



BRANCHES

from the

WILLOW TREE

Summer/Fall 2011

Message from Christine



Christine Coll RN, BS
Administrator

Willow Tree Hospice (WTH) has enjoyed rich community relationships since our inception in July, 2006. This year our hospice team has intensified efforts to spread the word of hospice to the residents of Chester County.

WTH works hard to educate the community about hospice services because misconceptions related to the hospice benefit persist. Professionals and lay persons alike continue to believe that hospice care is only available for the last weeks or hours of life. These erroneous beliefs often result in delay or denial of services for persons who might otherwise take advantage of this generous healthcare benefit.

Our first step was to develop a series of lectures related to, not only the many services provided by hospice, but the stress of care-

giving as well. These lectures/discussions are available to various retirement communities, libraries, senior centers and churches.

Additionally, we have been sponsoring "physician lunches" where we meet the local physicians and their staff and chat informally with them during their lunch hour. These talks have proved very effective at both dispelling myths, and explaining the many and varied benefits of the hospice program.

Despite our best efforts, we realize that myths and misconceptions continue to surround end-of-life issues; however, we plan to keep informing people about the care and support we are able to provide to our community. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or if you would like a representative from our team to come and speak with you or your group. Topics are highlighted in this newsletter. We can tailor our programs to meet the needs of your audience. Please contact us at 610-869-2201 for more information on how we can educate you or your group.



"The Sandwich Generation"

"The Sandwich Generation" is a term coined by Carol Abaya that describes many modern day adults. The official definition of this generation is: "those sandwiched between aging parents who need care and/or help and their own children". In the past, parents have only had the responsibility of providing and caring for their children. Now these adults often have the added task of caring for their parents. Statistically one out of every eight Americans, aged forty to sixty, take care of both their children and their parents.

What does all this mean? You love both your children and your parents, but suddenly there are so many new obstacles, ranging from financial resources to health issues. If you are experiencing the burden of having to take care of both your children and your parents, know that you are not alone. July is the official "Sandwich Generation Awareness Month", which spotlights community support.

Willow Tree is here to help. We are a community-driven organization that wants to assist you with the emotional and physical demands of caring for your loved ones. The articles in this newsletter are designed to highlight our Community Outreach Program and outline the ways we can help.

Willow Tree Hospice Welcomes our New Employees



Willow Tree would like to welcome a new member of our Social Service staff. Nicolette Hawrylak, MSW, LSW has joined our team as our full time Social Worker and Bereavement Coordinator. Nicolette received her degrees at The University of Pittsburgh. She grew up in Oxford, PA and now resides in the Southern Chester County area with her family. Nicolette offers a one credit approved CEU for social workers entitled, "Conversations on Hospice." Please contact Nicolette at Nicolette.hawrylak@willowtreehospice.com if you are interested in sharing this important topic with your facility or staff.

Willow Tree Hospice is excited to introduce our Volunteer Coordinator, Betsy Beehler. Betsy grew up in Southern Chester County and chose to live and raise her family in the same area, so it seems fitting to introduce her to you in this edition of our newsletter focusing on Community Outreach.

After earning her Bachelor of Science degree and working in a variety of professions, she chose to become a stay at home mom to raise her three daughters. During this time, Betsy's focus turned back to her childhood roots related to the importance of volunteering. She volunteered with many community organizations such as church, Girl Scouts, PTA, etc.. During this time, she also mentored many children, as well as her own, on the importance of volunteering at some point in their lives.

When asked what strengths she felt she brings to Willow Tree her response was, "To make sure that the patient's dignity and life matters, up until the very end." Betsy is excited to grow the volunteer program and to support our many wonderful volunteers.

If you wish to share your time bringing your warmth, compassion and desire to make a difference in a patient's end of life experience, come join our volunteer program. No experience is necessary, training will be provided.

Please contact, Betsy Beehler at 610-869-2201 or download a volunteer application on our website www.willowtreehospice.com. This application is located under the volunteer tab.



On June 2, 2011, Willow Tree Hospice sponsored a hole at the Ninth Annual Jenner's Pond Golf Classic at the Deerfield Golf Club. This was the fifth year that Willow Tree Hospice participated in this event, which raises money for the Benevolent Care Fund of Jenner's Pond. It was a beautiful Thursday afternoon and all in attendance had a great time. The Willow Tree Hospice Golfing Team was comprised of Christopher Coll, Tom Shanahan, and Jeff Blaies, who all showed much improvement in their game (although they still don't keep score). All in all, it was a wonderful day for a worthy cause.



