

You Can Make Difficult Decisions Easier

People who have made final health care decisions for a loved one, without knowing that person's wishes, can tell you how hard it is. They will express the pain and guilt. They will share their doubt about what their loved one wanted. They will tell you how they still wonder whether their choices were the "right" ones. But this pain, guilt and uncertainty can be avoided if you talk about your final choices with your loved ones before a crisis occurs.

The United Hospice Foundation is working with Stephens County Hospital and numerous volunteers to implement a program called CRITICAL ConditionsSM. The program is designed to educate and engage the community in planning for health care at the end of life. The project centers around the CRITICAL ConditionsSM Planning Guide, a discussion tool that uses real-life scenarios to help people talk about their health care choices with family members and record their wishes using a new type of advance directive document called a "Directive for Final Health Care."

Planning for your health care at the end of life is extremely important, yet fewer than 9% of Georgians actually do so. The United Hospice Foundation—with your help—is hoping to change that. We are offering the following educational opportunities free to the public and would like your help to spread the word to churches, civic organizations, and places of business in Franklin, Habersham, Stephens, and Rabun counties.

FAMILY WORKSHOPS—Learn more about the CRITICAL ConditionsSM program and how to start your family discussion. Workshops are held monthly at Stephens County Hospital.

PERSONAL AGENT WORKSHOPS—Learn the responsibilities of a personal agent so you know what is expected of you if you accept this role.

PRIVATE PRESENTATIONS—Schedule a private presentation for your church, civic organization or place of business.

COMMUNITY COUNSELORS—Volunteers can personally help your family begin its end-of-life discussion.

CHURCH BULLETIN ARTICLES—A series of articles is available to publish in or attach to your church's bulletin.

BOOKMARKS/BROCHURES/POSTERS/VIDEOS—Marketing materials are available to help raise awareness in your community.

If you would like more information about the CRITICAL ConditionsSM program, please call the United Hospice Foundation at (800) 443-4788.

CRITICAL ConditionsSM
Make your final health care decisions

Our Mission

The United Hospice Foundation will work with communities to prepare and promote activities that raise public awareness and understanding of end-of-life issues. ♦ We will advance the hospice philosophy so more people living with life-limiting illness and their families can find comfort care. ♦ We will make grief and bereavement support available for those suffering from loss. ♦ We will provide the information and resources necessary to stimulate end-of-life discussions among family members to assist them in the development of advance directives. ♦ And, we will work with healthcare providers to develop ways to ensure patients' end-of-life wishes are realized. ♦ We will be guided by the highest level of ethical and moral values as we develop, manage and grant support for this cause.



Practical Tips for Caregivers

Caring for an ailing loved one can take its toll, but there is help. Here are some practical tips from www.caregiving.com.

• **Get things in order.** Find financial information, including investments, bank accounts and tax returns, and names of lawyers, bankers and accountants. Locate life insurance policies, birth certificates and funeral arrangement papers. Have the names and phone numbers of all physicians as well as information about all prescribed medications at your fingertips. Find social security and Medicare cards. Help your charge complete living wills and durable powers of attorney for health care.

• **Ask questions.** Speak with the doctor about diagnosis and prognosis. Ask what you can expect in the future. Spend time in the library and/or on the Internet conducting your own research. Contact local agencies to get more information.

• **Get informed.** Ask your home health aides or visiting nurses to show you proper hands-on techniques, such as transferring safely, proper skin care and lifting properly. Or contact your local American Red Cross to find a caregiving class. Log your care recipient's health in a diary, and include notes about meals, techniques that worked, medication dosages and any changes in medical condition. This journal will be helpful during doctor appointments and to update family members.

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Tidbits...

♦ **Volunteers passed out information** about final health care choices at the Ninth District Opportunities Food Distribution sites in Franklin, Habersham, Rabun and Stephens counties during August and September. Many of those who picked up the information were surprised to learn that you do not need an attorney to fill out a Directive for Final Health Care and the forms are free.



♦ **Check out the Foundation's new Web site at www.unitedhospicefoundation.org!**

♦ **The United Hospice Foundation's Tree of Memories Celebration** will once again take place at the Mall of Georgia between Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you would like to volunteer at the event or sponsor the event, please call Maureen McCarthy at (800) 443-4788. Watch for more details in the next edition of Passages.

