



# Flashes of Inspiration

Volume 5 Issue 6

A Newsletter for Inspiration Hospice Volunteers

June 2009

## I Bid you Farewell

Life is always changing, certainly as we know with our patients, but our own lives have a tendency to have ebbs and flows along with nature itself. This is a very difficult article to write because I have decided that now is the right time for me to spend more time with my family, and so I will be leaving Inspiration Hospice fairly soon.

I cannot describe how much I have loved working with each one of you. You are truly some of the best people on earth with hearts of gold. I have loved visiting and laughing with you. I have especially enjoyed our time together during volunteer trainings. It's been a wonderful time to come to know each other's hearts.

You have made such a wise choice to volunteer with Inspiration Hospice because no other hospice serves their patients and their families better. And you will never be appreciated more and supported better as a volunteer than here. I know you will be in good hands and your experiences will only get better. Our Administrator, Shar, and I are working closely together to find my replacement as Volunteer and Bereavement Coordinator, and I have told her that I want to stay until the perfect person is hired and trained so it can be a smooth transition, especially for you. We want someone who we know will love and appreciate you as much as you deserve.

I hope we will always remain friends. I am easy to find in the phone book. Please feel free to call me any time.

You have my love and sincere gratitude,

*Linda*

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## Kathy Gowers

Compiled by Brittany Horsley

**Describe your type of volunteer assignment(s):** I visit three patients every week and help with Eleventh Hour when I am able. I also teach the Eleventh Hour portion of Volunteer Training.

### Personal background:

Phew, this could be a novel. I was born in Denver, CO. and grew up there until I turned 6. Then we moved to England and lived there, with cows for neighbors (literally) for 6 1/2 years. After that it was to Connecticut where I stayed until I was 17.



Once it was time for me to leave the nest I made it out West to Utah where I went to Westminster College for nursing school. Once I graduated I went back "home" to Connecticut where I nursed for 2 years and started a freelance photography business. After two years of complaining about how much I wished I were a photographer rather than a nurse, I moved back to Utah and opened my own photography studio. I continued to nurse for 2 years and just "retired" from nursing 8 months ago. I currently reside in Riverton with my brand new hubby, Dan, our dog Bruno and our two cats, Sib and Lady.

**Why I decided to be a volunteer:** I worked as a nurse for Inspiration for a brief time and while being a nurse wasn't my calling in life, I absolutely fell in love with my patients and did not want to leave them, nor the staff. I signed up as a volunteer immediately and then recruited my mom and recently my husband to share in my passion.

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## Meet the Staff:

### Cindy Christensen, RN Case Manager

Compiled by Brittany Horsley

**Describe your role:** I'm an RN case manager and provide assessments, nursing care, and coordination of care to my patients.



**Personal background:**

I was raised in East Millcreek and have two older brothers and one younger sister and we are a very tight knit family. My father owned HydroSwift boats and we spent most weekends at Bear Lake. After graduating from the U of

U (Go Utes!), I worked at St. Mark's Hospital for 30 years, of which 27 were spent in the ER. I was laid off as of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009. Shar probably thought I was a nutcase after I screamed in joy when she offered me a job at Inspiration Hospice.

**One thing I love about my job:** The little miracles one witnesses every day such as how people can still have a sense of humor when they are dying, stories of being comforted by family members who have passed, and how adversity can really bring out the best in people.

**Best things about working for Inspiration:** I love how the staff is so close. When I told Shar I dreaded leaving St. Mark's because they were like my family, she responded "We want to be your family." Her comment still brings tears to my eyes and she was totally correct.

**Best advice I've ever been given:** Wayne Dyer said "If you have the choice between being right or being kind, always choose kindness."

**Favorite Place in the World:** The Tahitian Islands for their beauty and Capital Reef National Park for its spirituality.

**Favorite Song:** *Amazing Grace*

**Favorite Movie:** *It's A Wonderful Life*

Meet the Staff continued on page 3

## Our Newest Volunteers!



From left to right: Marj, Mindy, Lorna, Mellissa, Cindy, Becky and Colton

## Entwined and Enlightened

Eight strangers brought together, like these roses  
each one of a kind,

Not knowing just how our lives would suddenly  
become entwined.

Learning together how we can help bring relief to  
the suffering and pain,

To those preparing to leave this place and find the  
peace only they can attain.

We have shared so much in such a short time and  
grown in so many ways,

It's hard to believe that the feelings we have come  
together in just a few days.

We have felt the strength of our mentors and  
teachers - they have truly opened our eyes,

To the many ways we can serve and assist  
families in saying their final goodbyes.

Please allow the spirit we've felt here to remain as  
we go out and volunteer,

As we comfort, listen and do our best with hearts  
that are truly sincere.

--Cindy Jacobsen

**One thing I love about volunteering:** My most favorite thing about volunteering is the conversations I have with the patients. I have one patient that I visit weekly who tells me the exact same story every single week. Every time I pop in she is elated to tell me that she's flying to Hawaii on Saturday. We talk about how she plans on dancing and how she hopes her "problem children" will see this as a type of therapy. I guess some would see this as boring and repetitive, but I learn just a little something new every time we talk, and I think about what to say all week long. I love her!

