



hospice highlights

Hospice of Amador and Calaveras is a non-profit agency serving primarily Amador and Calaveras Counties

P: 209.223.5500 • F: 209.223.4964 • www.hospiceofamador.org • FALL 2010

Hospice Serves More Patients Than Ever Before

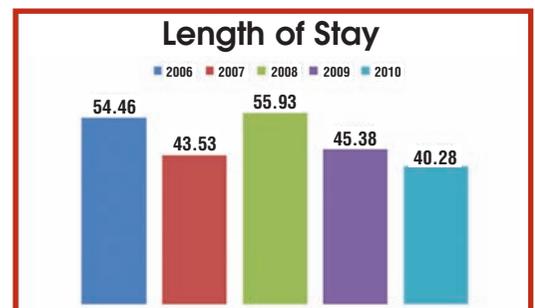
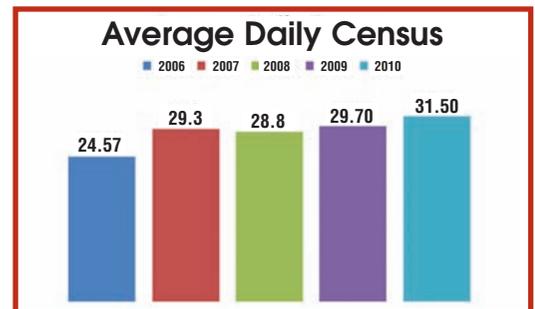
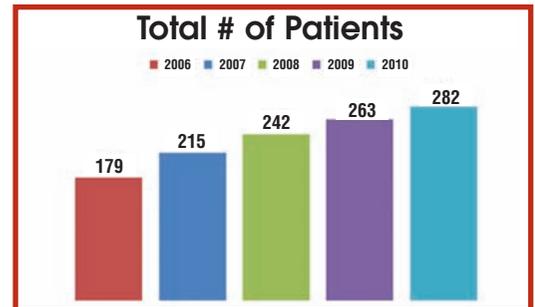
During the past year Hospice of Amador & Calaveras provided service to more patients and families than ever before in our history. As this chart shows, last year we served 282 patients and families. Of these, 97 (35%) lived in Calaveras and 183 (65%) lived in Amador. We are pleased to be able to continue providing services to those patients and families who want to live their final days to the fullest with hospice care.

Average Daily Census

In this graph we see that the average number of hospice patients receiving care each day has increased over the past several years from approximately 24 to 32 patients per day.

Length of Stay

The length of time a person is on hospice care is important in many ways and can certainly impact the quality of the end of life experience. When folks wait too long to call hospice, it is very difficult for the patients and families to take advantage of all the services hospice has to offer. In this chart we see a very disturbing trend. Over the past 3 years the length of stay for hospice patients has continued to decrease from an average of approximately 56 to 40 days. That is over 2 weeks of care that patients and families are missing out on. I encourage each of us to remind our loved ones that they have an option to exercise more control during their end of life process. Hospice can help. Call hospice to learn more about how to live your life to its fullest with the help of the entire hospice team.



"Accessorizing is everything," says Dave!

Welcome Dave Carlton

Please stop by the Jackson Thrift Store and welcome Dave Carlton, the new thrift store manager. Dave joined our team when Lynne Standard-Nightengale, our long-standing store manager, retired in August this year. Dave brings over 20 years of retail experience and a big hospice heart to our organization. Welcome Dave! Remember, every dollar you spend at the hospice thrift stores helps make sure we can always provide service to anyone who needs our help, regardless of their ability to pay.



Dave discovers new passion in life...Aloha shirts!



Calendar of Events

Tuesday, October 19
4-6pm

Hospice Open House

Hospice Corporate Office
1500 S. Hwy 49, Jackson

Tree of Lights

Saturday, December 4
Calaveras Senior Center,
San Andreas

Sunday, December 5
Hospice Thrift Store,
Jackson

You're Invited!

Please plan to support this year's Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony to be held December 4th and 5th. This event continues to bring solace and support to all of those who attend. It is a very special and meaningful way to remember your loved ones during this special one-hour tree lighting ceremony sharing support, music, love and treats! By purchasing the memorial lights on the tree, you are also supporting the important work of hospice. When we mail our invitation to purchase lights in November, please

respond and then join us this year for the Annual Tree of Lights Ceremony!



Hospice Open House

Please stop by on October 19th from 4-6PM to meet some of our staff and board members and to enjoy some hot cider. Hospice of Amador & Calaveras will be hosting an open house for friends and community partners. We hope this will be a time of sharing and getting to know more about all of the various services hospice can provide. We hope you will drop by and say hello. Let us know how you think we are doing and what else we could be doing to support you and your loved ones during the end of life. Share your thoughts and ideas and enjoy some nice hot cider and goodies on a cool fall evening with your friends at hospice!

Surviving the Holidays - Thoughts on Coping...

Knowing the pain the holiday season can bring, here are some helpful thoughts which other bereaved persons have shared, with the hope of making the holidays easier to handle. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays.

Find a way to acknowledge the person who is missing. Include your loved one in your thoughts. That may be as a toast during a holiday dinner, a visit to the cemetery, or the burning of a special candle. But here, too, remember what will and will not work for you. If you know that a toast at dinner will be too upsetting, plan another way to make a remembrance.

