



Winter 2018-2019

HOSPICE HAPPENINGS

Compassionate care for the terminally ill, their caregivers and their families

Serving our community since 1978

**GIVE
THANKS**
FAMILY • FRIENDS • GRATITUDE

A THANKSGIVING STORY

This is a story about thanks . . . giving thanks, being thankful, and sharing Thanksgiving. This is a story about giving . . . giving life and living life even while facing death.

This is a story about the Brown-Cruce family and how during the worst of times they met the best of humanity in a nurse named Bette Wood.

VHOCC Nurse Bette Wood

Bette became a nurse in 1973 but she knew her calling from a very young age. She joined VHOCC in 2004, after stopping by the VHOCC booth at a Sequim health fair and being intrigued by a volunteer hospice organization which focused more on the patient and functioned without all the medical bureaucracy defined by Medicare and Medicaid.

2008

In 2008 Irving Brown was accepted as a patient by VHOCC. VHOCC nurse Bette Wood arrived at the Brown home and first asked what she and VHOCC could do to make Irv more comfortable. A hospital bed, a wheelchair and toilet chair were provided by VHOCC.

As a hospice nurse, Bette assisted Irv's wife Harriett, teaching her techniques of how to care for Irv, how to show loving devotion without causing pain. She was the trusted professional whom son Erich and wife Debbie relied upon for knowledge and advice. She explained what was happening, what was natural, what to expect in the days and months ahead, to prepare for the unexpected.

In Irv's final days, with the assistance of Bette, Erich learned much more about his father. Bette knew how to approach dying and death, opening the conversations in such a way that felt comfortable and accepting of the natural life process. The profound discussions that can happen at the end of life, and that hospice staff can facilitate and participate in, often lead to deep intimacy in a short period of time.

turn to page 2

Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization, whose service area stretches from Diamond Point to Joyce.

The mission of Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County is to provide physical, emotional and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their families with free around the clock registered nursing availability and trained volunteers.

This support enables patients to live out their final days as fully and comfortably as possible. Ongoing grief support services are also offered to the families and anyone in the community who has experienced the death of a loved one.

Since its inception in 1978, all services have been provided free of charge to patients and their families; VHOCC does not bill any government agency for its services.



Board of Directors

President	Pastor Randy Hurlbut
Treasurer	Nancy Bargar, CPA
Secretary	Michael Bucierka, MSW
At large	Bruce Busch
	Sally Featherstone, BSN
	David Gilbert
	Tim Guthrie, M.D.
	Mary Sherwood, RN
Honorary	Ed Hopfner, M.D.
Class II & Staff	
Office Services Manager	Lyn Gilbert
Patient Care Manager	Bette Wood, RN
Volunteer Services Manager	Astrid Raffinpeyloz

Hospice Hugs

Dungeness Lutheran Church
First Street Haven
KONP & KSQM
Lila Morris Massage
Oak Table Cafe
Peninsula Daily News
Port Angeles Moose Lodge
Port Angeles Senior Center
R/C Club Sequim/Port Angeles
Sequim Bay Yacht Club
Trinity United Methodist Church

Volunteer of the Month

July: Mike Clapshaw
August: Carole Rose
September: Cherste Nilde
October: Charlotte Zedekar

continued from page 1

Caregiving, Friendship, Family

After Irv's death, Harriett and Betty stayed in contact with one another. A relationship, a family, nurtured over 5 years and 3 generations was birthed in the ashes of loss.

Erich and Bette shared a love of gardening and almost every weekend Erich could be found in Bette's garden. Debbie and Harriett often accompanied Erich. One day Erich mistakenly weed-wacked Bette's goji berries; he planted yellow raspberries as a replacement.

In the years following Irv's death the two families celebrated Thanksgivings together, some years at Bette's, others at Erich and Debbie's. Included were Bette's daughter Mackenzie and grandson Jayvyn.

2012

In 2012 Erich was unable to attend Thanksgiving. He exhibited an unusual rash and other signs of illness. He could no longer take 4-year-old Jayvyn to the park. It became difficult for him to sit so he spent more time lying in bed. Mackenzie put fluorescent stars on the bedroom ceiling.

Again, Bette was there to walk with Erich, Debbie and Harriett. The friendship, now fused into family and matured by years and grief, led to deeper conversations between Erich and Bette, about spirituality, beliefs, higher powers and ultimate peace.

In July 2013, like his father, Erich became a VHOCC patient. And in August 2013, like his father, he died of prostate cancer. During Erich's failing health Debbie questioned whether she had done enough to show Erich how much she loved him. Debbie was frightened, unsure she could participate when Bette offered to walk her through washing Erich's body. Bette encouraged her, helped her through the deeply personal and loving experience. When complete Debbie felt an inner calmness, a healing, confident that Erich knew how much he was loved.

When Debbie speaks of VHOCC nurse Bette Wood, she speaks of empathy and optimism even in the grimmest circumstances, infectious hope, appropriate humor and lightheartedness. She speaks of practical assistance with difficult and unfamiliar tasks as in changing adult diapers and methods of lifting. She speaks of how even the VHOCC volunteers delivering equipment were understanding, empathetic, respectful. She speaks of the VHOCC prevailing premise that the patient is always the one in control. She reflects on the eternal gratitude and love for an organization that is defined by its people and their humanity.

