From the desk of … Starr Browning, executive director, Duke HomeCare & Hospice

VOLUNTEERS… HANDS THAT SERVE, HEARTS THAT CARE

At this, the beginning of National Volunteer Appreciation Month I want to thank each of our volunteers for all you do in support of DHCH. Consistently, we have volunteers who go above and beyond to help improve the quality of life for our patients and their families. The services you provide—whether it’s sitting with a patient who needs companionship in the home or the Inpatient Facility, running errands, or giving a family member much needed time to themselves—greatly enhance the overall service DHCH provides to our patient base and the community at large. You assist our office staff by assembling admission packets, filing, and helping complete the many tasks that would never get accomplished if it were not for you.

Our continuing projects such as “Oh What a Night,” Camp ReLEAF, and the Care Shawls would not happen if not for your continued support. It is because of you that we have been able to evaluate and embark upon other worthy projects like the Fidget Aprons, At A Moment’s Notice, and the Mystery Caller program. The work you did in helping host the Open House events for the new inpatient facility—Hock Family Pavilion—will have ripple effects in the community for years to come. You provided furniture, rugs, and books, you hung paintings, and even baked goods for our staff and visitors as if you were preparing them for a member of your own family. Just your presence would have been enough but you “owned” this project. Many of you are going to serve as Volunteer Ambassadors for the Hock Family Pavilion, you will ensure that patients and family members are acclimated to the new facility and experience the greatest level of comfort possible.

When we need help you give it in whatever way you can. And it is evident to our staff that you give not only your hands and talents, you give our patients and families your heart. You, dear friends, represent the very best of the hospice movement. Thank you.

As we prepare to accept our first patients at the Hock Family Pavilion we want to salute Regina Mitchell for the many, many hours she has worked on the new volunteer Ambassadors program for our inpatient care facilities. Regina’s assistance has been instrumental in making this program happen. She truly does make a difference. Our hats are off to you, Regina! Thank you.

April is volunteer appreciation month and we want to celebrate our volunteers by hosting a brunch on Saturday, April 18 at our Durham office. Invitations are in the mail. We value all our volunteers and want to spotlight them in April so our staff can get to know them. If you have not already done so, please return the Volunteer Spotlight questionnaire or ask Carolyn to send you another copy.
Our next **Staff / Volunteer Memorial Service** will be April 2 (Thursday), 8:30 a.m. at the Unicorn Bereavement Center in Hillsborough to remember those patients who died in January and February. We recognize that the reality of busy schedules may sometimes prevent you from attending the bi-monthly service that follows your patient’s death. And although we will continue to organize the service to reflect the recent deaths, you are welcome to attend ANY memorial that fits your schedule. We will give you an opportunity to include your patient by name and to share a memory if you so wish. So please consider coming to honor any patient that you have served. For more information or to RSVP, contact Allison Shultz, Unicorn Bereavement Center at 919-644-6869.

“The future depends on what we do in the present.” M. K. Gandhi.

April 16th is **National Healthcare Decisions Day**, an initiative to encourage patients to express their wishes regarding healthcare, and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes, whatever they may be. Even four years after the nationwide attention prompted by the life and death of Terry Schiavo, the conversation about healthcare wishes continues in fits and starts. If you need more information about the informed decisions and paperwork involved in Advance Directives, go to the NHDD website at [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org). And spread the news.

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<td><strong>April 29, 2009</strong>  Hospice Foundation of America annual teleconference, <em>Diversity in End of Life Care</em>, 1:00–4:00 p.m., Durham office. This important conference will (1) define <em>diversity</em> and discuss sources of diversity such as ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, religion, and disability; (2) describe the ways that cultural diversity can both complicate and facilitate end-of-life experiences, including grief and adaptation to loss; (3) discuss the knowledge, sensitivities, and skills necessary to work with culturally-diverse populations in end-of-life care; (4) assess the challenges hospice and palliative care present for culturally diverse groups including, but not limited to, African-Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, Asians and Islamic-Americans; (5) describe effective strategies and programs to work with end-of-life issues with culturally diverse populations including, but not limited to, African-Americans, Asians, Latinos/Hispanics, and Islamic-Americans. Call Carolyn to reserve your space.</td>
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**Brick Dedication and Service of Remembrance Volunteers Needed**….The Unicorn Bereavement Center is requesting your help with our next Brick Dedication and Service of Remembrance to be held in the lovely Carver Gardens behind the UBC on Thursday evening, May 14. The Brick Dedication is for those families who have donated for a memorial brick, but the SOR is open to all grieving persons in our community, and usually lasts less than an hour. Though not specifically religious in nature, it is a spiritual and moving event that includes readings and music, and a time for individual commemoration of the deceased. The Brick Dedication starts at 5:30 p.m., followed by the Service of Remembrance at 6:30 p.m., and we will need volunteers at varying times throughout the afternoon. Outdoor set-up (some heavy lifting) starts at 3:30 p.m., reception / food set-up begins at 5 p.m., and clean-up can take until 8 p.m. We have other jobs within this timeframe (parking, ushering), so you can stay as little or as long as you like, and enjoy the service as well. We could also use donations of baked goods for the reception—always a hit! Mitzi Quint is in charge of these logistics and can be reached at the UBC at 919-644-6869, or by e-mail: mitzi.quint@duke.edu. We always have a good time together, and look forward to hearing from you.
Two of our “limited edition” patios have been claimed already! Only 4 left!

