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Newsletter July 2016

Dear Friends,

Well hasn't this year just shot by in a flash? So much so our newsletter is a little later than we planned for! That said, here is the new issue and we do hope you find something in here of interest. You are most welcome to pass on this publication, and we hope it may be helpful and informative. Included in this issue:

- **A busy year so far** - Statistics for the last 6 months
- **Hospice Happenings** - what we've been up to
- **A testimonial** - from a family who have experienced our care
- **Fundraiser needed** - can you help?
- **Civvies Day** at our local schools!
- **Candle of Compassion** - we need your R50 per month!
- **Why, When and How to call on Hospice for help** - some valuable information

Please enjoy this newsletter! Your feedback and constructive criticism are most welcome.



It's been a busy year so far!

At Hospice our professional nurses are extremely busy, and we'd like to share with you some of our statistics for the last 6 months, which will give a very good idea of our service and activities within the White River community.

Patients in our care:

Total patients on our program: 44

We had 691 visits to these 44 patients and this included 2219 interventions. These interventions include physical, psychosocial and spiritual care.

New patients admitted onto our program: 11 (6 male and 5 female patients)

Patients discharged: 5 (Patients either in remission or moved out of HWR service area)

Deceased: 8

Patient Age groups:

36 - 45 years = 3

46 - 60 years = 6

61 - 70 years = 4

71 years + = 31

Chronic Diseases cared for:

Cardiac disease - 1

Cardiac failure - 2

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - 3

HIV/Aids - 3

Types of cancers cared for:

Breast cancer - 6

Cervical cancer - 1

Colon cancer - 2

Head and neck cancer - 1

Lung cancer - 1

Oral cancer - 2

Ovarian cancer - 2

Pancreatic cancer - 1

Prostate cancer - 1

Rectal cancer - 1

Skin cancer (excluding melanoma) - 1

Squamous cell carcinoma - 1

Stomach cancer - 1



Hospice Happenings!



Marina Erasmus presents long service awards to Daniel Madaka

Long Service Awards presented at our AGM

At our AGM in May we were thrilled to present a Long Service Award to Daniel Mdaka. Daniel has been with our organisation for 12 years, and we felt it was time to recognise Daniel for his steadfast dedication to Hospice. Daniel is always willing to turn his hand to anything we need on the maintenance front, and he is always there with a big smile for all errands, large or small. Daniel cares for Hospice House and has been integral in improving the premises. We were able to present Daniel with a financial gift, and of course a certificate. This was presented to Daniel at the AGM by our Chairperson, Marina Erasmus, pictured left with a beaming Daniel.

Acknowledgment was also given to professional volunteer nurses Madeleine Collins and Gaye Hassenkamp for their long service to the organization, and Marina awarded each with a certificate and a bouquet of flowers. Sr Gaye has been with Hospice since 2010, and Sr Madeleine has been with us for 8 years. Both nurses are well loved by our patients and have made a big difference in the lives of many. As we award these long term volunteers, we are also pleased to welcome on board Wendy Roche, who joins us as a volunteer professional nurse.



Marina Erasmus presents long service awards to Madeleine Collins and Gay Hassenkamp.



Hospice welcomes a new member to the team

A very warm welcome to Winnie Segone, an Enrolled Nurse as well as a Social Auxiliary Worker, who has joined the Hospice Team. Winnie's talents will be an absolute asset to the organization, and we consider ourselves very blessed to have her on board. We will certainly make the most of having Winnie as part of the Hospice team, as she will only be with us until November this year; Winnie will be leaving us to continue with her studies in becoming a professional nurse.



A successful night at the movies!

In March we held a movie fundraiser, once again hosted by the Casterbridge Cinema, with thanks to Sue and Tracey for always offering us a good rate for hire of the venue. We were grateful for the kind sponsorship of the movie house by local business woman Vangi Gwala, pictured left with our Brand Ambassador Renata Stewart.

Local restaurants as always came up trumps with a delicious spread for our movie-goers, and we were delighted to have nearly 80 people attend the function. The movie itself 'Alive Inside' turned out to be an absolute heart-warmer, and people raved about it, so much so we had many requests to borrow the film so that its inspiring message could be spread further. Hospice is delighted that not only did we raise some nice funds, but we educated and inspired many in our community about the healing power of music in reaching patients suffering from memory loss.

A Testimonial from a Family who have Experienced Hospice Care

With gratitude to Leona da Costa for providing this Testimonial and allowing us to publish it. We feel her story describes so well the service that Hospice provides patients and their families.

