

HOSPICE FRIENDS
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HOSPICE NEWS

*Providing Peace, Comfort, & Care
 in the Kittitas Valley since 1983*

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In May 2010 I was visiting family in Boise, Idaho and saw the article, "A Legacy of Faith, Love and Loyalty." It is a poignant story of one man and one family's journey during a difficult time.

I was so moved by the piece that when I returned to Ellensburg I called the Idaho Statesman to request permission to reprint it in this edition of Hospice News. When I told the editor about Hospice Friends, she didn't ask any questions and said absolutely "yes".

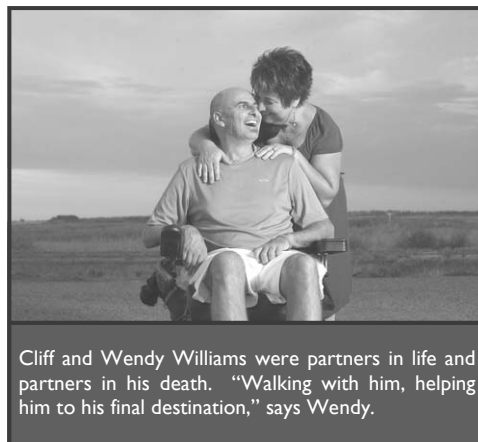
I hope that each of you find value in this story no matter what your faith may be. It is truly a story of love, faith and loyalty but moreover a touching story of perseverance, dedication and hope.
 Roger

A LEGACY OF FAITH, LOVE AND LOYALTY

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Text and Photos by Katherine Jones

A few days before Christmas, Cliff Williams had a dream. He was in heaven, watching a parade of people with their arms open wide. In his dream, he was surprised, then he realized: All the arms were outstretched to greet him.



Cliff and Wendy Williams were partners in life and partners in his death. "Walking with him, helping him to his final destination," says Wendy.

"There was so much joy and celebration; words couldn't even express how beautiful it was," says Wendy Williams, telling the story for her husband. The dream gave him hope - hope that the end was near; and in the promise of his faith, which was what he longed for.

Cliff had ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, which attacks the nervous system. Muscles become weaker and then nonfunctional. By that Christmas, there was little he could do for himself.

Wendy says: "It was an awful journey. And it was a sweet journey."

For 19^{1/2} months, Cliff had known he was going to die. No one knew, (on) the day of his diagnosis, how long it would take, but every day after that was measured against inevitability. Says Wendy: "ALS tortures. He told me it was like being in a straight jacket all the time.

He didn't want to waste a moment here. (But) the more his body failed him and the more he couldn't do anything, the more he longed for heaven."

Cliff was a gregarious and hugely popular pastor at The Rock Christian Missionary Alliance (in Nampa, Idaho) until a year ago, when his strength failed. He spoke openly about his illness, which made some people uncomfortable. But his openness also allowed many to accompany him along what he saw as simply - and deeply - a journey of faith. "Going home," he called it.

Cliff's health declined progressively, as it does with this disease. Wendy and their daughter, Chelsea, were with him constantly. (Their) three sons took turns with care-giving.

At first the wheelchair was helpful, then (it became) indispensable. Gradually, Cliff couldn't raise his arms to scratch an itch, take a drink or give a hug. Bit by bit, he couldn't speak and then he had trouble swallowing.

Wendy learned how to feed him with a feeding tube. Cliff learned how to type with his eyes on a special keyboard. Losing his voice was the hardest.

Wendy: "There were lots of days when he couldn't see God's plan in leaving him here as long as he did. Although when we would talk about it, I'd say, 'What about so-and-so? Had you not been here, you wouldn't have influenced their lives for good.' So there was kind of a plan."

A few weeks after Christmas, though, when asked how he was doing, Cliff typed: "Discouraged." He added: "That I am still here."

He had faced his death openly and with grace, good humor and honesty. In the last months, though, he was tired.

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HELLO AND GOODBYE

FAREWELL KIM

Since 2003, Kim Brittain has been a driving force at Hospice Friends. In February of 2010, Kim moved back, with her husband Tom, to her native state of California.

Kim's tenure at Hospice Friends began in 2003 when she became a Patient Care Volunteer. The very next year, she became employed as the Program Coordinator. At one point, Kim found herself "running" the organization alone while the Board of Directors was searching for a new Executive Director.

