

The Chaplaincy



WINTER 2014

PURPOSE

Living out God's call to comprehensively ease suffering—body, mind and spirit; during a crisis; when ill; at life's end or following a loss—with acts of compassion.

VISION

The Chaplaincy is a recognized source of compassionate, impeccable, and spiritually-rooted care during times of crisis, grief, healing, and at the end of life.

MISSION

Serving others with impeccable spiritual, emotional and physical care.

A Wonderful Final Chapter

by Nicole Austin,
presented at the *Lighting the Path Breakfast*, Nov. 5, 2014

I've had the opportunity to attend the Lighting the Path Breakfast as a guest in years past but never would I have imagined that I would be speaking about my own experience with The Chaplaincy. Having said that, I'm honored to share a bit of my story and how the Chaplaincy has helped our family.

Two years ago, our son Matthew, who was 9 at the time, was diagnosed with a terminal form of brain cancer. The neurosurgeon who gave us his diagnosis had tears in his eyes as he said "80% of the children with this diagnosis die within 12 months. The other 20% might make it to 18 months."

The 10 months after Matthew's diagnosis passed as uneventfully as they could for our family. After spending seven weeks in Seattle while Matthew completed his course of radiation to his brain, we returned home and got back to living our lives. Matthew returned to 4th grade, played basketball, baseball, skied, swam, rock climbed, roller skated, bowled, traveled, tortured his sister and spent time with his friends.

Matthew's tumor remained stable for 10 wonderful months. However, as his tumor progressed, Matthew began to understand the difficult truth that it would likely take his life. We told Matthew that when he was in



Nicole Austin and her son, Matthew

Heaven, it would be like a sleepover. When you go to a sleepover, we don't see each other, but we're still a family. We still love each other and think about each other, we just can't see each other. We told him that's what Heaven would be like. He was going to go to the best sleep over ever. And even though we won't see each other, we'll always be a family.

As we continued to care for Matthew at home, cancer took his abilities one by one. He lost his ability to walk, stand, sit, eat, swallow, speak and communicate with us. He slept nearly all day.

Even in the end of his life, Matthew continued to make us laugh. His right arm became constricted as a result of his tumor growing. Because he had lost his ability to speak, we were communicating by hand squeezes. Steve grabbed Matthew's right hand one day and said "Matthew, squeeze my hand if your head hurts." Steve waited for the squeeze. He repeated himself, "Matthew, squeeze my hand if your head hurts." Then, in slow motion, Matthew

continued on page 2



A Wonderful Final Chapter *continued from page 1*

raised his LEFT hand, put it on top of Steve's hand and squeezed. I think if Matthew could have spoken then, he would have said "seriously dad?"

When our hospice team, including our nurse Cleo, walked through the door that first time, I felt an immediate sense of relief. We had an instant rapport with Cleo. It felt like an old friend coming over to visit. She calmly explained the changes that were taking place with Matthew and what we could expect to happen at each step of the way. She not only took care of Matthew, but she took care of us. She always made time to talk with us, hold our hands and was a wonderful shoulder to cry on. I think of Cleo as the angel of calm in our home during those weeks.

It's easy to forget when everyone is so focused on Matthew that our daughter Megan was going through an unimaginable time as well. Our Chaplain Craig and Social Worker Heather were a wonderful resource for Megan during that time. I remember a day that they came over to meet with Megan. They played a game in which you got Skittles candy each time you talked about a particular feeling. It didn't take Megan long to figure out that the more you talk about your feelings, the more candy you got. Needless to say, she really wanted Craig and Heather to come back and talk about feelings.

The day that Matthew died, we knew that his time here was coming to an end. We had talked with Cleo earlier in the day and agreed that unless anything worsened, she'd come by later in the afternoon to check in. Cleo had a feeling that she should come earlier in the day, and she did so unannounced. At that exact time, Matthew's breathing changed and not even five minutes after Cleo arrived Matthew died in our arms. I know in my heart that Matthew waited for our angel of calm to arrive before he took that last breath. When I look back on those last moments, I'm so thankful that Cleo was there. I can remember looking at her during the last minute or so of Matthew's life. She gave me a gentle nod as if to say, "yes, this is it...it's ok, you can do this." I don't think I could have remained as calm and present in that moment for Matthew if she weren't there.

Without the Chaplaincy, we couldn't have given Matthew the quality of life he had in his last weeks. We were able to keep him comfortable—at home, with his family, his sweet dog who never left his side and

**Steve and
Nicole Austin
with daughter
Megan and
son Matthew**



surrounded by the things that he loved. We will never be able to adequately thank The Chaplaincy for what they have given our family.

