

The Voyager



Winter 2006

A PUBLICATION OF THE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE GROUP, INC.

Hospice Pharmacy Program Receives Accreditation

Niagara Hospice recently received accreditation for its residency program in pharmacy practice, with emphasis in home care, from the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). The Commission arrived at its decision based on a thorough review and survey conducted at Niagara Hospice in May, 2005. The ASHP Board of Directors reviewed and accepted the Commission on Credentialing's actions on September 23, 2005. Accreditation is granted subject to the provisions of the ASHP Regulations on Accreditation of Pharmacy Residencies.

The Pharmacy Practice Residency Program is a joint collaboration of Niagara Hospice and the University at Buffalo's School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to provide a post-doctoral pharmacist residency. "We are very excited

about this recognition," said Robert Wahler, UB clinical assistant professor of pharmacy and Niagara Hospice pharmacy practice residency director. "Our pharmacy practice residency with emphasis in home care is the only nationally accredited residency based in a hospice, furthering Niagara Hospice's conscious effort to be a teaching hospice."

The joint venture has placed both institutions at the forefront of research and instruction in hospice and palliative care. The partnership is instrumental in offering patients the unique type of comfort and care that characterizes Niagara Hospice. Under the agreement, Niagara Hospice provides a residency to a pharmacist who performs research and supervises UB pharmacy students during clinical rotations at its facility

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In mid-life, the caterpillar attaches itself to a protected place while it undergoes a transformation into a chrysalis. The butterfly that emerges has a whole new life in a different form.

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A Story of Hope and Love

CONTRIBUTED BY JOANNE AND RODNEY HERRIVEN

This is a story of two people who each lost their spouses to cancer: Rodney lost his wife of 37 years in September 2003 and Joanne lost her husband of 14.5 years in November 2003 - both were under the care of Niagara Hospice. The first year of widowhood was full of emotions: anger, frustration, loneliness, sadness, abandonment, failure and wondering if they would ever feel whole or happy again. Neither knew where they would get the courage to go on without their partner, lover and best friend. Both took advantage of grief counseling through Niagara Hospice.

Neither Joanne nor Rodney ever imagined falling in love again, or even thought about doing so, until November 2004 when they were each convinced by co-workers and family to try Match.com and Yahoo.com. They both had a lot of reservations about starting to date again, but felt that maybe just finding someone to do things with would bring some happiness. Rodney and Joanne both corresponded with several people but did not feel a connection to anyone.

Then fate stepped in: Rodney saw Joanne's profile and sent her an email. They emailed for two days and talked on the phone for hours be-

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John L. Lomeo
President & CEO



Paul C. Collins
Board President

A Message from the CEO and Board President

Happy New Year! We hope you will join us as we enter 2006 with great optimism and hope for the future. This will be a challenging year for Niagara Hospice as we continue the “Wings of Serenity” campaign to build Niagara Hospice House. This year also promises to be one of the most exciting years in our 18-year history as we plan to welcome the first residents of Niagara County’s only hospice house. But we can’t do it without your help.

As many of you know, Niagara Hospice House will be an 8-suite hospice residence and 10-suite in-patient unit. The residential wing will provide a place for hospice patients to go when their own home or family situation

isn’t suitable for home care, but they don’t need hospitalization or nursing home care. Perhaps their home is too small, or poorly suited for handicap accessibility, or they don’t have family or friends who can stay with them 24 hours a day. The in-patient wing will hold 10 suites specifically designed for patients needing short-term medical monitoring and patients who have only a few hours or days to live. Many families find the final hours extremely difficult and want medical professionals available for pain management and support, but hospitalization isn’t required.

Plans for Niagara Hospice House have been on the drawing board for years. The decision to go forward is partly attributed to recent changes to New York State law that enable smaller counties to operate cost-efficient residential hospice services, and the 2002 change in Medicaid reimbursement regulations in support of hospice residences. These changes have opened the door for Niagara Hospice to meet the long-time need for a residential hos-

pice facility.

