

# CareLines

COMPANIONS FOR THE JOURNEY



Little Things  
Mean a Lot in  
Patient Care



WINTER 2012-13



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*Building on 30 years of excellence*

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Can you believe we're at the beginning of another year?

At Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care, we are taking stock of our accomplishments in 2012 and beginning the work for 2013.

Reflecting on the changes to our Board of Directors, we are grateful for the tireless dedication of retiring members Inez Jones, Janet Wilson, and Parker Williamson, who accounted for a combined 67 years of Board experience.

We welcome Dottie Metzger, Charles Shell, and Linda Story to the board (see "Board Spotlight" on page 11 for introductions to each one), and we're expecting an explosion of new ideas and different perspectives from them, as well as a deep commitment to maintaining Caldwell Hospice's place as a proven, compassionate leader in end-of-life care.

We instituted a wellness program for our staff, recently. All of us are learning to eat better, fit exercise into our daily lives, and reduce stress. It makes good sense that we can give better care to our patients and their families when we feel stronger and more rested. Wellness also has a positive impact on "the bottom line," as our insurance provider offers better rates when we have healthier staff members.

We completed months of preparation for the re-accreditation

survey by the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC). The surveyor arrived the week before Christmas to review documents, interview patients, families, staff, and volunteers. Before leaving, the surveyor complimented our facilities, our helpfulness, and our ability to keep a "warm, small hospice atmosphere" as we grow. We were instrumental in developing this method of rating hospices for their quality of work, and we were among the first hospices to earn ACHC accreditation in 1998. We've been re-accredited for each three-year period since then.

I'm looking forward to my second term as a Board member for The Carolinas Center for Hospice and End-of-Life Care, the association for hospice providers in North and South Carolina. It will be a good opportunity to participate in strengthening hospices across the Carolinas.

As all of us make our "to-do" lists and get busy with our 2013 goals, let's never be too busy to make time for good experiences with our families and friends.

Thank you to all the people who make it possible for us to serve the end-of-life needs of our patients, their families, and the community in which we live.

**—Cathy Swanson,  
chief executive officer**

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## COVER STORY

# Caldwell Hospice Does Its “Homework”

Caring for hospice patients begins, most often, in their homes because that is where most people would prefer to spend their final days and months.

When Caldwell Hospice’s team members (physicians, nurses, nurse practitioner, medical social workers, certified nursing assistants, chaplains, or volunteers) enter a patient’s home, they experience the patient’s situation; they enter as guests, and very often they leave as “adopted family.” Finally, they prove the truth of Caldwell Hospice’s desire to be “companions for the journey.”



*Patient Newland Saunders in his Forlines Patient Care Unit room with BeBe, family dog and daily visitor.*

“We gain a better idea of how to provide care,” CHPC Medical Director Dr. Thomas Ray said. “A patient’s independence or access to his community can be compromised by his condition. If we see this during a home visit, we can order medical equipment, such as a wheelchair, which will allow him to leave his bedroom. Or we can find an agency or a community group that might build a ramp and make it easier for him to go outside his home.”

Inside the home, team members can identify obstacles to patients’ safe movement from room to room: narrow hallways, carpets or throw rugs, furniture placed too close to

**On the Cover:** For Caldwell Hospice patients, the “at home” feeling extends to the patient care units. Here, a volunTEEN and hospice patient bake cookies in the Forlines PCU’s family kitchen.

afford easier movement. Family members might not have recognized these objects as impediments.

In the living room or at the kitchen table, team members listen to family conversations, pet the dog or cat or bird, and connect with the family more personally than in a hospital or an office visit.

“Families want to welcome us into their homes, show us their family photos, tell us about their military experiences,” Dr. Ray explained. “They can say, ‘This is who I was before I became ill; this is my life.’”

“My years as a family practice physician allowed me to understand patients and their families as a whole unit,” added CHPC Associate Medical Director Dr. Dennice Herman. “Visiting hospice patients in their homes brings a more personal dimension to their care.”