I, Leona Da Costa, wish to place on record my experience and dealings with Hospice White River during the time of my mother, Rhoda Dodgson's passing.

In November 2014, Rustig Ouetehuis told us they had a place for Mom in frail care. Due to Mom's condition we all agreed that if she lived there, at least hubby Frank and myself would have peace of mind knowing that she was being looked after. Mom only lasted one month there, her condition deteriorating rapidly and her inability to eat made us all very unhappy. I just could not leave her there. Not that there was anything from Rustig's side, they were wonderful but Mom could not cope with the change this late in life and already being ill. I could not see her spending Christmas there and moved her back home at the beginning of December.



Rhoda Dogson, centre, with the da Costa family

I realized that Mom would now no longer have the benefit of the Rustig nurses helping her. My domestics, Lettie and Owen, who adored her, did everything they could to help her while I was at work. Mom's room was away from the main house and she wanted to stay in her room where the bathroom was right next to her bed. Lettie could not always hear her call for help.

I had spoken to Debbie Glossop, the manager at Hospice White River many times in chats in the past and during all of this and she kept telling me they will come and assist. I know we battled on needlessly, holding onto the illusion of being independent and capable for as long as we could but with hindsight, everything could have been so much easier if we weren't so hard-headed and proud.

One day in tears I phoned Debbie and explained my situation.

Debbie and Professional Nurse Elsa Swanepoel, more lovingly known as Sr Elsa came to the house and did an assessment of Mom's health, BP, sugar etc. At this point Mom was already very frail. They both spoke to Mom with such respect and explained what they were able to do for us. They offered advice and suggestions, explained everything they were doing for her etc. Mom had such a great rapport with both of them and they treated her gently, no bullying or pushiness. Debbie and Daniel brought us a hospital style bed with cot sides to stop her falling out, as they could see my back was taking stress, leaning over Mom to help her and picking her up to take her to the bathroom. They suggested bedpans, an airflow mattress and all the other equipment we could use that they have available at Hospice to make it more comfortable for Mom and to give me peace-of-mind. Mom had already previously fallen between her bed and bookcase hurting herself and the more frail she became, the more we worried for her safety.

My sister had spent time with Mom and looked after her but needed to get back to her work and family. After she left, and Mom weakened even more we realized that she needed to get a full day carer. Sr. Elsa and Debbie explained that they have a list of recommended carers who could help us, but that we choose and engage with them directly. I engaged a lovely lady, Vivian Mzimba who would come in before I left for work. I watched her treat my Mom like she was her own mother, speaking gently, giving Mom bedbaths, washing her hair (which I was totally unable to do and it frustrated Mom not having clean hair). Vivian would rub cream onto Mom's body, make her bed with fresh sheets, try tempting her with any and everything to get her to eat, which she just couldn't. She sat and chatted to Mom during the day, doing everything she could for Mom.

Sr. Elsa and Debbie popped in regularly, taking all the vitals signs, reporting it back to the doctor, and later arranging with the doctor for morphine as the pain was unbearable. They organized with the pharmacy and I just collected the medicine. Sr Elsa put the morphine patch on, and checked everything regularly that there were no reactions etc. The syrup was just too strong and Sr. Elsa suggested, in consultation with the doctor that we modify doses etc. as we didn't want Mom to be so spaced out she didn't know anyone.

Continued over/..

We all knew that Mom's time was coming and Debbie and Sr Elsa sat with my sister and myself explaining what to expect. Books may carry a lot of information but not recognizing what is happening; rather having someone tell you what is happening, is so much more comforting.

They had visited us on 25 February to check and chat as they always did. Sr Elsa told us she wouldn't be seeing us the next day because of other patients. But Murphy's Law dictates differently. I noticed a change in Mom on Thursday 26 February 2015, her lips were cracked and she was 'just different'. Vivian said to phone Elsa, and I did, in a panic. Within a short time Debbie and Sr. Elsa arrived. They very gently told me to call Frank home as 'it was time'. Frank arrived in time to say goodbye as we all stood in her room, Lettie and Owen, Debbie and Elsa, Vivian and myself. She just gently slipped away, no drama, no nonsense. I could not believe she was gone, Elsa even put the pulse oximetre on her finger to assure me that it had happened and she was gone. Debbie and I went outside awhile and I was calling the family. Debbie looked up and there was an eagle circling around overhead, calling, first low and small circles and then higher and bigger. We called everyone out and just watched as the eagle came to show her the way home.

