Continuing Education Opportunities in August

- **Friday, August 6, 8:30-10:00 a.m., Durham office:** *The Alzheimer’s Project, Part 2: I Remember Better When I Paint: Treating Alzheimer's through the Creative Arts.* (This is the second of a 4-part series changing the way America thinks about Alzheimer’s Disease. Part 1: The Memory Loss Tapes was offered in July.) Day care centers, nursing homes, and assisted-living facilities are using drawing, painting, and museum visits as effective therapies, making it possible to improve the quality of life and restore a dialogue with caregivers. Scientists have discovered that the parts of the brain related to emotions and creativity are largely spared by the disease.

- **Thursday, August 12, 6 p.m., Durham office:** *Workshop on Working with Alzheimer’s / Dementia Patients.* Participants in the workshop will get ideas on how to meaningfully relate to end-stage Alzheimer's and dementia patients as well as tips for handling difficult situations (e.g., distracting patients from anxiety). There will be a panel of experienced volunteers to answer questions and share their experiences. Facilitated by Allison Bulloch, intern.

- **Friday, August 20, 8:30-10:00 a.m., Durham office:** *The Alzheimer’s Project, Part 3: Stories of Caregivers.* This series will have three more parts through the fall and will end in November, which is Alzheimer’s Disease awareness month.

We are continually looking for educational programs that will be useful to our volunteers. If you need information, help, resources, or the like for any aspect of your hospice work or would like to get involved in developing a program or workshop, please let Carolyn know.

The Duke Hospice library has *two new booklets from the Alzheimer’s Association* that you may find helpful in your work with dementia patients: “Late-Stage Care” and “End-of-Life Decisions.” Of particular interest in the “Late-Stage Care” booklet are suggestions on keeping up a personal connection through the senses. The “End-of-Life Decisions” booklet provides guidance in making informed decisions (including a glossary of terms and descriptions of levels of care) and resolving family conflicts. Call Carolyn if you’re interested.
Recent articles of interest to volunteers:

- The New Yorker, Dr Atul Gawande August 2, 2010
  http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/02/100802fa_fact_gawande
  “Letting Go: What Should Medicine Do When It Can’t Save Your Life?” “Like many people, I had believed that hospice care hastens death, because patients forgo hospital treatments and are allowed high-dose narcotics to combat pain. But studies suggest otherwise. In one, researchers followed 4,493 Medicare patients with either terminal cancer or congestive heart failure. They found no difference in survival time between hospice and non-hospice patients with breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colon cancer. Curiously, hospice care seemed to extend survival for some patients; those with pancreatic cancer gained an average of three weeks, those with lung cancer gained six weeks, and those with congestive heart failure gained three months. The lesson seems almost Zen: you live longer only when you stop trying to live longer. When Cox was transferred to hospice care, her doctors thought that she wouldn’t live much longer than a few weeks. With the supportive hospice therapy she received, she had already lived for a year.”
  The July 30 Fresh Air podcast features Terry Gross talking to Dr Atul Gawande about this article Letting Go: Make End Of Life More Humane and physicians hesitancy to tell patients that there’s nothing else they can do, even if statistics show procedures are unlikely to work.

Our patients participated in the studies mentioned below.

  “New Scan May Spot Alzheimer’s” “Until now, the only definitive way to diagnose Alzheimer’s has been to search for plaque with a brain autopsy after the patient dies. Scientists hope the new scanning technique, described June 24 in The New York Times’s series “The Vanishing Mind,” will allow doctors to see plaque while the patient is still alive, improving diagnosis and aiding research on drugs to slow or stop plaque accumulation.”

  “New Test Could Help Detect Alzheimer’s Disease: Who Should Get It?” “At an international conference on Alzheimer’s disease in Honolulu yesterday, a small Philadelphia-based company presented data on a radioactive dye that promises to be a powerful new tool for penetrating the mysteries of the disease. Used in conjunction with a PET scan, the radioactive “tracer” is injected into patients, where it quickly binds to sticky plaques in the brain that have long been considered a hallmark of Alzheimer’s disease.”

  “The Vanishing Mind: Promise Seen for Detection of Alzheimer’s”

Please be careful during this hot, hot weather to keep yourself and your patient hydrated and out of the sun.

Carolyn will be making ride-along visits this summer. If you’d like to get a jump on this (preferring to get it out of the way rather than waiting for Carolyn to call you), call the office to set up your time with her in the field.

Do you remember reading this notice last month?

