



# *Volunteers*

**American Home Hospice**

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## Hospice Volunteers

The hospice concept and movement has grown out of the commitment and vision of thousands of volunteers. From the beginning, and still today, volunteers are at the heart of hospice.

Traditionally, volunteers have been the backbone of the hospice movement and are still an indispensable part of any hospice program. Even the federal government recognizes the importance of volunteers in the delivery of hospice care by requiring that Medicare-approved hospices utilize volunteers from their community. Nationally, about 100,000 people serve as hospice volunteers and give millions of hours of their time to serve terminally ill patients and their families.

Volunteers serve as a member of the hospice team by sharing skills and interests in a manner that provides comfort and enriches the quality of life for those served. Volunteers serve on a regularly scheduled basis and provide the following:

- Support services - companionship, friendly visiting, active listening, bedside sitting, letter writing.
- Sharing hobbies and special interests -- reading, gardening, listening to music, sports, travel, crafts, etc.
- Assisting with errands - grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions and supplies, banking.
- Transport patient/family - appointments, shopping, social outings.
- Homemaking tasks - light housekeeping, dishes, laundry, meal preparation, child care.

No task is too big or too small for a hospice volunteer, but often the most important thing you can do is just "be there" for patients to reassure them they are not alone, to hold a hand, to offer a smile, or to just listen. It is not easy work, but the personal rewards are enormous. The strength and courage of patients provide a constant source of inspiration, and volunteers usually feel they gain more than they have been able to give.

Other volunteer opportunities include providing help with special projects, mailings, reception, clerical support or working with special events such as memorial services and fund raising events. Trained volunteers can assist with community education and public speaking.

Some volunteers choose to share their professional expertise by serving in advisory capacities, as a member of the hospice's board of directors or on other board committees.

Hospice volunteers often express their work with patients and families as a blessing. The inner knowledge and satisfaction a volunteer receives from knowing they've made a real difference in the life of a patient or family is what makes being a hospice volunteer special. To be invited into the last months, weeks, and days of a person's life is an honor and a privilege.

If you have recently lost a loved one, it is recommended that you wait at least one year before becoming a hospice volunteer.

For more information or to become a hospice volunteer call  
**972-524-3800**