We have turned the corner on winter and spring is upon us. And do we have a deal for you and your itchy green thumb. The Inpatient Care Facility at the Meadowlands is looking for individuals or groups to “Adopt a Patio” this spring. Each of the 6 patient rooms at the ICF has a wonderful little private patio for the view and use of patients and their visitors. We are looking for sponsors to do seasonal plantings and maintenance for each of these little patios to bring an added bit of color, delight, and distraction to people who might really enjoy it. If you can see yourself bringing Mother Nature’s gifts to bear on this project, please give Carolyn a call. Two patios have been adopted so we are on our way.

SAVE THE DATE: It’s that time again! The DHCH Development Department is working on the May 2, 2009 Oh What a Night! Gala to be held at Hope Valley Country Club in Durham. This black tie optional event includes hors d’oeuvres, a plated dinner, desserts, and silent and live auctions. If you haven’t received your invitation and would like to attend, contact Danielle Irving at danielle.irving@duke.edu or call 919-620-3853 x253. We are still seeking sponsors, and we are also looking for groups to underwrite/reserve tables of 10 ($1,000), to purchase tickets at $100/person, and to solicit items (gift certificates, vacation packages, etc.) for the auctions. Please contact Danielle Irving if you would like to help. As DHCH celebrates its 30th year, this year’s gala is going to be extraordinary! Be a part of it!

It has come to our attention that Norovirus may again be present in our service area, specifically in some area skilled nursing facilities. Norovirus is very contagious and can spread easily from person to person. The concern is for children, the elderly, and immunocompromised patients who can become dehydrated from vomiting and diarrhea. As always, hand hygiene is the key to preventing spread of the virus, and protecting your patients, your family, and yourself. Please be extra alert and wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands. If you should develop a norovirus infection, do not visit your patient but do call Carolyn so we can track the virus in our area. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Susan Thomason, DHCH Infection Control Officer, 919-620-3853.

From the CDC: The symptoms of norovirus illness usually include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and some stomach cramping. Sometimes people additionally have a low-grade fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, and a general sense of tiredness. The illness often begins suddenly, and the infected person may feel very sick. In most people the illness is self-limiting with symptoms lasting for about 1 or 2 days. In general, children experience more vomiting than adults. People infected with norovirus are contagious from the moment they begin feeling ill to at least 3 days after recovery. Some people may be contagious for as long as 2 weeks after recovery. Therefore, it is particularly important for people to use good handwashing and other hygienic practices after they have recently recovered from norovirus illness. (http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/norovirus.htm)

DHCH Safety NET (No one Ever goes To visit UNINFORMED) ....

DHCH is developing a safety awareness program to ensure volunteer and staff safety as they go about their duties for our patients and their families. The goal is to have every member of the hospice team made aware of potential concerns (weather, psychosocial, environmental, etc.) as they arise. More information will be forthcoming, but in the meantime, if you have any concerns about your safety or that of other staff, your patient, or the family, please call Carolyn to let her know. Sometimes just being alert to the conditions (think black ice) is enough to ensure your watchfulness and safety.
Playmakers Rep Spotlight on Service (S.O.S.) program. Starting April 1, Playmakers will stage Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. In the best of all possible worlds there will be tickets available to our volunteers as a part of the S.O.S. program, and Playmakers will inform us each Monday about the tickets available during the upcoming week. If you’d like to know when tickets are available, please ask Carolyn to be put on the e-mail notification list. And many thanks to Playmakers for their gift of quality theater to our hospice volunteers. (For information on current and future productions, please go to http://www.playmakersrep.org.)

New book in the Volunteer Services Library: Crossing the Finish Line: The Last Two Weeks of My Father’s Life by Lorie A. Friedman. This very quick read (70 pp.) chronicles the period between the author’s father’s terminal lung cancer diagnosis and his death. She felt caught in the time warp of waiting for her father to die, but in those two weeks she developed a closeness to the hospice employees, learned about the “angel network,” and became all too familiar with her father’s medications. An excellent little book to acquaint the new volunteer with the chaos in the minds and hearts of families new to hospice and to the reality of an impending death in the family. Ask Carolyn to borrow it.

We are having another monster Packet Assembly Work Day at the Durham office on Saturday, May 2 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.

Patient/Family Support Volunteer Training will run in Oxford in this spring for Granville volunteers and anyone else who would like to attend. Please get in touch with Carolyn if you know people who would be good volunteers for hospice and might be interested in training. The need is everywhere.

Got an Opinion? We want your input on our volunteer program, what is working, and how we can improve. Please complete the volunteer survey form sent out in March and return it to Carolyn. Feel free to call if you would like to offer your comments and suggestions in person.

A RESOURCE FOR YOU . . . Continuing Education for April – “The Art of Relaxation,” adapted from FIRST AID FOR BURNOUT & COMPASSION FATIGUE by Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., The American Academy of Bereavement

“Paul Revere earned his living as a silversmith. But what do we remember him for? His volunteer work.”

Susan J. Ellis

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.