CONGRATULATIONS to our very own Regina Mitchell! She is this year’s North Carolina Hospice Volunteer of the Year, selected for the Judith Lund Person Award by the Carolinas Center for Hospice and End of Life Care. She joins Terry Johnson (2003) and Lee Ruckert (2007), previous Duke Hospice winners of this prestigious award. Next time you see Regina, be sure to give her a richly deserved hug.

Our eighteen-hour Patient / Family Support Volunteer Training will be offered the weekend of June 12-14 (Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday). New volunteers, volunteers who have done self-study and volunteers who want a refresher are welcome. If you are interested in working directly with patients and families or volunteering at Hospice at the Meadowlands, call Carolyn for the details. Current volunteers are needed to participate in the volunteer panel the afternoon of Sunday June 14.

A new volunteer opportunity is available to interested current volunteers and those who participate in our upcoming training. At A Moment’s Notice Volunteers for Hospice at the Meadowlands will take 2–3 hour shifts on short notice to sit at the bedside of patients at our inpatient care facilities (the program will start at the Meadowlands and eventually be expanded to Hock Family Pavilion). Volunteers would select the times and days they are willing to be called on short notice. These are very, very important volunteers whose efforts would help in preventing falls and providing a caring presence for patients who are agitated, confused, or just do not want to be alone. AAMN Meadowlands volunteers might read to the patient, write a letter, remind them of the day of the week, or they may just sit quietly so that there is a presence in the room. The main objective is to be a caring presence for patients who cannot be left alone, to help prevent falls by notifying the staff when a patient needs attention, and to make sure our patients are kept as comfortable as possible.

The volunteers at Duke Hospice Inpatient Care Facility at Hock Family Pavilion have been very committed to working extra shifts to ensure coverage from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. They are making a difference by answering the phones, greeting visitors, and helping out wherever they are needed. The next Hock Family Pavilion volunteer training will be offered the week of June 15. If you know anyone who would be interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity, please have them contact Carolyn Colsher.

One of our hospice patients has gone public with his end of life thoughts as he journeys with Duke Hospice care. At 6 feet 10 inches, David Turner is a gentle giant, growing happier every day despite his prognosis, fatigue, and pain. He has shared his story with the Durham Herald-Sun, including a photo accompanying the article “David Turner: His Views on Life and Death” in the May 9 issue—a photo of him with our very own supernurse, Carol Weiner-Bissell. If you have a 7-days-a-week subscription to the Herald you can find this and previous stories about David in the online archives.
A note from a hospice patient who received one of our care shawls:

Dear caring friends,

I want to thank all of you in the project that creates the beautiful shawls for people like me. I have been a knitter for many years so I know the time and concentration it takes to produce a lovely shawl like this. It is more than just beautiful. It is a cozy answer to all my needs. I keep it near me at all times.... lap, shoulders, everywhere. It is a perfect answer - more than I ever dreamed of for comfort. In fact when I curl up for a nap, it covers all five feet of me and yet it is small enough to make a perfect pillow. I thank you.

Lovingly, A Duke Hospice patient

Speaking of Care Shawls—Kudos to Kay Harmon who created 100 care shawls for our patients in less than a year! Almost 2 per week. What an accomplishment! And what a gift of time and talent to 100 of the patients and families we serve. Thank you, Kay. This program clicks along on your faithful needlework.

A series of Grief Support Dialogs are available to all members of the Triangle Community. If you know anyone who is grieving a loss, they may be interested in attending the Duke Community Bereavement Services Dialogs on Grief offered this summer at the Teer House in Durham. Intended for a wide range of grieving people, topics include: Dimensions of Grief, Children’s Grief, Rituals, Loneliness and Loss after Long Term Caregiving, Questions of Meaning, and Recreating the Future. Registration is not required and there is no fee, but donations are appreciated. More information check our website dhch.duhs.duke.edu, or call 919-644-6869.

