

The A-Team

asera  care Hospice Volunteer Newsletter



An Encouraging Word:

"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way- things that I had no words for"

~ Georgia O'Keeffe

You Did It!

As a volunteer team, for the month of May a total of 132 visits to patients were made. Can you believe it! This means on average each day 4 patients received visits. Because many of our patients are bedbound there are concerns of isolation. So volunteers counteract this by providing patient socialization and in addition give families peace of mind. What a difference your visits are making.

We also received a special thank you from the Merrick family. Here's what they had to say:

We made use of the Aseracare services during my mother's recent illness and death. I wanted to thank your local staff for their kindness, diligence, and professionalism during this very difficult time. I was not so aware of all that hospice provide, and you truly blew me away... Pass along my thanks to the entire team including vigil volunteers that made all the difference for us, we will never forget.



An Encouraging Word

You Did It!

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Timely Tips and Reminders

MUST DO LIST:

1. Volunteer Etiquette

- Wear your nametag
- Knock on the patient's door
- Wash your hands
- Introduce and explain your role to facility staff and families
 - Keep your complaints and advice to yourself
- Tell your patient what you're doing while you're doing it
- Write in the patient's journal
- Wash your hands (again)
- Document your visit within 3 days

2. Aseracare University

- go to <http://aseracare.care2learn.com/>
- click the icon box that says "Volunteers! ClickHere." login as a *returning user* by entering your username and password
- complete course for August

3. Monday Night Meeting

(attendance highly recommended)

August 2nd 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Bloomington office 5001 American Blvd W.

Topic: Alzheimer's, Memory and Being

Alzheimer's disease has been described as "the great unlearning," a "disease of memory," a "demise of consciousness." But what does it reveal about the nature of human identity? What remains when memory unravels? And how might such insights help Alzheimer's sufferers themselves?

Get answers to these questions August 2nd!

TOP TIPS:

- Vigil volunteers, if family is present on your visit at a facility, offer them water, **coffee, cookies** etc. Most facility kitchens will be happy to provide these items and families will be grateful you offered.



- A patient's behaviors are related to yours. What kind of **energy** do you bring into the room?
- Is your patient a **chronic complainer**? Do you ask your patient how they're doing and then wish you never did? If you're shaking your head yes, try this approach. Be positive. Upon arrival, the first thing you say to your patient should be a compliment. For example, "Lord almighty Mable- your hair looks amazing!"



YOUR OWN BAG OF TRICKS

When visiting patients, it's important that the volunteer comes prepared. This not only makes you more professional but it shows you are customizing your visit to your patient's interests. Here are some items to consider putting in your hospice tote bag.

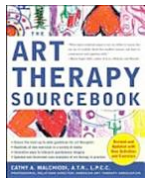
An empty box. Fill with suggested items from the Helpful Hints article.



25 Classical Favorites CD. \$4 .99 at Barnes & Noble. A collection of classical musical pieces by the likes of Mozart, Chopin, Strauss, Bach, and others. Each song is between one and five minutes

long. CDs specific to an artist are also available for the same price.

The Art Therapy Sourcebook by Cathy A. Malchiodi, an art therapist and clinical counselor. 276 pages. \$19.95. This guide shows you how to use art therapy to guide yourself and others on a special path of personal growth, insight, and transformation.



Passage into Paradise: The True Story of My Own Mother's Struggle with Alzheimer's Disease by Dorothy Womack. 370 pages. \$19.95. A true story about a caregiver dealing with her mother's struggle with Alzheimer's. Her mother was a gifted artist who continued to paint after being diagnosed. The book also contains articles which will instruct, help and comfort those who are dealing with this disease today.

Bienfang Sketch Pad. 100 sheets. \$6.99 at Staples. Size: 8.5" X 11". Side spiral bound sketch pad for pencil, pastels, pen and ink.



WHAT IS IT?

Acronyms are commonly used in hospice. For those of you who are new to the jargon- this column's for you!

