



# High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care Inc.

*Dignity, comfort and peace at the end of life.*

## NEWSLETTER

## FALL 2011

*Serving the counties of Warren, Essex, and portions of Franklin, Hamilton, and St. Lawrence*

### 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On May 31st, 2011 many of our founders as well as past and present staff and volunteers gathered at the spectacular AuSable Club in St. Huberts to celebrate 25 years of caring by High Peaks Hospice and Palliative Care.

The guests of honor included Ann Merkel, Dr. David Merkel and Dr. Robert Kasulke - whose lunchtime conversation (and vision!) many years ago became High Peaks Hospice. Also present was Reverend Rick Dennis who served in a variety of capacities within the agency at the beginning and Doris Shatraw - who was the first office volunteer all those years ago and who continues to volunteer in the Saranac Lake office today.

Brian Mann, the Adirondack Bureau Chief at North Country Public Radio, made an impassioned talk about his experience becoming an integral part of Bill Gallagher's final journey, along with his family and High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care. Brian explained how he had always jumped from one story to the next until he had the enlightening and emotionally deep trip with the Gallaghers.

Others told their personal stories as well: Assemblywoman Teresa Sayward spoke of her friend Honey Carpenter's life and final journey with HPH&PC, Martha Gallagher - the Adirondack Harper - told of her experience many years ago when her husband's great aunt moved in with them and their poignant and often humorous experiences with the help of HPH&PC in her final months.

It was a day of reflection on the past and great hope for the future.



Founders Drs. David Merkel and Robert Kasulke.

### HOSPICE IS A GREAT BARGAIN AND ITS NOT GIVING UP!

In the Martinsburg, West Virginia *Journal*, Kathie Campbell, of the Hospice of the Panhandle, argues that hospice is a great bargain, and laments the fact the more people don't use it. She writes, "Americans want a bargain, and hospice is a great bargain. But most people never have hospice because they are afraid that contacting hospice will signify that they are giving up. Yet people who have hospice live longer and have better quality of life than people who never had hospice. And with the Medicare hospice benefit the care is covered 100 percent, and they conserve their financial resources."

She encourages those who might qualify for hospice, or who know someone who might, to call. "There is no obligation to enroll," she says, "and if the person is not yet eligible, at least the groundwork will have been laid."

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## CARPENTER FDN AWARDS HOSPICE \$20,000 GRANT

High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care is pleased to be the recipient of a \$20,000 grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. This grant will fund our Communication and Professional Development Initiative. The purchase of teleconferencing pods, Internet televisions and peripheral equipment, will ensure that staff, who work a rugged 4,600 square mile region caring for the dying, will receive advanced training in hospice and palliative care to keep up with the ever-evolving medical environment without disrupting the continuity of care. We must find a balance between access, quality of care, and financial ability in the most time efficient and fiscally responsible manner. While there are certainly times when travel is required we have found that most conferences, meetings and in-services can be accessed through updated audio-visual technology.

Time saved equals money saved and staff, volunteers and Board of Directors alike will no longer need to drive long distances for training and meetings which can now be conducted on site and connected from multiple locations. Because of the great distance staff must travel, attending meetings can currently mean anywhere between 3 and 4 hours of their day just driving to and from meetings - not including the meeting itself. Consequently 3-4 staff are not available for patient care for a entire day. Additionally, this comes at great expense to the agency in mileage reimbursement.

We are extremely grateful to the Carpenter Foundation for its generosity in providing the funds so that we can offer professional development without disrupting the continuity of care for our patients and their families.

### WORTH NOTING...

This year Petrova and Bloomingdale Schools in Saranac Lake joined the LP Quinn Elementary School in Tupper Lake in fundraising for *High Peaks Hospice Radio Day*.

Each school set out in its own unique way to raise funds for Radio Day. At LP Quinn students of individual classes held raffles, dug into couches and sold pencils (to name just a few!). As always, faculty, families and the Tupper Lake community wholeheartedly supported the students efforts on our behalf.

In Saranac Lake, Principals Josh Dann of Petrova Elementary School and Therese Lindsay of Bloomingdale Elementary School, along with the students and faculty came up with a variety of unique fundraisers. The students efforts were enthusiastically supported by the principals, staff and community.

Collectively the three schools raised close to \$12,000. We thank everyone who participated in and supported these schools - you really DO make a difference!



Jim LaValley with students at LP Quinn School.



### ***Our Mission***

***Dignity, comfort and peace at the end of life.***

High Peaks Hospice and Palliative Care provides end of life care that

listens with respect,

Cares with compassion,

Support with choice,

And comforts with understanding

Wherever you call home.



## Board of Directors

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Margaret Sorenson, RN  
Mary Zellner, RN

## High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc.

### Administrative Office

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### Essex Clinical Office

4322 Main Street  
PO Box 192  
Port Henry NY 12974  
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### Office Hours:

8:00am - 4:00pm  
Monday through Friday

**On call support 24/7**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING...AN UPDATE

### **2011 has been a busy year for High Peaks Hospice and Palliative Care.**

While we have faced a great many challenges and changes in the loss of staff and the ongoing changes in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, we also have much to celebrate this year.

