

Visitors

"Home is where
the Heart is"



Winter 2008

A Publication of Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association

My Father's Last Smile

by PAULA PEZZOTTI-EVANS

We want to thank Livingston Hospice for all the love and support that our father received under their care and that our mother continues to receive. My family and I realize that hospice is a team effort, that there are people manning phones, filing, and working behind the scenes in a variety of ways on a daily basis. We want to thank all of you for your love and compassion and for the work that you do. Our lives have been forever enriched for having this shared experience.

The following people have blessed us directly and we would like to give them special recognition.

Lorna [Davis] is an excellent nurse in every sense of the word. She attended to all the detailed medical aspects of our parents' care. I am a registered nurse, but Lorna's excellent care allowed me to be my parents' daughter, not their nurse. I can't tell you what a huge relief this has been for me. When Lorna started caring for our parents I had just started a new job that required travel out of town frequently for training. The stress and pressure of being out of town while our mother

was in and out of the ER or in and out of the hospital was overwhelming. Lorna stepped in and became a lifeline for me. She made sure that all medical concerns were addressed without the trauma of emergency room visits. Lorna kept me in the loop as far as their care and medical status was concerned.

As our father's illness took a turn for the worse, not only did she support our father, she supported us as well. We were able to keep our father in his own bed next to our mom and surrounded by those he loved until the very end. I know this is what our father wanted and I can't thank Lorna enough for making this possible.

I want to also recognize **Michelle [Clisby]** the social worker. She obviously had a positive impact on our father, as she was the last person to make him smile. Michelle came

into the room the day before he died. Although he was struggling to breathe, at the sound of her voice he managed a weak but very distinct smile. This was the last time I ever saw my father's smile. This was so very special. I will be forever grateful for the love and compassion I know Michelle must have given him for him to respond to her in



Charles and Mary Pezzotti spent over 50 loving years together. Hospice allowed them to stay together until Charles' last breath, this was their greatest wish.

that way.

I'm sorry I don't remember the nurse that was on-call and came out very early Friday morning on 5/23/08. She was wonderful. She came all the

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LIGHT UP A LIFE Memory Tree Lighting December 9th

... see back cover

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Mission Statement

Livingston Memorial VNA Health Corporation and Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association recognize the growing need to provide services in the home environment for the sick, handicapped, elderly and homebound.

As community-supported, nonprofit organizations, they strive to provide professional, licensed and supportive home health and hospice care services of the highest quality in the most cost effective manner to the people of Ventura County to ensure a positive patient outcome.

LMVNA explores and develops health-related programs based upon community need and acceptance, economic viability, and availability of resources to provide services.

LMVNA is sensitive to the financial circumstances of its patients and provides needed services, including those at reduced or no charge to indigent patients, based upon the available resources for the organization.

Do you or a loved one need help at home?

Our care is customized to fit your needs, from bathing assistance to shifts from 2 to 24 hours.

Get help today!
(805)642-9570



Gold Coast CareGivers is a family member of Livingston Memorial VNA Health Corp.

Hospice Has Come a Long Way

In medieval times a hospice was a place of shelter for ill and weary travelers on long, difficult journeys. Today, the word “hospice” has come to mean a very special way of caring for adults and children with a life limiting illness.

Hospice provides supportive rather than curative care for patients with a terminal diagnosis with six months or less to live. **Dame Cicely Saunders**, founder of the first modern hospice in London in 1968, still expresses the essence of hospice best, “You matter to the last moment of your life, and we will do all we can, not only to help you die peacefully, but to live until you die.”

Our Livingston hospice team approach is multidisciplinary and focuses on the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of both the patient and their families. Services provided include:

- Skilled nursing care
- Symptom management medications
- Medical supplies and equipment
- Social Workers
- Home Health Aide services
- Chaplain services
- Volunteer services

My Father’s Last Smile

(cont. from page 1)

way from Ojai and was just as pleasant and helpful as she could be. We made the call after being up for over 30 hours and we were past exhausted. We were feeling a bit overwhelmed and felt we needed an objective look at things to see if there was something more we could be doing to keep my father comfortable. She was very efficient, sensitive and caring. If you could please make a note in her personnel file I would greatly appreciate it. I’m sorry I don’t remember her name [**Susan Shrum**]. I’m sure you can imagine what a very stressful time this was for us.

