

Hope Hospice

"If he's a hospice patient, how come he's mowing his yard?" an observer may wonder.

The answer, according to the Patient Care Guide of Hope Hospice in Rochester, is this:

"Hospice is end of life care, not the end of living."

Executive Director Dan Purkey is a firm believer of getting his patients active. "We want our patients out of the house," he declared. Hope Hospice was a dream fulfilled by Dan's mother, Sarah Purkey, a registered nurse, and aided by her husband Ronald, an ordained minister. Their son, the present executive director, said his mom felt that dying in a hospital was "too sterile," and she wasn't thinking about cleanliness.

Mrs. Purkey, a Rochester resident, thought about what she could do for her community, studied, and decided that it needed an in-home hospice program. "Dad bought into it," Dan said. They accepted their first patients before being approved for Medicare reimbursement, so they covered the costs. Their first "office building" was their own home until they later moved to rental space in downtown Rochester.

In October, 2001, Hope Hospice bought a vacant house on Rochester's Main Street and converted it into an office structure. A grant from the Fulton County Community Foundation (FCCF) helped them purchase, renovate, and make the building handicapped accessible.

Because of assistance through the Fulton County Community Foundation, Hope Hospice is able to help its patients escape the confines of their homes to do such things as shopping, fishing, and travel to loved ones' homes out of state. Over the years, foundation funds have financed the purchase of a computer, software, a PowerPoint projector, scanner, printer, and fax machine.

In 2007, the FCCF offered a dollar-for-dollar match for up to \$25,000 raised for a permanent endowment. The campaign was successful, taking only four months to meet the goal. This fund now provides Hope Hospice with annual support that will help them fulfill their mission.

Other items Hope Hospice has purchased with unrestricted grant funds via FCCF are wheel chairs and two oxygen concentrators. The oxygen devices are small, portable units that weigh 17 pounds


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and can be plugged into a vehicle's cigarette lighter as well as household current. This allows patients the freedom to travel without lugging around large equipment.

"When I came here in April 2007, the level of community support just blew my mind," Dan Purkey said.

That support continues through the efforts of the Fulton County Community Foundation. Hope Hospice serves an eight-county area that includes all three counties that comprise the Northern Indiana Community Foundation. There are two full-time nurses and one aide, plus fourteen volunteers, four chaplains, and a social worker. In a far-reaching move, Hope Hospice has entered into a partnership with Woodlawn Hospital of Fulton County for one inpatient bed to be available to Hospice patients. "All hospice programs have common services," Dan Purkey said. "The difference is how they are provided. At Hope Hospice, we provide compassionate, quality care."

Providing patients with a better quality of life is the goal of Hope Hospice. They have been doing just that since the beginning, and with continued community support, will continue into the future.

Hope Hospice is a perfect example of how needs in our community are met by individuals who are willing to make a difference.