The foundation of the hospice philosophy is for every patient to have a dignified, pain-free death. The absence of a residential facility in Niagara County poses a significant threat to that standard. Although Niagara Hospice will always be primarily a home based program, Niagara Hospice House will open up new ser-



VICES for people who currently must go without.

These are trying times for fundraising and we are humbled by the generosity of our staff, volunteers, board members and the community in their support of Niagara Hospice House. If you haven’t yet had an opportunity to see plans for the building, we encourage you to call Hospice at (716) 439-4417 to request information. If you have been touched by Hospice, you know how important hospice care is. You can name for yourself the co-workers, friends or family members who depended on Niagara Hospice during a difficult and painful time. Because of the importance of this work, we know you will want to help if you can. With your help, we can bring dignity, comfort and choice to all who need it, regardless of their home situation.

The Voyager

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Visit us on the web at www.niagarahospice.org

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Hospice Website Receives Face-lift

The Niagara Hospice web-site has recently been refashioned with the goal of providing clear and concise information to individuals who have recently received a potentially life-threatening diagnosis, as well as their families, and encourage them to call Hospice sooner. "We know all too well how important it is for individuals to have easy access to information that relates directly to them when faced with end-of-life challenges," states Patricia Degan, Niagara Hospice director of marketing and public relations. "Because everyone's situation is different, another goal of the site is to encourage people to call Hospice sooner to get information early on in their diagnosis - providing them with

the tools to make informed decisions in their own care," says Degan. The new website provides resources for the patient, the family, and the community as a whole that can be accessed in the comfort of home or office at a time that is most convenient.

A Memorial Book section has been added to the new site that invites families to remember a loved one and invite others to sign their guestbook. The addition is an effort to provide families with another tool to help them work through their grief as well as provide lasting tributes to their loved one. Memorials can be



printed from the website to be kept by the family if they wish. Hospice news, resources, contact information, and newsletters can all be accessed at www.niagarahospice.org.



Essie Calhoun (left), Chief Diversity Officer & Director of Community Affairs and Vice President at Kodak and Kate Juba, Niagara Hospice PharmD.

Kodak Donation Supports Pharmacy Study

The Kodak Co. in Rochester, New York recently donated a digital camera to the pharmacy program at Niagara Hospice to aid in research on the treatment of oral thrush in hospice patients. This is a common condition in terminal patients that up until now has been problematic in treatment. New studies on an alternative regimen could result in better treatment of oral

thrush and a decrease in medication costs. The camera will be used to photograph symptoms throughout treatment to document changes for the study. The research is being conducted by Niagara Hospice PharmD Kate Juba and Robert Wahler, University at Buffalo clinical assistant professor of pharmacy and Niagara Hospice pharmacy practice residency director.

Community Foundation Funds Unit

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo awarded a \$40,000 grant to Niagara Hospice to install an automated medication dispensing unit. According to Vice President of Hospice Services, Catherine Mulawka Borden, the automated medication dispensing unit will ensure that Niagara County hospice patients have access to 24/7 remedy for breakthrough pain and other emergencies. "This equipment will make it possible to provide emergency pain medication during non-business hours, using secure protocols supervised by a local licensed pharmacist," states Borden.

The automated medication dispensing unit will add another dimension to the standout pharmacology services Niagara Hospice has developed. The project expands on an innovative palliative care program already underway, one that has been developed in collaboration with the University at Buffalo's School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Since 2002, Niagara Hospice has pioneered efforts to improve how medications are used and managed in hospice care, and is recognized nationally for a variety of strategic initiatives. Over three years Niagara Hospice has adjusted formularies to make better use

of generic drugs and taken other steps to cut drug costs; assisted the University at Buffalo School of Pharmaceutical Sciences in researching the use of methadone as pain medication for cancer patients; established a Pharmacy Residency; developed a palliative care consultancy that assists local nursing homes and physicians; and collaborated with UB in PharmD intern rotations and miscellaneous studies of geriatric pharmacology.

"The Foundation is pleased to be able to support this important effort," stated Community Foundation Vice President, Clotilde Dedecker.