Our relationship with The Chaplaincy didn't end when Matthew died. They continue to support us one year later. Our daughter has attended Cork's Place since Matthew's death. Cork's Place is a children's grief group where kids her age come together, bonded by a significant loss in their lives. It's a place where Megan isn't the only person whose lost someone close to her and other kids around her understand what that's like.

Megan isn't the only one in our family who has benefited from Cork's Place. While the children do their thing, the parents meet upstairs and have an opportunity to talk about how our children are coping with grief. And even though the person sitting next to me may not have lost a child, there are still amazing similarities to our losses that we can support each other through.

I'm forever grateful to The Chaplaincy for the support, caring and love that they've shown our family. Losing Matthew has been the hardest thing I've ever experienced. I also think of it as a sacred honor to have been able to be present for his entire life, from his first breath to his last. There is also a wonderful peace that comes with knowing that we gave him a wonderful final chapter to his journey. 🕊

Lighting the Path Breakfast



The Chaplaincy gives thanks to our table hosts, guests and sponsors for attending our annual "Lighting the Path" breakfast benefit.

— Table Hosts —

Bev Abersfeller
Tom Adams
Nikki & Steve Austin
Tom Becraft
Nan Benecke
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Wendy Bennett
Heather Breymeyer
David Brockman, Kurion
Sandra Brown
Larry Bruggeman
Steve Buckingham,
West Highlands Missions Team
Sue Caruso, Banner Bank
Gary Castillo
Stephanie Castleberry
Paula Clark
Al Cordova,
Tri-Cities Community Health
Lois Dahmen
Carol Darley Dow
John & JoAnn Deichman

Merrienne Door
Jim & Kathy Dyson
Karee Eliason, Edward Jones
Heather Filbin
Paul Fiorini
Penny Gardner
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Dave Guyll, Conover
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Give the Gift of Compassion, Care & Support

When you support The Chaplaincy you are doing more than supporting another non-profit agency. You are turning your generosity into gifts of compassion, care and support for a friend, neighbor or loved one.

Please consider making a gift to The Chaplaincy so that we can continue serving people in our community when they need it most by providing hospice care, palliative care, grief support and chaplain services. Use the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.tricitieschaplaincy.org.

DONATE TODAY



Grief Support Groups . . . open to the public

Hope for the Holidays Grief Classes

We understand that the loss of a loved one is difficult any time of year but it can be especially hard during the holidays. If you are grieving a loss, please join us for this free class to help you deal with the stress, loneliness and confusion of the holiday season.

Choose from one of four sessions:

Saturday, Dec. 6 Noon–2 pm

Wednesday, Dec. 10 Noon–2 pm or 6:30–8:30 pm

Registration is required. Please call (509) 783-6243.

• Understanding Grief: An Introduction

This one-time session is open to adults experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one. *Call Wanda at 783-6243 for dates, information or to register.*

• Young Adult Grief Support

This 12-week series for young adults 18–30 who have experienced the death of a relative or friend. *Call 783-7416 for more information.*

• Survivors of Suicide

SOS helps people adjust after a loved one dies by suicide. *Please call 783-6245 for more information or to register.*

• Cork's Place for Grieving Children & Teens

Sessions specifically for ages 3–18 years. Ongoing groups meet regularly during the school year. *Call Heather Babler 783-7416, ext. 3000, for information & fees, to schedule a tour, or to pre-register a child.*

• Coming to Terms with Loss

Open to adults experiencing grief due to the death of a loved one. This group is educational as well as supportive. *Call 783-6245 for more information or to register.*

• Widowed Support Group

Widows, widowers and partners who have lost a loved one will discuss topics centered on role changes and transitions. *Call 783-6245 for more information or to register.*



SEW-Q Auction to Benefit Hospice at The Chaplaincy

*March 14, 2015, 2:00pm
Southridge Sports Center, Kennewick*

SEW-Q (Southeastern WA Quilters)

will hold its Annual Fundraising Auction March 14, 2014 at 2 PM in conjunction with the Tri-Cities Antique Show being held this year at the Southridge Sports Center, 2901 Southridge Blvd in Kennewick. Preview starts Friday evening at 4 PM to 8 pm and Saturday 9 AM to 1 PM. There is everything from traditional to modern quilts. The auction also includes smaller items such as table runners or wall hangings. Our Raffle Quilt drawing will be held right after the auction. Tickets will be available during the preview for \$1 ea. 25%+ of everything raised goes to Hospice at The Chaplaincy.

For more info about SEW-Q, go to www.sewq.org.



Little Things Can Help a Lot!

An easy way to contribute to the great work at The Chaplaincy is by donating items from our wish lists. . .

