



For Immediate Release

Contact: Mary Ann Sabo
Sabo Public Relations, 616.485.1432

or

Kristin Lynn
Sabo Public Relations, 248.709.1405
kristin@sabo-pr.com

Hospice of Michigan Seeks Companion Pet Volunteers

Muskegon, Michigan, November 9, 2015 – Hospice of Michigan is seeking volunteers with companion pets in Muskegon and Ottawa Counties to help provide comfort to patients.

“Many patients used to have pets, but now that they can no longer care for one, interacting with a dog, cat or even a bunny fills a void for them,” said Claire Fisher, HOM volunteer program manager. “Companion pets can help bring out feelings of happiness – which often allows a patient to open up to volunteer and build a relationship.

“There are also several well-established health benefits of pets, including boosting one’s immune system, decreasing feelings of anxiety and increasing verbal and non-verbal communication.”

Fisher explains while companion pets don’t need to be certified therapy animals, they must be at least 1-year-old and current on vaccinations. The pet will be “interviewed” by HOM to ensure it has a good demeanor, enjoys being around people, is comfortable with strangers and likes being touched.

Companion pets must be accompanied by a volunteer who has completed HOM’s orientation program, which helps prospective volunteers learn more about the organization, the principles of hospice, the grieving process and how to help patients, their families and HOM staff.

If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities for Hospice of Michigan or to sign up as a volunteer, visit <https://www.hom.org/get-involved/> or contact Fisher at 616.356.5233 or cfisher@hom.org.

For those who have experienced a loss, HOM encourages a waiting period of one year before becoming a volunteer to allow for the processing of grief.

About Hospice of Michigan

A nationally recognized leader in end-of-life care, Hospice of Michigan is the original – and largest – hospice in the state. The nonprofit cares for more than 1,700 patients each day, raising more than \$4 million each year to cover the cost of care for the uninsured and underinsured. HOM offers a broad range of services to enhance the quality of life at the end of life, including At Home Support™, our advanced illness management program, community-based palliative care and pediatric care programs. HOM provides grief support and counseling, caregiver education and support, and education programs for physicians and healthcare professionals through its research, training and education arm, the Hospice of Michigan Institute. For more information, call 888.247.5701 or visit www.hom.org.

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