

## Continuing Traditions to Celebrate Life

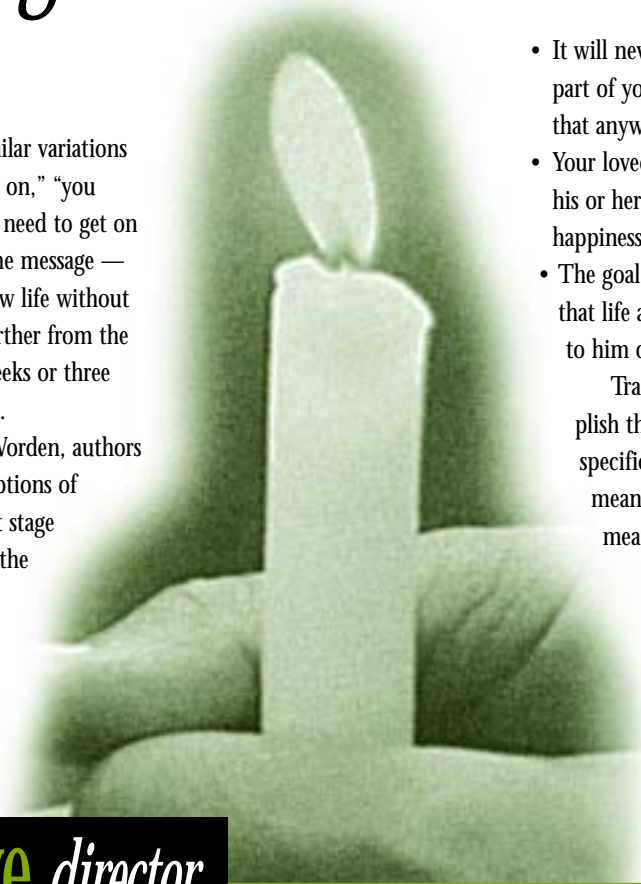
There is a saying that most, if not all, have heard:

“Aren’t you over that yet?” Similar variations to the saying are “it’s time to move on,” “you should be over it by now,” or “you need to get on with your life.” Each sends the same message — the goal of grieving is to form a new life without the deceased. This could not be further from the truth, whether it has been three weeks or three years after the death of a loved one.

Therese Rando and William Worden, authors and developers of their own conceptions of grief stages, both sculpted their last stage of grief to include reincorporating the deceased into your life.

Other conceptions include:

- The relationship you had will always exist — in a different form, but present nonetheless.



- It will never be as if your loved one were not part of your life — and who would want that anyway?
- Your loved one gave you many gifts during his or her life such as love, hope, friendship, happiness and courage.
- The goal is now to find a way to celebrate that life and those gifts and stay connected to him or her.

Traditions are a great way to accomplish this. They are acts performed at specific times of the year that provide meaning to the bereaved. By finding meaningful traditions, you are able to celebrate and remember your loved one. For example, some families

*Celebrate continued on page 2.*

### from the executive director



*Brent Wolfe*

I have many fond memories of childhood and particularly of spending time with my grandparents. They died many years ago, but I’m still aware of their presence in my life in small, but significant ways. During the holidays my grandmother made flannel pajamas for all the grandchildren to wear on Christmas Eve. As a child they were certainly not the most exciting present, but even the comfort and stability provided by this annual event was evidence that I belonged to a family that loved and cared for each other. My mother continued this tradition and every year my daughter receives a nightgown. Even though my daughter is now twenty-one, she still fully expects that present. My grandmother did not know she began a ritual which continues to connect our family.

As we enter this season of holidays and celebrations, let us all honor those seemingly small, but very important rituals that were

started by those we have loved in the past. Although there is some sadness as we acknowledge feelings of loss, there also can be joy as we remember and carry forward traditions that keep those we have loved present.

