



CornerStones

A Newsletter From Oak Grove Cemetery

Winter ♦ 2003 ♦ Vol I ♦ No. 4



Trust ♦ Compassion ♦ Respect

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Frequently asked questions about hospice

We asked Pat Niemeier, R.N., Director of Franciscan Skemp Home Health Services, to answer some of the commonly asked questions about hospice. Here are her answers:

What do hospice workers do?

Hospice offers assistance on everything from routine matters like filing insurance, to things that are more difficult - like dealing with loss. Hospice cares for loved ones and works closely with the patient, primary caregiver and a team of dedicated professionals. They offer assistance and obtain resources for the family in order to help with not only the physical pain but also the emotions, relationships, finances and spiritual strength needed for the patient.

A multi-disciplinary team supports the patient and family. This team consists of physicians, nurses, aides, social workers, spiritual caregivers, and volunteers. Hospice addresses all symptoms of a disease, with special emphasis on controlling a patient's pain and discomfort. They also focus on the emotional, social and spiritual impact of the disease on the patient, family and friends. Hospice also offers bereavement services to the family for a year following a death.

At what point in an illness does hospice become involved?

The hospice program is for patients in the end stages of a disease, who are no longer undergoing active treatment to cure their illness. Hospice is the love and care for patients with a terminal illness and the care of their families.

The patient's physician needs to sign a form stating that, in their best estimate, the patient has six months or less to live. If the patient lives longer, there is no problem (continuing hospice care) as long as the patient continues to show decline.

What are the benefits of hospice to the dying person?

Hospice improves the patient's quality of life through education, pain control and caring for their individual needs. Many hospice patients are able to spend their final days at home. This provides both the emotional and physical support needed for them and family to make the best of whatever time is remaining.

Again, the team concept plays a role here in meeting all of the patient's needs. In addition to all the disciplines described above, hospice also covers physician services, medical equipment and supplies, drugs related to the terminal illness, and respite care.

What are the benefits of hospice to the person's loved ones?

Hospice provides training and support for caregivers (i.e., the family and friends caring for the terminally ill person). With help from the hospice team, the caregiver can learn to administer pain medication, provide day-to-day care and control the patient's symptoms.

Many times the family also needs hospice services to help them work through the many changes occurring in their lives. Hospice offers the family a respite, or break, from caring for the patient (if needed). The patient can be in a facility that provides respite care for up to five days at a time.

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Message from Val

Executive Director

In this issue of *CornerStones*, we look at two issues related to death and dying. The first is hospice, the program that assists dying people and their families. Although I have not witnessed their work first-hand, the people who have tell me that hospice workers and volunteers have made an incredible difference in their experience with a dying loved one. The second issue is what to say to someone who has lost a loved one. When I'm faced with this situation, I am torn between the desire to

say something comforting and the fear of saying the wrong thing. Hopefully, this article will help us to all be more articulate in these difficult situations.

Thank you for reading our newsletter, and as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Val

Val Reinke
Executive Director

What to say

when someone dies

We have all been there - we're face-to-face with someone who has lost someone dear to them and we don't know what to say. "Many people feel uncomfortable at funerals or running into someone when they know that someone close to that person has died. Sometimes people don't say anything," says Pat Niemeier, R.N., Director of Franciscan Skemp Home Health Services.

What should you say? Pat says, "True support does not mean that we are there to 'cheer the person up.' Rather, we are there to be present to the bereaved. The gift of listening is powerful. Many bereaved people need to talk about death over and over again. Other times the bereaved may need to be quiet."

Pat suggests that we allow for the silence. "Your presence alone can be comforting. However, do not be afraid to provide words of comfort and a shoulder. Just letting them know that you are willing to talk with them may be what they need in order to talk about their loved one and thus begins the healing process," says Pat.

It can be especially difficult when the person who died is a baby or child. Maryellen Paudler, M.S.S.W. the Hospice Director of Gundersen Lutheran offers this advice, "I think it is always appropriate to start by expressing how sorry you are for the death of their child. Also, that you can't imagine what they must be going through. Offer a hug if that is comfortable to you and it is appropriate."

She adds, "We can't take away their pain but we can be with them in their pain. We show our willingness by listening to whatever they want to talk about related to this very difficult grief. Allowing people or getting people to talk about the thoughts and feelings they have is very compassionate, it shows that we care and helps people begin the healing journey."

Pat agrees that active listening is key and suggests saying things like, "This has to be a hard time for you. Does it help to talk about (name)?"

Some things that people say in these situations can be counterproductive. Pat suggests avoiding the words, "I know just how you feel." She says, "We cannot truly know what another person feels, so it's best to come up with an alternative."

Another phrase that should be avoided is "You can't stay sad forever."

"When you say this you deny the fact that being upset and expressing strong emotions is a very necessary part of healing," Pat says.

Pat offers these additional suggestions for how to express yourself to someone who is grieving:

Instead of:

"Time heals everything."

"Try to look for the good in this situation."

"Your loved one is better off."

"The Lord never gives us more than we can handle."

"Try not to cry."

"I know just how you feel."

"Let me know if I can do anything."

You could say:

"You must feel as if this pain will never end."

"This is just too painful to bear."

"Your loved one is no longer suffering, but I know you are."

"This must be very hard for you."

"It's okay to cry - cry as much as you need to."

"I can't even imagine how you must feel. Just know how much I care."

"I'll call tomorrow to see how I can help."