Weathering the Storm

BY LARRY MORROW, BSW MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER

Every one of us will experience the loss of someone or something we love, or cherish very dearly. It may be someone or something we have invested much of our emotional being with, and allowed ourselves to become part of. What we feel when that is taken away from us is a measure of grief, on some level. The level of grief depends on how great an investment we had in that loved one, or that thing we cared for dearly. And, that investment may be emotional, mental, or spiritual.

We grieve because of a loss of some kind, usually of someone, or something we love. But, we can also grieve over something or someone in our lives that has had a negative influence, or a negative relationship. Grief is the emotional response as a result of the loss. Grief may manifest itself in an emotional roller coaster. One moment, we may be doing just fine and later we may not be able to hold it together. Grief can strike at any moment, and rise up from a word, a smell, a sound, or a thought. It may hit us as we think about past relationships or a connection to a loved possession. We grieve over many things and at different levels throughout our lives. Grief is a natural part of living. If you have not grieved, you have not cared.

To give a perspective on grief, think of it as a snowstorm in winter. I think of a particular snowstorm that hit Western NY in 1977 (deemed “The Blizzard of 77”). Several feet of snow fell in a short time. People were stranded in many places - at work, school, on the road, and many other places away from home. Well, it was winter. We expect snow, but not like that. It hit hard. I think of grief like that snowstorm hitting hard, very hard. In fact, it paralyzed us. The city was at a standstill. Often, when we grieve, we become paralyzed.

Nothing else can be done. We are stuck in that storm, stranded somewhere.

Well, that snow did cease. The storm ended at some point. We knew we would survive. No, winter was not over, just like our grief hasn’t ended. But the storm has stopped. I knew winter was still here though. I knew we were going to get more snow. I know I will grieve again over this loss. And maybe another storm will hit, and render me inoperable for a time again.

Grief is like that. It can come at a moments notice. Just like winter snow. The snow is still on the ground. It is still cold outside. If you want to go out, you must shovel the sidewalk. You need to dress properly. Grief is like that. It is hard work. You must clean off the snow before you can safely navigate the sidewalks. We know there will be more snow before winter ends. Grief ends at some point. No, we don’t forget the love for the loss. Emotions can still rise when we think of it. But, for the most part, grief ends and we can navigate the sidewalks of our life again without shoveling, or having to dress warm. We don’t have to prepare for another storm because summer is here, but we remember the past winter well. We just don’t dwell on it as we used to. Oh, we talk about the “big storm” and how it affected us. We will talk about our loss, and that is good. We need to openly confess how much the loss meant to us. That helps us get through the storms.

Remember, grief may be intense at times. It may come upon you as a storm, maybe when you are not expecting it. There will be snow squalls, small flurries, and maybe sunny days in winter as well. But, there is no escaping grief. Just like that snowstorm, it is going to affect every part of your life in some way, and you must deal with it many times before you see the season change. Your storm may be a little different than mine, or your friends. Don’t expect to be able to shovel all the snow in one day. Sometimes it takes awhile to work through it. You need to rest. You need to ask for help if needed. It’s okay to let someone know that the drifts are just too much for you right now, and you need a helping hand.

When you are going through your snowstorm, consider that others may be going through it as well. Perhaps they may have the same type of loss as you. If they appear to be handling the storm well, ask them how they do it. Don’t be afraid to speak about the storm to others. Maybe they have a perspective that might just give you some hope that the storm is not going to be here forever, and there is a summer. In your grief, remember that you are not alone. We all experience it at different times and over different losses. Grief is common to all people. You will manage it one day. You will grow through it. You will find better weather ahead, and may even see a rainbow.

on Sunset Drive in the Town of Lockport.

“Our pharmacy education program has grown from one student on a clinical experience program to a full-fledged post-doctoral residency program,” said Wahler.

