



Flashes of Inspiration

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A Newsletter for Inspiration Hospice Volunteers

May/June 2010

Words to Live By...

Recently I read a statement made by the late Christopher Reeves. He said, *"I think we all have a little voice inside us that will guide us....If we shut out all the noise and clutter from our lives and listen to that voice, it will tell us the right thing to do."* How often in our lives are we afraid to do something because it is "different" from everyone else? Do you ever hear that voice inside of you that is guiding you on the right path but you tune it out because of the fear of what others might think? Listening to that voice is so important in guiding us through our lives. That voice or "instinct" is our core belief system telling us the right thing to do. We all need to learn to not care what others think and follow our own belief system. *"We could change the world tomorrow if all the millions of people in the world acted the way they believe."* Jane Goodall.

Each of you has a special and unique belief system that allows you to do the amazing work that you do. You follow that inner voice and help others selflessly when in this day and age, most others are selfish. They ask "what's in it for me?" You ask "What can I do for others?" What greater gift is there than giving of yourself to others. The joy you receive is far greater than any selfish act you could make.

I want to thank each of you for following that voice and providing the amazing care and compassion to our patients. Without you, some of our patients would miss the opportunity to receive the beautiful gift that each one of you provides.

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Julie Stringer

Compiled by Brittany Horsley

Describe your type of volunteer assignment(s): Compassionate Companionship

Personal background

(where you grew up, etc.): Born and raised in Whittier, Calif. Degree in Fine Arts from BYU. I've been masquerading as a police officer since 1979. Mother of two wonderful sons; I have 5 grandchildren. Part time work: water aerobics instructor, disaster recovery operations with a Federal response team, and crisis intervention work with local emergency responders.



Why I decided to be a volunteer: Our family received amazing hospice support when my mother was dying. I wanted to offer/ experience that kind of unconditional love during the death transition (a most critical time for any family).

One thing I love about volunteering: I love how easy it is to 'heart connect' with others. Giving hospice care allows me to jump-start my own energy, and also gives me a sense of purpose and peace.

Best things about volunteering with Inspiration: The staff is appreciative and supportive, always. Volunteering gives me an opportunity to grow.

Best advice I've ever been given: "Being powerful is like being a lady: If you have to tell people you are, you aren't." Margaret Thatcher

Spotlight continued on page 2

Meet the Staff:

Jeneece Western

Hospice Aide

Compiled by Brittany Horsley



Describe your role: :

I help patients with their activities of daily living. I get them up, shower, and change them. Brush teeth, comb hair, and make beds. Pretty mundane stuff, but important to those who struggle with the little things.

Personal background: I was raised in Orem, UT. I've stayed pretty close to the area since most of my family is still around here.

One thing I love about my job: I love learning about the lives of my patients. It always makes me love them more when I hear about their past and what they have accomplished. It makes me proud to be a small part of their lives.

Best things about working for Inspiration: Their willingness to work with my family schedule and demands. It is great to be surrounded by people who care about every aspect of life.

Best advice I've ever been given: You never get this time back, so use it wisely.

People who have influenced my life: Family, friends and even acquaintances. I'm pretty much a tenderheart so it's not too difficult to get to me.

Favorite place in the world: Depends on my mood. It could be as simple as cuddling on my bed with my kids and husband or playing on a beach somewhere. I'm always really happy when I get to travel. Best places are NY to see Broadway shows or to Disneyland and the beach with my family.

Favorite Song: *Forever Young* by Alphaville or *I Hope You Dance* by Leanne Womack.

Favorite Movie: Um, I like a lot of movies. Don't really have a favorite but any Disney movie or musical is a safe bet.

Favorite Food: my husband's Chicken Piccata

What talent do you wish you had been born with: I wish I were more musically gifted, instrumentally speaking.♥

Spotlight continued from page 1

People who have influenced my life: Gosh, each person has something to teach me, if I hold still long enough to listen to them.

Favorite place in the world: Yellowstone National Park, the Upper Falls.

Favorite song: Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*

Favorite movie: *Yentl*

Favorite food: Thai food; fruits and vegetables, anything that is graciously made by others. (I'm so happy if I don't have to cook!)

What talent do you wish you had been born with: To heal others with my hands. Instead, I have to resort to using words and Presence. ♥

Life is too short to wake up with regrets.

So love the people who treat you right.

Love the ones who don't just because you can.

Believe everything happens for a reason.

If you get a second chance, grab it with both hands.

If it changes your life, let it.

Kiss slowly.

Forgive quickly.

