

The BRH Volunteer Newsletter

October 2025



Our Volunteer Alek Borkowski sharing his amazing piano playing talent with the folks at Brookdale. Thank you Alek!!!

Reminders and Need to know info:

- If you would like to take a patient outside in nice weather this fall, when weather permits please notify a facility staff member prior to taking them out.
- Reminder that visits should be made on a **weekly basis** to build relationship and to be compliant with the guidelines for hospice volunteer visits. If you are unable to make weekly visits, please let Karen know. Thank you
- To reach Karen 508-945-1611 ext 382
karensangler@broadreachhealth.org
- **Karen's hours:** Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 8am-4pm. (note Mon and Wed working remotely). Day off is Thursday
- **When filling out report forms, please be sure they are signed, dated correctly, in BLACK ink and on clean paper as they are scanned into patient's charts.**
- Blank volunteer **report forms** are available by either stopping at the office, or by email
- Reminder to please wear your **ID badge** when you visit. If you need a new one, please let Karen know

A Note from Karen:

This happens every year....fall comes with cooler temps, shorter days and we all ask "How did the summer go by so fast?". Of course, by Christmas we'll probably be asking the same question about this fall!!!! It does make me think that although time does go by sooo fast lately, we need to raise up and cherish the significant moments.

Our hospice work provides us with those moments, times when our hearts are full and we walk away from a visit thinking... *wow that was meaningful for myself and the patient.*

Even though I don't make nearly the number of visits that you all do, I've had several of those **wow moments** in recent weeks. Watching and listening to Alek, our volunteer piano player play for our 98 year old patient who was an accomplished piano teacher, presenting a Reflections Book that Georgia made to a patient and their eyes light up, and when I'm with any of you at a visit watching the way patients react to your smiles and presence. Pure Joy! As well, on the top of those **wow moments** is when one of our clinical staff comments that a volunteer went beyond the call and how they witnessed the way the volunteer enhanced the quality of life of their patient.

Yes folks, these are the times that I overflow with pride that I serve as Volunteer Coordinator at Broad Reach. What an honor to work with such an amazing team of compassionate volunteers who every day extend themselves to provide companionship and support. Special thanks to those who volunteered this summer and have returned to homes or college campuses.

Gratefulness abounds, from myself but also from ALL the staff at BRH. What a gift!

Much love, Karen



In August and September we welcomed these new volunteers:

Amy Burke – Amy will be seeing patients at both Harborpoint and The Terraces

Nancy Vogler – Nancy will be seeing patients at Liberty Commons

Two more volunteers are in the onboarding/ training process and will be officially joining the team soon

Skyler Callahan – Skyler will be seeing patients at Maplewood Brewster

Martha Longley – Martha will be seeing folks in Harwich/ Brewster area

Welcome all and thank you for your interest in hospice work!

Covid, RSV, Flu - Here it comes!!

As many of you are aware we have already been seeing that Covid is rearing its ugly face again for patients in their own homes as well in facilities. I will continue to do my best to communicate with all of you when precautions are in effect for a patient you are seeing. Please check notices at the facilities you go to. Masks are always available, please use them if you choose.

FLU SHOTS

Again, for your protection, Broad Reach policies require that staff and volunteers receive flu shots each year. Please send me documentation or an email telling me that you received your shot during coming months.

Together we will do our best to keep everyone healthy this fall and winter!!



Visit Report Forms

Thank you for getting report forms to the office in a timely fashion.

- ♥ Karen is more than happy to meet you at facility or wherever to pick up... I'll treat to coffee!!!!
- ♥ Reminder to fill out one form for each patient, we scan these reports into each patient file
- ♥ Black ink is needed for the reports! Thank you Everyone!!!

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### YOU SHOWED UP!!!

Those words are used often when we talk about the role of a hospice volunteer. You made a choice to share your time, talent and compassion with those who are journeying to end of life. Everytime you "show up" and spend time with a patient you are providing a gift. We all know that some visits are interactive, animated and we walk away feeling very confident that we brought healthy social companionship to the person. Other times the visits are quiet, non-interactive and feel much different. Below are some definitions (albeit..thank you google!) for the words we use to define what those visits mean.



**Compassionate presence** - Compassionate presence means being fully, attentively, and non-judgmentally present with another person in a way that communicates care, support, and understanding, allowing them to feel less alone and more connected during times of suffering or vulnerability. It is a gift of oneself, involving deep listening, warmth, openness, and a willingness to simply "be" with someone, rather than trying to fix or change their situation.

**Supportive presence** - A supportive presence is being emotionally and physically available for someone, offering nonjudgmental listening, empathy, and reassurance without trying to fix their problems. It means validating their feelings, communicating care, and ensuring they feel seen, heard, and valued, especially during difficult times

**Companionable silence** - Companionable silence refers to a comfortable, peaceful quiet shared between people who have a strong sense of mutual understanding and connection, where words are not needed to enjoy each other's presence or a shared activity. It conveys a deep level of friendship and ease, allowing for quiet contentment and the ability to simply "be" together without the need for constant conversation or interaction.

**\*\* feel free to use these terms in your reports!\*\*\***

## Best Hospice Volunteer tool EVER!!!



You all know how passionate I am about the use of music with end of life care. We all have witnessed profound responses from patients when a familiar song is played. Perhaps it is singing along, or maybe just a change in facial expression, sometimes their feet start tapping and hands start moving to the beat. In my research I have learned that music has an effect both emotionally, mentally and physically.

### Physical Effects Include:

- Decreased Heart Rate
- Reduced Blood Pressure
  - Decreased Pain
- Symptom Management
- Limited range of motion

### Emotional Effects Include:

- Emotional Release
- Instigate Life Review
  - Reduce Anxiety
  - Aid for depression
- Increased feelings of purpose/ meaning of life
  - Religious music facilitates expression of faith
- Hearing familiar hymns stimulate long term memory

"Music became my bridge between inner searching and outer expression. I sought peace, faith and a meaning writing songs that weren't just for the charts but for the soul, for people to carry through life's journey" **Cat Stevens**

"Music is indeed the most beautiful of all Heaven's gifts to humanity wandering in the darkness. Alone it calms, enlightens, and stills our souls." **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

"Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life" **Beethoven**

***In the office I have several old CD's (okay granted that's an outdated term!!) and a boom box!! Feel free to use your own devices to play music for our folks.***