All the while, Kim continued to pursue accreditation as a Grief Counselor. Her continued education made her an instinctively valuable asset to Hospice Friends and our clients.

In July 2009, Kim took on the responsibilities of Spiritual Care for our patients and their families. Other areas of her service in the community included volunteer work with The American Red Cross, Presbyterian Women, Valley Musical Theatre and Ellensburg High School to name a few.

She plans to stay involved in hospice and bereavement care while enjoying her new life in Sacramento.

We were so fortunate that she was our beacon of light – advocating for the peace, comfort, and care of Kittitas Valley residents. Best wishes Kim! You will be missed!



In 2010 we said goodbye to Kim Brittain who had been with Hospice Friends since 2003



Volunteer Coordinator Ian Kitts came on board with Hospice Friends in January 2010
programs@hospicefriends.net



Janine Yoder has been the Hospice Friends Chaplain since February 2010
chaplain@hospicefriends.net

WELCOME IAN & JANINE

JANINE YODER

When Kim advised us that she would be relocating to Sacramento, the world stopped for a moment. How do you replace a person capable of wearing so many hats. The answer soon came to us through two talented individuals. (Yes Kim, it took two people to replace you 😊)

Fortunately for us, one of those people is Janine Yoder who became our Hospice Friends Chaplain in late February 2010.

Janine is originally from the Midwest and has been in the Pacific Northwest for ten years. She received a Masters Degree in Pastoral Studies in 2006 from Multnomah Biblical Seminary and in the past has focused on Women's Ministries.

Working in a local Ellensburg church as both a volunteer and a paid staff member, Janine has come to know the Kittitas Valley communities quite well.

In addition to her responsibilities at Hospice Friends, she also serves as a self-employed Guardian ad Litem where she advocates for individuals in the legal arena who are in need of special protections.

Chaplaincy in hospice care differs from pastoral care in a church setting in that a chaplain is charged with serving a myriad of faiths and belief systems. Janine has a remarkable capacity to do exactly that and we are pleased that she is part of the team.

IAN KITTS

Ian Kitts became the new Volunteer Coordinator/Program Assistant at Hospice Friends in January 2010. He says that he is happy to be working with such a great community of people here in Ellensburg.

Originally from just over the hill in Yakima, Ian attended AC Davis High School. In 2008 he graduated from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA majoring in International Relations with an emphasis in Mandarin Chinese.

In his free time he loves cycling, traveling, producing music and camping.

While in college, he studied in London, Beijing and Taiwan. "Still", he says, "it has always felt best coming home to the northwest."

While attending UPS, Ian dedicated two years of service to the City of Tacoma's Coalition for the Homeless. Following that, he completed a year of service as an AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteer and was the Fall Prevention Coordinator for RSVP of Yakima County.

Ian says, "I love working with Hospice Friends because I get to see the results of our organization on a daily basis. It's wonderful to see people walk in our office and walk out with what they need regardless of their situation. It is especially exciting to see our programs growing and receiving the recognition they deserve."

Ian has very quickly developed a rapport with staff, patients and volunteers alike. We are happy to welcome him as a "hospice friend".

A LEGACY OF FAITH, LOVE AND LOYALTY

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Cliff kept blinking and typing. "I am so ready for heaven."

THE BLESSING

From Cliff, in the program at his memorial service: "All of us are terminal - some of us are just fortunate enough to know it."

The blessing, he said, was that he had time.



Cliff was a chaplain for the Nampa Fire Department. The crew didn't need much of an excuse to come visit and they volunteered many hours fixing up the new house

That became both the good and the bad. He and Wendy had time to talk, to process, to say goodbye; Cliff had time to plan his memorial service, write letters to his children, plan for their future without him. He came up with thoughtful ideas - a puppy named Angel for his daughter, repairing Wendy's wedding ring, planning trips for her after he was gone.

And then there was time, agonizing time, while he suffered. Wendy took inspiration from "Lord of the Rings:" "Frodo is near death and doesn't think he can finish his journey. Samwise (his companion) tells him he can't carry his burden, but he can help to carry him.

"And I believe that was what God asked of me in the last little bit. Cliff and I talked about that a lot."

One day in February, Cliff told Wendy, "I think I'm going to die." She put him to bed on a Friday night, knowing he would never leave it again. For two weeks, he was seldom alone as the family took turns keeping vigil.

