



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY ZARNEY

People who care: Discussing how the hospice program has helped families when a loved one is terminally ill are Brian Hansen (left), director of Cranbrook Hospice Care; Dee Wright-Masiotti, president of the Women's Committee for Hospice Care; and Rick Buckenmeyer, a bereavement coordinator and also the spiritual care coordinator for Cranbrook hospice.

Women's committee helps 8 hospices in metro area

BY ETHEL SIDMONS
STAFF WRITER

Fund-raising and supporting area hospices are the work carried out by the Women's Committee for Hospice Care, which wants to raise public awareness of the organization's efforts.

WCHC's big fund-raiser for the year is an annual ball that will hold its 10th anniversary celebration, Grand Night for Hospice X, on Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Ritz-Carlton, Dearborn. Luckily, "We are oversold. It is all sold out," said WCHC president Dee Wright-Masiotti of Birmingham. Most WCHC members including board members live in Oakland County, but they support eight hospices throughout the tri-county area of Oakland, Wayne and Macomb. One of these hospices is Cranbrook Hospice Care in Bloomfield Hills, where Wright-Masiotti with Birmingham recently met with Brian Hansen, hospice director, and Rick Buckenmeyer, one of the bereavement coordinators who is also the chaplain.

Wright-Masiotti said WCHC started with just a few hospices and "grew to the eighth one in the last year or so." Among other hospices served are the Hospice of Southeastern Michigan in Southfield and the Karmans Cancer Institute Hospice Program in Southfield.

Still more are Angela Hospice Home Care Inc. in Livonia, Community Hospice Services in Westland, Visiting Nurse Association Hospice in Oak Park, Hospices of Henry Ford Health System in St. Clair Shores and McLaren Hospice Service in Lapeer. "We feel in order to do a really good job for the hospices we have to keep it limited. I highly doubt that we will go over eight," Wright-Masiotti said. Giving some history of the hospice movement, she explained that hospice care came out of Wales and blossomed in England. "The year 1964 was the first time hospice came to the United States," she said. She defined the purpose of hospice care as, "It's about life and giving quality of life in the last weeks and months for the terminally ill."

Cranbrook Hospice Care began in the mid-1980s. "The majority of care is in the patients' home and the rest in some nursing facilities and some hospitals," said hospice director Hansen. He stressed, "We need to treat people as human beings, not as some kind of diagnosis." When hospice first came to the U.S., no federal or state funds were available to help the newly created hospices serve families. "No one had a category for us, to dole out funds," Hansen said. Things have changed since then, but some aspects of hospice care still are privately funded. Wright-Masiotti noted that there are two kinds of hospices, profit and not-for-profit. "The women's committee only supports the not-for-profit," she said.

Hospice is concerned with care for the whole family, spiri-

tual and physical," said Cranbrook hospice bereavement coordinator Buckenmeyer. A one-time visit may be followed up with phone calls monthly or weekly, then visits with the family once a month.

"We see families in their home, or the conference room, or the Quiet Room," Buckenmeyer said. The Quiet Room at the offices of Cranbrook Hospice is furnished like a living room, to provide a comfortable setting. Spiritual care also is available for the patient and family. "Some have us with their church, or choose not to have spiritual care at the beginning," he said. As chaplain, he may visit weekly or every other week, for a half hour, to offer support through prayer counseling.

The program follows the family for 13 months after the death of the patient. "We contact the family six to eight weeks after death to offer support," Buckenmeyer said.

"A huge part of those dollars are spent on bereavement," said Wright-Masiotti, referring to how money raised by WCHC is used. Services of Cranbrook hospice may include a nurse (RN), medical social workers, a health aide, spiritual care coordinator, bereavement counselors and volunteers. When volunteers pitch in, it allows family members to take a break from staying with the patient. "To keep the hospice motivated, we've retained the volunteer component, for a strong volunteer flavor," director Hansen said. In July, Cranbrook Hospice Care, which is a full-service nursing agency, became a subsidiary of St. Joseph Mercy-Oakland hospital.

Women's Committee for Hospice Care has some 475 members, with 38 board members, who take an active role in all the fund-raising activities. For more information, write WCHC at 366 W. Brown, Birmingham 48009.

WEDDINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS

Haar-Sheridan

Drs. Robert and Catherine Haar of Rochester Hills announce the engagement of their daughter, Meredith Ellen, to Dr. Stephen G. Sheridan, son of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Sheridan of Saginaw.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Rochester High School and Albion College. She is attending the University of Michigan School of Dentistry.

Her fiancé is a graduate of Nouvell Catholic Central High School, Albion College and Wayne State University School of Medicine. He is a resident in family practice at Providence Hospital in Southfield. A May wedding is planned at St. Mary's Student Parish in Ann Arbor.



Occupational therapist speaks

Mature Minglers Senior Center in Bloomfield Township will hold a low-vision support group meeting 10:30-11:30 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 22.

An occupational therapist from Beaumont Hospital's Eye Institute will be the featured speaker. She will discuss ways to adapt your environment to your vision needs. The group meets at 7273 Wing Lake Road. For more information, call (248) 932-6235.

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Residents of the Farmington area should send information to the Farmington Observer, 39411 Grand River, Farmington 48336.

If you have questions, call Sue Wills in Birmingham at (248) 901-2560; Debbie Douglas in Rochester at (248) 651-7675, or Katie McManus in Farmington at (248) 477-5450.

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