Plan ahead. It's a good idea to make a list of those things that are important to you in terms of celebrating the holidays. Know ahead of time that your feelings will come in waves and that you will have good days and bad days. When you know what to expect, you can take advantage of and enjoy the good days and not feel so devastated by the bad days.

Don't be afraid to make changes: it really can make things less painful!

- Open presents Christmas Eve instead of Christmas morning
- Have dinner at a different time
- Let the children take over decorating the tree, making cookies, etc.

Know that whatever you choose to do this year, you may decide to handle things differently next year. Growth and change go hand in hand.

Be realistic – recognize that we need to set limits and do those things which are meaningful for our families



and ourselves. Don't set yourself up by putting yourself in a situation that makes you uncomfortable or unhappy.

Our greatest comfort may come in doing something for others; some people feel they can acknowledge their loss more meaningfully by:

- Giving a gift in memory of our loved one
- Donating the money we would have spent on our loved one for a gift to a particular charity
- Adopting a needy family for the holidays
- Inviting a guest (foreign student, senior citizen, etc.) to share your festivities

Plant a tree, flower or plant to celebrate the life of your loved one, sending life into the future. Plant daffodil bulbs and watch for new life in the springtime.

Get plenty of rest.

Be gentle with yourself – everyone handles grief differently.

For more information and support with how to effectively process your grief, call Nancy, our Bereavement Coordinator, at 223-5500 or visit our website at http://www.hospiceofamador.org/grief_services.htm

Connecting with your Loved Ones

Hospice Journey is "a place to engage in meaningful conversations, share updates, express your love, and share your journey." Hospice Journey provides free, private, personalized websites which you can create in just a few minutes. In 1995 as a high school student, Vanessa Callison-Burch became a hospice volunteer with Hospice of Amador & Calaveras. About a year ago she reached out to Dan Riordan, Executive Director of Hospice of Amador & Calaveras, to talk about a dream she was developing that would allow family and friends to share their end of life journey with loved ones wherever they were. Through an amazing year of development, consultation and hard work, Vanessa and her team have developed this treasure to share with all. Please visit www.hospicejourney.org to learn more about this important way patients, families and friends can share their hospice journey.

Hospice Journey is offered by The Samvara Project, a 501(c)(3) non-profit.



Fall
Message
from
Dan Riordan,
Executive Director



The Parable of the Twins

Once upon a time, twin boys were conceived in the same womb.

Weeks passed, and the twins developed. As their awareness grew, they laughed for joy, "Isn't it great that we were conceived? Isn't it great to be alive?"

Together the twins explored their world. When they found their mother's cord that gave them life they sang for joy, "How great is our Mother's love that she shares her own life with us."

As the weeks stretched into months the twins noticed how much each was changing.

"What does this mean?", asked the one.

"It means that our stay in this world is drawing to an end", said the other one.

"But I don't want to go", said the one, "I want to stay here always."

"We have no choice", said the other, "but maybe there is life after birth!"

"But how can it be?" responded the one. "We will shed our life cord, and how is life possible without it? Besides, we have seen evidence that others were here before us and none of them have returned to tell us that there is life after birth."

And so the one fell into deep despair saying, "If conception ends with birth, what is the purpose of life in the womb? It's meaningless! Maybe there is no mother at all."

"But there has to be", protested the other. "How else did we get here? How do we remain alive?"

"Have you ever seen our mother?", said the one. "Maybe she lives in our minds. Maybe we made her up because the idea made us feel good."

And so the last days in the womb were filled with deep questioning and fear and finally the moment of birth arrived.

When the twins had passed from their world, they opened their eyes and cried, for what they saw exceeded their fondest dreams.

Over the past 30 years I am fairly certain that this has been the coolest summer we have ever experienced in Amador and Calaveras Counties. Would you agree? 83 degrees on August 20th? Opening my windows in the very early evening to feel the cooling air move throughout our home. I am not sure I have always appreciated these types of gifts as much as I seem to these days. I think working with hospice continues to awaken me to the present moment. As my greatest role models who live their final days on hospice remind me, "Dan, every day is a gift!" And I know, coming from them, this is not lip service. This is the simple truth. Every day is a gift. As fall approaches I can hardly believe that this cool summer is about to pass. What comes next, we don't know. A friend sent me this parable today and I thought you might enjoy it.

*Peace to
each of you.*





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Have you seen this truck?
We now offer pick-up service
for furniture and larger items...
Call today to donate!

Four ways you can **Support** hospice

- 1 Every time you receive a hospice **newsletter** donate **\$25.00** to hospice. If everyone who received the newsletter did this it would generate **\$20K per year!**
- 2 Log on to www.hospiceofamador.org and click on the "How You Can Help" button. Donate whatever you can! It's safe, it's easy, it's tax deductible, and best of all it will enable your local hospice to continue providing quality end of life services to anyone who needs them.
- 3 **Volunteer** by calling Ann at 223-5500, there are many ways to volunteer. Call Dave at 223-4762 to volunteer at either thrift store.
- 4 **Donate** your lightly used articles of clothing and home furnishings to the Hospice Thrift Store (10776 Argonaut Lane, Jackson) and at 570 North Main, Angels Camp. Call for donation hours, 223-4762.

Need a speaker?

Remember if you or your group would like to hear more about hospice services, the thrift stores, volunteerism, Griefbusters or more, call Dan to set up a speaking engagement. We would be happy to join your group and share the hospice story!



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Dan Riordan

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