



BRANCHES

from the

WILLOW TREE

Message from Christine

Volume 1, No 3

Fall, 2009



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Administrator

The summer sped by, didn't it? And while the fall season brings many treats: pumpkins, fragrant air, Halloween, etc., it also brings with it the very real threat of flu and flu-related illnesses.

We encourage our staff to avail themselves of the seasonal flu vaccine which our organization provides to our employees.

The H1N1 vaccine is another matter. As of this date, the vaccine has not been released and we are waiting to hear when /if we will receive H1N1 vaccine for our staff.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the illness with the new H1N1 virus ranges from mild to severe. While most people who had the illness recovered without needing medical treatment, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred.

With seasonal flu, certain

people are at "high risk" of serious complications. This includes people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions. One thing that appears to be different with the H1N1 virus is that adults older than 64 years do not appear to be at increased risk of 2009 H1N1-related complications and may even have some immunity to it.

Good hand washing is still one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of **infection of any kind**. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. The Center for Disease Control recommends that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs.



HELPING HANDS

Once again students from the Helping Hands Community Service Program at Oxford High School and Avon Grove Middle School came together to create flower pens, bookmarks and Halloween candy bags for our marketing promotion this fall.

We laughed, told stories, ate pizza and created items that will help spread the word that Willow Tree Hospice is so appreciative of the community it serves.

The students' hard work and dedication to Willow Tree makes our jobs easier and they continue to bring life and laughter to everyone they meet.

For more information about Willow Tree Hospice, contact 610-869-2201 or visit www.willowtreehospice.com.

COORDINATOR'S DREAM

Occasionally something happens that makes me realize the richness of the volunteer experience. It is in these moments that I see how people are willing to reach out and help others in need.

One particular woman started with Willow Tree Hospice as a facility volunteer then found a home patient that she knew would be perfect to spend her time with. The volunteer reminisced with the patient about gardening, housecleaning and beauty parlor days. Her volunteer time became as precious to her as it did to our patient and the family. When it was time to finally say goodbye the volunteer styled the patient's hair one last time for her journey to eternity.

Another volunteer described how she had rescued her beloved pet from puppy life in a cage. In return, a life long dream has been fulfilled as she spends time with our patients in our Pet Therapy program. She has found her calling and longs to spend many hours bringing smiles and comfort to our hospice patients.

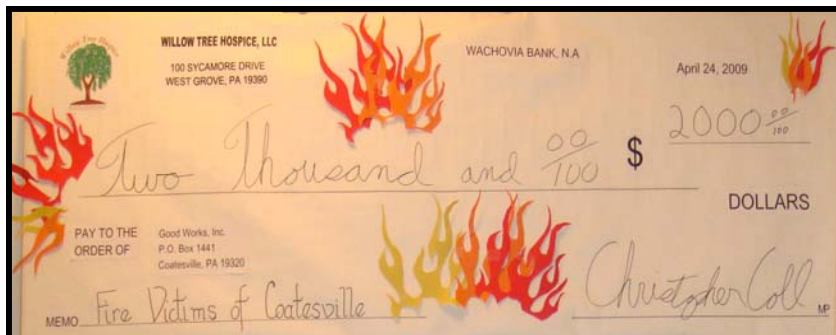
Lastly, one particular student developed important administrative skills over her summer vacation as she answered phones, filed and supported our staff with different office projects. She now uses these skills in her academic life by scheduling other students for community service projects.

Each of these people, in their own way, have created a unique and satisfying volunteer experience and contributed greatly to our Community.

COATESVILLE FIRE VICTIMS

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Night recognized our volunteers for their time and talents this year in a very special way. The volunteer's hearts were bigger than ever and instead of accepting gifts they decided to donate \$2000.00 to the Coatesville fire victims. These families were devastated by a series of arsons which left young and old homeless and suffering.

The Willow Tree volunteers continue to open their hearts to the hospice families. Their love and compassion for folks who are suffering or hurting truly defines where their hearts are.....ministering to the surrounding community.



HOSPICE CARE IN NURSING HOME OFFERS BENEFITS TO RESIDENT AT END OF LIFE

Researchers at the Harvard Medical School, Department of Health Policy have published an article of hospice care in nursing homes and found a number of benefits indicating that greater availability of hospice holds promise in the nursing home setting.