**Best things about volunteering with Inspiration:** Hmm...I guess I kind of answered that already, but I do volunteer with a few other organizations and I don't have nearly as many friends as I do through Inspiration. I refer to them very fondly as my family.

**Best advice I've ever been given:** From my English teacher in college, "Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer." --Rainer Maria Rilke

**People who have influenced my life:** Ah, I love these questions! Obviously, my parents. It is hard for me to imagine where in the world I would be without them. My political science teacher in high school is still one of my closest friends. I hated her class, but spent every minute outside of class learning from her. An English teacher in college was my mother away from home and taught me a lot about beautiful words and about myself. Brian Andreas, a poet and artist has written many, many things that will forever be embedded in my heart. Isaac Alongi, a photographer in Kansas helped me start my business and forever changed my life. And most importantly, my husband. I have learned so much from him in such a short time. He makes me want to be a better person but has helped me, more than anyone I know, to love who I already am.

**Favorite place in the world:** This is the hardest question. I have lived so many wonderful places and

traveled to even more. I've always said I would be happy in Austria...it's a winter wonderland there, but I think, having lived overseas once already, that I would miss America too terribly much. I'm going to have to say America, and leave it general like that. I love the ocean and the trees of Connecticut. I love the fast paced atmosphere and bright neon lights and talent of New York City. I am constantly in awe of the mountains here in Utah, and the wide open skies of the Plains, but I would certainly be happy to live amidst the orange blossoms of San Diego or the photographer's paradise of cliffs and forests in Oregon.

**Favorite song:** It changes weekly but currently it is "I Wish" by Heather Headley.

**Favorite movie:** Again, this changes quite frequently, but a few staples are Dirty Dancing, Under the Tuscan Sun, Titanic, Up Close and Personal, The Notebook, and P.S. I Love You.

**Favorite food:** Japanese. I could eat sushi daily and be a happy camper. Although, having just gotten married, I have my own personal chef now and he has yet to make a plate that's disappointed me.♥

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**People who have influenced my life:** My parents taught me the importance of hard work and that I can accomplish anything I want. My teacher, Khentrul Lodroe Thaye Rinpoche who is an Abbott of a monastery in Tibet taught me how to meditate. He has also taught me practices of mindfulness and compassion so that I can encounter anything without habitually resorting to fear, anger, and grasping. Three years ago he predicted that I would leave St. Mark's and go into hospice; at the time I thought he was delusional.

**Favorite Food:** I'm a foodaholic so there isn't just one. I love Mexican food, cake, ice cream, cookies, bagels with veggie cream cheese, and lattes.

**What talent do you wish you had been born with:** The ability to sing without having every dog in the neighborhood howl. ♥

# ABC's of Inspired Volunteers

By Lorelee Kurzius

June 2009

## B is for Belief System:

Belief System can refer to life stance, religion, world view, philosophy or ideology. Think of people you have known throughout your life and you will see that one's belief system can be a most powerful asset or worst liability. It is made up of a set of core values, upon which we tend to base our actions, words and beliefs. It defines us and molds us throughout our lives.



This month we want to focus on the spiritual side of belief systems.

Often, in the medical world, there is little to no room for anything but hard science. In hospice however, we see that anyone giving care to a dying person finds that even the most ordinary things can take on a spiritual nature. Spiritual support is an integral part of patient care.

How can we as volunteers help provide that spiritual support without overstepping bounds?

First, we must respond to patients from their own backgrounds. To do that, we must learn what their background is. Most everyone loves to talk about themselves and this is especially important to someone who is dying as it allows them a bit of a life review as they process the fact that they are indeed at the end of their life. As you get to know a new patient, you can ask gentle questions that give them an avenue to discuss their belief system if they choose. They have to know that you are interested in a non-judgmental way. Recording a patient's life history, will also likely bring their spiritual beliefs to the forefront.

Once we know what a patient's background or belief system is, we can be there with them in that place.

It is so important that we never impose our own personal beliefs on patients or families. This can be a delicate thing when we wish to bring them comfort in times of grief, but what succors us may not console another.

Spiritually, everyone has a belief system, even if it is simply that they have no belief in a power higher than themselves. Those that have no higher power can be the hardest to support.

The most gut-wrenching funeral I ever attended was my husband's grandmother in East Berlin not long after the wall fell. Denied freedom of belief system or religion for so many decades, the young people in the family were absolutely devastated by her passing.

We are blessed to live in a time and place where people are allowed the freedom to believe how they wish. We must not do anything to take this freedom away from others.

It is a tragic thing to witness someone in the depths of despair, but all we can do is be with them in their grief and keep the channels of communication open should they desire to explore other ideas.

We have an awesome chaplain available to help with patients who are struggling spiritually. Perceptive volunteers will let the staff know when needs are apparent. That's Inspiration! ♥

### **BRITTANY'S CORNER**

**Inspiration's Annual Summer Party:** SATURDAY, AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 4:00 P.M. AT BOUNTIFUL CITY PARK.

**Bereavement Training:** MONDAY, JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> FROM 2PM TO 4PM.

### **FLASHES OF INSPIRATION**

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Brittany Horsley & Jim Sweeney, editors

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