

HEARTBEAT

Volunteers are the Heart of Hospice

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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

The third week of April each year is National Volunteer Week whereby we recognize our volunteers for their hard work and service to our organizations. This year's theme is "Celebrating People in Action." As we are experiencing an economic recession, I would encourage us all to re-focus and remind ourselves why volunteerism is so important and helps to provide hope to our society particularly during these challenging times. Please know your hard work, dedication and service does not go unnoticed. We truly could not do our work without our volunteers. Research tells us there is a direct correlation between volunteerism and life satisfaction that result in feelings of

competence and significance. We commit to ensuring your skills are utilized, honored and appreciated as you bring tremendous value to Evercare™ Hospice and Palliative Care. May you equally be completely satisfied and know how very much you are celebrated as an Evercare Hospice Volunteer, not only this week but each day throughout the year!

Jennifer Jackson
National Team Lead, Volunteer Services

Our Awesome Volunteers:

The numbers are in! In 2008, Evercare Hospice volunteers — at sites across the country — donated a total of **9,102** hours of service to our patients! At the current rate used for conversion, that translates into **\$175,149** of savings — funds that are freed up for other aspects of patient care, thanks to the hard work of our amazing volunteers. Some special individuals are highlighted in the articles to follow.

Contents:

Music Therapy.....	2
Artist Volunteer	3
Volunteerism Chain.....	3
Keep Your Resume Current.....	3
Veterans Ceremony.....	4
CaringBridge Web Site.....	4
Discussions Lower Costs.....	4

For more information or to learn more about Evercare™ Hospice and Palliative Care, please visit us online at:

www.EvercareHospice.com

Music Therapy: I Love What I Do — Birmingham, AL

Being a volunteer can be a challenging job, especially for someone who works part-time, has two children, and runs a busy household. But for **Angela Howard**, it is a calling.

Angela joined our team of volunteers in Birmingham, AL in December 2008. She came to us through a referral made by a member of our team. When I called Angela to discuss volunteering with hospice, she was quick to commit her time and unique talents to seeing five patients, two times a month, in the local nursing facility.

What makes Angela so unique? She plays multiple instruments, has an awesome singing voice, is full of energy, is extremely creative, has a great sense of humor, likes to have fun, and absolutely loves what she does. Angela is a credentialed professional music therapist, and is certified to practice music therapy by the Certification Board for Music Therapists. She uses musical instruments and physical and cognitive therapy techniques in order to develop individualized treatment and supportive interventions to address patients' social, communication, emotional, physical, cognitive, sensory and spiritual needs. She works with people of all ages and ability levels and uses a variety of music therapy techniques. When working with hospice patients, music therapy is used to increase or maintain the patients' level of physical, mental, and social/emotional functioning. The sensory and intellectual stimulation of music can help maintain the patient's quality of life.

Angela typically works directly with the patients, their families, friends and caregivers to develop a plan of care for that patient. The patient and therapist decide upon the music selections and preferred music exercises. A typical therapy session might use sing-along songs, percussion exercises, client-friendly instruments, CD's and tapes, movement, dance and other musical media to afford the patient an enjoyable environment for self-expression, however, each session is tailored to the patient's needs. Angela also provides her services to the entire nursing home through scheduled group therapy sessions.

Angela says that her most memorable moment took place during a group music therapy session in the nursing home. She was leading a sing-along when a patient in the group, who had moderate to severe Alzheimer's, suddenly joined in the sing-along. On this particular day the patient was unaware of her surroundings and the activities. However, when the music started, the client became lucid and actively participated in the rest of the session. The other residents were amazed at her level of participation seeing that she had never participated in any other activity. As the session neared its end, the patient asked Angela to continue playing. She did, playing the guitar and singing a few more songs. The patient then thanked her and said she looked forward to her return.

We are lucky to have Angela in our office (and in the Birmingham area). Angela moved to Helena, AL from Nashville, TN and before that Stockbridge, GA. Angela received her Associates of Arts degree from Gainesville State College, and her Bachelor of Arts degree from Georgia State University where she majored in psychology and music. She worked as a professional musician for a few years before attending the University of Alabama where she earned her equivalency certification in music therapy.

Angela says that flexibility and communication are the keys to balancing her work, family, and volunteering. "I have an understanding husband who loves and supports me," says Angela. "I love what I do, and I do what I love. I am here to help others. If I can remember this, then every day that I volunteer will be rewarding." Angela believes that she was called by God to share this gift with others...to help make patients' lives a bit brighter and a bit easier. Thank you, Angela, for sharing your time and talents with Evercare Hospice!

Misty Altiparmak, VC
Evercare™ Hospice & Palliative Care, Birmingham, AL

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Rhonda Waters— Atlanta’s Artist Volunteer

Not only is **Rhonda Waters** one of Evercare Hospice Atlanta’s most dedicated and compassionate volunteers who tops the charts in patient visit volunteer hours each month, she is also an artist and sculptor who colors our world.