A Message From The Chairman



- 24 hour support and advice
- Comprehensive Bereavement program

Most hospice patients are Medicare eligible. Those who are uninsured or underinsured, often pediatric patients, most often qualify for one of our subsidized care programs.

The Livingston hospice team works very hard to lessen the burden by helping patients and families feel confident about what to expect during this very intimate, special, and emotional time. Our wonderful Hospice Director, “**Tree**” Pavan, has adopted Dame Saunders’ mantra, “We guide our patients care by helping them live until they die.”

Charles M. Hair, MD
Chairman of the Board

The caregiver [**Yolanda Lopez**] that has been bathing and attending to our parents has done a wonderful job and we very much appreciate all that she has done and continues to do.

Dr. Dial is wonderful! He is so gentle and compassionate. When he first came out to meet our parents and do the evaluation, he knelt at their bedside to talk face to face with them. Thank you for holding up the medical end of things in such a warm and caring way.

We just can’t say it enough...
Thank You!

With undying gratitude from the
Pezzotti and Evans families!

CALENDAR

www.livingstonvna.org

SAVE-THE-DATE

Light Up A Life!

December 9

ONGOING

All classes are free to the public.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

Drop-ins are welcome to bereavement support groups. Contact or information 642-0239, griefinfo@livingstonvna.org, or visit the website www.livingstonvna.org.

ADULT

Tuesdays — 2:30 to 4:00pm
Help of Ojai,
111 West Santa Ana St., Ojai

Wednesdays — 3 to 4:30pm
First Presbyterian Church,
850 Ivywood Dr., Oxnard

Wednesdays — 6:30 to 8pm
Livingston Memorial VNA,
1996 Eastman Ave., Ventura
Enter Suite 106

Thursdays — 1 to 2:30pm
Livingston Memorial VNA,
1996 Eastman Ave., Ventura

GRIEF CLASS

A class for the newly bereaved to assist in understanding the grief process.

2nd Tuesday of the Month* — 6 to 7:30pm
(*December 16 class is 3rd Tuesday)

Livingston Memorial VNA
1996 Eastman Ave., Ventura
Please call 642-0239 ext.624

DIABETES CLASSES

No registration necessary

For info, please call 642-0239 ext.723
Basic information on Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes with emphasis on the development of an individualized plan of care.

1st Tuesday of the Month — 1 to 3pm
Livingston Memorial VNA
1996 Eastman Ave., Ventura

1st Wednesday of the Month — 2:30 to 4:30pm
Camarillo Community Center
1605 Burnley St., Rm. 7, Camarillo

A Message From The President



Hospice in all Sizes

The vision of hospice is usually an elderly person who has lived a full and complete life, surrounded by loving family and friends. We wish this for all our Livingston Hospice patients. However, every hospice patient's life is different. Not all hospice patients live a full and complete life. Some have lives destined to end prematurely. For some life has barely begun. Livingston's pediatric hospice cares for children who have a terminal diagnosis and are living their final days.

Over this last year we have had ten pediatric hospice patients. The number of patients is not huge, but the need is. Some are babies born with congenital anomalies and some are teenagers with terminal cancer, all devastate families, friends and neighbors.

SPECIAL NURSES FOR SPECIAL CASES

Because of the unique situations and complex family dynamics surrounding pediatric hospice, Livingston employs two special pediatric hospice nurses, **Julie Nishida** and **Jean Marie Tantalo**. These nurses have received specialized pediatric hospice training that specifically qualifies them to care for children on hospice. In fact, Livingston Hospice is the only non-profit medical hospice provider in Ventura County that employs specialty pediatric hospice nurses.

Our nurses are often referred to by patients and families as "angels." In the

case of Julie and Jean the label fits.

One case this year really captured the challenges and creativity required of providing pediatric hospice. And, illustrates the extra mile the Livingston Hospice team is willing to go to meet the needs of patients.

A DREAM ENDING

Michael, not his real name, was born healthy and initially developed normally. At sixteen months he suffered a heart attack, which later led to cerebral palsy. Less than four years later, he was a quadriplegic. Michael's final burden was the development of stomach cancer. The cancer quickly spread to his bones and brain. When we began caring for the six year old, he had less than six months to live.

