

2016 Creative Arts Contest.



Hospice and Palliative Care:
When It Matters Most!



2016 Creative Arts Contest.

Hospice and Palliative Care: *When It Matters Most!*

NHPCO is proud to showcase the winning photographs, essays, blogs and poetry from the 2016 Creative Arts Contest. The theme for this year's contest, "Hospice and Palliative Care: When It Matters Most!" reflects the special life moments or memories made possible by hospice and palliative care teams across the country.

Photography: Adult Category

First Place

A Birthday Party Sprinkled With Love



It's a big deal when a hospice patient lives to celebrate another birthday. Ruth decided to spend the start of her 106th year filled with songs from her youth and surrounded by some of her favorite people--family, friends and her hospice team--including nurses, music therapist and home health aide. At times raucous and reflective, the lively party also featured balloons, two chocolate cakes and a whole lotta love.

Submitted by Audrey Waters- Director,
MJHS Public Relations , MJHS Health System

Second Place

Generations



"Sharing a last story with her great granddaughter Lola" This is a photo of our patient Norma Jean "Jeana" spending time with her great granddaughter Lola. Reading and sharing books was one of her biggest passions, she even owned her own bookstore in El Cajon for many years. Lola's

father took this photo of the two of them on her balcony sharing a story together. Jeana passed away a few days later and her grandson, who took this photo, let us know how happy he is that he has this photo to show Lola one day.

Submitted by Sharon Ahlberg
Volunteer Coordinator at Bridge Hospice

Honorable Mention



It was early afternoon when the staff of Hospice of South Georgia, Mr. Harvell's family, and American Legion Post 13 began a We Honor Veteran ceremony at our inpatient care center, the Langdale

Hospice House. Little sounds of a child squirming and whimpering came from the back of Mr. Harvell's room as both hospice and the legion gave him thanks. After the ceremony, the little voice impatiently waiting wanted to get up on his grandfather's medical bed to investigate the colorful certificate and flag lying on his lap. After a few minutes of grabbing every loose object he could find, this curious grandson was picked up by his father, but not before he leaned in for a goodbye hug. Before the child could open his arms, Mr. Bobby Harvell leaned forward, touching foreheads. A loving moment that stood still for all of us.

We were touched that our care gave the Harvell family a reason to come together, allowing the opportunity to witness beautiful moments shown in this photo. Mr. Bobby Harvell served our country in Scotland as a coder in the Cold War. It was truly our honor to give him a We Honor Veterans ceremony to thank him, as well as his family, for his service.

Submitted by Lindsey Rogers
Manager of Physician Relations & Marketing
Hospice of South Ga & Langdale Hospice House

Photography: Nature Category:

First Place Earth and Sky



As an amateur nature photographer I take pictures of 'spontaneous moments in nature' - in other words, I never "set up a shot" I always click what I see at the moment I see it. This thrills me because there are so many incredible moments in life - moments in nature - if you are truly present in the moment.

I was driving home, turning onto our bridge that goes over the creek at the start of our farm and glimpsed the reflection in the water as I drove over the bridge. I was stunned! I stopped, backed up, and parked on the bridge, rolled down the window and took this picture. The creek is usually a dry bed of mud and stones and refuse unless it rains. Here...in this special moment... I saw how the beauty of the sun behind the cloud reflected in the beauty of the rain filled creek bed.

Often times, when we least expect it, nature will reflect the essence of life's special moments. Here the earth and sky reflect on each other and it reminds me of the impact we have on one another at moments in life when we least expect it. As a hospice volunteer for 10 years I have had many moments like this - when I see in the eyes of my patient or their family member the music I sing reflecting back from their hearts. Just as I see in my photograph how the sun behind the cloud reflects in the creek... making it light up in a way I would otherwise not have noticed



- Hospice and Palliative Care brings light to patience and their families in their darkest hours. I think this image implicitly shows how nature represents the essence of life's special moments.