**Celebration...**Our 25th Anniversary Celebration (as seen on page one) was followed by successful 25th Anniversary Fundraising Gatherings in Keene, Westport, Lake Placid and Bolton Landing.



**On the move...**At the end of August, the Tri-Lakes Clinical office moved to 19 Church Street in Saranac Lake. The staff has settled into its new home on the corner of Lake Flower Drive and Church Street. Stop in if you get a chance!

**Expanding Board of Directors...**Recently we welcomed five new members to our Boards of

Directors. The new members are: Ray Agnew, Vice President, Institutional Advancement at Paul Smith's College; Rik Cassidy, a lifelong Lake Placid resident, with years of marketing experience in a variety of media; Tucker Slingerland a physician with Hudson Headwaters Health Network in Warren County; Margaret Sorensen, RN, Chief Nursing Officer at Adirondack Medical Center; and Mary Zellner, RN, Director of Nursing at Heritage Commons Residential Health Care in Ticonderoga. We are excited to bring new energy and experience to the board!

**Partnerships.....**We extend thanks to the many individuals, businesses, organizations and agencies who partnered with us or fundraised on our behalf in the past year. Graymont Materials and Smiths Pro Shop, once again, held a successful and fun Golf Tournament at Tupper Lake Golf Course to benefit our services ...The Lake Placid Sinfonietta partnered with us and raised over \$1,000 for HPH&PC through its efforts this past summer...Mac's Market (Sherman V. Allen) and Hannaford #360 had in store promotions... Nancy Brown held an event in Blue Mountain Lake and raised over \$3,000...The Adirondack H.O.G.S. raised \$1660...the Essex Community Church Women (though men helped out as well!) raised \$1,000 on our behalf as did the Westport Federated Church ...the Adirondack Polo Club Leslie Cup brought in well over \$1,000... And last (most impressive!) was the effort displayed by a group in Raquette Lake who spent a year designing, shooting and selling the *Adirondack Elegant Ladies* calendar which raised over \$6,000! Heartfelt thanks to you all!! Your efforts raised close to \$20,000 that will benefit our patients.

**Fundraising Events...** Let's not forget the many people who helped us by offering their homes, expertise and time to making our 2011 fundraising events such a success. Heartfelt thanks to The Jones Family of Skenewood in Westport, Sam Fisk and Linda Coe in Keene Valley, Tom and Adele Connors in Lake Placid and Norman and Marian Wolgin in Bolton Landing for opening their homes for our summer parties. Thanks also to the committees who helped to make these parties a success. **(continued on next page)**



## HOSPICE AND THE HOUSE OF GRACE

High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care has provided end of life care to over 40 terminally ill individuals over the past few years in the House of Grace in Glens Falls. The House is there for those who are enrolled in hospice care but have no safe place to go. This impassioned letter was written to the House of Grace by an HPH&PC nurse who has had the privilege, in the past year, of providing that care at the House of Grace:

### *A Note from Hospice*

*In the ten months since I became the primary hospice nurse at the House of Grace (House), I have been profoundly humbled by my experiences. I have been struck by the incredible strength and courage that my patients and their families possess, but also by the House staff and volunteers. It is uplifting to witness such selfless acts of kindness, caring, and generosity practiced by the individuals who work tirelessly at the House.*

*Our patients come to the House with their own unique set of circumstances. Whatever the underlying reason, without this house, High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care would not be able to fulfill our mission of support for these patients and families. This mission is a commitment that we strive to honor for everyone who needs us.*

*I am thankful for the very special gift of the House of Grace and the "angels" who devote their time collaborating with me to assure that our patients are receiving the best possible care in this challenging chapter of their life's journey.*

*The ability to touch someone's life in a home away from home is an intangible service that the House of Grace provides...for that I thank the staff, the volunteers, the Board of Directors and the countless people that have supported this facility over the years with their generous donations.*

*Sincerely,*

*Julie Bauer, RN Case Manager  
High Peaks Hospice & Palliative Care*



***National Hospice/Palliative Care Month***... as we near the end of 2011 we also take time to remind you about National Hospice/Palliative Care Month in November. This year's theme is, "We listen, we care." If you know of any agency, club, church or organization that would benefit from learning more about hospice care please give us a call at 518-891-9631 ext 103 and we would be happy to set up a time and date to come speak with you. Help us to spread the word!

***(continued from previous page)***

***Heartfelt*** thanks also go to Camp Dudley - particularly Peg and Davo and everyone at Camp Dudley for their wonderful support of the inaugural *Willie Schmidt Memorial Swim for Hospice*...To The Sweet family for another beautiful and successful *Claire Sweet Memorial Golf Tournament*...Everyone who volunteered and pledged during this years *Radio Day* - with special thanks going to Rick Knapton and Ted Morgan (and crew!) from Mountain Communications...Let's not forget those who helped out at *PawzPower* in Lake Placid, the *Tri-lakes Motorcycle Rally* and the *5K Walk/Run for Hospice* in Warrensburg.

*Your combined efforts, and the support of the participants brought in over \$100,000! Thank you!*