Elder care.....It's not easy

Are your loved ones having trouble with their grooming, household chores, shopping, cooking, eating or managing their finances? Have they become slightly forgetful? Having trouble with their hearing or vision? This may raise some concerns and questions. Where do you begin?

First realize that you are not alone. More than 65 million people are caregivers: 29% of the U.S population provides care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during any given year and spends an average of 20 hours per week providing care for their loved one. 13% of family caregivers provide 40 hours or more of care a week. Some juggle job and parental responsibilities as well.

Willow Tree Hospice is excited to offer another Community Outreach Program, "Elder care...It's not easy" to the community. This program focuses on helping adult children of aging parents prepare to meet the needs of their loved ones.

Caring for aging spouses, parents, family members or friends can present unique challenges especially if there is a crisis or a sudden illness occurs. The stress of providing this care can seem overwhelming. Planning ahead will help you understand what service options are available, thereby reducing emotional and financial stress for you and your loved one.

Through our interactive presentation, participants will acquire tools and resources to successfully navigate this new territory; addressing the questions:

- What resources are available to help determine what my friend/family needs?
- How can I help someone gain access to services?
- How do I have difficult conversations to identify my loved one's needs and wishes?

Participants will gain insights on how to develop an action plan to answer these questions. Included in the program we will provide self-care tips to support the caregiver through these difficult times.

Navigating the Healthcare System

An Advocate is defined as a person who pleads for, or on behalf of another. If this definition describes you, the following will help you navigate the healthcare system as an advocate for your loved one:

- Become informed– This helps you to ask the right questions and understand the disease and treatment options.
- Create a folder– At some point you will need to provide a list of medications, tests, procedures, and hospitalizations. Having this information organized and at your fingertips can make appointments and hospitalizations go much easier. Also, having these items available allows you to take and keep organized notes during the appointment.
- Put legal documents in place– To be the best advocate, you want to have the legal power and authority to advocate for your loved one. If you haven't taken this step yet, act now before your loved one is hospitalized.
- Encourage your family/friends to make their health and personal wishes known– Talk with them about their wishes especially when it comes to symptom management and issues related to pain. Don't assume that your doctor or nurses know how your loved one wants to be treated.
- Keep your eyes and ears open– Remember that mistakes happen, so when you hear someone mention the wrong medication or see the wrong technique being used, speak up. If something does not feel right or if things are happening too fast, make sure someone in charge knows about it.

Navigating the Healthcare System and Elder Care are two of the topics we offer through our Community Outreach Program.

Chaplain Chat by Rev. Gayle Reuter Director, Chaplain Services



Loss enters our lives in many forms, but none more poignant than the death of a loved one. Although we cannot avoid the losses of life, we can find direction and support as we make our way through the “valley of the shadow of death”. “Pathways through Grief”, a Community Outreach seminar, offers resources, information and coping skills to assist you in dealing with the thoughts and emotions that can sometimes seem overwhelming. Included in this seminar is a question and answer period to address specific personal issues, experiences and concerns. As with any of our Community Outreach

Programs, we would be happy to tailor our presentations to your needs. If you are interested, please contact us at 610-869-2201.

Willow Tree Hospice is excited to introduce our Pet Therapy team, Julian and Nancy Wolfenbarger and Duncan. They are celebrating their one year anniversary as a Hospice Pet Therapy Team with Willow Tree.

Duncan is a 10 year old Chow Chow who came to the Wolfenbargers as an 8 week old puppy. He was named for a dog who was a great playmate to the Wolfenbarger’s previous dog, Katie. “Duncan” is a tribute to that canine friendship.

From the start Duncan was giving back and he gives back nearly every week to the patients at Ware Presbyterian Village in Oxford, PA. He visits with the patients and brings his kind, gentle and loving nature to any resident who reaches out their hand to pet him.

Willow Tree is very fortunate to have six Pet Therapy teams who visit patients across Chester County. Pet Therapy is as rewarding to the dog and their human companions as it is to the patients they serve. If you and your “best friend” are interested in becoming a Pet Therapy team or would like more information about the program, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Betsy Beehler at 610-869-2201.



**Willow Tree Hospice
100 Sycamore Drive
West Grove, PA
19390**