



HOSPICE HEARTBEAT

Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County, Inc.

Spring 2023

“Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you.” Walt Whitman

- [Welcome from HVOSC Board Chair](#)
- [Amy... Thinking](#)
- [Bereavement Information](#)
- [View from the Board](#)
- [Yard Sale](#)
- [Memorial garden](#)
- [Annual Appeal](#)

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Vice Chair

Tim Curtis
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Dana Hamilton
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Dan Belanger

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Sharon Provost

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WELCOME

On behalf of Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County welcome to our spring 2023 Newsletter. It has been a few challenging years with Covid 19, and it is so good to be back and offering our full set of hospice volunteer services to the citizens and families of Somerset County. My Name is Bill Primmerman; I am retired from Redington Fairview General Hospital where I was the Director of Somerset Public Health. I have been a HVOSC board member for several years. A friend recently said the view out the front windshield is much bigger than the view out the rear-view mirror and this newsletter is being produced with looking forward as its focus.

I am writing this on May 1st, May Day, a birthday of a special friend of mine named Joanne. It was a day to give her a May basket gift usually flowers and to sing her a rousing “happy birthday.” She began as a volunteer for Somerset Public Health and in the years, she was not able to travel to events she still found ways to help those where she lived at One Madison Ave receive public health services. Though years have gone by since her passing, thoughts of her still bring me smiles and wonderful memories. So why tell you this? I tell you because as a volunteer in her community Joanne made a difference, a difference in our organization and to all those she loved and helped gain community services. I am blessed to have known her. Are their people like that in your life? People who you miss, like I miss Joanne, people who made a difference in your life, the life of your family or community. People whose memories you hold on to and will never let go. Are you one of those people serving your loved ones and community or someone who would like to make a difference? If so welcome home to Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County.

The mission of Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County (HVSC) is to provide support and compassion for those we serve. Unlike medical hospice, a client does not have to have a prognosis of six months or less to live and can still be pursuing curative treatment. Once a family has lost a loved one, HVSC provides bereavement services. Those services include mailings, phone calls, support groups and memorial events. All our services are provided at no charge to Somerset County residents we serve. Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. We provide volunteer training, which includes a background check. While most hospice clients receive services in his/her home, some clients are visited in nursing homes. Families identify the needs that they have such as transportation, meal preparation, respite for the caregiver, and taking care of pets. Etc. and volunteers donate their time and talents. As loving community members, we also grieve and celebrate the lives of loved ones through our community garden ceremony, Lights to remember ceremony and grief support groups.

In our country today, there are very few hospice volunteer organizations left as larger for-profit organizations try to provide these services. Friedrich Schiller said, “Even the weak become strong when they are united.” Please help us unite again to have a strong volunteer hospice organization providing loving kindness for our families, friends, neighbors, and community. Thank you.

Amy... Thinking

Oftentimes, families are faced with difficult decisions regarding health care and what is the most prudent decision for a family member. Journeying down such a path has obstacles, uncertainties, pain, doubt, and fear. Reliance on personal faith, love of the family member and understanding that there is no “right way” to make these decisions are the initial steps. Fortunately, **hospice volunteers** can become the stabilizing factor in such situations.

Reflecting on the decision

Another aspect of hospice is understanding how one’s perspective on end-of-life conversations and preparing for that last chapter can only be realized once death has occurred. These are the thoughts some of our family members have had to share:

“After this experience, I cannot imagine a loved one dying in a hospital instead of at home. If you are fortunate to have the option as a loved one approaches end-of-life, do it. I cannot imagine being anywhere but home,” Kim shared.

“It was an absolute gift to be with a loved one as they cross the threshold. I would not want it any other way,” Stacy said.

“It was a gift to be with Dad and for my children to be with their Grandpa,” Lindsay recalled.

Offering advice

If other families are facing a similar situation, some others had a few things they wanted to say, offering some guidance and advice based on their experience:

“Just be there. Hold hands, laugh together, remember the special times, and always say I love you,” Amy suggested.