Cliff's muscles wouldn't let him move. Yet impossibly, at one point, Wendy realized he was pulling up his head and looking at something.

"Who is that? Are you seeing something? You're seeing someone I can't see." "He'd smile real big, like he was seeing someone. He hadn't smiled like that in a long time."

"It made us all cry. He was very much in that zone and we were just witnessing it. He was moving into a mode of communicating with God in a way we couldn't."

Wendy lit candles, turned on music, made Cliff's room a quiet, sacred space.

Cliff died on Feb. 18, a Thursday evening, while two of his sons held his hands. Wendy says: "We surrounded him. All I could do was pray."

"Even though it makes me cry still, it was a very, very sweet time for us as a family to say goodbye, to recognize how much we loved him. As a family, we thanked God for his life, for the time we had with him, for the father he was, and the grandfather that he was and the husband that he was. Holding hands, just saying goodbye."

LEGACY



Isaak Plew, 6, (Cliff's grand-nephew) and Cliff have a "nose war." "He's never lost...When he couldn't use his arms for a hug, that was his thing, giving head butts"

Cliff's life still resonates, even after his death. Hundreds of people came to his three-hour memorial celebration service. And on May 1st, Wendy and her daughter left for a cruise to Italy.

"He (Cliff) said, 'You will do this.' It was on his bucket list.

After he died, I thought, he doesn't care, he's in heaven - it's a lot of money. But we are honoring what he desired for us."

And then there's the model house. Sitting in the living room of their ranch home is a detailed wooden model of a cute clapboard cottage. It's painted in pastel colors; a picket fence runs around the perimeter of the plywood base and painted grass. The tiny mailbox has their names: Cliff and Wendy.



Cliff had performed wedding ceremonies for his first two sons. Unable to do the same for his third son, he wrote a blessing to be read at the ceremony.

"This is a bitter-sweet day for me and your mom. Bitter in that I won't be around a lot of your journey together as a married couple; but sweet, knowing that I got to be here to witness the special (bonding of) two people whom I love with all my heart."

"FOUNDING MOTHERS" WIN 2010 WASHINGTON STATE JEFFERSON AWARD



JEFFERSON AWARDS
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Enid Gage with her
Jefferson Medallion
in Seattle - April
2010



Peg Rowbotham
Enid Gage



The two ladies who were the driving force behind the creation of Hospice Friends were tapped earlier this year as recipients of the prestigious 2010 Washington State Jefferson Award. Enid Gage and Peg Rowbotham (posthumously) were chosen by the Seattle City Club, in March, to share this award along with five other state winners.

Enid and Peg, who died in 2008, were recognized for their courage, vision, dedication, and were honored at an awards breakfast in Seattle's Westin Hotel in April for making a difference in their community.

King 5 Television's Evening Magazine aired a series of segments highlighting each of the five state winners during the first week of April. "I believe that King 5 did a remarkable job of telling the story of Enid, Peg and Hospice Friends in a three or four minute time span," said Roger Hiles, Hospice Friends Executive Director. In addition to Seattle City Club and King 5 Television, other corporate partners in the Washington State Jefferson Awards are Microsoft, Starbucks and Safeco Insurance.

Hospice care was just beginning to be accepted as a medical practice in the United States in 1983 when Rowbotham and Gage, made it a reality in Kittitas County. The two long-time community members were drawn together by a common cause: to help individuals and families facing end of life. Enid had watched her sister lose her husband to cancer, and Peg, a cancer outreach coordinator for Kittitas Valley Community Hospital, saw people on a daily basis with terminal cancer. Many of the people Peg saw had no where to turn to receive emotional or physical support nor the financial support to assist them when a doctor told them they had less than six months to live. Both Peg and Enid realized that there were not adequate resources in the area to help people at end of life.

Peg and Enid knew they had to do something, but they didn't know what. "We just wanted to get help for the people we were serving

that were in such a bad situation," said Peg in an interview prior to her death in 2008. Not knowing how to start, they began to share their dream with others in the community and soon Hospice Friends became a reality.

