35 Years of Caring for Communities in Need

Serving MARIN, SAN FRANCISCO, NORTHERN SAN MATEO and SONOMA COUNTIES
A message from Hospice By The Bay’s CEO Sandra Lew and Board of Directors Chair Stephen A. Thal

Hospice By The Bay is 35 years old! Born an innovator and leader in hospice care when the concept was new in America, Hospice By The Bay’s expertise and influence in end-of-life services increases each year.

This year, Hospice By The Bay’s leadership focused on several goals:

- Continuing to excel as the regional end-of-life care provider for the Bay Area.
- Supporting access to hospice care for all American families by lobbying to prevent funding cuts in the Federal Medicare Hospice Benefit, which covers most costs for hospice care. Patients pay little or nothing for our compassionate care and support.
- Reaching out to under-served and diverse groups, and community partners to ensure that we’re serving everyone who needs care.
- Helping fill a dire need in the region – providing hospice care for children with terminal illnesses – by increasing the reach of our Pediatrics Program.
- Increasing community access to our professional grief counseling services, as well as meeting the needs of hospice patient families.
- Strengthening our fiscal health by continuing our successful cost containment efforts. By careful regulation of our expenses, we lowered administrative costs to just 15% of our budget, while continuing to offer the best care possible to patients, families and the community.

Despite difficulties in the economy again this year, charitable donations from the community and sound planning by our leadership allowed us to maintain our commitment to care and breadth of services. The Board of Directors and staff leadership will continually update our strategic plan to ensure a healthy future for Hospice By The Bay.

We invite you to review our Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009-10 as we highlight some of the many ways we continue to enhance the lives of the Bay Area families who need us.

On The Cover: Top photo shows a Hospice of Marin nurse visiting her patient and his wife at home in 1982. In the bottom photo, volunteer Patricia Becker enjoys a happy moment with a young camper at our 2009 Camp Erin™ Oakland/Bay Area. Becker is a Patient Care volunteer in Marin year-round.
Building on 35 Years of Expertise in Hospice Care

From the first hospice visit, Jo was surrounded by loving family caregivers. Since her illness began, her son and daughter-in-law had kept an eye on her at home, with visits by family from out of town. She always had a smile for everyone, including our nurse, social worker and home health aides who provided gentle, familiar and consistent care. During one tough night, a nurse stayed on the phone with Jo’s son, advising and comforting him, offering him the support he needed. After Jo’s death, Hospice came out to help, contacting the mortuary and helping with memorial arrangements. “I truly don’t know how anyone could do it without you,” says Jo’s son. “I send my sincere gratitude for being with our family, day in and day out, during a truly hard time.”

Fighting to Save the Medicare Hospice Benefit

As leaders in California’s advocacy for the Hospice Medicare Benefit, we organized a local lobbying campaign to prevent Congressional cuts in funding for end-of-life care. Although the reductions went forward, we will continue to lobby to prevent further Medicare cuts and return funding to cover the true costs of care.

In April, staff members joined more than 500 hospice advocates from across the country in Washington, DC, to lobby Congress to stop cuts to the Medicare Hospice Benefit. In visits with legislators, we argued that these cuts would limit the care hospices can provide at a time when demand for care is rising. We also pointed out that hospice care actually saves Medicare money over the costs of emergency hospitalizations. “While Hospice By The Bay’s financial planning is helping us absorb the cuts,” says CEO Sandra Lew, “in the long term they will seriously affect us. Our biggest fear is that some hospice agencies may have to close because they can’t cover the costs of care.”

Unfortunately, even strong national lobbying efforts couldn’t prevent the cuts. However, government leaders heard us in ways that give us hope that the cuts may be reversed in the future.
As Hospice By The Bay sought to fill the regional need for pediatric hospice care, our specially trained staff continued to support critically ill children and teens and their families. Our increased focus was in response to the lack of Bay Area pediatric hospice providers. Our outreach grew to meet children’s needs.