The official publication of the United Hospice Foundation

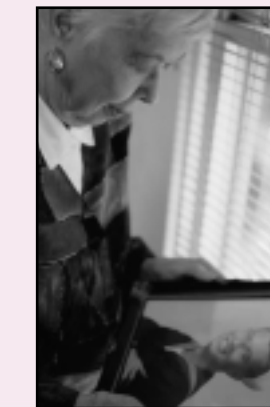
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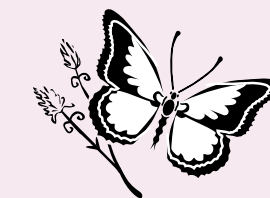
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Joe and Cathy on their wedding day— August 17, 2002

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So Much More Living To Do



It had been raining all morning. But, as if in celebration of the day, the rain dried up and the sun peeked out from the behind the clouds to shine. The bride looked as beautiful as the wildflowers she carried in her arms when she walked down the aisle towards the love of her life. The hoop, chemise, petticoats and heavy wool dress itself must have added a cumbersome 20 pounds to her slight frame. Judging by her grace and beauty, you never would have known.

And the groom, so gallant in his dress uniform with its polished brass buttons and velvet trim, awaited his bride with anticipation. He had been through a tough battle and she had been there for him through it all.

Joe and Cathy Blandford were married just a few weeks ago. Had you attended their wedding you might have thought it was 1862 during the Civil War. Joe has a passion for history and has been a Civil War re-enactor for more than ten years. He has spent many weekends traveling around the United States as Hamilton Holmes, a surgeon in the Confederate army. His specialty, recreating the scene of an emergency amputation, is so realistic it's not for the faint of heart. Joe met Cathy at a re-enactment and shared his passion with her. Therefore, it was only fitting the two be married in such a way.

During one of the couple's weekend trips in April 2002, Joe had taken ill. Doctors, originally thinking he had pneumonia, later found a large mass in his brain and cancer in his lungs.

Enduring 17 rounds of radiation, chemotherapy, blood transfusions and other aggressive medical treatments completely drained Joe of his

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So Much More Living To Do

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energy and left him in considerable pain. Although the brain tumor had diminished, the lung cancer was still spreading.

In early August, Joe's doctors admitted him to United Hospice and told him he had only two weeks to live. The news was shocking to both Joe and Cathy. They had such a great future planned.

Joe knew about Hospice because of his medical background (in real life he had been a medic in the Air Force for 27 years), but he had no personal experience with it. Unfortunately, the way Hospice had been presented to the couple was terrifying. "It seemed so cut and dry," said Joe. "Almost as if the doctors had given up on me and were handing me over to Hospice to die."

But to the contrary, Hospice has given them comfort and hope. What was supposed to be two weeks has now been six and may turn into months. "The Hospice staff has been so good to us," said Cathy. "They are looking out for us and acting as our champions, which lets me concentrate on just being a wife."

Hospice has allowed Joe to stay at home with family and friends. The Hospice staff helps him manage his pain and is available to the entire family at any time—day or night. Nurses, social workers, chaplains and others have made it possible for Joe to concentrate on what's important to him. He married Cathy four months earlier than planned and is "working to be well, living a good life, talking with friends and remembering stories."

The newlyweds are hoping to have a portrait taken mimicking one of Joe's favorite pictures depicting a soldier perched atop a horse leaning over to kiss his bride goodbye before he heads off to war. What a fitting tribute to their love.

"I've also got a few surprises for him," said Cathy as Joe looked on suspiciously. "I can't wait for him to see what I've got planned!"

The sparkle hasn't left Joe's bright blue eyes. Cancer hasn't defeated him. And he hasn't lost site of his dreams...partly because of the care



Joe and Cathy on a hiking trip in 1998.



Joe & "friend" before he was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Hospice has provided and partly because he feels he has so much more living to do.

Myths and Facts About Hospice

from Hospice Foundation of America

MYTH: Hospice is where you go when there is "nothing else to be done."

REALITY: Hospice is the "something more" that can be done for the patient and the family when the illness cannot be cured. It is a concept based on comfort-oriented care. Referral into hospice is a movement into another mode of therapy, which may be more appropriate for terminal care.



MYTH: Families should be isolated from a dying patient.

REALITY: Hospice staff believe that when family members (including children) experience the dying process in a caring environment, it helps counteract the fear of their own mortality and the mortality of their loved one.



MYTH: Hospice care is more expensive.

REALITY: Studies have shown hospice care to be no more costly. Frequently it is less expensive than conventional care during the last six months of life. Less high-cost technology is used, and family, friends, and volunteers provide 90% of the day-to-day patient care at home.



