

Valley hospital foundations announce major gifts

Leaders of the three valley hospital foundations announced major contributions from their boards towards the future Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House.

Steve Uerlings, president of the Good Samaritan Hospital (GSH) Foundation ; Bill Rauch, president of the Lebanon Community Hospital (LCH) Foundation; and Dell Alexander, chair of the Albany General Hospital (AGH) Foundation gathered at the site of the building to discuss the campaign.

To help support the campaign, the GSH and LCH foundations both pledged \$75,000 and the AGH Foundation board announced 100-percent giving from its members towards the \$4.33 building goal.

“Our boards did not hesitate to provide this funding,” said Uerlings. “It serves the patients that we serve, and there is a real need with the aging population in all of our communities.”

Alexander and Rauch agreed on the growing need throughout the region.

The facility will serve families throughout Linn, Benton and parts of Polk and Marion counties.



Bill Rauch (left) and Steve Uerlings (right) discuss with Dell Alexander (middle) plans for the new facility at the site.

Hospice House Tally: \$1,758,719 million raised for building goal of \$4.33 million (41% reached)

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The Journey

News from Samaritan Evergreen Hospice

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"Evergreen Hospice volunteers feel honored that people let them into their lives; it's a real privilege to do this work."

Karen McLain,
Samaritan Evergreen Hospice
volunteer coordinator

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Attending 'Angels' keep family intact

The Haralson family knows what it is like to experience the support of hospice when a loved one is nearing the end of life. They call hospice workers their angels.

Joe Haralson, Vice President of Ancillary Services at both Samaritan Albany General Hospital and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital, and his wife Linda, marketing coordinator at the Mennonite Village in Albany, lost Joe's mother Elaine five years ago, and both of Linda's parents as well as Joe's brother-in-law, Tim Brennan, last year.

Joe and his sister, Kathy Brennan, watched as their mother became terminally ill with lung cancer in 2004. Elaine did not want any extreme treatment measures and wanted to stay comfortably in her home for as long as possible. The family cared for Elaine in her home and involved Samaritan Evergreen Hospice from the beginning. "That was our first experience with hospice, and we learned then about all the amazing services they provide," said Linda.

Samaritan Evergreen Hospice manager Barbara Hansen and an additional hospice nurse managed Elaine's routine and breakthrough pain, provided oxygen and treated her wounds. Kathie came up from California on weekends and Joe took four weeks off work to care for their mom before she was moved to an adult foster care home in Albany. "If there had been a hospice house then, there is no question that we could have utilized it," Joe said. "We all took turns caring for her until she died in 2005."

Linda's parents lived in St. Louis, where both were in hospice care. Her father was in a skilled nursing facility and her mother was still in the family home. Her mother's health began to fail and she required 24-hour care for her congestive heart failure. Linda's mother decided to move to Albany where she was transferred into Evergreen Hospice's care. She lived the last six weeks of her life in the Haralson home and passed in 2009.

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Angels in Albany continued...

“Hospice allowed us to be caregivers and keep our family bonds intact. That made a huge difference to all of us,” said Linda.

In the fall of 2009, after the death of her mother, Linda’s father, who had Parkinson’s disease, was moved to the Mennonite Village in Albany. Hospice staff and volunteers, along with Mennonite Village staff, provided compassionate care for him and made sure he was never alone until his death in December of 2009.

Tragedy again struck the family when doctors in California discovered that Kathie’s husband, at 53 years old, had terminal cancer. “Tim was a fighter,” said Kathie. “He thought hospice was the end of the road — that you’re writing people off when you call in hospice.” Tim’s perspective changed when a hospice nurse told him about the six-month graduation ceremony, which celebrates a patient going off hospice care. Tim then said yes to hospice care.

Tim did not make it to graduation, but his family will never forget the wonderful work of everyone on the hospice team.

“We cannot say enough good things about hospice and what they have done for our family,” said Kathie, who recently moved to Albany to be close to the rest of her family. “The people who work for hospice have been our angels.”



From left: Linda and Joe Haralson and Joe’s sister Kathie Brennan.

Good words to share

Dear friend —

I really enjoyed and appreciated receiving “The Journey”. I have always had a soft spot for Evergreen Hospice. I am so happy to hear about to new hospice house to come.

God bless you guys.

Sincerely,

L.I. — Corvallis, OR

Use our envelope to let us hear from you!

Welcome to The Journey, a newsletter about Samaritan Evergreen Hospice and the exciting path our community is taking toward a new hospice house in Albany, Oregon.

In these pages you will find updates on the \$4.33 million capital campaign, profiles of the professional staff and volunteers who make Samaritan Evergreen Hospice an outstanding service to families throughout the mid-valley and articles about donors who are bringing the hospice house to life. You will also read

about people who wish to share their own experiences with hospice.

An envelope will be enclosed in each issue, which I hope you will use to send us your comments, suggestions, questions or personal hospice experience – or to make a donation to help fund the new Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Megan M. Gianotti
Editor

Hospice physician redefines success

“Medical schools teach aspiring physicians that the goal of medicine is to cure; so when there is no cure, they often see themselves as failures,” said Jeff Lear, MD, medical director for Samaritan Evergreen Hospice. “Some doctors even shun terminally ill patients because they find it difficult to deal with or even witness their patients’ final stages of life.”

What they don’t teach you, Lear explained, is that it is even more important to ensure comfort and quality medical care at the end of a patient’s life. Lear advocates redefining success to include care and comfort at the end of life.

Hospice provides a very real community for those in the final stages of life. This community includes bath aides, nurses, physicians, therapists, chaplains and social workers. The people who are most needed are those who talk with patients and make them feel physically or emotionally better.

“When we can help terminally ill patients continue to be a part of a living community; we can make a big difference in the quality of their last days,” said Lear. “That is really the only time we can effectively address their challenges around pain, hygiene, loneliness, despair, relationships and spiritual needs.”

Lear praised the mid-valley community for its commitment to build a hospice house, where he says the whole pace and focus of care will change. Patients will have extensive, constant care. Hospice nurses, who are experts in the treatment and control of pain, will be present 24-hours a day. And when a patient is experiencing a crisis he or she can utilize staff and all of its resources on the spot.

“I started working with Samaritan Evergreen Hospice 25 years ago and have had the privilege of working alongside many excellent nurses, social workers and aides,” said Lear. “It requires a team to do this kind of work, and we have the very best right here. In the home-like setting of the new hospice house, we will be able to bring all of our creativity and abilities to our patients.”