Today Hospice Friends still operates on the same guiding principles that were first established in 1983. In coordination with Kittitas Valley Home Health & Hospice, who in 1994 began to provide certified medical services to hospice patients, they still provide the support individuals and families need at end of life. Over the years Hospice Friends has provided services to thousands of Kittitas County residents in the form of nutritional support, patient care supplies, volunteer support, bereavement and spiritual support and medical equipment loans.

The Jefferson Awards are a prestigious national recognition system honoring community and public service in America. Created in 1972 by co-founders Sam Beard, U.S. Senator Robert Taft and former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis, the Jefferson Awards are presented on both the state and national level.

The primary purpose of the Jefferson Awards is to serve as a "Call to Action for Volunteers" in local communities and to recognize "unsung heroes" with a "Nobel Prize" for public service. Past national winners have included Jerry Lewis, Paul Newman, Dr. Henry Kissinger, Bill and Melinda Gates, Helen Hayes and Barbara Bush.

Shortly after being informed that she had won a Jefferson Award on the state level, Enid Gage said, "I really don't want this recognition to be about me, I want it to go to the people and volunteers who make Hospice Friends what it is. I don't feel that I really did that much and I think Peg would feel the same way." In response, Hiles said, "That is exactly why Peg and Enid are so deserving of this recognition. I want people to know of their humility and of the legacy that they have created in our community."

A LEGACY OF FAITH, LOVE AND LOYALTY

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The house is so quintessentially quaint it betrays its origins, based on the movie "Up" (fake balloons rise from the chimney). The movie plot is sentimental to them, but the relevant part here is scrawled on the gray-paint sidewalk: "Thanks for the adventure. Now go have a new one."

Cliff conspired with his four kids to have the model built and instructed them to present it to Wendy one month after his death. He had no way of knowing, but that was within a day of their 32nd wedding anniversary. The kids told her what Cliff intended.

"It was very important I understand that he was so grateful for his time with me. But I needed to continue. And I needed to have a new life now. (Of course), we didn't stop crying for hours. It was a wonderful, thoughtful gift."

Wendy and her daughter (have returned) from the cruise to her ranch home saturated with Cliff. They moved into the house while Cliff

was sick; the remodeling and painting and landscaping were gifts of church members and fire department friends.

"The joy of living in this house and having grandkids in the backyard. Every once in a while I have a twinge of pain remembering what we talked about (doing together), but I very quickly try to transition to the joy he had, knowing we (Cindy and her daughter) were going to be in a place we loved and that we would be taken care of. I feel really blessed by that."

And as for the new adventure? When it is time.

"I know now my life isn't my life because of my husband. I am what I am because of my husband, in a large part, but my life belongs to Christ. God is going to give me something beyond now, even though I can't see it.

"I'll just do whatever God wants me to. I won't fret. When the time is right, I'll know."

RACHEL CONGER A VOLUNTEER GIVES BACK

My husband, Ward, and I moved from Enumclaw to Ellensburg seven years ago – exchanging rain for wind, and now farm sixty-five acres of hay ground. The beauty of farmland never fails to thrill me. It's a love affair that began in the fertile San Joaquin Valley of California. My dad was a school teacher so I'm not really a "farm girl," but I did manage to marry a genuine farmer. In 36 years of marriage, we've lived in California, Oregon, Nevada, Minnesota, and for the last 31 years in Washington. I love taking care of my farm boy and my home.

Among my other interests, I read a wide variety of books, including historical fiction, mysteries, biographies, history and my favorite book, the Bible. I love to travel, and if my husband can't get away, my daughter is always willing to go with me. Our son and daughter still live on the "rainy side," so I travel I-90 regularly. I also crochet a little, but nothin' fancy!

My relationship with hospice began on a very personal level. In 2003, my mother was dying and I wanted to help care for her. I had become aware of the benefits of hospice when my sister-in-law chose it for her dad. Word of mouth is a powerful tool! The information available gave our family the courage to care

for our mom at home. The wise and compassionate people who came to the house were a great encouragement. I don't think I could have handled it without the help of hospice. It was the hardest thing I had ever done, but we were able to be at Mom's bedside when she died, knowing it was right for us and a wonderful gift to her.

We love so many things about Ellensburg. There is a strong sense of community unlike we've experienced anywhere else. We enjoy the many and varied opportunities for music, art, theater, and of course, the rodeo! We are active at Chestnut Street Baptist Church. I am a member of the Red Hat Society. I always tell people that I stay as busy as I want to. Our lives are truly full and I wanted to "give back." One way I have been able to do that is through Hospice Friends. After my experience with my mom and some time had passed, I was ready to act on my strong desire to get involved. I haven't had a lot of clients but feel that my life has been enriched by each and every one.