I’m continually amazed and impressed by the level of professional competence and genuine caring that the staff members of Green Country provide to our patients and their families and friends during and after the end of life process. I’m also truly impressed by the involvement of family and friends in this process and the love and respect they’re able to display. Hopefully in this journey — of life and death and then more life — we remember those traditions that connect us to the past and the future.

I’m hoping that each of you has a meaningful holiday season. The staff of Green Country and I look forward with you to the coming year and the many ways that we can honor those who have died by keeping them alive in our thoughts and good works. \*

Compassionate Hospice Patient

# Leaves Lasting Impression

Raye Ann Blaylock is recognized by her family and friends as a loving mother, dedicated teacher and compassionate friend.

Blaylock says her life is filled with great adventures. She ran the Tulsa Run fun run two years in a row, enjoys camping, attended rodeos, and learned to paint as an avenue to express herself.

"Painting provided quiet time for me as well as noise free time from the daily routine of duties," Blaylock said. "I was even brave enough to enter a professional art show and won first place! What a pleasant surprise!"

Though she has many joys in her life, one of the biggest is her daughter, Kara. Because Kara was born hearing impaired, Blaylock became fluent in sign language. She also made a long commute every day to allow Kara to attend a school that met her needs.

Blaylock's drive to work hard and her dedication carried over into her career, including teaching preschoolers throughout Green Country at Head Start.

Cheryl Taylor, Blaylock's long-time friend, said she just has a special bond with children.

"She was always there for her kids at Head Start, loving them as if they were her own," she said. "And the kids loved her enthusiasm and dedication."

Blaylock retired from teaching after a diagnosis of liver failure. At home in a nursing facility in Cleveland, her most frequent visitor and friend is Wendy Bowman, a Hospice of Green Country home health aide.

"We grew up together," explains Bowman. "My memories of childhood with Raye Ann are filled with tumbling and twisting during gymnastics. That athleticism poured over into adulthood as she and Kara shared a passion for softball."

Taylor adds that even as she struggles with her illness, Blaylock remains a truly genuine person who thinks of others in her community.

"She is so loving and always thinks of others instead of herself," Taylor said. "She would give the shirt off her back to make sure someone else is safe. It has been an honor to be her friend." \*

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**Celebrate** *continued from page 1.*

release balloons on the birthdays of their deceased loved ones as a way of celebration. Sometimes they even write messages on the balloons as another way of communicating thoughts and feelings they still hold dear.

Each family's rituals and the meaning given to them are unique. Because the holidays for all religious traditions can be an especially hard time, it's a particularly important time to create traditions or rituals. These help establish a connectedness to your loved one. Some families continue to hang stockings for their loved one. One family has a special picture that's brought out only during the holiday season and prominently displayed. Another family places a picture of their daughter, who died some time earlier, on top of the tree as their "Christmas angel." These acts bring comfort to the families and provide a way for the deceased to remain part of the celebrations.

One important thing to keep in mind — this is your journey. Find acts that are meaningful to you in your time. You might not be ready now or even for several years. It's your decision. When you're ready, you'll find your ways to celebrate the life of your loved one, show thankfulness for all the gifts he or she gave you, and stay connected to the relationship you share. \*

RAYE ANN AND  
DAUGHTER KARA



# Hospice of Green Country Stay-At-Home Tea

*"It is not the years in your life, but  
the life in your years, that counts."*

*— Adlai Stevenson*

On Saturday, December 7, Hospice of Green Country hosted its third annual "Stay-at-Home Tea." This "virtual" fundraising event allowed participants to support Hospice of Green Country without leaving the comforts of home on a chilly, winter day. Funds raised by the Stay-at-Home Tea go toward Hospice of Green Country's Courtesy Care Program. Through this outreach, Hospice of Green Country is able to continue providing compassionate, quality, end-of-life care to patients and families — regardless of their ability to pay.