Michael's multiple medical complications were compounded by unpredictable mobility. He was born to a fifteen year old mother. Now at the age of twenty one, mom had no permanent address and was moving around the county from her sister's house to her parents', and boyfriend's. Michael, with all his medical complications, in tow.

We never knew when or where the mother would call from. One time we saw Michael for a patient visit in a parking lot. To meet Michael's complex medical needs and accommodate the mobile lifestyle of the young mother, we made special arrangements for medications to be available at multiple pharmacies. Despite myriad medical and logistical complications, Michael's story ends with a dream fulfilled.

Through the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Michael was able to spend four days at Disneyland with his family. Two days after returning from his trip of a lifetime, the short and difficult life of young Michael was over.

It is a privilege to care for patients like Michael, as it is with every patient Livingston serves. Your contribution helps make this care possible.

Dr. Lanyard Dial
President/CEO and Medical Director

Bereavement in Action

The livingston staff watches the news for local events that have an effect on our neighbors. When something tragic happens in our community, we immediately consider the ways to respond that best serve the needs of the people involved.

When there was a school shooting, we called the school to offer bereavement support for students.

When a young man died at home, we called his school to offer grief counseling.

When there was a suicide in the workplace of a local business, we provided a staff in-service. We also gave local referrals for ongoing grief support services.

We helped a local retirement village start a support group that assists residents as they come to terms with the changes in their lives and lifestyles.

Recently, when the Metrolink train collided with a freight train, Livingston partnered with the Red Cross and the city of Moorpark to organize a bereavement support group for survivors.

We currently offer six ongoing adult bereavement support groups and five teen support groups each week. The groups openly discuss topics like mortality, disability, loneliness, illness, healing, loss, grief, dignity, autonomy, independence, and the process of finding meaning in the events of our lives.

Our outreach to retirement communities, residential care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, classrooms, organizations, and hospice families includes emotional support, educational support, and fostering a nurturing environment. We facilitate the exploration and expression of feelings and concerns, the development of coping skills and an understanding of the grief process.

Whether responding to a crisis or preparing for a crisis, the Livingston bereavement services' mission is to prevent and relieve suffering. We promote quality of life at every stage through patient and family care. Our focus is to provide comprehensive bereavement education, support, and resources to individuals and families.

Talking with each other helps us feel connected, heal what hurts, and create new social support systems. Livingston Bereavement Coordinator **Maddy Hazard** adds, "We know how difficult healing from a loss can be, so we go the extra mile."

Jane McCullick
Chaplain and Grief Counselor



Sign up for 2009 Hospice Volunteer TRAINING

Join Livingston's core of over 50 patient volunteers, our unsung heroes, that give their special gifts of time and compassion to patients and their families during the end of life. The training is designed to give you the confidence to enter the homes and lives of others giving them added support as part of our hospice team. What you will receive back is as priceless as what you give. For more information contact **Maddy Hazard** at 642-0239x775 or email mhazard@lmvna.org.



The following students were awarded a Certificate of Completion: (Top row L to R) Instructor, **Carole Cutler, RN, Cheryl Allen, Monique Morales-Herrera, Maria Contreras, Araceli Ochoa, Sandra Chavez, Gloria Forgea, RN** Education Director. (Front row L to R) **Sarah Burciaga, Margot Sanchez, Erika Longines.**

Home Health Aides Receive Certification

LIVINGSTON IS HAPPY to announce that eight Certified Nurse Assistants have received their Home Health Aide Certification. Completion of the program allows the Home Health Aide to function as an entry-level worker on a health care team. The curriculum provides theory and practical application of knowledge and skills needed to function as a Home Health Aide in the State of California.

The Home Health Aide Certification Training Program is approved by the California Department of Health Services and by the Bureau of Private and Postsecondary and Vocational Education as a short-term career training program. To learn more about the program please contact **Valeri Ziegler** at 642-0239 x676 or vziegler@lmvna.org.

Dear Friends of Hospice,

Memories are so precious. It is the goal of hospice to enrich the experience of a loved one's final days when memories are created that will be with us forever.



Lucille Whitebook

Caregiver for **Seymour Whitebook**, loving husband and recipient of Livingston Hospice Care, Chairwoman Light Up A Life campaign 2000-2007

We are sad to say that Lucille Whitebook died February 2, 2008. The Livingston Hospice Team was honored to care for her and support her beautiful family during her last days. To honor Lucille's memory or the memory of any loved one with a gift, please go to the Livingston website, www.livingstonvna.org.