For CHPC physicians, caring for hospice patients is a shift in direction from what is taught traditionally in medical school. Drs. Ray and Herman aren’t trying to cure their patients.

“One of the most important things I have learned is that patients really do want to know the truth about their illness and prognosis, even if it is grim,” said Dr. Herman. “It is a natural reaction for family members, and even doctors, to want to protect the patient so as not to destroy hope, but patients seem more relaxed and comfortable once the truth is out in the open. They can express their last wishes and hopes.”

One of the most important advantages of hospice care is that everyone can take more time—to sit and visit, to listen and learn, to grow relationships with patients and their families and their pets. Visits aren’t hurried, and patients aren’t “numbers” or “cases.”

“What might seem to be ‘little things’ make a big difference in

people’s lives,” Dr. Ray said. He recalls a caregiver who received confirmation from Dr. Robert Belk, former CHPC medical director who retired in 2011, that she was doing everything right for her husband.

“Seeing the patient and the caregiver in their home,” Dr. Ray said, “allowed Dr. Belk, as a medical expert she trusted, to reassure the woman. She called it a ‘blessing.’”

Caldwell Hospice nurses and medical social workers watch and learn, during visits, how to help each patient live fully and pain-free, to resolve emotional, financial, or familial issues, and to prepare for the end of life. They try to uncover special wishes. Some requests can be fulfilled as simply as calling on CHPC volunTEENS to do yardwork at patients’ homes or arranging with special volunteer hairstylists to do a shampoo and style.

Some requests take more effort. Social workers have arranged for patients to speak with, and sometimes visit with, family members from whom they’ve been separated for years.

“We can identify problems sooner and solve them before they get too big, provide assistance, reaffirm the value of what caregivers are doing,” Dr. Ray said. “We provide hands-on care; we listen and support.”



*Patient Rita Hines at The Bold & the Beautiful, with Ooh La La! Nail Spa and Skin Care owner Linda Phipps, CHPC nurse Carla Sherrill, and CHPC medical social worker Kelly Mitchell.*

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First Presbyterian Church

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Free Spirit Baptist Church

Friendship Baptist Church,

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Grace Chapel United

Methodist Church

Hudson United Methodist

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Center Grove Baptist Church

Central Baptist Church

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East Flat Baptist Church

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First Baptist Church, Granite

Falls

First Baptist Church, Whitnel

Flemings Chapel Baptist

Church, Adult Men II Class

Flemings Chapel Baptist

Church, Adult Men I Class

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Hudson

Gamewell United Methodist

Church

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Church

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Yadkin Valley Baptist Church,

Golden Nuggets

*Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care, Inc., gratefully acknowledges memorials and contributions received between 01 July and 30 September 2012. Please notify us if we have omitted a donation from this listing. Contributions received after 30 September 2012 will be listed in our Spring 2013 issue.*

**Newsletter mailing list policy:** CareLines is published four times a year. Each person who contributes during the six months prior to a mailing will receive the next two issues. Individuals who ask to be placed on our "do not remove" mailing list will receive the newsletter every quarter.

## CALDWELL HOSPICE CEO

# Cathy Swanson Elected to The Carolinas Center Board

Cathy Swanson has been elected to serve, for the second time, on the board of directors for The Carolinas Center for Hospice and End-of-Life Care. Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care's chief executive officer will join three other new board members: Lynn Hardy, Carolinas East HomeCare and Hospice (NC); Jean Eckert, Hospice of the Carolina Foothills (SC), and Dr. Jeff Seymour, Hospice and Community Care (SC).

Named Caldwell Hospice's executive director in 1990, Cathy's background as a medical social worker is central to the organization's focus on caring for the whole patient, including family members. Since 1990, Caldwell Hospice's average daily census has grown from 17 to 147, and the staff has increased to approximately 110 permanent employees.

"I look forward to active involvement on the board," Cathy said. "We must maintain the highest quality of care, even in the midst of increased regulations and greater scrutiny of the work we do."