Famous

sites:

In The Cemetery: Civil War monument

This gray granite structure, also referred to as the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) Monument, is a memorial to La Crosse area veterans of the Civil War. It features a granite statue of a Union soldier. Inside the monument, an airtight box contains the names of all who contributed to the memorial and the names of the members of the Wilson Colwel Post that promoted the idea. The monument was dedicated on Memorial Day 1913.

Flanking the monument are two solid brass Civil War era cannons that were placed on the site in 1916. They were referred to as "napoleons" because of their similarity to a fieldpiece popular in France during the reign of Louis Napoleon. The cannons weigh 1,200 pounds each and had a range of about one mile. These cannons could fire four types of projectiles and were used by both sides in every major battle of the Civil War.

Civil War monument



Self-Guided Walking Tour

Brochures Now Available

You can easily visit the Civil War Monument, along with several other historic sites in Oak Grove Cemetery, thanks to our self-guided walking tour brochure. This guide leads you to gravesites of famous people, as well as interesting structures and works of art. You'll also learn about the lives of the people buried in the cemetery, including G. Heileman, the Hixon Family and the Tranes.

The guide is free of charge and is a great way to learn more about area history - and get a little exercise at the same time. Call us or stop in for a free copy of the brochure.

It's Time To Think Spring At Oak Grove Cemetery

This year's grave side spring flower vase includes dracaena, geraniums, petunias and vinca vines, planted in premium soil that includes a slow release fertilizer and water crystals. We take care of everything. The flowers receive adequate watering and we carefully remove spent flowers (deadhead) to encourage additional blossoms. If there's a problem with insects, we'll spray and monitor the plants. At the end of the season, we'll clean, disinfect and store the vase for you, for next year.

Check the flower vase option you prefer:

- Annual Flower Vase Planting (reorder): \$49.06
- Annual Flower Vase Planting, Vase and Stand: \$106.56
- Special Care Flowers (Vase and Stand purchased previously): \$2,479.25
- Special Care Flowers, Vase and Stand: \$2,536.75

Flowers will be placed on the site before Memorial Day for orders received by May 1 and will be removed after September 15. Special Care Flowers are placed automatically year after year.

Your name: _____

Name of deceased: _____

Your address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

e-mail: _____

Note: Seasonal décor will be available for purchase for crypts and niches. Please contact our office if you are interested.

For more information call (608) 782-6956.

Please return this form along with your payment by May 1, 2003 to Oak Grove Cemetery, 1407 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601

term Of The Issue: Hospice (hás • pis) v.



"The word hospice stems from the Latin word hospitium, meaning guesthouse," says Pat Niemeier, R.N., Director of Franciscan Skemp Home Health Services. "It was originally used to describe a place of shelter for weary and sick travelers returning from religious pilgrimages. During the late 1960s, Dr. Cicely Saunders, a British physician, began the modern movement by establishing St. Christopher's Hospice near London. St. Christopher's organized a team approach to professional caregiving, and was the first program to use modern pain management techniques to compassionately

care for the dying. The first Hospice in the United States was established in New Haven, Connecticut in 1974."

Maryellen Paudler, M.S.S.W., the Hospice Director at Gundersen Lutheran, adds, "Hospice has evolved to be more than a place to provide care at the end of life. Today it means a concept of care, provided by a specific program, to people in their own homes. In the mid-1980s, the federal government included hospice care as a reimbursable service under Medicare for all Medicare beneficiaries. In the past ten years, many private insurance policies now cover hospice care as well."



Please Send Me:

- General information about Oak Grove Cemetery
- A 2003 price list for Oak Grove Cemetery

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

e-mail: _____

- Please have someone at Oak Grove Cemetery call me regarding pre-arrangement counseling or other questions related to the cemetery.

Telephone number: _____



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Send to: Oak Grove Cemetery, 1407 La Crosse Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601



Oak Grove Cemetery News Briefs



Adam Casper

Adam Casper named superintendent

The Oak Grove Cemetery Association is pleased to announce the promotion of Adam Casper to Superintendent. Adam has an extensive background in cemetery, crematory, mausoleum and building operations. He has worked as a member of the grounds crew, lead man and assistant superintendent over the past eleven years at Oak Grove Cemetery.

Adam is a La Crosse native, who graduated from Central High School in 1989. He enjoys hunting and fishing in his free time.

Lot owners meeting

People who own lots at Oak Grove Cemetery are invited to attend the annual lot owners meeting set for: Wednesday, April 23, 2003 at 9 a.m. - State Bank Conference Room (2nd Floor).

Need a Speaker?

Does your organization need a speaker? Let Oak Grove help! We can give talks on the history of the cemetery, pre-arrangement issues/estate planning, and cremation. Give us a call at (608) 782-6956.

Annual Holiday Event: A Light to Remember

Oak Grove Cemetery helped people remember their loved ones in a special holiday event. "A Light to Remember" was held December 15, 2002.

More than 80 individuals participated in one of two celebrations in our chapel and created an ornament for their loved one. This year's event is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 14.



Our Mission:

Oak Grove Cemetery exists to provide a beautiful and serene final resting place. We will provide comprehensive services for clients in an environment of trust, compassion and respect. The cemetery recognizes its importance as a historical resource, and is committed to enhancing public knowledge of that history.

Revised rules and regulations

The Oak Grove Cemetery Association Board of Trustees has revised the rules and regulations. These are available online at our web site www.oakgrovecemetery.com.

If you would like a hard copy of the rules and regulations, send a self-addressed stamped (\$.60 postage) envelope to Oak Grove Cemetery, 1407 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601.