Submitted by Karen Schulman-Bear; Volunteer with Hospice of the Bluegrass

2nd place Shared Path



Sometimes off a well-worn path is an ancient fallen tree.

It isn't as tall as it once was and can sometimes be lying on its side.

If you approach it ever so slowly, you begin to feel its grace, its story, written on every ring.

Even the rings may be difficult to see, yet there is, A knowing in this sacred space.

This is where tears of joy and sadness echo in the stillness.

Listening.

Did it just speak to you here on this path of mystery?

You strain forward growing ever so quietly, you can hear your heartbeat Your quick short breath in, and out.

You are electrified and awed,

And ever so humbled, to be here now,

With this giant, who speaks words of dying and living.

Submitted by Teresa Looper; RN Supervisor Providence Hospice

Honorable Mention Serene Sunset



"Make the days count"

"Don't count the days; make the days count." This familiar quote by Muhammad Ali is a wonderful way to express what Bridge Hospice strives to do for every patient and family that comes on our service. Making their days count, as well as being there for them when it matters most, is a

privileged service we in Hospice get to provide on a daily basis.

Submitted by Sharon Ahlberg Volunteer Coordinator, Bridge Hospice

Photography: Child Category

First Place Sending Timmy Home



Moments that have true meaning and deep impact on our lives are often found in our day to day living. In Timmy's case, his mother shared her day to day story in a blog. This blog revealed her experiences of caregiving and loving her

precious baby as he journeyed to the end of life. Beth writes, “This is about the raw, painful emotions of having the gift of Walking Timmy Home. Losing Timmy is hard, but we know this is God’s plan for our little Fellow. We are honored and blessed to be his parents and to be given the gift of Walking him Home.”

Submitted by Kathy Moneypenny,
Bereavement Coordinator
Hospice of Tift Area

Essay/Blog

First Place Honoring Death

I arrive to Mr. H’s room on a late Friday afternoon and am greeted with fatigued smiles from family members. I offer respite to a family weary of waiting. I will stay with their father until they return. He is hot, his breathing rapid and raspy, sporadic coughing fits seemingly coming from his abdomen, as he pushes and pulls with his arms and hands, almost like he is trying to escape from his earthly body. I hold his hands and gently guide his arms so he does no harm. The nurse comes in with additional medication. As I cool him off with a wet washcloth, gently caress his hands, soothe him with my voice telling him he is not alone and I will stay with him until his family returns, he slowly calms. Peaceful.

I return Saturday morning 7:30 am. With sadness in their eyes and weariness in their voice they ask: “How much longer will this go on?” I have no answer and simply say “I would be honored if you will allow me to stay with him while you take some time.” They are thankful and reluctantly leave. His breathing is rapid and difficult to listen to as it sounds like he is struggling. The nurse comes in with additional medication (every hour now) and the aide bathes him, combs his hair and we change his position in bed. He looks so handsome and is breathing comfortably now. His family returns two hours later

and says “He looks so peaceful. Like he is sleeping” It is all I can do.

It is noon and I am being pulled back to Mr. H. As I walk in his daughter looks to me and says: “I didn’t think you would come back. Oh, thank you. I need to step out for a while”. As she leaves, I hold his hand and talk to him: “Hi Mr. H. I told you I would be back to see you. I am glad your son came to see you this morning. Your daughter needed a little time to herself but she will be back soon. Oh Mr. H. your beautiful granddaughter is sitting right beside you. Your family loves you so.” I turn to get a wet washcloth to soothe his forehead. I turn back to the bedside, touch my other hand to his forehead and I know immediately he is gone. Quietly...so, so peaceful.

I can think of no greater honor than the privilege of being present as another human being’s life ends. There are no guidebooks, there are no rules to follow, and there are no words that I can say that makes it easy. There is only the path leading from your heart. Follow it and do not fear it. Trust it to lead you where you need to go.