A special thanks goes to Dr. and Mrs. Kenyon and Karen Kugler for their "actual" assistance promoting the virtual event. According to Elaine Moore-Jones, Hospice of Green Country board president, the tea was once again a "big success."

"Thanks to everyone who participated," said Moore. "It's not too often you can turn out for a benefit event while keeping on your slippers, jogging suit or yard-cleaning duds." \*

## Hospice of Green Country Celebrates Love with Candlelight

Hospice of Green Country's Annual Fall Memorial Service was held on November 10 at the B'nai Emunah Synagogue. The service included inspirational readings and music, along with a poignant message from Rabbi Fitzerman. With the theme of celebrating the life of loved ones lost, Hospice of Green Country staff read the names of patients who have died in the last six months. When a name was read, a family member came to the front to light a candle.

The lighting of the candles expresses thanks for all the loved one's gifts. Sharing the light with others symbolized the way the loved one touched others' lives.

After the HGC patients' names were read, the rest of the audience was invited to come forward, share the names of their loved ones, and light candles to share with their families.

Pam Cox, a Hospice of Green Country volunteer, played the harp for the ceremony. Additional music was provided by Jacob George, Chuck Fluker, Debby Raskin, Diane Thorton, Rebecca Ungerman and Debbie Zanerhaft. \*



STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT: JAN CURTH, CHARLOTTE MILLER, MARILYN MURPHY, PEGGY CAUDLE, SHIRLEY INGLIS, KAREN KUGLER. SEATED: ELAINE MOORE-JONES

## Claremore Office Grows Bigger and Stronger

When Hospice of Green Country established Hospice of Green Country Northeast in October of 2000, the Claremore office had a staff of four.

Over a short period of time the need for hospice services has grown rapidly in Rogers and north Tulsa Counties – and so has the staff and office.

Now, two years later with a staff of 13 and an average patient census of 30, the Claremore office has had to expand.

“We were beginning to bust at the seams!” said Wegie Sumter, community relations coordinator for Hospice of Green Country Northeast, of their previous arrangement. “The office is still in its

original location, 1005 West Archer. Occupying more space, the expansion means more room for a growing non-profit.”

“We are totally elated to have grown this much in just two years,” added Sumter. “It is great to be part of a non-profit and reach out to an area that might not have been able to be reached otherwise. As Claremore citizens we are serving Claremore people in need, we all find the work highly rewarding.” \*



Hospice of Green Country Northeast staff.

## from the president



Elaine Moore-Jones

There is a saying, “If you want something done, ask a busy person.” That is especially applicable to hospice work.

A typical scenario plays out like this: as quick as a call is received from a family inquiring about hospice care, the admit team is on their way to the family’s home. The staff gently imparts the information needed, while reassuring the family that they can help. After numerous phone calls, medical equipment is brought in to help keep the patient comfortable. A nurse administers medication to calm the patient. A home health aid changes the bed, fluffs the pillows and gives the patient a bath. A social worker talks with the family, listening to concerns and finding solutions. Shortly, a chaplain joins the group.

This is what Hospice of Green Country does approximately five to seven times a day. It wouldn’t be possible without the experience, compassion and dedication of every member of the staff.

Margaret Mead once wrote, “Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For indeed, that’s all who ever have.” On behalf of the entire Hospice of Green Country board, I wish to thank every one of the hardworking, dedicated professionals who keep our organization the finest hospice service agency in the Tulsa area. We admire and appreciate your tenacity, professionalism and compassion. That is a combination that cannot be beat.

Elaine Moore-Jones  
President, Board of Directors, Hospice of Green Country

# Spirituality —

## CELEBRATING HOPE

I did not know John (not his real name) before he became sick, but if we die the way we live, he must always have been a person with a true love for life.

His family confirmed my impression of him as a person with an adventuresome spirit. He loved horseback riding down nature trails and growing orchids in his greenhouse. He had a zest for life.

