to end each life history interview by asking patients how they want to be remembered. "Their answers are usually profound," she says. "It always touches me when I listen to that particular answer."

"I think people incorrectly assume that being involved in hospice work is something sad," says Christi. "But it's usually a really joyful experience because patients have good memories and want to talk about their families, their children and grandchildren." ❁

If you would like more information about life histories, or if you would like to help interview, record or document a hospice patient's life history, please contact our volunteer services department at 747-2273.

*Christi Johnson,
hospice volunteer.*



TO *Everything* THERE IS A *Season*

Just as the earth experiences the changes of seasons, so do we. Seasons have their own particular beauty to be appreciated. I love spring for what it brings. Everything is fresh and alive. It is a time for newness and rebirth. A time for sprouting, budding, growing and blooming. Life is exciting and couldn't be better!

Then the seasons begin to change and summer appears. I love summer because it means work, travel and fulfillment. The days are long and glorious and bring the promise of the harvest.

Fall is a wonderful time of year. It's not too hot and not too cold. The lawn no longer needs mowing. Colorful leaves crunch under your feet as you walk hand in hand with that special someone.

We harvest a bumper crop, and all of a sudden a cold snap appears. The roads get snow-covered and slick. The land lays fallow, the trees are bare of their leaves and the flower bulbs are nestled in the earth. The days are shorter, grayer and colder. This is winter. The season of quiet, stillness, and darkness. Yet this season is the beginning of creation. Without the cold and darkness of the earth the life within the flower bulb cannot burst out of its seed to show its beauty in the spring.

The cycle of life goes on silently and steadily. Beneath the ground bulbs wait quietly, preparing for the warmth of spring when they will burst forth with fresh, new color. Like the spring bulbs, we also have the need for times of quiet reflection and inner stillness. So that's what I do to deal with the winter weather — try to embrace it as a chance to rest and enjoy the challenge of the season. Rather than becoming alarmed at the apparent seasons in your life, look for the beauty of each, attaining the benefit of each one.

Life changes . . . Adjustments to new schedules, new routines, a much quieter or noisier house, changes in relationships, a birthday passing with the person no longer there to celebrate and give wishes for another happy year. I pondered all my changes. Some of them I like, others I don't care for, but all of them are simply part of life.

To everything there is a season: a time for sowing, a time for growing, a time for reaping — then rest and regeneration. Winter will blossom into the spring of a new beginning. Each rite of passage is, in effect, the death of the "old" and a birth of the "new." We are invited to wait quietly, to store up things in our hearts and to stand still. May your waiting time be filled with peace. ✿

Jacob George is director of spiritual care. He is a board certified chaplain and holds a doctoral degree in pastoral counseling from Brite Divinity School, TCU.

SEASONS OF *Change*

"Grieving is as natural as crying when you hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry, or sneezing when your nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart." – RABBI EARL GROLLMAN

The beauty of nature is ever changing into new colors and seasons. Each has its own unique beauty to behold, much like life itself. Birth, aging, sickness and death are all part of the human condition, like seasons that come into our life at different times. It is up to us how we deal with each season and how we choose to handle it.

Sometimes we get stuck in an emotion like anger, sadness or fear and may need some gentle guidance to see life at that moment and to change our course in keeping with the seasons of change. Sometimes it is a friend, family member, acquaintance, volunteer or even a stranger who appears in our path for a particular reason, such as helping us to move through a challenging time. Sometimes a celebration, funeral or ritual service helps us to regain a perspective and focus on our priorities in the moment.

Rituals help us to do something when we do not know what to do. We at Hospice of Green Country are privileged to attend many different types of funerals and life celebrations of our patients and friends in the community. Each one is an example of that individual's uniqueness, the gifts he or she has brought to the lives of others, and a celebration of his or her life among us.

We host a memorial service for our families every spring in Claremore and every fall in Tulsa. In addition, every other month we conduct a special memorial service within our office to help our staff cope with the death of our patients. 🌱

Benelle Reeble, Ph.D., CVA is director of volunteer and bereavement services.

Hospice Workers: Prepared to Run the Good Race

Hospice of Green Country is being honored as the beneficiary of a \$25,000 charitable contribution from the 2005 Tulsa Run. In addition to donating a significant number of volunteer hours to the event, Hospice of Green Country also will be sending two of its fastest runners to participate in Tulsa's well-known 15-kilometer race.

Executive Director Tamra Moore and Director of Patient Care Kathy Bryson, both registered nurses, have been training together for the run since spring.

"We are just thrilled that we were chosen to be the 2005 Tulsa Run beneficiary," Tamra says. "It's such an honor in the non-profit world to be chosen from a field of so many worthy organizations."