Submitted by Jeanne M. Karr, Volunteer Coordinator,
Beacon Hospice, an Amedisys Company

Written by Beacon Hospice volunteer, Linda Aherns-Poscos

Second Place Transformed BY Love

When Melanie Harless’s husband, Todd Martinez, was killed, she was devastated. She described that period of time as so dark she had no reason to live. But in the 24 months since Martinez’s death, Harless has been able to choose life again. Her choice is marked by a powerful symbol she wears on her wrist. It is a bracelet fashioned from the spokes of Martinez’s beloved bicycle.

When the couple first met, Martinez’s passion for cycling was quickly apparent. Because he had been riding since he was a teenager, often competing in races around the country,





Martinez wanted Harless to love the sport too. The two rode as often as their busy lives permitted, always enjoying the calmness of riding in sync and the beauty of rural Summerfield.

Harless remembers everything about their ride on Super Bowl Sunday, February 2, 2014. It was an unseasonably warm day, perfect for a ride before the big game. They were only three miles from home, riding single file, with Harless in the lead, when it happened. A pickup truck hit Martinez. The driver continued on his way without stopping.

Despite the heroic efforts made by EMS on the scene, Martinez never woke up. Friends and family rushed to Harless's side as did Martinez's fellow High Point firefighters and Guilford County paramedics. Thankfully Harless's brother-in-law from California took it upon himself to contact the Counseling and Education Center at Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro (HPCG). Within two weeks of Martinez's death, Harless was meeting with grief counselor, Ryan Colgan, the person Harless credits for helping her choose life again.

In the safety of the counseling office, Harless could express her rawest feelings. Martinez had been the love of her life. His death marked the destruction of every dream they held for the future. Colgan encouraged Harless to create a mantra she could use when overwhelmed by her sorrow—words she could say aloud even if she didn't believe them yet:

I will survive because I love you. I will survive because of you. I will survive for you. I will survive—I have no choice. With the strength of your love, I will survive.

A little over a year after Martinez's death, Harless remembers a small shift in her pain. It happened during a visit with her sister in California. While shopping, the two women discovered a boutique that sold handcrafted photo frames bordered with bicycle chains and jewelry fashioned from silver spokes. The items sparked an idea... an idea sprinkled with hopefulness.

When Harless returned from her trip, she took her husband's mangled Della Santa bike out of storage and contacted Dale Brown of Cycles De Oro. He located a craftsman to create jewelry and picture frames from the parts of Martinez's

beloved bike. Custom-built and meticulously assembled by Martinez himself, this bike had brought him so much joy and adventure.

It was part of him.

Harless wears her cuff bracelet to mark her decision to live. With Colgan's help and the love of friends and family, Harless has redirected her grief into goals, one of which includes sharing her story. She hopes to increase awareness of HPCG's Counseling and Education Center and the support available at no charge for those devastated by the death of a loved one.

Harless's other goals seek to honor Martinez's life through efforts to keep roads safer for cyclists, to change hit-and-run driving laws and to speak publicly about being an organ donor like Martinez. Her bracelet affirms that, like Martinez's bike, she too has been transformed—transformed by his love and inspired to help others.

Submitted by Elizabeth Keri
Communications Specialist
Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro

Written and submitted by Jane Gibson
Public Support Coordinator
Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro

Honorable Mention

Vet-To-Vet Program Enlisting More Volunteers to Honor Veterans at Their End Of Life

It is the tale of a recent Honor Salute, performed by a veteran Marine and her husband, an active duty Marine.

It was Marine Corps Veteran Nicole Richard's first Honor Salute, a brief, moving ceremony where Veterans are thanked in their homes or by their bedside for their service to the nation by other Veterans or those presently serving. The patient's daughter said he had become sullen and unresponsive, and she didn't think he would talk. Upon learning the patient was a fellow Marine, Richard asked her husband, Jimmy Richard, who is assigned to Marine

Barracks Washington, D.C., to join her.

The minute the patient saw the Richards in their Marine Corps uniforms, he perked up.

“He talked so much. We used our terminology – oorah, semper fidelis – and he was smiling, telling us about his unit, where he served, what he’s done,” Nicole said.