Hospice places the patient and the family together at the center of care. Support, training, and assistance are available when they are needed most and administered with the utmost gentleness, empathy and concern. —Rosalyn Carter

On a personal level, I thank you for considering this request for support. By remembering your loved one in this special way, you can help shape the memories that are finding their place in the hearts of others.

Chaplain's Corner



I recently got a phone call from a close friend who shared the sad news that her husband died suddenly. The shock and trauma were heavy in her voice, as was the profound sense of loss. "How did this happen?" she asked, not believing the reality of it. Many questions arose revealing her feelings of emptiness and vulnerability. Perhaps worst of all was her feeling of isolation. A common feeling for those newly bereaved.

It is helpful to have a companion through the journey of loss and grief. This can put us on a path of healing and hope for the future.

Companionship the bereaved means to accompany and to comfort. It also means to honor a person's story by becoming familiar with it. Our job is to slow down and listen, not analyze, not give advice, nor try to fix anything. Our goal is to be fully present as the mourner acknowledges the reality of this loss, accepts the pain, reviews memories, and tries to make some meaning of it all. We as companions can watch and learn, as opposed to playing the expert.

Companionship the bereaved happens here at Livingston Hospice on a regular basis. Our bereavement support groups offer a warm welcome to the newcomer. There is a bond that develops based on sharing the deep and varied emotions of loss. The groups offer a safe place to tell one's story and have it heard and honored by facilitators and group members. Participating in a support group can be the crucial next step in regaining a sense of belonging and being in community once again.

Judith Cohen,
M.Div. Hospice Chaplain

Light Up The Internet

START A NEW holiday tradition with Light Up A Life memory stars! The stars are a fantastic way to express your love and support to family and friends, and maybe even whittle down your gift list too.

Your memory stars will be posted on the Livingston website, www.livingstonvna.org, virtual memory tree. Matching physical stars are hung on the Livingston memory trees at the Pacific View Mall in Ventura through the month of December.

Memory stars are a convenient and economical way to give too, only \$20 each. Simply go to the Livingston website, and click on "Order Memory Stars." You can add a personalized message and we will notify friends, family and loved ones of your gift.



Online donations significantly reduce gift processing costs, ensuring the maximum amount of your gift goes to Livingston's vital patient services. In fact, 83 cents of every dollar Livingston spends goes to home healthcare, hospice and respite services.

Think of the hearts you'll warm and the time you'll save, especially during this busy time. Please, make a difference with your holiday giving. Order your Light Up A Life memory stars online.

Susan Mercer,
Development Associate

Thank you!

DONORS — JULY THRU OCTOBER 2008

Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, foundations, businesses, institutions and community organizations for their generosity. It is the loyalty of our many supporters that allow us to continue our mission of providing high quality home healthcare and compassionate hospice.

Honoring and recognizing our donors is very important to us. We apologize for any omissions and/or errors. Please call Susan Mercer at (805)642-0239 x607 to update us with any changes, corrections or preferences. Your support is greatly appreciated!

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Contact Marc Wilde
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(805) 642-0239 ext. 603**

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- Transfer the ownership and beneficiary to Livingston. You receive a charitable tax deduction, which is the lesser of your cost basis (premiums paid), or the fair market value (usually the cash value) of the policy.
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If you would like to discuss your personal life insurance situation or any other information related to gift planning, please contact me (805)642-0239 x603 or mwilde@livingstonvna.org.

Marc Wilde, CFRE
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August 21, 2008

Livingston Memorial
Visiting Nurse Association,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation to your organization for all the help it has given to my wife, **Judy Eberhardt**. The hardest part of trying to care for her was frustration. As her condition worsened, I didn't always know what was happening or how to care for her. The VNA staff was extremely helpful in showing me what to do.

As her condition reached the point that required hospice care, your staff was again outstanding. I could not have handled the situation without their help and support. I know that it eased much of my wife's discomfort.

I would like to thank **Rosario, Ludie** and **Dorothy** from the VNA and **Julie, Linda, Michelle, Jean Marie, Rosemary** and **Judith Cohen** from Livingston Hospice. There were many others that helped, but I am embarrassed to say I cannot remember all their names at this time.

Let me just say, THANK YOU to all.

Sincerely,
Bill Eberhardt



Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association
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