Funds from the Tulsa Run will directly support many hospice programs, including: Courtesy Care, Live Alone and Grief Assistance. The Courtesy Care program cares for patients and families who cannot afford to pay for hospice services. Hospice patients in the Live Alone program are able to maintain control of their lives while living at home and receiving quality end-of-life care. The Grief Assistance program helps patients' families cope with their loss.

The 2005 Tulsa Run is scheduled for Saturday, October 29. Presenting sponsors include the *Tulsa World* and Bank of Oklahoma, both of whom are loyal and generous supporters of Hospice of Green Country.



▲
Kathy Bryson and Tamra Moore's regular training runs prepare them for the Tulsa Run.



Tamra Moore, RN

This note comes to you during a time of transformation; the season is shifting and autumn is upon us. Isn't it curious how we react differently to this change? Some are sad at the close of summer, others welcome the new season. As we all accept the inevitable, that autumn will come, most would agree the end result is beautiful. The crispness of the air stimulates and rejuvenates us, the leaves become varying shades of a beautiful sunset.

As I consider the seasons and similarities of the work we do at Hospice of Green Country, I find some poignant observations. As the inevitable is confronted we encounter many reac-

tions from patients, families and loved ones, ranging from anger to sadness, denial or fear. The goal for most people sounds simple and yet is complex — to journey from life with dignity, grace and comfort.

The staff and volunteers at Hospice of Green Country help the transformation from the sometimes confusing variety of emotions into a positive experience. We work with dedication and commitment to create a beautiful journey through the end of life. Along this road, we find the transformation includes all of us at Hospice of Green Country; our lives are changed with each completed journey. Both of those transformations bring to mind poet William Cullen Bryant's quote: "Autumn, the year's last loveliest smile." ❀

Tamra Moore, RN
Executive Director

from the president



Jane Mudgett

A friend of mine died today and he wasn't quite ready. How do I know that? Well, he hadn't finished his "Call List," that is, the people who he would like notified about his death. The other reason he wasn't ready is that although he knew about hospice care he had not sought it out, as he thought the timing was premature. I'm not going to judge or second-guess my friend, but I will use it as a catalyst for other related discussions.

Each of you receiving this newsletter is a supporter of Hospice of Green Country and we thank you for your encouragement. Issues related to death and dying are not only NOT easily discussed emotionally, but they also are not particularly socially acceptable topics even among close family and friends. As the season changes, please ponder what your friends and family may need to consider:

- Soliciting or accepting hospice care earlier than one may think is necessary.
- Receiving resources such as Advance Directives, Living Will templates and other instructions to help patients and their families plan so decisions aren't made during medical and emotional emergencies.

- Accepting comfort care services after curative care remedies have been depleted.
- Having access to hospice support services during care-giving and after death.
- Experiencing comfort in knowing there are people who can help coordinate medical care, spiritual support, emotional and therapeutic help, respite care, bereavement and many more services for patients and their families.

At Hospice of Green Country, we are observing an unfortunate trend where people are being admitted for hospice care later in the evolution of their disease or illness. As a patient, family member or friend, we ask for your courage and timely intervention in accessing hospice services earlier in the diagnosis process. Quality and compassionate hospice care is capable of benefiting a large network of people when patients and their families are given the specialized care they need to make every day, every hour, every moment count.

We thank you for your consistent financial and volunteer commitments to Hospice of Green Country. Enjoy the ebb and flow of life and the changing of the seasons. ❀

Jane Mudgett
President, Board of Directors

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Hospice of Green Country, Inc.

2121 S. Columbia Ave. • Ste. 200 • Tulsa, OK 74114

Our Mission

Hospice of Green Country is a nonprofit, community-based, multi-faith and multi-cultural United Way agency dedicated to providing compassionate and quality end-of-life care to patients and families – regardless of ability to pay.



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on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

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hospice events

Mark Your Calendar!

Sunday, October 2

Annual Memorial Service

Thursday, October 6 • 5:45 - 9 p.m.

Hospice Volunteer Training

Friday, October 14

United Way Mid-Campaign Report

Saturday, October 29

Tulsa Run (Event Volunteers Needed Oct. 17-29)

Thursday, November 10

United Way Victory Celebration

Saturday, December 10

Remembering Others Volunteer Event

Saturday, December 10

Stay At Home Tea

Hospice of Green Country Staff

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Dala Jarolim, MD - Medical Director
William Smith, MD - Medical Director

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Pete Brown, CHHA
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Irene Veuleman, CHHA
Angela Wiley, LPN
Janie Wood, RN
Camille Zumwalt

Hospice of Green Country

2121 S. Columbia Ave.
Ste. 200
Tulsa, OK 74114
(918) 747-CARE (2273)
Fax: (918) 747-2573

Hospice of Green Country Northeast

1005 W. Archer Dr.
Claremore, OK 74017
(918) 342-1222
Fax: (918) 342-8191

Hospice of Green Country Southwest

210 E. Dewey
Sapulpa, OK 74066
Phone/Fax: (918) 224-7403

