

News

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## Hospice volunteers enjoy helping others

By Evan Carden, SA Editor



Agnes Oliver and Josephine Tillman

For the past nine years mother and daughter, Josephine Tillman and Agnes Oliver have been bringing a little welcomed joy into the lives of area hospice patients.

The two women send out at least 80 cards each

week to those receiving hospice care. The cards are intended to lift the patients' spirits, by letting them know that there is still someone who cares about them.

Tillman, who recently celebrated her 94th birthday, is the oldest hospice volunteer with AseraCare, formerly Hospice South. She and her daughter share an apartment at Windsor Manor in Jackson, which is the home base for their volunteer operation.

"The two of them are such an asset to us, we feel they deserve all the recognition they can get," said AseraCare's Volunteer Coordinator Diana Brown. "They contribute so much to our organization."

Both women were recognized by the company for their efforts two years ago when they were chosen as

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recipients of its "Volunteer of the Year" award for 2004.

"Everyone needs a reason to get up every morning and this is mine," said Tillman. "We both enjoy helping others and if we are able, we help as many people as we can."

Oliver explained that her mother knows firsthand how it feels to be a hospice patient. "She herself was one 2-1/2 years ago," she said. "She got sick and that's when I decided to move in with her."

Tillman, who suffered from congestive heart failure, pulled through her illness and said she feels fine now. "I prayed to the Lord and told Him I would do this work until I couldn't anymore," she said. "And I got better."

The two ladies enjoy their lives in the small apartment and are constantly chatting back and forth with each other, poking fun and joking. "That's what keeps us going," said Oliver. "We believe having a good sense of humor adds to longevity."

They also enjoy visiting the family home in McIntosh, where they spend occasional weekends with other members of their family. "We love to get out in the country with our relatives and cut up," laughed Oliver. "But, we like living here (at Windsor Manor) too. Here we don't have to worry about maintenance, lawn care or any of those things, because it's all taken care of for us. The staff here is wonderful and we enjoy seeing and talking with the other residents."

In addition to the cards they send, Agnes and Josephine also make telephone calls to hospice patients and when they are able to, visit with some of them. Through their volunteerism, they reach out to patients in both Clarke and Washington counties.

"I know exactly how many of them feel, because I've been down that path," said Tillman.

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