“You do not have to have it all sorted out. You do not have to get everything right. You have to figure out how to embrace it. Take everything as it comes and just be yourself,” John advised.

“It is important to take care of yourself and one another. Know your support people. As silly as it sounds, be sure you are all drinking water. Try to plan your meals ahead of time with your support system, so when things progress, you do not have to worry about grocery shopping, meal preparations or doing dishes. Make it easy on yourself and your loved one. Do not stress about all the little extra stuff. Also, do not be afraid to take videos and pictures with your loved one. You will be grateful that you took them and have them for later. With all that said, in the end, you are not going to get it all right, but the most important thing is to be present, be together and be supportive,” Dorothy said.

Know the facts:

Myth: Hospice is a place.

Fact: Hospice care usually takes place in the comfort of an individual’s home but can be provided in any environment in which a person lives, including a nursing home, assisted living facility, or residential care facility.

Myth: Hospice means giving up hope.

Fact: Receiving hospice care does not mean giving up hope or that death is imminent. The earlier an individual receives hospice care, the more opportunity there is to stabilize a patient’s medical condition and address other needs. Hospice care focuses on quality of life and making the most of life. Hospice helps patients experience joy, reminiscence, laughter, reunion, and hope.

Bereavement Information

Winter is finally over! Trees are budding, animals are coming out of hibernation- even people are "thawing out" after the long, cold days of winter. It is time to get ready for spring!

When you are ready to begin to "spring clean" your grief, you will begin to go through your loved one's "stuff," clothes, belongings, etc. It will be a sort of "life in review" for you. As you look through those papers and clothes and files and personal items, the things they loved, used, and cherished, do not be surprised if it opens the sadness all over again. The intensity of this grief may take you by surprise, like an unexpected snow in April. This is normal! Remember: as you go through their belongings, you are NOT giving away the person; you are only giving away and throwing out the stuff. You can never give them away; your love for them will always be with you and comfort you. It is actually very healthy for you to reminisce and cry and daydream about your loved one. While you are literally cleaning out your house, you are also cleaning out your heart and soul... and that is healing.

We here at HVOsc care and wish to help and give resources to you. Below we have listed some resources:

Our agency provides grief support groups throughout the year and one-on-one support always. Reach out to Amy at 474-7775 or email at volunteers@hvosc.org

Other places where grief groups happen:

Redington-Fairview General Hospital-474-5121

Sebasticook Valley Hospital- 487-4000

If you feel a loved one is in crisis, they just cannot seem to get themselves out of the depth of grief, or depression these resources are also available:

Maine Crisis Hotline- 1-888-568-1112

WWW.depression-understood.org- 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

View from the Board

From: Bill Primmerman

This past January I moved into the position of Chair of the Board of Directors for Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County. It is a pleasure to work with a great board and staff that represents an agency that provides such a wonderful service. I would like to thank Tim Curtis for the years of steady and solid leadership that he provided as Chair, and I am grateful that he is staying on the board as past Chair and our new Secretary. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Amy Cunningham our Volunteer Coordinator extraordinaire for her continued service to Somerset County.

Here are your 2023 HVOSC Board members:

Chair: Bill Primmerman, Cornville, Maine

Vice Chair: Roger Renfrew, Skowhegan, Maine

Secretary: Tim Curtis, Madison, Maine

Treasurer: Dana Hamilton, Skowhegan, Maine

Members at large: Dan Belanger, Madison Maine; Ken Lexier, Skowhegan, Maine; Sherry Rogers, Solon, Maine; and Sharon Provost, Skowhegan, Maine.

“Last fall I was honored to be invited to join the board of Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County. HVOSC is a true example of Abraham Lincoln's statement 'of the people, by the people and for the people'. It only exists because many members of this community contribute in many ways to serve our neighbors, friends, and families. This broad support humbles and inspires those of us who contribute by serving on the board. Thanks to all of you.”

