



For Immediate Release

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Hospice of Michigan Seeks Volunteers in Traverse City

Traverse City, Michigan, November 5, 2015 – Hospice of Michigan, the largest nonprofit hospice and palliative care organization in Michigan, is seeking volunteers to help support patient care.

While opportunities for an HOM volunteer are virtually limitless, some of the organization's more specific and immediate needs include care by:

- Professional and licensed massage therapists, hairstylists and manicurists
- Art and music therapists
- Bedside companions able to talk, watch TV or play games with patients
- Sitting vigil, a special program that ensures no patient dies alone
- Veterans willing to connect with others through the organization's We Honor Veterans program

Traverse City resident Kay Serratelli estimates she has provided companionship support to more than three-dozen patients since she began volunteering for Hospice of Michigan seven years ago. As one of the organization's "seasoned" volunteers and a self-professed "good talker," she regularly sits with patients, talking or playing cards or watching television.

Serratelli recalled her very first patient, a 98-year-old woman who loved to play a card game called Skip-bo and always wanted to win. On one of her visits, they played hand after hand for nearly two hours until the patient finally left the table a winner.

"It may sound a little corny, but if you really do believe you should try and make the world a better place, you should try and do something nice every single day," Serratelli explained. "If you go and see a patient and they smile and talk with you for as little as 20 minutes a day, it makes them have a better day. If I made a contribution to someone have a better day, then bingo, I've hit my goal.

"When I tell people I volunteer for Hospice of Michigan and do this and that for the organization, there's a gasp and people ask, 'How can you do that? I would never be able to do that – it would be so depressing.'

"But it's not depressing if you're trying to make it better for individuals. It's much more depressing to think they are staring at the four walls all by themselves. If you can help these people in their final stages of life to have a better day, then you're a better person for it."

Amanda Fleming, volunteer program coordinator at HOM, couldn't agree more.

“Volunteers are an integral part of a hospice team, helping to provide comfort at the end of life,” she said. “We are particularly looking for volunteers who can provide important touches of grace to our patients, such as the beauty of music and art, the comfort of a new hairstyle or the companionship of a pet.”

Prospective volunteers will be asked to go through a training course where they learn more about HOM, the principles of hospice, the grieving process and how to help patients, families and staff. If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities with Hospice of Michigan or to sign up as a volunteer, visit <https://www.hom.org/get-involved/> or contact Fleming at 989.358.4293 or afleming@hom.org.

For those who have experienced a loss, HOM encourages a waiting period of one year before becoming a volunteer in order 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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