Before leaving, Jimmy removed the Eagle, Globe and Anchor pin from his cover and gave it to the man. There were tears all around.

The moment cemented the purpose of Hospice of the Chesapeake’s Veteran-to-Veteran program. When a Veteran Patient Care Volunteer first meets a Veteran hospice patient, an entire conversation takes place without anyone speaking a word.

Navy Veteran Paul Mullenhoff of Bowie was with the Richards for that honor salute. He said the sight of the uniformed couple precluded a need for awkward introductions. “All of the sudden, the bond was there because they were all Marines.”

“He wouldn’t talk to others, but he was open to talking to us because we understand, the terminology, the values – honor, courage and commitment” Nicole said.

The Veteran-to-Veteran program is part of the We Honor Veterans Program, a collaboration of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Program partners like Hospice of the Chesapeake use resources and education provided by the NHPCO and the VA to help Veteran Volunteers care for Veteran patients and their families. With more than 25 percent of Hospice of the Chesapeake patients checking off the “Veteran” box when being admitted, the need for Patient Care Volunteers who also are Veterans is growing. On any given day in Anne Arundel and Prince George’s Counties, more than 100 patients who are Veterans are being cared for by Hospice of the Chesapeake staff and volunteers.

The tremendous need is why Director of Volunteer Services Diane Sancilio is looking to increase the number of Veteran Patient Care Volunteers by 100 percent. “We are committed to showing our unwavering gratitude every day to our Veteran patients. So, to paraphrase a very famous uncle, ‘We Want You!’ We need Veteran volunteers to help us,” Sancilio said. “In return, you will experience the heartfelt emotion that comes from honoring Veterans at their end of life.”

And maybe even healing moments of your own.

Nicole said families will sometimes roll their eyes as a Veteran patient starts telling “another” war story. “But we get it. It heals us, too. We have our own mental and physical wounds. Just listening to somebody else kind of helps heal us, too.”

For more information about the We Honor Veterans program at Hospice of the Chesapeake, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/the-life-center-109/we-honor-veterans-program. To volunteer, contact Volunteer Coordinator Allison Kuchar at 443-837-1513 or akuchar@hospicechesapeake.org.

Submitted and Written by Elyzabeth Marcussen
Communications Specialist - Media
Hospice of the Chesapeake