Rhonda, a professional artist for many years, is a painter, sculptor, photographer, potter and more. Among her generous gifts to our volunteer program are two clay hand sculptures done in shadow boxes of a “mother and son” hands. These were done as a final gift from a mom who had ALS to her 4 year old son. Rhonda also decorates the patients’ journals, makes fabric angels, recruited a wonderful donor for

our flower program and made a copper wall sculpture of our Evercare logo for our office.

As our “Artistic Director” Rhonda and her art team co-workers, Vijitha Gutta and Melissa Igoe, add color and depth to our patients and their families lives and our own too!

Rhonda is married to Jan. She’s a mom and a grandma. She blends all of her amazing skills with a contagious sense of humor and profound spirituality. We deeply appreciate all that she does!

Dee Zeitounian
Volunteer Coordinator, Norcross, GA

The Volunteerism “Chain” — Tucson, AZ

In December 2008, I advertised in a newsletter that is distributed to approximately 2,500 active adults in a local homeowners association. I received a reply from Claire Stahler, one of these adults interested in volunteering for Evercare Hospice. Upon talking with Claire, I learned that she was an active hospice volunteer for High Peaks Hospice in Lake George, NY. I am so thankful and blessed to have Claire as one of our Volunteers. I feel like I hit the lottery having her on board. Claire is very well liked by her patient

and patient’s family. The staff at the assisted living home where the patient resides has nothing but good things to say about Claire.

Last week, I received a phone call from Miguel, a local hair stylist. He told me Claire had referred him and his aunt to me and they were both interested in volunteering. So, Claire is not only a terrific volunteer, she is also seeking potential volunteers for me. Of all the 2,500 active adults that the newsletter reached I am truly blessed and thankful that I received a call from the “gem” of this community. Thank you so very much, Claire.

Diane Otero, VC
Evercare™ Hospice & Palliative Care, Tucson, AZ

Keep your resume current!

Try Volunteering. Eighty-one percent of employers view volunteering as relevant work experience, according to a recent CareerBuilder.com survey. Roxanne Ravenel, a job-search coach, says volunteering gives people a sense of purpose and empowerment, which is critical to the self-esteem of job hunters who feel powerless after weeks or months of a fruitless job search. “Volunteering gives job hunters the opportunity to meet decision-makers in their community to which they wouldn’t otherwise have access,” Ravenel says. Decision-makers get to see the job seeker in action, which helps them envision working with that person full time. Volunteering also fills in the “gaps” between jobs and keeps your resume looking current.

Atlanta Evercare Hospice Plans “Honoring Veterans Ceremony”

The Atlanta Evercare Hospice Volunteer Program will be offering an “Honoring Veterans Ceremony” for our vets and their families. This will be an ongoing program with special events on Memorial Day and Veterans Day to honor Evercare Hospice patient-veterans and to celebrate their service to our country.

The Honoring Ceremony will be lead by one of Evercare Hospice Atlanta’s volunteers, **Irene Meddeb**. Irene is an officer in the US Army and has just returned from Iraq. The ceremony for our vets and their families will include a short biography, a description of their service to our country, and the presentation

of a flag pin, an Evercare Certificate of Appreciation, and a framed photo of them being “pinned” by our uniformed volunteer, Irene.

Nancy Kuhn, a Reiki Masters volunteer, came up with the idea for this program. Nancy is very active with the American Legion and offered this idea as a wonderful way to honor Evercare Hospice patients who are veterans. What great teamwork!

Dee Zeitounian
Volunteer Coordinator, Norcross, GA

Evercare Hospice Partners with CaringBridge Web Site

Evercare Hospice recently announced a partnership with **CaringBridge.org**. This free web site has been developed to provide patients and family members a place where they can develop personalized web

sites that support and connect loved ones during critical illness and treatment. Once the web site is developed, families share the address (<http://www.caringbridge.org/evercare>) as they choose. The site is password protected and allows visitors to leave messages and good wishes. The site supports pictures and allows family members to update information frequently. This minimizes phone calls and questions while keeping friends and family aware of condition changes and the progress of the patient’s condition. Volunteers are encouraged to help patients use this new tool.

Discussions Lower Costs at End of Life

A study in the March 9 issue of Archives of Internal Medicine found that patients with advanced cancer who reported talking about their end-of-life wishes with their physicians had significantly lower healthcare

costs in the last week of life which led to fewer cases of aggressive care and a far more peaceful death for patients. Thirty percent of Medicare’s annual costs are spent on the five percent of beneficiaries who will die in a given year. Additionally, about one-third of those dollars spent in the last year of life are spent in the last month. To draw attention to this valuable study, NHPCO issued a press release available online and encourages providers to share news of this research with those in their community.