

Giving That Goes Both Ways

Volunteers, Patients, Family All Benefit From Hospice Experience

BY LYNN CARLSON

Helen Jaynes is as pretty as a picture. Her white hair has been coiffed by a hairdresser this day. She has rosy cheeks, a porcelain complexion and twinkling blue eyes. She wears stylish chestnut-colored slacks and sweater with a turtleneck and gold hoop earrings.

As she talks about her favorite pastime—shopping—she becomes as animated as a teenage girl. "I like to go look, even if I don't buy anything. I love to go to every part of the store. I just like to keep up with the styles. My idea of heaven is racks and racks of clothes."

She is feeling as good as she looks today—she beams when she says so. It's difficult for her visitor to conceive of the fact that this adorable senior fashionplate has congestive heart failure. That her heart can't expel sufficient blood to keep up with her body's metabolism. That she won't recover from it.

Helen is one of the 30 or so Brunswick County patients of Lower Cape Fear Hospice. Hospice care makes it possible for her to remain in her comfortable Brierwood condominium, close by her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Clawson, and her granddaughter and grandson-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Kirtley. Hospice takes care of the details of getting oxygen and a hospital bed and deals with the avalanche of paperwork involved with care of a terminal elderly patient.

But most importantly for Helen and her family, Hospice provides Henri Moulton.

Henri is a registered nurse who retired to Sea Trail from New Jersey and became a Hospice volunteer because she "just missed being involved." She spends two to four hours a week with Helen Jaynes. "We sit and chat, or just look quietly" out Helen's sliding glass windows overlooking Brierwood golf course. "I bring her lots of goodies."

The Hospice volunteer's work is as much for the patient's family as for the patient herself, Henri adds, getting a nod from Helen's daughter Norma Clawson.

"She's just somebody we can rely on to help us through this, to give us time off to take care of other things," Norma says. "It's a lot of moral and emotional support. We feel we have someone to call, and we can depend on things, and schedule accordingly."

In addition to Henri, Norma can rely on a Hospice nurse coming by a couple of times a week to check her mother's blood pressure, and a certified nursing assistant coming by to help Helen get bathed and dressed.

Lower Cape Fear Hospice currently has 205 volunteers who work with nurses, administrators, social workers and bereavement counselors in Brunswick County in an intensive effort to care for about 30 terminally ill patients under its care here, said, Laney Blanton, volunteer coordinator and community relations director.

Only about 55 are involved in patient care. Others are invaluable in helping with every other facet of keeping the program going. "When people want to volunteer for us, we find a place to best use whatever talents they bring to the organization," Blanton explains. "Everyone can't do patient care."

And those who do patient care don't necessarily need a background in medicine like Henri has. "We have some great volunteers who are just moms," Blanton adds.



HELEN JAYNES (left) and Henri Moulton in Helen's backyard at Brierwood.

STAFF PHOTO BY LYNN CARLSON

Henri says volunteering gives her an outlet as well as an opportunity to really feel a part of Brunswick County, despite being a relative newcomer.

"You meet interesting people and all their family members. You are intimately involved with the recipients of Hospice care. You give the family an outlet, too—you are not a relative, and they're not paying you to be there. The recipient and the family can

say things to you they can't say to anyone else."

All patient-to-volunteer and family-to-volunteer communication is confidential, Laney Blanton adds.

Norma adds, "When someone in the family is ill, and there are family members living far away, you try to shield them from things, even though you have things on your mind you need to say. You can't get on the phone and dump on your family."

Hospice volunteers help families deal with the roller coaster of emotions accompa-

nying the care, and ultimately the loss, of a terminally ill loved one. Norma has been with Helen through a heart attack, stroke and the recuperative periods. When her feisty mother is feeling good, Norma is still apprehensive because Helen tends to become "too independent, too active." Even the good times can be stressful.

The issues are different with every patient, Henri adds, so a part of being a good volunteer is being perceptive—hearing what is not said as well as what is.

"Usually, I have dealt with patients who

Love Light Tree At Seaside Will Benefit Hospice

A "Love Light" tree sponsored by Brunswick County volunteers of Lower Cape Fear Hospice offers a special way to share the beauty of the holidays.

This year, the tree will be placed at the corner of N.C. 904 and N.C. 179 at Seaside.

"There are a lot of people in this area who need to be educated about Lower Cape Fear Hospice and its work," said Jill Hope, project coordinator.

Each light on the tree may be sponsored in honor of, or in memory of someone. Lights on the star that tops the tree may be sponsored for \$25 each. A mail-in form appears elsewhere in this issue of *The Brunswick Beacon*. The contributions are tax-deductible and will be accepted throughout the holiday season.

Names of those honored are placed in a "Book of Honor," which will be displayed in the lobby of Century 21 Sunset Realty, whose staff is coordinating the project, starting Dec. 1, when the tree will be lighted, and continuing through Jan. 1.

At 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 16, Lower Cape Fear Hospice volunteers will hold a candle-lighting ceremony at the tree. The Rev. Jerry Lowry, pastor of Seaside United Methodist Church, will read the names from the Book of Honor and lead a brief program.

Proceeds of the Love Light Tree will help support Lower Cape Fear Hospice Inc.'s work in Brunswick County. The not-for-profit agency provides medically-directed care intended to improve quality of life for the terminally ill and their families, by alleviating pain and helping meet their special physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs.

For more information contact Jill Hope or Virginia Loester at 579-1000 or Lower Cape Fear Hospice, 754-5356.

had living spouses who need the relief of talking about things when their loved one is close to death. If it's the wife who's ill, the men have a hard time explaining it to themselves. It's good for them to be able to sit eyeball to eyeball with another woman and talk about, for instance, what his wife will wear for her burial."

It must be so hard, so sad, the visitor remarks.

"The first one is the hardest," Henri says. "You get more at ease."

As emotionally difficult as it can be, Blanton adds, "you get more out of it than the family or the patient. When I'm having a bad day and things aren't going like I think they should, I just stop and go see patients."

Henri Moulton agrees, smiling warmly at her friend Helen Jaynes. "If you want to have some say in your community, you have to give something to it. If you want to make some noise, you'd better be where someone can hear you."

November is National Hospice Month.

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