The Carolinas Center "represents over 100 hospice providers in North and South Carolina and provides support to local hospice programs through technical assistance, education, and advocacy in state legislatures, state regulatory bodies, and Congress. Hospice care is currently available in every North and South Carolina county" (source: [www.cchospice.org](http://www.cchospice.org)).

Cathy served on TCC's board, previously, from 1996 to 1999. Her dedication to ensuring quality end-of-life care also led Cathy to a role in creating a hospice accreditation program through the Accreditation Commission for

Health Care (ACHC).

ACHC is now a recognized national accreditation organization for medical providers. It originated in North Carolina and now reviews more than 1,000 locations nationwide. Cathy served on the ACHC board, from 1995 to 1998.

Cathy earned a Master of Public Health degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree from Western Carolina University; she holds a Hospice Administrator Certificate and a certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University.



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*Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care, Inc., appreciates the generosity of these United Way donors for designating their contributions to its programs and services.*



## CALDWELL HOSPICE PHYSICIANS Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification

Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care announces the achievements of two members of its medical team.

Dr. Dennice Herman, associate medical director, and Dr. Ramesh Krishnaraj, weekend physician, earned Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification, recently. The doctors sat for the exam in Charlotte on October 5 in a group of approximately 20 physicians.

"The day-long examination was very difficult," Dr. Herman said, "and it required considerable preparation and study."

Dr. Krishnaraj added that the exam was challenging for him because he works in hospice care part-time.

**"The effort required of our physicians in gaining certification is a strong reminder that we focus on patient care." —Cathy Swanson**

Drs. Herman and Krishnaraj join Caldwell Hospice Medical Director Dr. Thomas Ray as Board-certified Hospice and Palliative Medicine physicians.

"The effort required of our physicians in gaining certification is a strong reminder that we focus on patient care," said CHPC Chief Executive Officer Cathy Swanson. "It solidifies our position as a leader in end-of-life care for this area."

A 1986 graduate of East Carolina University's School of Medicine, Dr. Herman earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1972. From 1998 until she joined CHPC's staff in 2011, Dr. Herman practiced family medicine at South Fork Medical Park. She also practiced

emergency medicine at Caldwell Memorial Hospital for seven years and served as the medical director for Caldwell Physicians Network and for Shaire Center, in Lenoir.

Dr. Krishnaraj graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Medicine in 1997. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science (1991) and Master of Public Health degree (1998) from UNC-Chapel Hill. He is a medical staff

physician in Geriatric and Specialty Services at Broughton State Hospital in Morganton, NC.

Dr. Ray earned his Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification, as a member of the first certification class after Hospice and Palliative Medicine was accepted as a medical sub-specialty. His certification will extend through December 2018.

Dr. Ray graduated from medical school and completed his residency at the Medical College of Virginia. He practiced physical medicine and rehabilitation, prior to coming to Caldwell Hospice in 2007, when he realized that providing hospice and palliative care was "where I'm supposed to be."

Dr. Ray's approach to caring for hospice and palliative care patients combines his medical skill in addressing physical problems and his compassionate concern for them: "You may not cure, but you can alleviate pain and distressing symptoms."



*Pictured (L to R): Dr. Thomas Ray, Dr. Ramesh Krishnaraj, and Dr. Dennice Herman*

"I enjoy serving the community, and Caldwell Hospice allows me to do that," Dr. Krishnaraj said. "It is the most rewarding work I've ever done. To provide hospice care, you have to have empathy, not just sympathy."

This is the last year the exam can be based only on work experience in hospice care; in the future, Dr. Herman said, the American Board of Medical Specialties will require one year of additional formal training in addition to work experience for Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification.

"The need for hospice and palliative care specialists will grow in the coming years, and the supply of those specialists will not match the demand," Dr. Herman said. "It is essential that we be prepared to provide end-of-life care and pain management."

Drs. Herman and Krishnaraj's Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification remain in effect through December 2022.