Suggestions to Aid Sleep

- ♥ Learn some kind of relaxation technique, such as meditation or biofeedback. Try alternately tensing and relaxing your muscles as you lie in bed.
- ♥ Exercise daily, but not close to bedtime.
- ♥ Always avoid ALL soft drinks, coffee, tea (Hot or Cold), cocoa, chocolate and Anacin which contain caffeine!!! (Drink herbal, decaffeinated or juices.) Carry your own tea bags.
- ♥ Don't watch television in bed. Even dull, boring shows may keep you awake.
- ♥ Be aware that sleeping pills, alcohol, and cigarettes may even cause insomnia. Alcohol or sleeping pills may aid us to go to sleep, but as soon as they are out of our systems we wake up. We build up a tolerance and need more to get us asleep. Barbiturates can cause death when taken with alcohol.
- ♥ Try not to spend daytime hours in your bedroom. Reserve that room for sleeping at night. Do not nap during the day. Avoid heavy meals before retiring.
- ♥ Try sleeping in a comfortable bed in a dark, quiet room.
- ♥ The hum of the air conditioner or special bedside machines that produce soft noises may induce sleep.
- ♥ Watch the temperature and humidity of the room. Warmth helps to relax muscles and induce drowsiness, but overheating and excessive dryness from high temperatures interferes with sleep. A cool room and an electric blanket may be a good combination.
- ♥ Try curling up in bed with a pillow or large, soft stuffed animal. It may aid you as it did when you were young.
- ♥ Lie on your side. Place a second soft pillow exposed ear, leaving your face out between the two pillows—or use ear plugs.
- ♥ If problems and anxiety are causing you much sleepiness, consider talking them over with an understanding friend. If this doesn't help, consider counseling.



Congratulations Ann on receiving your medal for completing the MS Walkathon in downtown Salt Lake City at the Gateway!

We are proud of you!

BRITTANY'S CORNER

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Upcoming Volunteer Training: Upcoming Volunteer Training will be held in our Murray office on JUNE 7, 9, 14 AND 16 FROM 5 TO 9 IN THE EVENINGS. Please share these dates with your family and friends who may be interested in having amazing volunteer experiences.

Continuing Education: TUESDAY, JUNE 29TH FROM 6-8 PM. Please join us to learn various self-defense techniques to protect ourselves. We hope to see you there!

Pet Therapy Wanted: We have several patients who would love pet therapy. If you know someone who practices animal assisted therapy or who would like to learn more about being trained in animal assisted therapy, please have them contact Pauline at 801-281-1314. We would love to provide this service to our patients.

BC's of Inspired Volunteers

By Lorelee Kurzius

May/June 2010

L is for Life Stories:

I think everyone of us wants to know that our lives have had purpose and meaning to others, and we each want to be remembered, yet each day people die or their bodies give in to the ravages of dementia and Alzheimer's and their precious life stories are lost.



An old saying goes that every time a person dies, it is as if a library has burned down. Too often, family members don't realize until it's too late, that they've missed a valuable opportunity. As volunteers, we can record the life stories of patients, not only giving them validation that their lives have been witnessed, but giving their families a priceless gift as well. How often do we get to give the gift of a family heirloom?

One of the main reasons that many seniors have not recorded their life stories is simply because nobody has asked! They honestly believe nobody cares anyway. That was certainly the case with my husband's grandmother. This woman spent the first half of her life trying to outrun the communists from Russia to Estonia to Poland and then living as refugees in Germany before immigrating to the United States. What a treasure trove of memories we found there!

Getting people to open up and talk is not always easy to do. My first patient was quite insistent that she had no story to tell and nobody that wanted to hear it, so I put away the tape recorder and just chatted with her. I asked lots of questions, pulling details out of her, and recorded it all. They were a family of Italian Immigrants living up in Bingham Canyon. As a girl is was her task to milk the goats and make the cheese. I know that I loved her story, and after her death, I had copies prepared to give to each of her children at the funeral. I'm sure that someone somewhere in her line will treasure those memories.

When we pulled out a video camera to record my mother-in-law, she got very nervous and flustered. Later we pulled it back out while she was chopping and prepping the ingredients for her homemade pizza. We got great stories out of her while her hands and mind were busy and we caught her fabulous pizza making process too!

My father-in-law, a very stubborn man who experienced many traumatic events while growing up in Berlin during

WWII, rarely talked about his experiences and he wouldn't talk on tape at all. After a couple of beers though, he opened up bit by bit, and after he'd tell a story, I'd escape to the bedroom, shut the door and re-tell the story into a tape recorder. My husband recently lost both of his parents rather unexpectedly and those stories are very precious to us. We each have a unique view of history from our own perspective and that is very clearly demonstrated through the family stories of loved ones who were on the "other side" during World War II.

We need to help our patients understand that they don't have to have an exciting or special story to tell, and they don't have to tell their entire life story.

When interviewing somebody, my first question has always been, "What is the earliest thing you can remember?" This seems to set the tone and get them off and running as they dig deep.

I would caution you on one point though. Try to help the person stay positive. When we interviewed my Grandma, she proceeded to say all the people who had disappointed her and such. This puts a real damper on the interview, and I've never felt inclined to make copies and share it with the rest of the family as a result. Try asking if this is how they want to be remembered, or if maybe discussing all that they are *proud* of in these same people won't make them want to be better.

During their final days, most people feel the need to review their lives. As volunteers, we sometimes struggle to fill that need. Recording a life story not only fills that inner need to be remembered, but allows the patient to reflect and to see that their lives had value.

A life examined and recorded is twice precious, first the experience itself and the memories that are stirred up and then the lessons learned as it is read later by others. Imagine the good you can do for the next generation as you give their parents and grandparents an opportunity to share knowledge, wisdom and advice and to pass down their traditions, standards and beliefs.

You can help your patient to not only celebrate their life but to leave a legacy! That's Inspiration!

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