Roger Renfrew, Vice Chair

We currently have standing committees to move the organization forward, which we welcome community members to serve on. These committees are Building and Grounds, Finance, Policy Development and Fundraising. If you have an interest in serving as a board member or a member of any of these leadership committees, please contact us at 474-7775 or volunteer@hvosc.com.

We are also looking for volunteer assistance with the following:

May 20 and 21, 2023-yard sale

Hospice Memorial Gardens in Skowhegan and Jackman
(Skowhegan Memorial Garden Ceremony June 10th in Coburn Park at 5:30 p.m.)

November Bake Sale 2023

Lights to Remember ceremony in December 2023 and

Festival of Trees in December 2023

We hope you as an individual, community business or organization will consider being part of our team in 2023. You will be glad you did.



We are having a lawn sale!

**We are having a lawn sale @ 2 Prospect Street on
May 20th and 21st from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**We invite you to come and see what we have. We are
selling plants, books, lamps and much more. We will be
holding a luck of the draw auction on some high-end items.**

The drawing will be held on Sunday the 21st at noon.

Any questions or concerns please call: 474-7775



HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS
ANNUAL MEMORIAL GARDEN REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY
JUNE 10, 2023 @ 5:30 p.m.

Each year Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County honor the memory of loved ones by planting flowers in the Community Memorial Garden in Coburn Park in Skowhegan. The Bloomfield Garden Club maintains this lovely garden throughout the year. They do a wonderful job, and we are eternally grateful to them for the hard work they put in.

We would like to invite you to join us in planting flowers in the garden on June 10th. We will have music, read poems, and read the names of our loved ones aloud. We have a few more special moments planned.

This is an opportunity for the community to come together and honor each other and the memories we hold so dear. We have all been touched by death in some way. This garden gives you a quiet place to come, sit and enjoy the beauty and know you are not alone in your grief and that the community holds you and your loved ones in their hearts.

If you would like to make a donation in memory of a loved one or a general donation to our organization, please fill out the form and mail back to: Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County P.O. Box 658, Skowhegan, ME 04976.

Thank you.

Amy Cunningham, Community Outreach Coordinator

Bill Primmerman, Board Chairman



Enclosed is my donation (*please enter amount*)

\$30.00 _____

\$25.00 _____

\$10.00 _____

Other _____

Donor's Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Name (s) of Person (s) in Memory _____

I plan to attend the ceremony: Yes ___ No ___ Number of Attendees: _____

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Cunningham at 207-474-7775 or email at volunteer@hvosc.org

Mail donations to: Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County P.O. Box 658 Skowhegan, ME 04976

A Letter of Appeal

To Whom It May Concern,

If you are an individual, business, or non-profit organization in Somerset County and you would like to contribute to assist HVOsc in their ongoing efforts we would be very grateful for your donation. Our funding goes towards our volunteer services, community education and outreach, program development, building maintenance/operations and staff salaries. Contributions can be made by sending your donation payable to:

Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County
P.O. Box 658
Skowhegan, Maine 04976

Please be sure to include your name and address for us to send you a receipt for your charitable donation. We thank you in advance for your kindness.

If you are an individual, business or non-profit organization in Somerset County and you would like to volunteer to serve on our board or on one of our committees please call Amy Cunningham at 207-474-7775 or e-mail her at volunteer@hvosc.com .

Sincerely,

William E. Primmerman

William E Primmerman
HVOsc Board Chair

**We are on the Web:
www.hvosc.org
Or on Facebook at hvosc**

*We care for those with a life limiting illness, provide support
and solace to the grieving and educate the community.*

To Contact Hospice Volunteers of Somerset Count, Inc.:

207-474-7775

Skowhegan office is located at

165 Main Street

Skowhegan, Maine 04976

We are open Monday – Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.