H A P P Y  A U G U S T  B I R T H D A Y  !

4 Christi Tyler  26 Stephanie McCauley
6 Ginger Ayotte  26 Kathy Stoner
9 Tiffany Barry
11 Tony Kirtsos
11 Marilyn Low
15 Suzanne Dauphinais
16 Janaya Tull
18 Christina Mattson
20 Bonnie Bass
25 Shirley Jackson
26 Don Huber

Volunteer time documentation matters

Recently, forms for recording volunteer time were updated for consistency and to streamline the entering of the data, important for reports used to document the required match of volunteer hours for Medicare reimbursement. Batches of time sheets arrive continuously in the Volunteer Services office where two dedicated office volunteers — Annette Conger and Walter McCabe — meticulously code and enter data into the clinical database.

All volunteer time is entered, whether volunteers are attending board meetings, working in the Thrift Shop or performing activities involving bereavement, community relations, team meetings, patient care or office support, for example.

Annette Conger’s career in software development at NASA helped her develop her computer skills. She devotes time every week to entering the volunteer hours related to patient care as well as time spent at events and in meetings.

Retired Reuters news editor Walter McCabe enters volunteer hours for Coastal Hospice at the Lake (CHL) as well as office support hours in all locations, including the Thrift Shop. Walt also sets the monthly patient and office volunteer schedules at CHL. Although he spends time in Volunteer Services daily, he works in the main office and finance areas, too.

Thanks to our two Volunteer Services office volunteers for so generously donating their time!
Volunteers go to Camp Safe Harbor

A desire to offer support for children who have lost a loved one prompted Coastal Hospice spiritual care manager Sharon Hutchison to approach Dr. Kim van Vulpen at Salisbury University (SU) about a partnership. They — along with Rev. Janelle Beiler and bereavement assistant Melissa Dasher — designed Camp Safe Harbor with the inaugural year in 2015. This year, 21 children who had lost a loved one attended the second year of camp.

Camp Safe Harbor is a three-day camp open to children ages 6 to 12 at no cost, and referrals were made by Coastal Hospice staff who identified children in need as they were working with patients and their families. Children also came to camp in response to letters sent to school guidance counselors and nurses in the four Lower Shore counties.

Volunteers played a vital role in ensuring the camp’s success. Whether they were assigned as “floaters” to set up and assist with the team-building activities or as companions to a specific group of campers, all of their contributions were invaluable.

Volunteer Margot Ralph worked as a floater last year and with a group this year. She saw firsthand the therapeutic progress campers made in a short period of time and how they connected to each other. Camp activities related directly to the children’s losses.

On the first day of camp, a young girl who had lost her sister to drowning participated but did not share her loss with the group. The next day she was able to pick up her sister’s photograph and show it to each member of her group, still silent but sharing.

Another success story from the camp’s first season involved the oldest sibling of five children whose father had passed. The boy attended the opening event with his hoodie pulled tightly over his head, insisting he would not attend camp. He reluctantly came back the next day for a “trial run” but did not plan to attend the rest of the week. By the end of the week, he had attended the whole camp and opened up, and his hoodie was gone.

Volunteer Ellen Lowe was honored and humbled to be a part of Camp Safe Harbor. She observed that interactive activities allowed the children to engage with their peers as well as channel their grief in positive directions. She witnessed the SU students applying their newly-acquired skills in social work under Dr. van Vulpen’s direction and noticed how the camp participants looked up to the SU students with respect and admiration. She also noted the dedication, compassion and professionalism of the hospice chaplains and social workers, and learned effective communications techniques from them.

In addition to the intensive orientation program the attended, the volunteers were at camp
Volunteers go to camp continued

with the children Monday through Thursday and attended a debriefing meeting on Friday. The time commitment was significant, but the rewards were worthwhile.

Volunteer Dave Duitscher said, “It was tiring emotionally and physically but worth it. It was awesome to see how the children responded to camp activities.” Dave recalled the letter one mother wrote during that week about her daughter while both were still grieving their loss. She expressed her thanks because the camp experience gave her daughter back to her.

Volunteer Susan Henry recalled two boys in particular, one who connected to her through art projects and the other one as her lunch partner. She enjoyed the experience immensely and hopes to volunteer again next year.

For the children, Camp Safe Harbor provided an opportunity to connect with others who had experienced a similar loss. By the end of the week they were exchanging phone numbers and were no longer alone in their grief.

It is anticipated that the camp will be offered next year in early to mid summer. As the camp continues to evolve and the number of referrals increases, there will be a need for more volunteers to assist the staff and children.

If this type of volunteer activity appeals to you, please let us know, and we will contact you about next year’s dates when they become available. Thanks to this year’s volunteers who so generously donated their time and energy to make such a difference in children’s lives.

Volunteer Chew N Chat meeting

New and experienced volunteers are invited to attend our fall volunteer Chew N Chats. Meetings are partly social, partly educational and always enjoyable. Beverages and dessert will be served:

- Wed., September 28, 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm, Philmore Commons Conference Room, Salisbury
- Thurs., September 29, 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm, Coastal Hospice at the Ocean, Berlin

Bring your brown bag lunch, questions, ideas and topics you’d like to discuss. We’ll supply the beverage, dessert and answers to your questions.

Please RSVP to Sally Rankin, 410-543-2590, srankin@coastalhospice.org.
Helping patients get wishes granted

In conversations with patients and their families, volunteers may learn about a favorite, memorable activity that patients may wish to experience just one more time. It may be a trip to see the ocean and boardwalk, attend a special family event, bring in a family member for a visit or fish at a local pier.

Coastal Hospice has received grant funds to help make final wishes happen. Funds can be used only for experiences and for travel within the United States. If the trip is close to home, professional photographers would record the event to provide a lasting memory for the family.

If you learn of an unfulfilled dream, please contact Volunteer Services so they can let the patient’s care team assess the final wish. The patient’s condition, ability to travel and financial situation would be considered.

As you know, the hospice experience focuses on quality of life and helping patients live fully while receiving services. Creating a special memory is just one more service offered by the Coastal Hospice care team.