Niagara Hospice president & CEO, John Lomeo, said the inclusion of a resident pharmacist in the patient’s care plan has proved to be a tremendous resource to both the clinical caregivers and the patient. “This clinical exposure to hospice and palliative care also affords the resident invaluable experience in pain management and end-of-life care,” added Lomeo. Both say that the role of the pharmacist has become increasingly more important in hospice and palliative care and Wahler believes there are many hospice facilities that need a pharmaceutical expert to manage the therapeutic use, distribution and costs of medication. According to Wahler, many hospices nationwide have hired clinical pharmacists.

The pharmacy resident is responsible for management of patient pharmacy regimens in a cost-effective and quality efficient manner as

well as coordinating the administration of medications for patients to assure there are no contraindications and/or negative interactions between medications. Niagara Hospice patients have the benefit of vital expertise in the case management of pain and symptom control. Patients are not the only beneficiaries in this partnership, as UB pharmacy students work and gain knowledge in the clinical environment with the resident pharmacist and hospice caregivers.

The Pharmacy Resident program was initially made possible through a \$30,659 grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. Objectives of the Foundation are to support creative and innovative responses to existing or emerging community problems; and support efforts that recognize and build on community strengths and assets. The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo is a community endowment whose mission is to strengthen and improve the quality of life in the Greater Buffalo area by supporting and enhancing philanthropy and charitable activities.

fore meeting in person. Three days later, Rodney knew he was in love but he also felt guilty because he felt he was cheating on his late wife. Rodney’s generosity by way of emotional support, the ability to make Joanne laugh, and being someone who could understand the ups and downs of being widowed soon helped Joanne realize that maybe true love could happen again. Much to their family’s surprise, they were engaged after two weeks and discussed a fall wedding - but common sense also told them that they had to get to know each other better before taking such a huge step.

As a trial run before committing the rest of their lives to each other, Rodney moved in with Joanne. The two argued, cried, laughed, talked and truly got to know each other. They also traveled a lot, and Joanne’s sister remarked that if you could travel in a vehicle with someone for over twelve hours without killing them, then it really must be love! Rodney and Joanne were able to share what life had dealt them and in doing so, got to know each other in the way some people don’t do even after years of being

together. They decided to head to Vegas, and were married on October 1, 2005 at a small chapel with some close friends and family in attendance. Friends and family commented that it had been a long time since either smiled and looked so happy.

Joanne and Rodney now share their lives together, after first sharing the devastating effects cancer can have on a family, the loneliness of grief, and they even unknowingly shared Niagara Hospice bereavement counselor, Laurie Stickney, as they worked through their grief.

The moral of the story is that Joanne and Rodney would like everyone that has lost a spouse or significant other to know that life can go on. It is very difficult making the decision to begin dating again, and yet another major decision to make a new life with someone else. They both acknowledge that their late spouses will always be a part of their lives and offer each other love and support with each passing anniversary of something from the past. They also know that together they will make new memories and celebrate more anniversaries of ‘firsts’ together.



Light-A-Life 2005

Over 100 friends and family joined Niagara Hospice for an afternoon of remembrance at the King Gallery at The Summit on December 11th. The St. Mary’s Folk Group of Lockport raised their voices and brought comfort to many hearts. Hospice Volunteer Sally Porter, and Hospice Social Worker Larry Morrow shared messages of hope for the holidays. Candles and the Hospice Memorial Tree were lit as we remembered 180 lives as all joined the folk group to sing Silent Night. A very special thank you to Don King, The Summit, Lockport Tim Horton’s, St. Mary’s Folk Group, Sally Porter and Larry Morrow for their support of Light-A-Life.

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Gifts to Hospice

The Niagara Frontier Hospice Foundation's gift program gives donors the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Hospice patients and their families.

Further, it enables donors to remember or pay tribute to a special individual by making a gift in that person's name. Upon request, the Foundation will send an acknowledgement to individuals designated in the donation, notifying them of the thoughtful gesture.

These gifts help ensure that hospice services will continue to be available to those individuals and families facing life's final journey. The Foundation is grateful for all the gifts it receives and the generosity of our community. However, space limitations permit only single listings of donations of \$50 or more per donor. We extend our sincere condolences to family and friends of those memorialized. If there is an error or omission, please call the Niagara Frontier Hospice Foundation at (716) 439-4417.