In November 2013 Debbie joined Bette and her family for Thanksgiving. The two families, now joined by years of love and loss, scattered Erich's ashes below the yellow raspberry bushes.

Joanne Yerkes, VHOCC Volunteer

Maybe

Lessons Learned

When I wander don't tell me to come and sit down.
Wander with me.
It may be because I am hungry, thirsty, need the toilet.
Or maybe I just need to stretch my legs.
When I call for my mother (even though I'm ninety!)
Don't tell me she has died.
Reassure me, cuddle me, ask me about her.
It may be that I am looking for the security
that my mother once gave me.
When I shout out please don't ask me to be quiet... or walk by.
I am trying to tell you something,
but have difficulty in telling you what.
Be patient. Try to find out.
I may be in pain.
When I become agitated or appear angry,
Please don't reach for the drugs first.
I am trying to tell you something.
It may be too hot, too bright, too noisy.
Or maybe it's because I miss my loved ones.
Try to find out first.
When I don't eat my dinner or drink my tea
It may be because I've forgotten how to.
Show me what to do, remind me.
It may be that I just need to hold my knife and fork
I may know what to do then.
When I push you away
While you're trying to help me wash or get dressed,
Maybe it's because I have forgotten what you have said.
Keep telling me what you are doing over and over and over.
Maybe others will think you're the one that needs the help!
With all my thoughts and maybes,
Perhaps it will be you who reaches my thoughts,
understands my fears, and will make me feel safe.
Maybe it will be you who I need to thank.
If only I knew how.

Anonymous.

*Thank you to Colleen Cunningham,
reception volunteer, for bringing this poem to our attention.*

All experiences as a respite volunteer can be wonderful teaching moments. Volunteers tend to remember their first patient. Especially in cases where a patient, deemed not near death, suddenly dies and proper goodbyes have not been made.

Such was the experience of one of our long-time volunteers: "always say our goodbyes each time we leave them." Twenty years after this first assignment, this volunteer still thinks of her first patient, and how they listened to music together. To this day, she still owns a tape of his favorite song.

Adapted from Betty Conger, respite volunteer

Cuddle up with a book this winter!

Fiction

The Friend by Sigrid Nunez
The Story of Arthur Truluv by Elizabeth Berg
The Keeper of Lost Things by Ruth Hogan
The House of Broken Angels by Luis Alberto Urrea
The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce
The Buried Giant by Kazuo Ishiguro
Everybody's Fool by Richard Russo
Census by Jesse Ball
Horace Winter Says Goodbye by Conor Bowman
Eternal Life by Dara Horn
Our Short History by Lauren Grodstein
Less by Andrew Sean Greer

Nonfiction

The Bright Hour by Nina Riggs
Tell Me More by Kelly Corrigan
Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved by Kate Bowler
Almost Everything: Notes on Hope by Anne Lamott
The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion
No Time to Spare: Thinking about what matters by Ursula K. Le Guin
The River of Consciousness by Oliver Sacks
Gratitude by Oliver Sacks
Devotions: the selected poems of Mary Oliver by Mary Oliver
Quicksand: what it means to be a human being by Henning Mankell

Courtesy of our local library

2019 Polar Bear Dip – January 1, 2019 10am Hollywood Beach – Port Angeles

This will mark the 31st year for the Polar Bear Dip and the 7th year as a fundraiser for Volunteer Hospice. Once again, VHOCC will have a booth at the beach to provide hot, share information about Hospice, collect donations, and **recruit volunteers**. Please join us by taking the plunge or enjoying the spectacle. We would love to see you there!!

Dan Welden, office volunteer



VOLUNTEER HOSPICE OF CLALLAM COUNTY

Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County
540 E. 8th St.
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Olympic Mailing
Services

**We are moving soon
to 829 E. 8th Street
in Port Angeles**

When you switch to email delivery, you make a silent donation! THANK YOU.

January 1, 2019

Hollywood Beach, Port Angeles



Benefitting Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County

Hot beverages, muffins & cookies

Events

December 1-31, 2018, Radiant Light Christmas Tree, VHOCC Office, Port Angeles
December 11, 2018, VHOCC Holiday Luncheon & Annual General Meeting, Port Angeles
January 1, 2019, Polar Bear Dip, Hollywood Beach, Port Angeles

Community Orientation to Volunteer Hospice

First Thursday every month, 11 am - noon, Sequim
First Friday every month, 10 am - 11 am, Port Angeles
(call the Volunteer Services Manager 360-775-7806)

Programs: information & register at 360-452-1511

Community Education & Volunteer Training Series

Fridays, March 22 - April 26, 2019, 1:30 – 3:30 pm, Sequim

Grief Support Groups

Sequim: Mondays, Jan. 28 – Feb. 25, 2019, 1 - 3 pm

Port Angeles: Tuesdays, Mar. 12 – Apr. 23, 2019, 2 - 3:30 pm

Check-In Support Groups in Sequim and Port Angeles (after completion of one of our Grief Support Groups)

"Living Alone Now" Workshops

Workshops organized around practical matters for those who have lost a spouse or partner: Home & Auto Maintenance, Shopping & Cooking for One, Medicare/Medicaid/Long-term Care Issues, Consumer Protection, and Self-Care. Check with office for 2019 dates.

One-on-One Grief Support to anyone in the community