

## Hospice helps terminally ill prepare for death

BY ABIGAIL WOLFORD  
Staff Writer

### WANT TO HELP?

Marshall Wolfe learned about his lung cancer a week before Thanksgiving last year, said his wife, Frances Wolfe. He had 23 radiation treatments, sending the cancer into remission. However, it came back about two months ago. He entered Hospice a month ago after learning that his cancer was terminal.

"I'm just floored with it [Hospice]. They come along and tell me they can do this and they can do that," he said. "They don't leave nothing undone. I'm just flabbergasted."

"It's the most wonderful organization I know of," agreed Frances Wolfe. "We got the oxygen [for Marshall] yesterday. They brought it out and set it up and explained it to me."

Hospice is an organization that provides medical services and counseling to terminally ill patients and their families. While the organization has an actual building for a few patients to stay, most of their service consists of house calls, like the ones the Wolfes receive.

"We try to control his pain. We provide support for the patient and family. We help with medicines related to his cancer. We're there when they need us," said Pam Howell, the lead social worker at Hospice of Cleveland County, explaining the services offered by the organization. Howell is also the Wolfes' niece.

"There are two things we've found patients fear the most: being in pain and being alone," said Howell. "Those are the things that we try to address."

The main Hospice building has six patients at a time, said Howell, but in total, they treat over 70 patients mainly through home visits.

As the lead social worker with Hospice, Howell said that she does all of the assessments and comes out to meet the patient with the nurse on the very first visit to explain Hospice to the families and help with their needs.

"They're all so kind and ready to talk with you or whatever they need to do," said Frances Wolfe.

"Anybody can make a referral [for Hospice care]," said Howell. The Hospice staff then speaks to the doctor of the patient to get a verbal consent that the patient has six months or less to live. Some of the patients survive the six month diagnosis, though, and Howell said that their care does not end. If the patient's doctor still feels that the patient does not have much longer, the care will continue.

"We've had patients for a year or more," said Howell. "We had one patient for six years. We've also had patients who have gotten better and who didn't need us anymore."

Hospice also has a bereavement program for the families of the patients who aren't so lucky. "Counselors follow the family for thirteen months after the patient dies. They're there for the first Thanksgiving, Christmas and birthday without the patient," said Howell.

"They're just amazing. That's all I can come up with," said Marshall Wolfe.

In his healthier days, the Wolfes loved to travel. They visited all 50 states together, said Frances Wolfe.

"Alaska was my favorite," she said. "We went there twice. We covered quite a bit of territory."

"The biggest part of it [Alaska] was country. It was really big," he said.

They also visited seven countries in Europe with a Christian tour group one year, as well as Mexico. Their last trip together was down the Panama Canal approximately six years ago, she said.

"It was always something I wanted to do," she said.

They also used to enjoy visiting their three children, she said. Their son lives in Marietta, Ga. where he works for Delta airlines and is a colonel in the air force reserves. Their youngest daughter lives in Wilson with the couple's only grandchild, 17-year-old Steven. The oldest daughter moved back home to help with her father.

The Wolfes are long-time members of Beulah United Methodist Church, said Frances Wolfe. They tried to teach their children right and raise them in the Christian faith, he said.

And they were successful, she added. "They all go to church."

"The good thing about Hospice is we're here for both the patient and the family. We see them as being one, and we provide services to both," said Howell.

The couple actually lives really far out in the country on Marshall Wolfe Road. Although several houses dot the road now, Wolfe said he was one of the first to live there.

"I was here first, so I guess it was named after me," he said.

Although he retired from Fiber Industries in 1981, Wolfe said he spent much of his time farming. As a farmer, he planted a little bit of everything, cotton, grain, cow feed.

"It was almost too diversified to make any money," he said. "I needed to be more specialized."

Wolfe was one of the directors of the field crop division of the Cleveland County Fair for at least ten years, he said. "I've been out of it [judging] for two years now," he said.

Interestingly, the first year Hospice had a Christmas party and bake sale, the Wolfes played Mr. and Mrs. Claus, said Frances Wolfe. That was 15 years ago.

Hospice will be holding its annual holiday bake sale fundraiser on November 23, starting at 8 a.m. at the Hendrick Appliance store on East Dixon Blvd. in Shelby. Meat and vegetable casseroles, cakes, cookies, pies and soups will be available to buy.

You can help Hospice make your friends' and neighbors' last days more comfortable by supporting the annual Hospice Holiday Bake Sale November 23 beginning at 8 a.m. at Hendrick Appliance in Shelby. For more information call Hospice of Cleveland County at 487-4677.



Pam Howell, the lead social worker for Hospice of Cleveland County, explains a form to her patient, Marshall Wolfe.

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