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Thank you!

Thanks you!



Dick Groves and Jerry DeFlippo present a gift of \$2,500 to Nick Granchelli of the Niagara Frontier Hospice Foundation board (right). The gift represents proceeds from last summer's Dominick DeFlippo Memorial Golf Tournament donated to support the Wings of Serenity Campaign to build Niagara Hospice House.

J's Motorcar of Lockport donated a percentage of their proceeds during National Hospice Month (November) to Niagara Hospice.

Thank you Roger Corlde and staff for supporting the mission of Hospice!



Dwyers Pub and the Niagara Falls HOGS broke the Guinness World Record of the most Harleys to drive through a bar! Greg Stenis of Dwyers and Paul Fedorsak from Niagara Falls HOGS present proceeds from the event to Amanda Scott from the Niagara Frontier Hospice Foundation.



Hospice-tality was a success again last November! Several Niagara County restaurants donated 20% of their proceeds from the evening of November 6th to Niagara Hospice. Pictured are Jenny Pinkham (left) from Mariner's Landing in Olcott, and Hospice Event Specialist, Amanda Scott. Niagara Hospice thanks Mariner's Landing and the following restaurants for their support of National Hospice Month and the hospice mission:

Apple Granny Restaurant

The Brickyard

Braccettos Restaurant

Cammarata's Restaurant

One Eyed Jacks

Village Eatery Italian Bistro

Gordie Harper's Bazaar

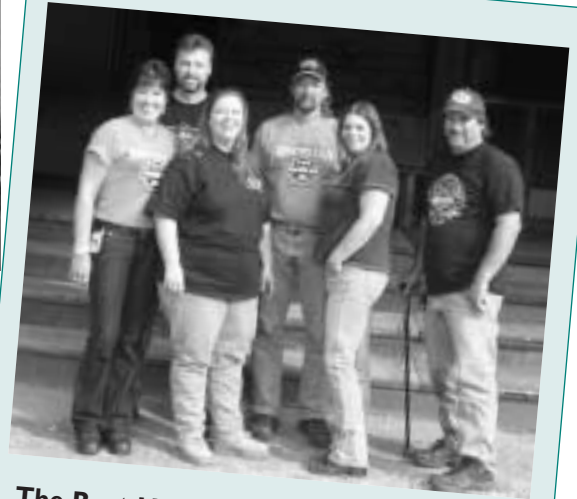
John's Flaming Hearth

Roman Café

Many thanks also to Applebees, Lockport for surprising Hospice staff with a delicious lunch last September. The ribs, chicken fingers, coleslaw and pop were enjoyed by all!



Supercuts of Western New York believes every day is a gift! Throughout the month of August stylists at 32 Supercuts locations sold Niagara Hospice butterflies for \$1 donation to Hospice. All of the locations did a fantastic job; the location that sold the most is on Payne Ave. in North Tonawanda. Pictured: Supercuts staff and Anthony Battaglia and Amanda Scott of the Niagara Frontier Hospice Foundation.



The Burt Hotel ran their 3rd Annual Partner Memorial Run in memory of John Rosemelia, Sr. The event raised \$6,295 for Niagara Hospice through admissions and various raffles. Pictured left to right are Kelly Sears, John Rosemelia, Jr., Diana Edminster, Tom Edminster, Kelly Lederhouse and Monty Noble.



The Peggyann Pytlik Walk had a successful second year last fall, raising \$3,900 for Niagara Hospice. The weather held out as walkers took a scenic stroll through Whirlpool State Park. Pictured are Anthony Battaglia of Niagara Hospice, Barb and Rich Pytlik, Caroline, Paige, Xander and Hailey Wasinger. Missing members of the Pytlik family are Annette, Joe, Joseph and Emma Dutton, Rick Pytlik and Ray Wasinger.



Dominick Muto of the Niagara Falls Fish Market organized a first year ride to benefit Niagara Hospice. Pictured are Vincent & Dominick Muto presenting a check to Anthony Battaglia of the Niagara Frontier Hospice Foundation.

The Voyager

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