

COMMUNITY LIFE

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1997

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CHAT ROOM



JUDY GREWELL

Hospice was a rock during family's turbulent journey

I think most people do not understand what the term hospice means and therefore may miss the opportunity to use their valuable services. As part of observing the one-year anniversary of the death of my wonderful husband of 31 years, I thought I would write about our experience with Arbor Hospice.

My husband John and I had been very healthy people all of our lives, so much so that we were not the best examples of compassion when others around us were sick. (Even our two daughters, now grown and married, would attest to this fact!) We had regular physicals and usually came through them with flying colors. That is primarily the reason when my husband took ill in late July 1995, we thought he had contracted a case of intestinal flu or perhaps food poisoning. However, after two emergency room visits for dehydration and other tests, it became clear that we were not dealing with a normal problem. A CT scan showed a mass in his colon which was diagnosed as colon cancer after surgery to remove it was performed in late August 1995. Unfortunately, the cancer had already metastasized to his liver. How could something like this happen when John had just had a good physical exam in January, 1995? Things had suddenly gotten quite serious for a guy who had always taken good health for granted.

Please See CHAT ROOM, B2

Hospice home is almost ready

Hospice of Michigan's new facility in Farmington Hills will feature many homelike touches.

MARY RODRIGUE
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills will be home to the first residential facility designed and built in Oakland

County to meet the needs of the terminally ill when the doors open at Hospice Home, a program of Hospice of Michigan.

The home at 25911 Middlebelt, south of 11 Mile Road, was constructed atop a hill on an eight acre site planted with trees and overlooking a small creek. Construction began last July and the first patients are expected to move in by mid June.

"We've done a lot to make it home-like and still meet or exceed (state) regulations," said Jan Grabinski, director of property management for Hospice of Michigan.

The 23,000 square-foot facility has two 20-bed wings, each with 18 private rooms and one two-room suite. The rooms feature wood trim, textured wallpaper, and flooring that resembles hardwood planking.

Furniture will include cherry wardrobes, cherry foot and headboards on electric hospital beds, 20-inch color TV with VCR, telephone, and reclining chairs so that family members can stay with their loved one around the clock if they choose. All rooms have a private bath and there will be a public laundry room.

"We've already hired a dietitian who will be able to meet all the special needs required of patients," Grabinski said.

Although there are formal dining rooms in each wing with seating for



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LOCKMERE

In the chapel: Jan Grabinski points to the meadow area beyond the wooden deck off the chapel. The chapel will serve as an interdenominational place of prayer.

20, meals can be served in patient rooms.

Both sides will operate as separate entities with separate staff, but a common chapel in the center of the building will be utilized by all. It will be an inter-faith chapel featuring original murals depicting the seasons painted by local artist David Armstrong. Just beyond the

arched windows of the chapel is a large wooden deck that will overlook a grassy meadow.

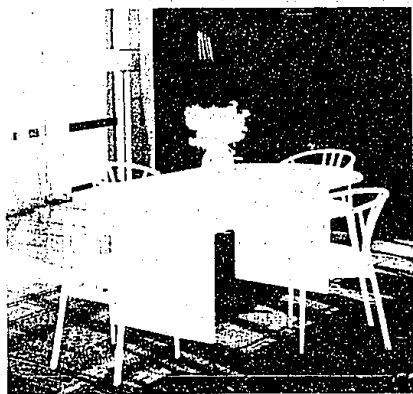
"It will be a meadow mix, like in a field," said Grabinski.

The meadow is just an example of the attention to detail given to every aspect of the center. Even placement of the bed in each room was an issue for staff consideration to

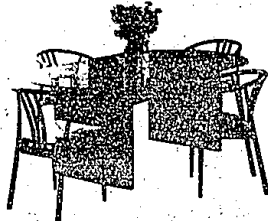
ensure that the patient gets the best window view, Grabinski said.

"Most hospice patients are cared for at home, but an increasing number need frequent nursing care or assistance with activities of daily living and find it difficult to manage at home," said Barbara Lewis, spokeswoman for Hospice of Michigan.

Please See HOSPICE, B2



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