

The A-Team

asera  care Hospice Volunteer Newsletter

An Encouraging Word:

“Do what you can, where you are, with what you have.



~Teddy Roosevelt

Congrats from Your VC

Some of you may remember earlier readings and discussions about a certification Aseracare Hospice was working towards. It is why we are all taking the Aseracare University courses, and why I send out emails each month for different file up-dates. Our company is challenging all of its communities to become CHAP (Community Health Accreditation Program) certified. This last month, we had our surprise visit from the CHAP surveyor. She show-up in a pink dress at our morning meeting. We were all a little bit nervous.

CHAP accreditation is the most prestigious accreditation that a hospice community can receive. It means that the team is following and practicing high standards of care and documentation in all areas: nursing, home health aids, volunteers, human resources, spiritual care, and bereavement care. The audit is very thorough, rigorous, and passing means that another audit is not needed until three years later (normally a state audit would be need annually).

I am proud to say Aseracare Bloomington did become CHAP certified. In particular the volunteer program passed with flying colors- there were no recommendations for improvements! So give yourselves a pat on the back. You are part of the second only CHAP certified hospice in MN.

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Call for Insider Insights

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Timely Tips and Reminders

- **Reminder:** If your patient declines a visit, you still need to enter that your visit (or phone call) was a minimum of 15 minutes. You cannot document a visit and just say that it was from 3:15 to 3:15.
- **Tip:** Sometimes it may be hard to find a “volunteer needs assessment” form on the HVA. A handy tool to use is the “filter.” Here’s a users guide: After logging in and selection “volunteer needs assessment” from the form selection box, go the bottom of the page and you will see a link called “Show filter.” Click on this and a series of drop down boxes will appear. Go the drop down boxes in the “Patient” column. Click on the arrows in the top drop down box and select “contains” in the box immediately below, type part or all of the patient’s name. Then click the “apply filter” link. Then the data will refresh and bring the form you are looking for to the top of the list.
- **Tip:** It is important that each companion volunteer meets their scheduled number of visits each month. If you would like to see if you have fulfilled your allotted number (usually 4); again use the filter tool on the HVA. You will also notice date boxes in the top right-hand corner. Select the dates for the time frame you are interested in, then refresh the data. This will let you know how many forms you have submitted so far that month.
- **Tip:** Try something new on your visits- play the Reverie Harp for your patient. Contact Renee for pick-up and availability. This instrument works especially well for patients who aren’t able to converse and rely more on sensory stimulation.

The Book Nook: Recommended Books, CDs, and Media

- ***Hannah’s Gift*** --- by Maria Housden. The moving and uplifting story of the indomitable and joyful spirit of little Hannah, a three-year-old who faced cancer and death in a way that will inspire those who read her story. Written by her mother. Available at Amazon.com
- ***Being a Compassionate Companion: Audio CDs***--- by Frank Ostaseski. A collection of stories and practical insights to aid a companion volunteer in accompanying patients in the end of life journey. The three areas addressed are: Preparing, Serving, and Grieving. The author is the founder of Zen Hospice and incorporates a Buddhist approach to caring for hospice patients. Available on the HVA website.
- ***Brian’s Song: Movie.*** An “oldie but goodie”, classic film from 1971. The moving story of friendship and competition between two famous Chicago Bears football players, Brian Piccolo and Gayle Sayers, and of Piccolo’s courage in facing his early death at age 26 from cancer. Particularly appealing to sports fans. Available at movie rental stores and Amazon.com. If you prefer reading to movies, the movie is based on the book, ***I Am Third***, written by Gayle Sayers.



Helpful Hospice Hints:

Imagine That!

Reverie Harps Soothe and Delight Hospice Patients



REVERIE: Dreamy thinking or imagining, especially of fanciful things; fanciful or visionary notion or daydream. A state of dreamy meditation or repose.

Isn't it amazing what can happen when one caring person with a bright idea, half way around the world, teams up with one creative person--via the internet yet?

A few years ago, Peter Roberts, a music therapist living in Australia, was caring for a disabled patient who wanted to make music, but couldn't because of his MS. Roberts concern led him to **imagine** an instrument that anyone could play, that would fit in a patient's bed, could be played while lying down--and would sound dreamily beautiful no matter how it was played. Impossible, many might have said. A fanciful notion indeed. Instead it turned out to be a visionary idea.

That's because Roberts concern led him pursue his idea and from that concern was born a wonderful new instrument that had never existed before, called the Reverie Harp, made right here in Stillwater, Minnesota. Roberts contacted Musicmakers about his dream and, after a few experiments, Matt Edwards, the company's designer, created the Reverie Harp in 2007.

Since then the Reverie Harp has come to be used in places and ways that even Roberts didn't imagine, serving nursing homes, assisted living centers, memory care centers, children's hospitals, chemo treatment centers and...hospice patients. It is being used in counseling, to work with special education students, and for personal meditation and relaxation.

The harp's music is described by those who have experienced it as calming, soothing, heavenly, and, yes, dreamy. The design even creates a special vibrating quality which creates its own comforting sensory experience.

In just two short years, the Reverie Harp has traveled far and wide bringing peace, joy, comfort, and the beauty of music to hospice patients and many, many others---all because two men, half a world apart, chose to "Do what you can, where you are, with what you have."

Aseracare has received one Reverie Harp as a gift from a former patient and it has been put to good use serving our patients. Pass the story on. Perhaps it will lead to more harps coming our way to use with our hospice patients.

The harp weighs only 4 pounds and is about 20 inches long. Because of its unique design, anyone can play it and make beautiful music by using any of all of its 22 strings. The Reverie Harp can be purchased fully assembled for \$495 or as a kit for \$295 from Musicmakers at www.harokit.com.

Up-Coming Events and Training:

✓ Care Options Network Newsletter

http://www.careoptionsnetwork.org/common/pdf/08-31-09_Network_News.pdf

This link is a great resource for those of you looking for additional training and ways to network within the healthcare community.

Note that there is an event called “Final Rights: Caring for Persons at the End of Life.” Doug C. Smith is a trainer, consultant, an national speaker. He is author of several books including: The Tao of Dying, Caregiving: Hospice- proven Techniques for Healing the Body and Soul, Being a Wounded Healer and The Complete Book of Counseling the Dying and the Grieving. More information found by opening above link.

✓ September Aseracare Training Classes:

(All classes are optional for current volunteers. Ask VC for more information.)

- Orientation:
 - September 12, 2009, 10-4pm
- Companion Training:
 - September 19th, 2009, 10-4pm
- Vigil Training:
 - September 19th, 4-6pm

✓ September Aseracare University:

- Boundaries in Patient Care. Please send your answers via mail or email. Be sure to include the name of your test and your name! (Some of you who are new volunteers already completed this test in your training.)

✓ Volunteer Appreciation Party:

- Save the date; October 4th, 2009 is the tentative date for our annual volunteer and staff party at Dr. Sonntag’s apple orchard. Look for more information to come.

INSIDERS’ INSIGHTS

We’re still looking for YOUR input. Please let us hear from you.

Can you share a special story about one of your patients? It doesn’t have to be long!!

Does the HVA website work well for you or do you have suggestions?

What do you do on visits with patients who have trouble communicating?

Email your short stories, comments, suggestions and questions so we can share them with fellow volunteers to: Renee.Gasch@aseracare.com.