Hospice Wish List

- Books for volunteers, patients and families:
Final Gifts *The Four Things That Matter Most*
A Virtuous Woman *The American Book of Dying*
Gift cards to Barnes & Noble or Amazon are also helpful.
- Small white/dry erase boards (9 x 12 or similar size)
- Bags with handles for families to take belongings home in
- Gift cards (Michael's, Craft Warehouse) for stepping stone kits and craft supplies for patients to make memories with their grandchildren and children
- Battery-powered candles
- Small wall clocks for rooms in the hospice house
- Baby monitors (Safety First Crystal Clear Monitors)



Cork's Place Wish List

- Painting canvases
- Child-sized dress up clothing
- Various child sizes of new/packaged socks
- Gift cards for art supplies (Joann's, Hobby Lobby, or Craft Warehouse)
- Laundry soap
- Air compressor/pump
- Gift cards for books at Barnes & Noble, Amazon
- Visa gift cards to buy grief resources from The Dougy Center for families and the community



Bereavement Support Groups Wish List (Please identify the donation as being for Bereavement)

- Beads, ½"–1" in size with unique colors and shapes for Affirmation Jewelry (example: This bead reminds me of your gift of listening.)
- Fiber filling (stuffing) for Memory Bears
- Scrapbooking stickers and theme sticker packets
- Gift cards for art supplies to be used in Bereavement Support Groups (JoAnn's, Craft Warehouse)
- Gift cards for books at Barnes and Noble and Amazon to be used in Bereavement Support Groups



Hospice Kitchen Wish List

- Mandarin oranges (canned or individual servings)
- Fruit cocktail
- Canned diced tomatoes
- Creamy Peanut Butter
- Chicken or beef broth (liquid only, no cubes)
- Walnuts (shelled)
- Bottled apple, grape or cranapple juice (2 qt size)
- Coffee (regular or decaf)
- Individual liquid French Vanilla and CoffeeMate creamers
- Regular sugar packets
- Individually wrapped herbal tea bags (single serve)
- Canned soup (cream of chicken, tomato, vegetable beef, chicken noodle)
- Dry navy beans
- Canned chicken (Kirkland brand) and roast beef
- Canned tuna (albacore preferred)
- Jell-O (individual cups or dry powder)
- Single-serve snack packs (i.e., peanuts, almonds, cashews, granola bars, Ritz crackers, trail mix, Nutri-Grain Bars, etc.)
- Hot cocoa (regular in packets)
- Spiced apple cider (in packets)
- Flour (5 lb), sugar (5 lb) and brown sugar
- Plastic spoons (heavy duty)
- Toilet paper (individual rolls, must be wrapped)
- Paper towels
- Lysol or Clorox wipes
- Zip-Lock bags (quart and gallon)
- Hypo-allergenic liquid laundry detergent for high efficiency (HE) washer
- Stainless steel tea kettle
- Gift cards for perishable foods, dairy products and meats



(Please refrain from donating low fat, fat free, sugar-free or "lite," low sodium items or dried, prepared foods, i.e. mac 'n cheese, instant potatoes.)



GIFTS RECEIVED IN LOVING MEMORY & IN

August 15, 2014 – November 4, 2014

All gifts received from the
"Lighting the Path" Breakfast will be
listed in the Spring 2015 Newsletter.

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Lee Speer
Henry Stevens

For your convenience, memorials and donations may be made on our secure website:

www.tricitieschaplaincy.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Volunteers to sing or play music with patients (all talent levels encouraged to apply).
- A licensed hair stylist to provide services in patient homes.
- Hospice House volunteers to work all shifts including weekends and evenings. Assist Hospice House staff and spend quality time with patients.
- Companions to visit with patients living in their own homes or care facilities.
- Cork's Place Volunteers to work with grieving children.
- RNs currently licensed in WA State to visit patients in residences or to make monthly check in calls to patients and families.
- Administrative volunteers to support Cork's Place and Community Palliative Care program.

Additional Volunteer Needs

- Newer model Digital Camera
- Gift Cards to Joann's Fabrics and WinCo

Please contact Volunteer Coordinators at 783-7416 to begin the volunteer application and training process.



1480 Fowler St • Richland, WA 99352

Phone 509-783-7416

Fax 509-735-7850

www.tricitieschaplaincy.org

*Hospice Care • Palliative Care
Chaplain Services • Grief Support
Clinical Pastoral Education*

Please Help

If you wish to change, delete, add names or
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(509) 783-7416 or email info@tricitieschaplaincy.org.

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Year End & Gratitude

*As this year draws to its end,
We give thanks for the gifts it brought
And how they became inlaid within
Where neither time nor tide can touch them.*

*We bless this year for all we learned,
For all we loved and lost
And for the quiet way it brought us
Nearer to our invisible destination.*

An excerpt from the blessing "At the End of the Year" by John O'Donohue