Poetry Category

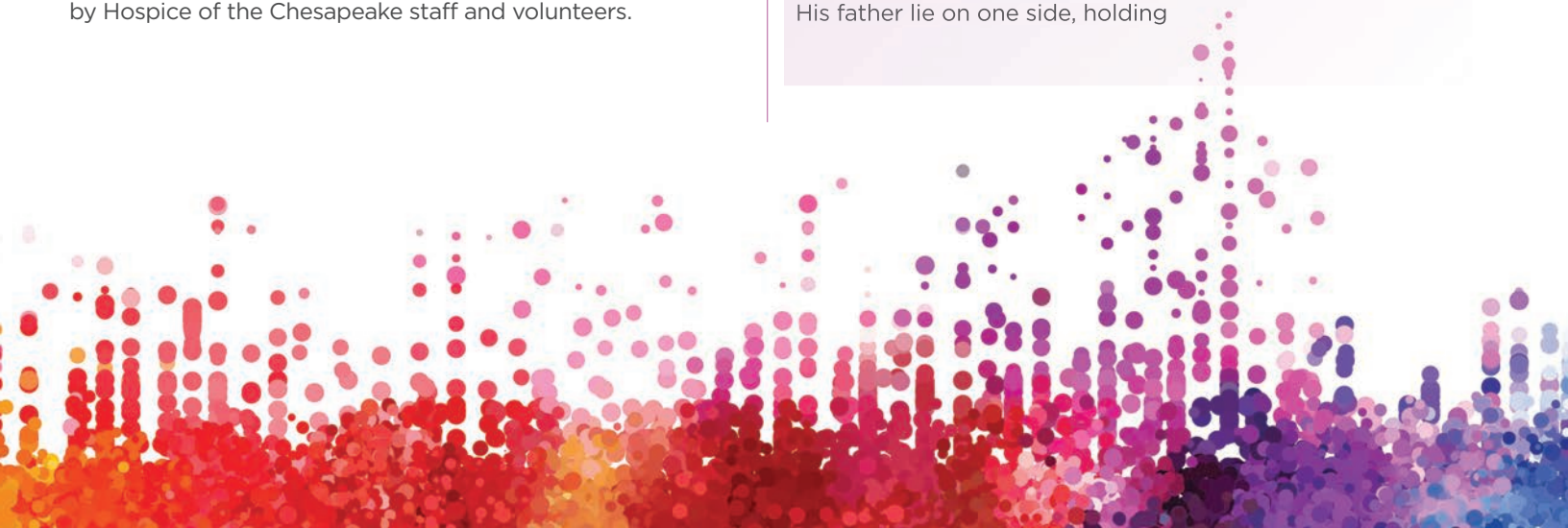
First place


Late

me

It was getting late
when he finally fell asleep—his
breath going out to never come back again.

His father lie on one side, holding





his hand, and his mother on the other, holding
his head to her breast.

Neither spoke.

His mother only looked up,
past their bodies,
past the machines and their tubes,
past the sill and its flowers, out
past the sun and its remnants hiding behind the mountains.

“It’s getting late,” she said, beginning
to hum his favorite bedtime song, laying
his head on the pillow.

His father nodded, pulling
the blanket up, tucking
it under his son’s shoulders and placing
a bear beside him—everything
being just the way he always wanted.

“Goodnight, my love,” his mother whispered, running
her fingers through his curls, thinking
it was about time for another haircut.

“I love you,” his father said, holding
his son’s cheeks in his palms, kissing
him on the forehead. “We’ll see you at first light.”

And they left, driving
out of the city, looking
for the place
behind
the
mountains.

Submitted and written by Scott Wilson
Chaplain
Benton Hospice Service

Second Place

Thank You For Holding My Hand

As I hold your hand I feel the joy that your mother must
have felt when she clasped your tiny hand in hers for the
very first time.

The pride your father felt when he used his strong hands to
place you on his shoulders, so you could get a better view...
and the world would see you.

The hands you used to feel the grip of the steering wheel in
your first car, and the ones that finally got the nerve to hold
your sweetheart’s hand for the first time...and then to
dance at your wedding.

The hands that worked hard to make a living and to care
for your family, the ones friends and family knew would
always be there to lift them up when they would fall.

The hands that cuddled children, cared for pets and held
your sweetheart at the end.

So today, it is time for your hands to rest, but for me your
precious hands are a reminder. To never miss a day holding
the hands of those I love, And to use my hands while I still
can, to do more good in the world.

Thank you for telling me your story through your hands,
and thank you for holding mine.

Submitted by Kimberly Heestand,
Coordinator of Volunteer Services
Hospice of the Bluegrass

Written by Angela Crawford
Eleventh Hour volunteer

Honorable Mention

A Collection of Hugs

A collector of hugs, that's what I am
With hope in my heart, and love in my hands
Each hug is different, not one is the same
Each has an owner, a story, a name

There's a hug for the time
When things seem so bleak
And a hug for the one
Whose body is weak

There's a hug for support
To get through the day
And a hug to bring peace
When you feel you lost your way

There's a hug for the tears
That silently fall
And a hug to bring comfort
Sweet comfort to all

There's a hug that says, "I love you,"
And, "Til be right here,"
And a hug for the burdens
That you must bear

There's a hug for the hope
That will never die
And a hug for the journey
When it's time to say, "Good-bye"

A collector of hugs
I'll continue to be
The future will look brighter
Just hug, and you'll see

Submitted and Written by Sophie Whitlock
Bristol Hospital Home Care and Hospice





National Hospice and Palliative Care
Organization



1731 King Street | Alexandria, VA 22314 | www.nhpco.org | 703.837.1500