HVA- Hospice Volunteer Association

PDV- Patient Data Vault

SOB- short of breath (not the other thing you were thinking)



STOP- see, told, offer, plan (mental guideline for documenting your pt visits)

Pt- Patient

VC- Volunteer Coordinator

IDG- Inter-Disciplinary Group (a format for discussing Pt's care plan)



COPD- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

INTERVIEW INSIGHTS

Volunteer Dennis Goodno

Dennis Goodno works as both a Vigil and Reflections volunteer since he has joined AseraCare. Many of you are familiar with Vigil program but the Reflections program is quiet a bit smaller. Basically, Reflections volunteers provide any sort of creative documentation about a patient for the patient/family. Specifically as a Reflections volunteer, Dennis designs and does the calligraphy for the birthday cards that are given to the patients. Growing up he was never trained as an artist, but it was always something that he enjoyed. Since he's graduated, art has become a larger part of his life. His art projects not only decorate his house these days, but working on them has become a release for him from his busy schedule.

How did you get into art?

Growing up, art was something that he always liked to do, but was never trained. His days in school were filled with engineering and science classes, so there was not time for him to pursue this interest. After graduating, Dennis decided to take a Beginning Drawing class at his local community center. From there he branched out to stone and wood carving classes and also for painting!

What was the inspiration for your stone sculpture?

Growing up in Madison, Wisconsin, Dennis's

It was decided that the church would not be rebuilt, but that the stone from some of the walls would be given away to parishioners. Dennis got 3 slabs of stone and began designing one for himself and one for his sister who had gotten him the stone. Dennis then created a stone carving he calls "The Vigil."

This sculpture now sits in the garden at his house next to a waterfall that he also made. On nice nights Dennis and his wife sit outside on the screened-in porch, light the candle placed in the stone's alcove and listen to the sound of the waterfall.

Dennis also says, "I've been lighting it in the evening at dusk when we sit out there and read or talk. I'm reminded of the vigils I've done, and some other people I want to remember who are now gone. It sits relatively near a tree we planted a few years ago in memory of my Mom. It also gives the patio outside the porch a nice glow after dark, when it's not too windy." What a great way to remember our patients, care for yourself, and process your own grief and loss history.



(Interview Insights Continued)

I hear you also make personalized cards for patients using your calligraphy talent. Do you have any interesting stories about patients and the cards that they have received?

Dennis mainly makes personalized birthday cards for patients, writing a patient's name in calligraphy on the envelope and card. Dennis then adds simple artwork around his lettering having different styles for men and women.

While Dennis does not get to deliver the cards to the patients, he said that he has received thank you notes from people who do. Often he will see notes that say that the card brought a smile to the patient's face- something that they had not seen in months. He said that he is very happy that his artwork is making a difference and lifting people's spirits.

While out on a vigil one time, Dennis noticed a specialty card that he had made for a couple's 60th wedding anniversary a few months before that was pinned to the bulletin board by the patient's bedside. He was happy that the card that he had made meant enough to these people to keep it.



Would you recommend other volunteers to pursue art to help as a release from their busy daily lives?

For Dennis, his art is something that he feels is inside of him and feels needs to come out. Dennis said that he recommends that everyone should find something in themselves that makes them want to continue with an activity; to continue to help both themselves and others. This activity is going to be different for everyone, from poetry to scrapbooking. It can be a way of helping others, but in the end it will also be helpful to you too.

Quaint Quips

Q: What is the fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does "varicose" mean?

A: Nearby.

Q. What does the word "benign" mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.



VOLUNTEER JOB OPENINGS

Now and then the A-Team has a need for special talents. Look here each month for ways you can help.

Cuisine Coordinator – Do you like to cook or just plain eat? We are looking for someone to cook or some place to provide food donations for the Monday Night Monthly meetings and other volunteer training classes.

Monday Night Monthly Meeting Focus Group- No one calls their own baby ugly! If you've got feedback to share on the Monday Night Monthly Meetings, we want to hear it. Along with the VC, this group of volunteers will assess the current program (topics, time, location, format, etc) and then implement changes.

Executive Assistant- Good with the computer and the ten-key? A volunteer is needed once a week for one hour to complete data entry at the Bloomington office. Must be available during regular business hours.

Volunteer Mentors- Interested in leadership? As small group of experienced volunteers are needed to help new volunteers grow. Mentors would guide new volunteers by reviewing and discussing visits providing feedback and insightful reflection. A minimum of one year hospice volunteer experience needed.