### Adult Volunteer Training March 19 and 21, 2013

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

McCreary Family Professional Center, Meeting Room B  
526 Pine Mountain Road  
Hudson, NC

#### We are currently seeking:

- Volunteers to visit with patients in their homes or long-term-care facilities
- Male Volunteers
- Volunteers willing to
  - provide caregiver relief
  - provide transportation
  - run errands for patients



For information or to register, contact **Brittany Bonn**, Volunteer Coordinator at 828.754.0101 or [volunteercoordinator@caldwellhospice.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@caldwellhospice.org).

## VOLUNTEER NEWS VolunTEENS Bake!

Sisters Megan and Ashley Laws and Kristen Beach are among the dedicated volunTEENS who began a new activity at the Forlines Patient Care Unit (PCU) with patients a couple of months ago. They come to the PCU's family kitchen on Tuesday afternoons and bake cookies with patients who are able.

"These teens took the idea and ran with it," said Volunteer Coordinator Brittany Bonn.

Emma Adams, Landyn James, and Macie Barlow are other volunTEENS who help patients slice cookie dough into quarters, place onto baking sheets, wait for the sweet scent to fill the room, and taste their success. Once the "baker patients" have had their fill, volunTEENS carry plates of cookies throughout the Forlines PCU to share with other patients and their families.

"Real sugar cookies made from scratch" was a recent request. The next week, volunTEENS brought sugar, flour, vanilla, Crisco, and eggs. The group got to work mixing dough, forming it into balls, and baking sugar cookies.

The patient who wanted real sugar cookies didn't feel well



*It takes two—volunTEEN and "baker patient"—to mix up a batch of cookies for sharing at the Forlines PCU.*

enough to leave her bed, so the nurses and certified nursing assistants wheeled her bed into the family kitchen, and she helped bake cookies.

"Hosting activities for patients is just part of what volunTEENS bring to us, along with smiling faces and lots of energy," Volunteer Support Specialist Crystal Burch said. "I am grateful and proud that they are serving hospice patients and families."

The volunTEENS need very little supervision, as they plan how to celebrate holidays and other special days: for Valentine's Day, they will make iced cupcakes.

"Will we color Easter eggs again this year?" a volunTEEN asked.

"Absolutely," CNA Juanita Carlton answered. "Hospice care is all about doing the little things to brighten someone's day."

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

### Gateway LPN Janice Stout Recognized by Caldwell Hospice

Janice Stout, a Gateway Nursing and Rehabilitation Center licensed practical nurse, was named Caldwell Hospice's Fall 2012 *Above and Beyond* award recipient.

"She is very compassionate to patients at the end of life and their families," wrote a CHPC staff member in nominating her. "When a patient is in distress, Janice calls to inform us about the changes."

"I love my patients all the same," Stout said. "And I am surprised but glad to receive this honor."

Caldwell Hospice employees and volunteers can nominate staff members of area long-term-care facilities who encourage quality end-of-life care for resident-patients and go "above and beyond" to support resident-patients, their families, and Caldwell Hospice staff members. The award is presented each quarter.



*Pictured (L to R): Nancy Wallace, Caldwell Hospice Long-Term-Care Facilities nurse team leader; Fall 2012 Above and Beyond recipient Janice Stout; Marilyn White, Gateway Nursing and Rehabilitation Center Director of Nursing; Kimberly Setzer, CHPC medical social worker, and Donna Hart, CHPC nurse.*

## BOARD SPOTLIGHT

# CHPC Board Introduces Three New Board Members

**Dottie Metzger** (pictured left in photo) retired from Caldwell Hospice in February 2012 as its longest-tenured employee, concluding a 27-year hospice homecare nursing career. Her patients, their families, and people throughout Caldwell County cared about her. The *News-Topic* readers voted her Caldwell County's Best Nurse, in 2005 and again in 2008. Her philosophy of hospice care is "to keep patients comfortable, give them the dignity they deserve, and give them the opportunity to die at home."

When Dottie went to a patient's home, she might have been a friend dropping by, except that she gathered necessary medical information and learned essential details during the visit. She combined medical skill, a professional focus on patients' well-being, and the special qualities that made her visits feel personal.