I am so grateful for the health and opportunities God has given me. We live in what is still the greatest country anywhere, and enjoy amazing blessings! I am thankful.

*...every time I drive by your office, I thank God you were there to help with my mother...
Thanks again and God Bless*

Grateful Daughter touched by the services of Hospice Friends



Top: Rachel with her husband Ward.

Bottom: Rachel at a "Red Hat" event.

I AM BLESSED IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING

Kathy Honeysett has been a Kittitas Valley Community Hospital nurse since 1994 - and has found her heart at Kittitas Valley Home Health and Hospice



I am blessed to become a part of peoples' lives and become like family at a very vulnerable time. I also have a job I love and live in a community that appreciates what I do.

KATHY HONEYSETT

In 1989 I sold everything I had and headed off on an adventure to run an orphanage on an Island in Honduras. I never thought I would do anything else. I was going to be a missionary forever. After 4 months I found myself back in Ellensburg, working at my old job at CWU that was a temporary job. I had no idea what I would do with my life but I knew I needed a job to pay back my student loans and I had no direction. I decided to take a job as a nurse's aid at Gold Leaf and fell in love with the people. It was the best, most amazing, hardest job I ever had and I would have stayed forever if I could have made enough money. I quickly learned that there was another plan for me.

My Grandpa saw how much I loved my job and challenged me one day to become a nurse. I took him up on his offer to pay my tuition and I have never looked back. Through the process of getting my RN and later my BSN I learned that being a nurse was what I was born to do.

I began my career at Memorial Hospital in 1994. I was blessed to get a residency program in CCU and spent 3 years learning and being mentored in Critical Care. The January of 1997 there was an opening at KVCH and I took the opportunity to work in the community I love. I spent the next 10 years working in CCU, Medical Surgical, and Recovery Departments. I was so blessed with the people and all the things I learned working in the hospital. I really love hospital nursing but at the same time I found myself being drawn to hospice. When an opportunity came and there was an opening in homecare/hospice I decided to give it a try. I wasn't sure if I would adjust to the new schedule or the different style of nursing but I was wrong. I again found myself blessed to be with people and families at one of the most vulnerable times in their lives...

their last days of life.

Medicare law requires that we address spiritual needs with all our Hospice patients. I think it is one of the reasons I love this job. My faith is the most important part of me. Sharing Jesus, being kind, loving, and caring was what He did best. It is what I want to reflect most with people. Sometimes I do that well and sometimes I don't but I always want the end of a person's life to be as comfortable, and as peaceful as possible. I marvel at the families that care for their loved ones. I am blessed to see reconciliations at the end of life, and families sacrificing to give of themselves to care for family. Not everyone can do that, or wants to, but it is a beautiful thing to be a part of when it happens.

I still get to travel and do mission trips. This August I am going to Haiti to be a part of the earthquake relief efforts. I will be working at Child Hope International which is an orphanage that has a school and a clinic. There is a team of 12 of us from Ellensburg using our gifts and talents to bless others. I will get to use my nursing skills in the mission field, which is very exciting to me.

I may not be running an orphanage like I thought I would be 21 years ago but I am getting to care for people who need help, encouragement and support. I get to assist people to be able to stay in their homes and teach their loved ones to care for them. I am blessed to become a part of peoples' lives and become like family at a very vulnerable time. I also have a job I love and live in a community that appreciates what I do. Being a hospice nurse is very rewarding in the midst of a lot of heartache. I would never be able to do it without my family, my faith or the people I work with.

Kathy Honeysett RN

Did You Know?

In 2009, Hospice Friends set a record in terms of the number of people served?

683

Did You Know?

Your Donations and Memorial Gifts are the primary funding source for Hospice Friends? We are grateful for your continued support.

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*If you want to lift yourself up,
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Kittitas Valley Home Health & Hospice, a department of Kittitas Valley Community Hospital, to provide quality care in the home, nursing home, or hospital in a professional, empathetic, and confidential manner. Hospice Friends promotes a caring community without affiliation to any specific religious orientation or political view.

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