Key findings reported in an article published in the September 2009 issue of Journal of Pain and Symptom Management found:

- ♥ Hospice in nursing homes can provide high quality end-of-life care and offers benefits such as reduced hospitalization and improved pain management.

- ♥ The provision of hospice care in nursing homes has been shown to have positive effects on non-hospice residents, suggesting indirect benefits on nursing home clinical practices.

- ♥ Hospice is relatively underutilized among nursing home residents at the end of life.

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization reports that more than 1.4 million Americans receive care from the nation's hospice providers annually with 22.8 percent residing in nursing homes. Yet, only six percent of nursing home residents in the U.S. currently elect the hospice benefit.

Hospice providers recognize the need for ongoing outreach and consciousness raising both among nursing home professionals and members of the public who may need end-of-life care.

MYTHS OF HOSPICE

The purpose of hospice is to help patients live each day to the fullest extent possible and to provide support to their families. When deciding to choose hospice care it is important to have a good understanding of the hospice philosophy. There are many myths about hospice and over the next several publications of Willow Tree's newsletter we will review some of the most common myths along with the facts.

Myth #1: Hospice only cares for patients with cancer. *Fact:* Hospice care is for patients and families during any life-limiting illness. More than half of the patients nationwide have diagnoses other than cancer. Hospice cares for patients and families coping with the end stages of chronic diseases like COPD, Alzheimer's, liver and cardiovascular disease.

Myth # 2: Choosing hospice means there is no hope and I am "giving up". *Fact:* It may be just looking at hope in a different way. While a patient once hoped for a cure they may now hope to be free of pain; they may hope to see a friend or relative "one last time" or to spend more time with loved ones. Studies show that patients on hospice live, on average, nearly 30 days longer than patients with the same diagnosis who do not choose Hospice.

Myth # 3: Hospice is just for the patient. *Fact:* Hospice focuses on comfort, dignity, and emotional support. Hospice helps patients and families come to terms with dying. They assist patients in finishing important tasks and in saying their final goodbyes. In addition, the bereavement team follows the families for at least one year after the death of their loved one.

"I can't say enough about the services you provided, your entire staff is caring and competent."

"We could not have gotten through this without your help."

Messages From Our Families

".....you all did a wonderful job!"

".....your companionship and attentiveness warmed her spirits and inspired her smiles...."

"Dad looked forward to seeing the hospice staff."

"We will highly recommend your services."

"You made my Mother comfortable. You are angels."

".....your aides went above and beyond the requirements of the job."

"It was so comforting to know that you were a call away."



Chaplain Chat



“I will not die an un-lived life.
I will not live in fear
Of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
To allow my living to open me,
To make me less afraid, more ac-
cessible,
To loosen my heart
Until it becomes a wing,
A touch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance,
To love
So that which comes to me as seed
Goes to the next blossom
And that which comes to me as
blossom
Goes on as fruit.

Dawna Markova

Rev. Gayle Reuter
Director, Chaplain Services

WILLOW TREE MASCOT

Derry Coll, born June 2, 2002 arrived from Long Island, NY on August 2nd, 2009. Derry's first day at Willow Tree marked a new beginning for him. Born into a puppy mill, as a stud dog, he spent his days alone and unsocialized. His toothless grin and barkless voice just adds to the unique personality he brings to Willow Tree. As the weeks go on he ventures out of his bed to greet visitors, staff and fellow Pet Therapy dogs. He is quickly letting everyone know that he is here to stay. Derry may have had a troubled beginning but he will finish out his years loved and living a life of luxury next to his beloved rescuer Christine Coll, RN, Administrator.



NEW EMPLOYEE

Willow Tree welcomes Betty Smith R.N. Betty comes to us with fourteen years of hospice experience, along with specialized training in the field of geriatrics. Prior to nursing, Betty spent twenty-five years as a chef and caterer. The role, however, that provides her with the greatest satisfaction is that of “Gammy”. As Gammy, Betty teaches her grandchildren the glory of sailing and boating on the Chesapeake. And although she loves her work, it's “Gammy” she treasures.



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