JUNE CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES:

June 12 8:30 to 10 a.m. DHCH Durham office, HIV/AIDS clinical update inservice, James Harmon ANP, Assistant Clinical Professor, Duke School of Nursing

Thank you thank you thank you

- Thank you to all the volunteers who made OWAN 2009 our most successful event yet. Cardinal State Bank and its volunteers, spearheaded by John Mallard, were incredible as were our own community volunteers.
- Thank you to the gardening angels who have adopted ALL of our patios at the Meadowlands. The spaces are absolutely beautiful, and our patients and families find them such an oasis of serenity and comfort at a very difficult time.
- Thank you to the Brick Dedication and Service of Remembrance Volunteers who helped make the May 14 events so successful.
- The bereavement team wants to thank the bereavement mailing volunteers who faithfully send out letters to bereaved families. Hospice families receive support by mail with a cycle of monthly letters that continue for a year after the death of their loved one. These letters (often as many as 900 or 1000) are sent out by an awesome team of dedicated volunteers. And the bereavement team wanted us to know just how wonderful they are.

A special note from William Holloman, bereavement services:

During the past month I have had the opportunity to review our bereavement programming for fiscal year 2009. There is no doubt about the significant annual contribution that is made by volunteers. Without your support we would be challenged to continue to provide the quality care that we provide. In the past year our children's program has logged over 600 hours of volunteer time. We have facilitated two Brick Dedications and Services of Remembrance, and one Lights of Remembrance Service. Each of these services rely on the presence and support of volunteers. We enjoy seeing you at the bereavement center, but more importantly we value the support you provide to our staff, assisting us to support the grieving individuals in our community. We are grateful for all that you do.
A NEW BOOK IN OUR VOLUNTEER SERVICES LIBRARY:

Chasing Daylight: How My Forthcoming Death Transformed My Life by Eugene O’Kelly. At 53, Eugene O’Kelly was in the full swing of life. Chairman and CEO of KPMG, one of the largest U.S. accounting firms, he enjoyed a successful career and drew happiness from his wife, children, family and close friends. Then in May 2005, Gene was diagnosed with late-stage brain cancer and given three to six months to live. This is the account of his final journey, and a compelling message about how to live a more vivid, balanced, and meaningful life. If you have a patient struggling to let go of a life of power, passion, and control (perhaps even a Type A personality), this book may help you suggest possibilities for growth and closure to bring joy to the patient and family’s final months and days.

We are having another monster Packet Assembly Work Day at the Durham office on Saturday, June 13 from 9 a.m. to noon. We are again making up packets agency-wide and will need a great deal of help that day. If you know anyone who is interested in helping (students age 14 and older are welcome), please give Carolyn a call.

On May 28 DHCH Executive Director Starr Browning conducted volunteer rounds with several of our volunteers. It was an opportunity for her to identify any safety concerns related to the many aspects of our volunteer program, as well as hear from our volunteers about what is working and gather suggestions on how we can improve our volunteer program. If you have any comments or insights about safety concerns or the DHCH Volunteer program that you would like to share with Starr and the DHCH management team, please call Carolyn who will pass the information along.

This is the time of year for annual volunteer evaluations and ride-alongs. If you are currently serving a patient, give Carolyn a call to arrange to share your quality bonding time.

We are converting to a new phone system at the main office. All DHCH staff based at the main office will now have a direct dial number. The main number 919-620-3853 (620-DUKE) remains the same, but Carolyn will have a new number 919-479-0385. For a few weeks both numbers will be in use, then later in June the new number will be the primary way to reach Carolyn. The phone numbers for Hock Family Pavilion (919-613-4663), Hospice at the Meadowlands (919-644-0764), and Unicorn Bereavement Center (919-644-6869) remain the same.

Carolyn will be on vacation June 3–9 in California visiting family. If you have patient related issues that need addressing in her absence, please call the main number and ask for the hospice supervisor on call.

A RESOURCE FOR YOU . . . Continuing Education for June: Notes on Diversity and End of Life Care 2009 National Hospice Foundation of America Annual Bereavement Teleconference.

For more information contact:
Carolyn Colsher, DHCH Volunteer Services Supervisor
(919) 479-0385 e-mail carolyn.colsher@duke.edu
Website dhch.duhs.duke.edu

“There is a light in this world, a healing spirit more powerful than any darkness we may encounter. We sometimes lose sight of this force when there is so much suffering, too much pain. Then suddenly, the spirit will emerge through the lives of ordinary people who call and answer in extraordinary ways.”

----Mother Teresa

And thank you, as always, for everything you do for our patients and families. Carolyn

Mission Statement: Duke HomeCare and Hospice will provide innovative, thoughtful care, using an interdisciplinary team approach, to achieve the best possible outcomes for the patients, families and communities we serve.