Last year, we reported that Hospice By The Bay was selected by the State to provide palliative care for critically ill, low-income youth. Due to California’s budget changes, the program start was delayed until 2011.

Meeting the Needs of the Bay Area’s Youngest Patients

Ned was six when he was diagnosed with leukemia. After chemotherapy, he was discharged to the care of his dad. By the time Hospice By The Bay’s Pediatric Care Team was called in to help, Ned and his father were homeless.

The pair eventually moved into an overcrowded house with many children and adults, not an ideal situation for a terminally ill child. The Pediatric Care Team adapted to the unusual arrangement and provided the home-centered hospice care Ned desperately needed.

When Ned died, he was surrounded by his dad and the household residents who had become his “family.” For our Pediatric Team, caring for the boy was challenging, but very gratifying. In a chaotic environment, they made it possible for a six-year-old to die peacefully and comfortably, with the people he loved at his bedside.

As a non-profit, Hospice By The Bay is committed to caring for everyone who needs us. This year, we increased our outreach into diverse communities, such as San Francisco’s Chinese-speaking families.

We also connected with community groups that serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and questioning individuals and families to offer our care and support.

The Wong family traces its American ancestry to a couple who came from Shanghai in the 1940s. Now great-grandparents, the elder Wongs’ health was failing. When Ye was diagnosed with lung cancer, our Chinese-speaking nurses and social workers provided end-of-life care in his own language. They spoke English to his family caregivers who weren’t fluent in Chinese, keeping them up-to-date on his condition and care. Our support in a linguistic and culturally sensitive manner meant Ye could talk with our staff directly about his wishes for care, without translation.
Caring for the Hearts of Families and the Community

When Carlos was 13, his 34-year-old father died of a brain tumor, leaving Carlos, his 11-year-old sister, Eliana, and his mother reeling from shock and grief. During counseling at Hospice By The Bay, the children learned about the Comfort Bear Project, where volunteers would make teddy bears out of their dad’s clothing. Volunteers used their father’s soccer jerseys, which were left unwashed. When the children held the bears, they were happy because they smelled like their father. For Carlos and Eliana, holding those bears was as close as they could get to holding their father again.

Hospice By The Bay has long offered professional grief counseling to the families of hospice patients. This year, more than 400 family members of all ages benefited from individual and group counseling. Also, our counselors helped an increasing number of community members – more than 350 – who had lost a loved one this year.

Other highlights: On a limited basis, we offered grief counseling in Spanish. Our support groups touched on such topics as parental, spousal and partner loss, losses as we age and children’s grief. Camp Erin™ Oakland/Bay Area, our annual, grief support weekend, served 43 young campers. And hundreds of community members found comfort by attending our annual Service of Remembrance memorial gatherings in Marin, San Francisco and Sonoma.

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Hospice By The Bay balanced several financial goals:

- Off-setting Medicare cuts, which affected our primary source of reimbursement for hospice services.
- Reducing operating expenses, while continuing to deliver quality care to all, regardless of the patient’s ability to pay for services.
- Building a reserve fund to ensure continuity of care for future patients and families, as Medicare cuts and the economic downturn continue to impact our funding sources.
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE DONORS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

We are deeply grateful for our community’s financial support. The following individuals and businesses were especially supportive during the Fiscal Year July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010. The full FY 2009-10 donor list will be published in our spring Community Connection newsletter.

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**Legacy Gift
Program funds were raised through donations and sponsorships for a variety of unique events throughout the year. Here are some highlights:

- The competition to win September’s 10th RCP Tiburon Mile Open Water Swim from Angel Island to Tiburon was especially fierce between top-ranked Olympians, World Champions and swim stars from all over the globe. Thanks to event organizer Robert C. Placak, Hospice By The Bay received event pledges and donations.

- In November, glamour and elegance reigned at Hospice By The Bay’s Annual Ball 2009. The gala evening, Black Tie & Red Roses, was organized by volunteers led by HBTB Fundraising Board Member Tora D. Isi and Barbara Jones.