Matt’s Story

3 Days of Hospice Care

My father had heard about hospice from his doctor and his sister, but he kept telling us he didn’t need a bunch of people coming over to the house fussing over him.

But one Friday evening, he was in so much pain I called Hospice by the Bay in a panic. When the nurse came out, her primary focus was to get his pain under control.

We had 2 nursing visits that weekend along with a social worker. They were making every effort to listen to what my dad wanted and at the same time address his symptoms.

My father and I had not talked about his end-of-life wishes, so I had no idea if he had things in order or not. I phoned my sister back east but she didn’t know anything either.

I was relieved that my father’s pain was being controlled. He was resting much more comfortably now. I felt better when the nurse said she would come first thing Monday morning and schedule a home health aide visit for my dad.

But when Monday morning came, the nurse told me he was near the end and loved ones should come now if they wanted to see him.

I was scrambling making phone calls to close friends nearby while my aunt helped family members make flight arrangements.

In all the chaos, the nurse gently calmed me so I could recognize if my father’s pain was increasing.

I was there when he died but all I remember was the look on my sister’s face when I had to tell her later that she didn’t make it in time.

Afterwards I was so grateful for the grief counselor who helped me sort through the overwhelming feelings from those 3 intense days.

Jenny’s Story

3 Months of Hospice Care

My mother was living on her own and her breathing problems were getting worse when her doctor said hospice care could be helpful. We called that afternoon.

A nurse came out, talked with mom and developed a plan to address her symptoms. That week mom was visited by a social worker and a home health aide.

My brother visited from out of state and the nurse spent time answering our questions about my mom’s medications.

With her breathing improved, she felt better and, after several visits by the social worker, she confided in him that she wasn’t sure if her trust was how she wanted it. He helped her obtain a referral for legal assistance.

When my mom became weaker, I didn’t know how I was going to fit errands into my work schedule. But a Hospice by the Bay volunteer offered to shop for groceries and fix her lunch. Another volunteer came weekly to read to her, which really lifted her spirits.

I was so concerned when my very private mother became bed bound and needed help with personal care. But she had developed such a great relationship with her home health aide that she even let her help with bathing. Hearing them laugh together was comforting.

At the very end mom stopped eating and it was clear that her time was close. The nurse said that if family needed to fly in to say goodbye, now was the time. Her only grandson held her hand and she smiled. We were relieved when hospice honored our mother’s wish to have a chaplain visit. She seemed calmer after their time together.

On that last day, we were able to just focus on being with her since all the final arrangements were in place, just as she wanted them.

HOSPICE CARE IS PEACE OF MIND

The Benefits of Choosing Hospice Earlier
Hospice Care – A Case Study

When someone chooses Hospice by the Bay, our team of compassionate professionals responds. This is what Susan discovered when she called us on behalf of her sister, Ellen, who was living with advanced heart disease.

Our Primary Nurse visited Ellen along with Susan who is the primary caregiver. By following Ellen’s expressed goals, a care plan was put in place that ensured her comfort and safety.

Being a widow, Ellen was concerned for the emotional welfare of her five children. Our Social Worker provided help with final arrangements, a referral for legal assistance, counseling referrals for her children, and a respite care plan that was put in place to give Susan a needed break.

A trained Direct Care Volunteer visited regularly to run errands and even helped Ellen make scrapbooks of photos that she wanted to leave for her children.

Our Home Health Aide came two to three times a week to assist Ellen with bathing and dressing, and to train Susan on how to reposition Ellen in bed so she would remain comfortable.

When Ellen’s pain unexpectedly escalated on a Sunday, a worried Susan called Hospice by the Bay and reached a Resource Nurse who accessed Ellen’s medical information and instructed Susan on how to bring Ellen’s pain under control.

One day Ellen confided to the home health aide that she was feeling sad about her life and questioned her worth as a mother. The aide told Ellen that if she thought that a visit from an Interfaith Spiritual Support Counselor might be helpful, all she needed to do was let Hospice know and it could be arranged.

With her pain and anxiety under control and her medical condition stabilized, Ellen was feeling calmer and more at peace. She shared with Susan that she was feeling comforted knowing that her children had the support of Hospice by the Bay and a Grief Counselor would continue to support them through the inevitable loss of their mother.

Ellen’s story is just one example of the thousands of patients that we take care of every year – we strive to meet their unique needs and are honored to bring our very best to every patient.