Sr. Elsa arranged the doctor and the certification of Mom's passing. The Lowveld Crematorium arrived and while I was with Magda, (Mom's old hairdresser and friend, now at the Crematorium) getting me to fill in all the paperwork etc, everyone else was helping with Mom.

When Debbie and Elsa left Vivian helped us clean up and tidy everything. Although she was only with us for about a week, she was crying too like she had lost a precious loved one. There was such a feeling of extended family through our experience of love and loss with Hospice White River. Debbie and Elsa called to check on us occasionally keeping in contact and really showing the love and compassion that Hospice has become renowned for. ♥

Can You Help?

As a small, dedicated team we require urgent assistance with our fundraising activities. We are seeking a professional person to organise and drive events that

will bring in much needed income for our organisation. We are looking for someone who has experience in fund-raising and event planning, someone who is mature (ie not a school leaver) and preferably someone who has some knowledge of the White River community. We need someone who is creative, energetic and who enjoys working with people. Remuneration will be negotiable. Anyone interested to please contact Hospice White River on 013-750 3044 or email whiteriverhospice@tiscali.co.za



White River Primary School

School Civvies Day!

Civvies Day at local schools are a great way to raise money for a good cause. Each year schools allocate their Civvies Days to a charity of choice, and we are blessed that this year White River Primary and Uplands Prep are dedicating their charity civvies days to Hospice.

The school children donate R5 each to Hospice, wear a splash of orange, and more importantly they learn about Hospice and what we do. Our Brand Ambassador Renata Stewart is integral in spreading this awareness, as she addresses school assemblies with a presentation that is full of fun and full of information too.

Both White River Primary and Uplands Prep will be staging their Civvies Day in the third term. Our huge THANKS to both of these schools for their support. We are grateful for the funds to be raised and also for the awareness generated amongst the younger population!



Brand Ambassador Renata Stewart dressed and ready for Civvies Day!

Please note that Hospice White River is responsible for raising its own funds; all funds raised remain within our community. Hospice White River is its own entity - we are not a national organisation.

Candle of Compassion

Our 'Candle of Compassion' campaign continues and we are very grateful to all those who are contributing*. To generate a sustainable stream of income for Hospice we need to push this campaign and we invite all members of the community to support Hospice White River by donating on an ongoing monthly basis **the amount of R50** (or any other amount that is affordable).

***Please note:** If you are already a donor to the Candle of Compassion, please check whether your recurring payment is still valid, and if it has expired please consider re-activating your monthly payment.

R50 can be pledged to us by setting up a recurring payment via internet banking, to the following account:

FNB White River Branch Code 270 552

Hospice White River

Cheque Account: 6202 566 8304

Please mark ref field with your **NAME** and add **COC**

PLEASE NOTE: Your donation is tax deductible. Every end of the financial tax year, you will be issued with a tax receipt on request



Why, When and How to call on Hospice White River for help

When facing a life-threatening illness patients are often overwhelmed by the frightening situation they find themselves in, as are their family members. Most of us have no idea how to navigate such unknown circumstances, and it is because of this that calling on hospice care is a **reassuring step** on this new journey.

It is unfortunate that people don't realise there is help available through Hospice White River and we have often seen families in desperate situations when they have not been aware of our services. Some feel that to call on Hospice is to 'accept death' and to 'abandon hope'. Nothing could be further from the truth and our professional nurses and hospice carers will quickly allay such fears. Hospice may be contacted **upon diagnosis** of a life-threatening illness.

We provide **professional nursing care** and this includes counselling and guidance, a friendly face and positive encouragement, the answering of difficult questions, and we also provide details of **bereavement counselling** and support, which is very important for family once the loved one has passed on.

Our services are freely available to all within the White River area. Please note we do charge an initial R350 administrative fee, which is negotiable depending on circumstances. Please **call us** on 013-750 3044 or pop into our offices at 19 Wildevy Street, White River. Our office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.

Hospice White River is also able to provide assistance in the form of **medical equipment** which we hire out. It is not necessary to be a Hospice patient in order to hire equipment such as a walker or a wheelchair, however our equipment is only available to those living in White River. Please enquire with our office for details of our extensive list of medical equipment; Terms & Conditions apply.

Our work is made possible through donations we receive from the public and other entities. Our enormous gratitude to all those in the community who support us and enable to keep doing what we do.

Until next time,
Warm regards from

All at Hospice White River



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