

Newsletter - Issue 19 - Spring Summer 2010

BAD WEATHER



Photo: F. Wilson

During the bad weather in late December and January Hospice at Home continued to provide day and night nursing care in patients' homes.

The challenges that the staff faced included extreme temperatures of up to -12 degrees. Thermal vests and leg warmers were in order.

The Hospice at Home nursing office team relied on the clinical nursing staff to give weather updates making sure we were aware of the most difficult areas to get to. It was not only rural areas that proved difficult but even housing estates and patients drives and then it was as if hills appeared from nowhere. Inevitably this lead to journey times to patients taking longer than in normal conditions when a journey can take from 45min to 1hr.

All this meant that good communication was essential between the Hospice at Home nursing office, our day and night nursing staff and the District Nursing teams.

Providing night care had its particular challenges for the staff having conquered arriving at the patient's home for 10pm, they would have the anxiety, concern and anticipation there, could there be more falls of snow by 7am

in the morning. Even if there wasn't more snow there would be hard frost making the roads like an ice rink. Come the morning the nurses would have to wrap themselves up de ice their cars and sometimes use their shovels to dig themselves out of driveways.

Carers and our patients were on occasions feeling very isolated by the weather, it meant some carers were reluctant to go out for fear of injuring themselves and therefore be unable to support and care for their family member. These issues impacted on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of all concerned.

The patients and their families were fantastic and always showed concern about the safety of our staff. There were occasions when family members would contact the nursing office and offer to cancel care due to the road conditions and were more than prepared to manage to care rather than put the member of staff at unnecessary risk.

The Hospice at Home staff felt supported by the community even at these difficult times and we even had an offer of a 4x4 vehicle.

Doris Hughes RGN
Team Leader, Clinical Services



Photo: F. Wilson

Chairman's Comments



Ph: Chesworth Press Agency

I would like to take the opportunity of using this column to give thanks for what has been achieved in the last few months and welcome some of the changes which I know will stand us in good stead for the future.

We are all aware of the problems created by the weather this autumn and winter, record rainfall, flooding and unexpected snow and ice. It is great credit to Fiona Stobart, our Clinical Services Manager, and her nursing team that in spite of all these problems they managed to get through to virtually all patients in this period. We thank them for their dedication under difficult circumstances.

Our Charity shop in Little Dockray, Penrith has been rejuvenated by a hardworking team of Donna Rae, Annie Binny and led by Isobel Burch. We have received support from local businesses in completing the shop's makeover which is most appreciated, and the day to day running of the unit is now done entirely by volunteers. The Charity could not operate without our volunteers, and I know that the shop team would welcome any new volunteers who would like to join them.

Our office team has also been hard at work behind the scenes. Sheila Thompson, our Charity Director, has provided a lead in all directions in the office which has ensured the smooth running of the day to day business of the Charity. Katarzyna Gajewska, our Office Manager, has done a superb job restyling and relaunching our website, www.hospiceathome.co.uk. If you

haven't had an opportunity of viewing it yet, please do so. There is still work to be done, but it is an ideal way of getting up to date information about the Charity and all that we do. Caroline Addison, who had been our Charity Fundraiser for just over three years, has now left to project manage a large extension to the family home. We are very grateful for all she did for Fundraising during her time with us and she has given us many foundations to build upon. Julie Allen, who worked alongside Caroline has now been appointed as Charity Fundraiser and she is supported by Cath Wheeler our new Fundraising Assistant/Administrator. They have a growing team of volunteer fundraisers who are to be commended for all that they do to raise much needed funds.

Trevor Hebdon, as Lead Trustee for our Business Partners scheme, has, together with Sheila Thompson, enlisted the support, financial and otherwise, from 21 local businesses. We welcome them also to our team. Full details of these important players can be seen on the website.

All of our activities at all levels are supported by our Trustees and I am conscious in writing these notes that two words are much repeated - "Team" and "Support".

It is only by working as a team that we can continue as a local Charity to provide the much needed and appreciated support for our patients.

Michael Pearson

A blue ink signature of Michael Pearson.

Chairman

CHANGES TO THE STAFF TEAM



We were sad to say goodbye to Caroline Addison in February. Caroline worked as Fundraiser for the Charity since October 2006 and will be sadly missed by all at Hospice at Home. We wish Caroline well in her future endeavors. Julie Allen who has worked alongside Caroline for almost two years has moved to the role of Fundraiser and is looking forward to the new challenge. Cath Wheeler joins the team as Fundraising Assistant/Administrator. Cath will be assisting Julie and providing administrative support.