

PALLIATIVE AND COMFORT CARE UNIT ANNUAL VOLUNTEER REPORT

June, 2012 - May 31, 2013

July, 27, 2012

Congressman Spencer Bachus introduced the Patient Centered Quality of Life Act which is designed to enhance the awareness and coordination of palliative care, which helps patients with serious illnesses manage pain and other symptoms. This bill was also endorsed by the American Cancer Society. He stated that UAB serves as a national model for palliative care education.

August 15, 2012

Congressman Bachus made an official visit to UAB. His tour included the Palliative and Comfort Care Unit.

September 20, 2012

Fifteen volunteers attended a lunch and learn program which featured a presentation by Claire Peel of Hand In Paw. PCCU patients now receive 3 pet therapy visits per week. Also in attendance were six members of Team Kathy. They provide special services to patients and families in response to a request from Social Worker, Amy McAfee. Special services have included flowers and refreshments on events such as the Chaplain blessing relationships, anniversaries, birthdays, and celebrating holidays "early". It was noted that Team Kathy members cover the expenses from their personal funds.

September 27, 2012

Kay Argo, the leader for Team Kathy was notified that the Auxiliary Executive Board had approved a gift of \$1,000.00 for the use of Team Kathy. Receipts are to be submitted to Auxiliary Treasurer, Mike Gibbs for reimbursement.

November

During the first week, volunteers assisted the UAB Family Support Coordinator by placing special booklets related to grief and the holidays into envelopes addressed to families who have lost a loved one during the past year.

November 8

The annual Palliative Care Conference was held in the Margaret Cameron Spain Auditorium. Medical personnel in attendance represented the intensive care units, oncology units, transplant units, and the palliative care unit.

Palliative Care is defined as the comprehensive management of the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs of patients, especially those with incurable, progressive illness. The goal of palliative care is to help patients achieve the best quality of life through the relief of suffering and control of symptoms, while remaining sensitive to personal, cultural, and religious values.

The Conference included presentations on: Spiritual Care, Pain Management, and Organ and Tissue Donation as related to the palliative care setting; a panel discussion representing the

Interdisciplinary Team that provides care on the Unit; and a role-playing dramatization which revealed ethical issues at the end of life.

November 15, 2012

Volunteers and staff gathered for the annual Holiday Pot Luck luncheon – each volunteer received a jar of homemade chocolate sauce as an appreciation gift. After the meal, volunteers decorated the Christmas tree and placed wreaths throughout the Unit.

December 5 - Dr. Tucker visited the American Cancer Society Joe Lee Griffin Hope Lodge

In mid-December, Team Kathy brought a small Christmas tree to a patient who was being discharged to her home where she had no holiday decorations. The staff reported this gift brought great joy to the patient.

On Christmas Eve, Team Kathy brought a pot of chili, all of the fixins, and fruit to the family dining room. Each patient received a Christmas blanket/throw.

January, 2013

The Palliative Care Team of the UAB Supportive and Survivorship Clinic is reaching out to the cancer patients who reside at the American cancer Society Joe Lee Griffin Hope Lodge. Team Members, including Dr. Kay Knowlton (Psychologist/Counselor); Dr. Ashley Nichols; Dr. Elizabeth Kvale; Lizzy Bohorfoush (physical therapist); Nicole Morris (Massage Therapist); and Kelsey Blankenship (Chaplain) have volunteered to speak to the patients following special dinners provided by the Young Supporters of the Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dinners are scheduled for: Jan. 16, March 13, May 29, September 18, and November 27. This is an extraordinary effort by the Team to bring information about the Clinic to patients who can benefit from the Clinic services.

February 14, 2013

Team Kathy members brought treats for the families on the Unit. One member baked cookies with her children and brought them to the Unit. Another made angels for each of the patients. A pasta dinner from Taziki's for 25 persons was delivered.

March 2013

First annual Conference for Palliative Care and Social Workers was held in New Orleans; next year's conference will be held on or about March 12 in San Diego.

April 25, 2013

Team Kathy brought dinner from Taziki's for 30 persons!

May 21, 2013

The Annual Fellowship and Education Reception honoring contributors to the Palliative Care Fellowship and Education Funds was held at the National Alumni Society House. It was my pleasure to meet the new fellows selected for training in Palliative Medicine.

May 30, 2013

Planning meeting with PCCU Social Worker - the Unit has a "Wish List " :

1. To give each family a gift when their loved one arrives on the Unit. This small "basket" should contain items such as: a note pad and pen; hard candies; new wash cloth; small package of Kleenex; stuffed animal; wind chime for IV pole; word search book; inspirational plaque, sippy cup; box of wipes . These would be needed on an ongoing basis. These baskets need to be wrapped in shrink wrap and tied with a ribbon.
2. More paperback books for the library- Auxiliary Used Book Sale - July 18
3. A Memory stone to give family when they leave the Unit; www.inspirationstones.com is the source for pocket stones.
4. Train our volunteers in the volunteer model "No One Alone" which was outlined by Dr. Ira Byock at the March Palliative Care and Social Worker conference . This could be the topic for our fall Lunch and Learn. Possible speakers are Dr. Barrett and Dr. Colin Wozencraft. Preparing welcome baskets could be suggested as a project for volunteers.
5. Continue financial support for Team Kathy.
6. Print the sympathy cards and remembrance cards sent to families on former patients' birthdays, Father's Day, and Mother's Day. Suggested method: use Word documents- set margins- print on in-house computer.

Fifteen volunteers have contributed over 450 hours on the Palliative and Comfort Care Unit.

Below is my interview with a dedicated volunteer who served faithfully on the Unit this year.

Question: What do you do on a typical day on the Palliative and Comfort Care Unit?

Volunteer: Check the Family Room to see if it needs to be straightened up; check the Family Dining Room to see if the snack supply needs to be restocked

Check in with the Patient Care Coordinator and/or the Social Worker to learn which families would enjoy a friendly visit

Question: What is a "friendly visit"?

Volunteer: My goal is to make the family and/or patient more comfortable. To accomplish this, I prepare a basket of snacks which I take when I enter a patient's room. Activities may include : conversation, offering to turn on the in-room music; writing a letter for the patient; reading to the patient (whatever the patient requests); pushing a wheel chair if patient wants to go to patio; and offering to bring sherbet from freezer. I inform families that the Art Station is available and contains supplies if someone wants to make a card or picture .

Other activities include helping the staff by taking inventory in the supply closet and clerical duties such as writing bereavement notes to families of former patients.

Thank you.

Report Submitted: June 8, 2013

Carol Hunter, Volunteer