We are updating our volunteer files to include your emergency contact information. At your soonest convenience (perhaps an e-mail, a snail mail note, or a phone call today?), please send Carolyn the name, relationship, phone number and e-mail information for your emergency contact person.
If you haven’t taken care of this yet, remember that this little notice was meant for you! Call today!
**Care shawl meeting opportunities:** We have received a great number of beautiful shawls even in this hot, sticky weather. Some are dropped off anonymously at the front desk by people who slip away before they can be properly thanked. If you are one of these shy knitters or know someone who is, please accept our heartfelt thanks on behalf of our grateful patients. Upcoming meetings where you can learn new or refresh your old skills will be held …

- **Saturday, August 7 from 1–3 p.m.** A group has begun meeting at Unity Spiritual Care Center in Durham. Contact Patricia Skinner at 919-479-1915 or by e-mail healingtc@aol.com for details.
- **Friday, August 27, noon to 2 p.m.** Our daytime group meets at the Durham office. Feel free to bring your lunch.

If you would like to receive our care shawl meeting notices, please contact Carolyn at carolyn.colsher@duke.edu.

New Volunteer Opportunity:
Our **Bereavement Program is developing a new outreach opportunity** for hospice volunteers who have completed the patient-family support training. New bereavement outreach volunteers will make regular calls of support and send cards to bereaved families. If you have interest in participating in this program currently under development, please give Carolyn Colsher a call.

**Playmakers Repertory Company has announced their 2010/2011 season** for the Mainstage Series, the plays that have historically been available to Duke Hospice volunteers under their Spotlight on Service program. Kicking off with “Happy Days” by Samuel Beckett and concluding in the spring with Joan Didion’s “Year of Magical Thinking,” this season looks to be fantastic. Check out the Playmakers website ([www.playmakersrep.org](http://www.playmakersrep.org)) for more information and contact Carolyn if you'd like to be on the list when (or if) tickets become available. The Spotlight on Service program is a gift to our volunteers and is limited by the last-minute availability of unsold tickets. Please keep in mind that tickets are available on an irregular basis and may not be available at times that are convenient for you. If you would like to attend one of these performances on a specific date, you are advised to purchase tickets for those occasions to guarantee a ticket.

**August Admission Packet Assembly** workday is coming up **Saturday, August 14,** from 9 a.m. to noon. Call Carolyn if you and a friend or two will be coming for the fun. This monthly chore is critical to the smooth functioning of Duke HomeCare and Hospice and our clinicians thank you profoundly. Please join us.

**Three patios are waiting to be adopted at adoption opportunities this Fall at Hospice at Meadowlands.** Thanks to April Perry and family, Anna and Roberta Wallace, Katie Smith, and the family of Pam Upton for adopting patios and gardens this summer. We have had rave reviews from patients and visitors about how much pleasure the patios provide. Once the weather cools we would love to find volunteers interested in doing some fall planting for the remaining patios. For more information please call Carolyn.
We are pulling together a book group in September to discuss Edward Bastian and Tina Staley’s *Living Fully Dying Well: Reflecting on Death to Find Your Life’s Meaning* (Boulder: Sounds True, 2009). The first part of the book is a series of 10 conversations between experts in the end-of-life field (Ira Byock, Joan Halifax Roshi, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, etc.) on topics such as Coming to Terms with Our Mortality, Living Through Our Dying, Are You Living Fully. The second part contains exercises for facing mortality, healing emotional wounds and forgiveness, transforming pain and suffering, and meditations, practices, and visualizations for patient, caregiver, and bereaved. Finishing up with a selected reading list this is a text rich with resources for the hospice volunteer journeying with a dying patient or preparing for his/her own final journey. If you’re interested in joining this discussion group, please call Carolyn with your preference for time of day and day of week. (By the way, co-author Tina Staley is director of Pathfinders at Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center.)

**Training for patient family support volunteers** (18 hours) will be offered for six weeks one afternoon a week starting in early September at our Durham office. Especially needed are volunteers interested in working with nursing home and dementia patients. If you know people who might be interested, ask them to contact Carolyn Colsher.

**Training (4 hours) for Hock Family Pavilion Ambassadors** will be offered Saturday August 21 from 9-1. Especially needed are evening (4–8 p.m.) and weekend volunteers. We are exploring adding an additional shift from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. If you know any night owls who might be interested, have them give Carolyn a call.

Volunteers *who are credentialed in aromatherapy, Reiki, and healing touch* and wish to participate in the new Complementary Therapies program at our inpatient facilities will need to be trained as Duke Hospice patient / family support volunteers. (See 6-week training above.) If you or people you know are credentialed practitioners in these fields and would like to put this expertise at the service of our dying patients and their families, please contact Carolyn.

Carolyn Colsher will be out of town on **vacation Aug. 9-11**. If you have questions during that time, please call and ask for Regina Mitchell (contact information below).

**A RESOURCE FOR YOU ... Continuing Education for August—BookNote on Thomas DeBaggio’s Losing My Mind: An Intimate Look at Life with Alzheimer’s and 10 Tips for Family Caregivers**

For more information contact:  
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Pity arises when we are sorry for someone. Compassion is when we understand and help wisely.  
--Heart of a Buddha

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.