"Dottie carries skill, respect, and her stethoscope on each patient visit," said Caldwell Hospice Chief Executive Officer Cathy Swanson, at Dottie's retirement. "There is no way to measure her value to our patients or to our staff."

After studying nursing at the Lutheran Hospital School of Nursing in Baltimore, Dottie worked at the Lutheran Hospital emergency room for five years before moving to Lenoir. She came to Caldwell Hospice as a half-time nurse, before extending her hours into 27 years.

Dottie's retirement focuses on visiting with her four children and their families, including three grandchildren, baking cakes—another of her talents—and crocheting, and teaching CPR to Caldwell Hospice staff members. When asked to participate on CHPC's Board of Directors, "I was honored," Dottie

said. So is Caldwell Hospice.

**Charles Shell** (pictured center in photo) has been an employee of RPM Wood Finishes Group, Inc., for 13 years; his most-recent assignment is as the company's Controller.

Charles and Melanie Shell, his wife, believe in the importance of "giving back wholeheartedly, as God continues to bless us."

He has known about hospice care, personally, through members of his family. He has been aware of the mission and the work that Caldwell Hospice does through other members of First Presbyterian Church, Lenoir. When approached about serving on the Caldwell Hospice Board of Directors, Charles said, "I felt very honored that you would think of me." As a Board member, Charles hopes to be a part of Caldwell Hospice's "spirit of love and family that will continue for many years."

When her husband went to Vietnam in 1970, **Linda Story** (pictured right in photo) left a job at the GE plant in Hickory for a job with the Town of Granite Falls, for a very practical reason: to be closer to home. By the time she retired, with nearly 40 years in local government, the Town's population had grown from 2,000 to 5,000; Linda had been named Granite Falls' *Woman of the Year* twice (1983 and 2009); she had served the Town's best interests while meeting county, state, and federal government regulations (not an easy task); she had



served on Granite Falls' History Committee, which had come into being around the 1999 centennial observance; and, as part of Caldwell County's Economic Development Commission, she had worked to bring in new businesses and retain jobs in hard economic times.

In retirement, Linda planned to spend more time with her three grandchildren, read, travel with her husband, and volunteer for Caldwell Hospice. So far, she hasn't found enough time for reading and going to the beach, but Caldwell Hospice has found a way to utilize her talents—by electing her to serve on its Board of Directors.

Linda's strengths include 13 years as Granite Falls' Finance Director, management skills honed during 26 years as Town Manager, and problem-solving: she tries to see all sides and make the best decisions for the long term. Add in her passion to help people—she works with seniors groups at Dudley Shoals Baptist Church and visits the elderly in the congregation weekly—and you see the contributions that Linda will make.

"I'm a person in the community who is willing to give time and talent to causes I believe in," Linda said. "At this time in my life, it's about helping others."



Building on 30 years of excellence

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## WISH LIST . 2013

- Snacks (*individual-size*) for patients' families
- Applesauce
- Cans of soup
- Individual boxes of cereal
- Coffee (*cans, regular and decaf*)
- Decaffeinated coffee in single-serve bags
- Hot chocolate/cocoa (*individual-size packages*)
- Napkins
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic wrap
- Styrofoam coffee cups (*8-oz.*)
- Solo cups (*16-oz. for soft drinks, tea, etc.*)
- Paper plates and bowls
- Plastic spoons and forks
- Lotion (*personal size*)
- Deodorant (*personal size*)
- Toothpaste (*travel size*)
- Men's lotion
- Mouthwash
- Nail clippers
- Orange sticks (*to clean fingernails*)
- Boxes of tissue (*Kleenex*)
- Baby wipes or refills (*not anti-bacterial*)
- Triple-blade disposable razors
- Hair brushes
- Disposable cameras
- Amazon.com gift cards to purchase children/teen grief books, music, and resources
- Music CDs (*instrumental, gospel, inspirational, meditation, nature sounds*)