

State Hospice Director speaks at campaign kick-off continued...

Hospice is about providing highly specialized care, saving precious family resources and going above and beyond quality-of-life expectations. Jacques said the most common thing people say when they learn about hospice is, “If only I had known all this sooner, I would have called hospice a long time ago.”

She praised Samaritan Health Services as well as mid-valley residents for stepping up to create the Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House — the third such facility in the state. “It speaks volumes when communities join together to make this kind of commitment in helping people as they age,” she said.

The facility will greatly expand the Evergreen program now serving families at home, in nursing facilities and hospitals. An inpatient hospice house will offer an additional care setting that will help make the end of life a human experience instead of a clinical event. Patients and their families will continue to help make choices about every aspect of care, from medical and pain treatment to the desire to be surrounded by the people, pets and things they love.

Most families prefer to keep their loved one at home as long as they can manage the care, according to Jacques. But in cases where care becomes too difficult, or the family needs a much-needed break, this setting will be a wonderful alternative. “Evergreen will offer an option to mid-valley residents that not all Oregonians will have,” she said.

Hospice House Tally: \$1,749,229 million raised; \$4.33 million building goal (40% reached)



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The Journey

News from Samaritan Evergreen Hospice

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"Hospice is there to provide that support when death is imminent. This hospice house will be a tremendous addition to that continuum of care."

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It's official: hospice house plans in motion for Oregon's mid-valley

Within two years the mid-Willamette Valley will have access to a hospice house where individuals going through an end-of-life experience can receive professional, compassionate care in a homelike setting.

The Albany General Hospital Foundation announced in May 2010 a \$4.33 million capital project to purchase land, design, construct, landscape and equip an inpatient facility. In addition an updated space for the outpatient hospice staff will be built.

Another \$1 million is sought to establish an endowment to ensure that anyone without resources will not be turned away and to provide funding for long-term upkeep of the facility.

The foundation purchased 6.7 acres on Waverly Drive at Del Rio Avenue in southeast Albany in December 2008. The location, on the eastern border of Albany is easily accessible to the city, Interstate 5 and just a few minutes' drive to Highway 34 leading both east and west.

Samaritan Evergreen Hospice has been a source of help for end-of-life care for more than 25 years; it is a department of the not-for-profit Samaritan Albany General Hospital. Evergreen physicians, nurses, staff and volunteers are specially trained in hospice care and dedicated to ensuring the right of each person to live out life in dignity, free of pain and attended by caring people.

Hospice Director Barbara Hansen, RN, says Evergreen serves all of Benton, Linn and portions of Polk and Marion counties. There are 55 employees on staff and another 45 who volunteer on a regular basis.

Most hospice care is offered at home — 661 individuals and their families were served in 2009 — because the vast majority of people prefer to stay in familiar surroundings. The home setting may not be appropriate due to a medical crisis, uncontrollable pain or the failing energies of caregivers.

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Hospice House Campaign launched first event at Wheelhouse

The Willamette River comes alive in a storm with heavy torrents of water tumbling along, carrying green and gray branches or sometimes whole trees downstream. On a quiet sunny day, ducks, geese, herons and a variety of small birds appear on its banks.



The annual 'Legacy Luncheon' hosted this year at the Wheelhouse attracted donors from far and wide: Dr. Larry Mullins, Corvallis; Kathleen McLagan Holden, Vancouver, WA; and Robert Lowry, Albany

To be drawn to the river's natural beauty, all you need to do is watch from a vantage point along the riverbank: a place like the new Wheelhouse on the Willamette, a multi-use complex designed to be the gateway to a growing riverfront community along Water Ave. in Albany.

David Johnson, Wheelhouse owner, revealed a soft spot for Samaritan Evergreen Hospice staff and invited them to be the first to hold an event there (five events, actually) for the May launch of a capital campaign to build a hospice house.

"The Albany General Hospital Foundation and Samaritan Evergreen Hospice were thrilled to have the use of such a dramatic setting to present our plans to the mid-valley" said Kim Sass, foundation director. "More than 600 people came to see the building and many were moved to support the campaign; and I know that the beautiful Wheelhouse on the Willamette made a tremendous difference."

"Hospice is a quality organization that helps people with all of the challenges involved with the care of a loved one nearing the end of life," said Johnson. "Our closest family friend was dying of a brain tumor and he spent his last weeks under the care of hospice," He recalled. "I will never forget the way hospice helped all of us prepare for and deal with our loss. Because we believe everyone should know about this service,



Taking in the Wheelhouse views: Deborah Origer; Kathleen McLagan Holden; Phyllis Alexander; and Jean Bond.

my wife, two children and parents all were on hand for the hospice kick off events."



Wheelhouse owners Janet and David Johnson greeted visitors to their new building

Johnson, a fifth-generation Willamette Valley native, says there is room for nine companies to lease "Class A" office space in the new four-story \$6 million complex in addition to a restaurant and bar.

Johnson said he wanted to design something to fit the river town essence of Albany so he worked closely with city staff to create a building style that complements the nationally recognized historic downtown surroundings.

For more information about the Wheelhouse on the Willamette, call David Johnson at (541) 760-3750.

It's official: hospice house plans in motion for Oregon's mid-valley continued...

Identifying a local short-term alternative for patients is a substantial challenge, explained Hansen. A hospital stay is expensive and hospital personnel are understandably not trained in the tenets of hospice care. Nursing homes are an option but it can be several days before a bed is available, and a private room is never guaranteed.

“There is one proven option: a stand-alone hospice house,” Hansen said. “By assuring every person has the right to live out life in dignity, free of pain and attended to by caring people hospice elevates all of us, as well as our communities.”

Hansen said this project takes on special significance because the Oregon Legislature has limited the absolute number of hospice houses in the state to six. Two — one in Bend and one in Portland — are now operational and two others are under consideration. “None of the facilities are within an easy drive of our mid-valley communities,” Hansen added, “So this project is essential for our region, now.”

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More choices for patients, families with Hospice House

While death and dying can be difficult conversation topics, Oregonians are straightforward when it comes to dealing with them, according to Deborah Jacques, Oregon Hospice Association CEO.

Addressing mid-valley philanthropists, civic and business leaders at the Evergreen Hospice House campaign kickoff in Albany, Jacques described the hospice philosophy as a source of pride for Oregon — a leading state in end-of-life care.

“We have a higher hospice usage rate than 46 other states, and the average cost for end-of-life care is

\$10,000 less than anywhere else,” she said. “Nearly half of Oregon’s terminally ill on Medicare experience the end of their lives under hospice care, compared to only 37 percent nationwide.”

“From these statistics, you can see how Oregonians deal with death,” Jacques said. “We make plans, prepare advanced directives, and designate health care representatives to speak for us when we can no longer speak for ourselves.”

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Hospice Director Barbara Hansen, RN (far right) shows architectural drawings to Barbara Doolan and (center) Jay Jackson.



Kathy Morris performs for event guests; Morris is a music practitioner who plays at patient bedside, both in hospital and home settings.



Takiko May, MD, hospitalist and member of the Albany General Hospital Foundation Board of Directors listens to Oregon Hospice Association presentation.