John was in fairly good spirits until we began to talk about the future and his terminal illness. For him, no possible positive outcomes existed — he wanted to die and get it over with. He despaired.

I visited John once a week throughout the remainder of his life. Even though some visits were better than others, we developed a strong relationship. We talked about his fears of pain and how medications would help ease them. We talked about his life. We talked about heaven — he hoped it included fishing. And we talked about spirituality and the many ways it was part of his care.

For John, the main source of spirituality came through the presence of those who loved him. It also manifested itself through his faith with God. He believed God had been good to him, he had a full life filled with lots of friends who cared for him. By faith he knew God would see him through to a place where no pain or suffering existed. His major regret was the belief that his life was ending too quickly .

I asked John if people coming to visit provided hope. He told me, "Only if people are hopeful themselves. If they are up and cheerful — there is a sense of hope. If they are down and look at me with pity in their eyes — it only gets me down."

Over time I witnessed a remarkable change taking place — from despair to joy. John moved past his hopelessness to hope as he shared tears and laughter with those around him. We had conversations about his relationship with God and how that belief got him through his time of grief.

Toward the end, we talked about the funeral, he hummed hymns he wanted to be played and noted scripture passages he wanted read. His wish was for his funeral to be a celebration of life. He left this world as he had graced it, with hope. Those of us who were blessed to spend time with him know he's "gone fishing." \*



# *United Way Day of Caring* COMES TO HOSPICE OF GREEN COUNTRY

Record numbers of volunteers turned out for this year's United Way Day of Caring. To celebrate the day, more than 7,000 people from different companies met Sept. 11 at Driller Stadium to give their time and services, putting in a total of 40,000 hours to complete 552 projects for the community.

Hospice of Green Country welcomed approximately 40 volunteers from American Automobile Association (AAA), Bank of Oklahoma, Fintube Technologies, and SBC. On behalf of Hospice of Green Country, they helped out in many ways:

- The AAA team cleaned four hospice patients' yards.
- Bank of Oklahoma lent a hand coordinating a 5,000-piece mailing for a Hospice of Green Country fundraiser.
- Fintube Technologies built a wheelchair ramp for a patient.
- SBC personnel printed and made repairs at the Tulsa Hospice of Green Country office.

Without this valuable help, Hospice of Green Country employees wouldn't have been able to complete these projects. The benefits provided this day have a ripple effect throughout our community — helping patients, families and the community at large. A special thanks goes out to Bill and Ruth's, at 15th and Lewis, for providing lunch for these Hospice of Green Country volunteers. Thank you to all who gave so unselfishly. The friends who we met and shared the day with will continue to live in our thoughts and hearts with thanksgiving.



The Bank of Oklahoma Green Country by helping

Day of Caring 2002 volunteers.



Employees from SBC brightened up Hospice of Green Country offices with a little paint

Participating for the first time in United Way Day of Caring, the American Automobile Association (AAA) cleaned the yards of Hospice of Green Country patients.



helped Hospice of fundraising efforts.



The team of Fintube Technologies worked diligently to build a wheelchair ramp for a patient

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## hospice programs

### Bereavement Events

Hospice of Green Country's Holiday Workshop was held on November 19. This annual event teaches families how to make the upcoming holiday season the best it can be. Attendees were given an information packet and listened to a panel of speakers who have lost loved ones. They shared their experience of holidays and helpful suggestions to "make it through."

Other upcoming Hospice of Green Country Bereavement programs include: six-week adult groups, kids and teens groups, and the ongoing monthly widow's group. Individual counseling, home visits, community education, and school outreach are always in progress and available. If you have questions or would benefit from participation, please call Kelly Wright, bereavement coordinator, at 747-2273. \*

### *It's That Time of Year*

Don't forget 2002 year-end  
tax benefit of supporting  
Hospice of Green Country.  
*Deadline: Dec. 31, 2002*  
*(Envelope Provided)*

### Hospice of Green Country Staff

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