MYTH: You can't keep your own doctor if you enter hospice.

REALITY: Hospice physicians work closely with your doctor of choice to determine a plan of care.



Practical Tips for Caregivers

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• **Talk it over.** Make sure all family members have the same information you do. Find out what family members can do to help, even if they're out of state. Develop a plan of care. For instance, who will help Mom with her groceries? Who will help her bathe and dress in the morning? Who will take her to her doctors' appointments?

• **Make time for yourself.** This is vital. Pursue your own interests and hobbies. Attend a support group regularly or find an outlet to vent your frustrations, whether it's friends, family or a daily journal.

• **Set limits.** Determine at what point you no longer can provide care. For instance, some caregivers decide they are uncomfortable when a care recipient becomes incontinent.

• **Remember why you're here.** Although your loved one may act "childish" or may be unable to fully care for herself, always respect her need for independence and choices. Encourage her to do as much as possible for herself—you'll both benefit.

• **Look ahead.** Seek out options for the day when you no longer can provide care. Visit several retirement centers, assisted living facilities and nursing homes to find one that you are comfortable with.

• **Share, share, share.** The best resource for family caregivers is other family caregivers.

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UHF Looking for Volunteers to Support New Grief Programs

The United Hospice Foundation is partnering with AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) to create grief and loss programs throughout northeast Georgia. The focus of the programs will be on providing one-on-one peer counseling to those who have lost a loved one and supplementing that with support groups, facilitated grief courses, special presentations/programs and whatever else the communities might need.

Programs will be started in areas surrounding Gainesville, Toccoa and Athens with a special interest in serving the more rural communities. In total, eighteen counties will be able to take advantage of this free program.

The success of this program depends on the number of volunteers recruited as well as their enthusiasm for the project. "Our hope is to recruit 50 or more volunteers who live or work in the Gainesville/Toccoa/Athens area," said Maureen McCarthy, Executive Director of the Foundation. "We are knocking on doors at community churches, health care facilities, civic organizations, funeral homes and anywhere else we can find people willing to help. There's such a need for these services and we're counting on our volunteers to help us reach as many people as possible."

The Foundation staff would appreciate any help you can give to make this program a success. Here are a few suggestions:

• Help recruit volunteers for this program—maybe you would be interested. Or, perhaps you could pass on the names and phone numbers of others you know who may be vital to the program's success (representatives at nursing homes, senior centers, hospitals, funeral homes, etc.).

• Learn a bit more and help the Foundation promote the program in your community. Help the Foundation set up radio interviews, write human interest stories for your local newspaper or place an article in local church bulletins. The more people who know about the program, the more successful it will be.

• Once the program is up and running, act as a referral source so that those who need grief services can take advantage of them. Brochures and cards will be available for you to distribute.

This program is absolutely free to everyone involved. The United Hospice Foundation is non-profit and is using donated monies to make sure this program is successful.

All of our volunteers will be asked to attend an all-day (eight-hour) training session in October. The training will be free of charge and will probably be hosted at BJC Hospital in Commerce (arrangements are still being made).

Please consider helping the Foundation with this project. If you have any questions, would like more information, or would like to be a volunteer, please call Maureen McCarthy at **(800) 443-4788**.

How Can You Help?

The United Hospice Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that depends on contributions from the community to fulfill its mission. We always appreciate:

- Volunteer Time
- Cash Gifts
- Memorial Gifts (in lieu of flowers at a funeral)
- In-Kind Gifts
- Deferred Gifts
- Gifts of Property
- Wills & Bequests

Call the United Hospice Foundation, Inc. at (770) 925-4788 or (800) 443-4788 for more information regarding your giving options. A United Hospice Foundation representative would be pleased to discuss these opportunities with you. Or, clip out the coupon below and send it with your gift to...

The United Hospice Foundation, 3945 Lawrenceville Highway, Lilburn, GA 30047

I would like to pledge my support of the United Hospice Foundation and its mission. I will contribute \$_____ every month quarter six months year for the next _____ years.

I would prefer to support the United Hospice Foundation with the enclosed one-time gift of \$_____.

Please send me more information about becoming a volunteer including United Hospice Foundation in my/our will other giving options hospice advance directives grief support

today's date: _____ name: _____

address: _____

city: _____ state: _____ zip: _____

phone: (_____) _____ e-mail: _____

This gift is in memory of in honor of _____ (tribute name)

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