



# CHOICES

*Empowering People*

Fall/Winter 2017

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## Honoring the Best of Hospice

Each year, the California Hospice and Palliative Care Association holds an Awards Luncheon recognizing outstanding service in hospice. This year, we honored two very special individuals.

### Gift of the Heart Award

The Gift of the Heart Award recognizes hospice volunteers. Individuals are nominated either for one unique project that they developed and implemented or for a history of dedicated service to hospice and the patients they serve.

This year's winner was Richard DeLisser and his canine sidekick Maggie, volunteers for Hospice of the Foothills (HOF) in Grass Valley. While Richard was technically the recipient of the award, HOF staff say it's impossible to think of one without the other. Maggie is a pit bull



*This year's Gift of the Heart award went to Richard DeLisser and his pit bull sidekick Maggie.*

*continued...*

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## Best of Hospice, cont'd

rescue who had suffered neglect and abuse. Through the loving care Dick provided, Maggie found her calling by bringing compassion to others in physical and emotional pain. Dick had Maggie certified as a service and visiting therapy dog, a mission she took to immediately. This hospice volunteer duo has been dubbed the "Magster" by the staff of HOF.

Dick became involved with hospice in Dec. 2013 when his wife Julia spent her final days as a patient in the Compassionate Care Home (CCH) with Dick and Maggie right there with her. Dick continued visiting the home after Julia's death, returning to sit and reflect on the painful but tender memories of her time there.

Dick and Maggie began attending a weekly Spouse/Partner Bereavement Support Group in January 2014, and at that time, Dick made the decision to become a hospice volunteer.

Dick had long retired from his career in Organizational Training and Development and Human Resources. After the death of his wife, he felt ready to explore his desire to help others through their grief journey.

Dick completed the Bereavement Volunteer training in June 2014 and Maggie was at his side throughout. He then implemented a new support group model for HOF aptly named "A New Beginning," a support group designed for those who were a year or more past the death of their loved one. This unique group was formed to create special friendships as members go through the healing process with support from one another. Dick's group still meets for holidays and special occasions after 3 years. Now solid friends, they are grateful for Dick's steadfast leadership and compassionate presence. The New Beginning concept now has a 3rd group forming this fall.

This past June, Dick became a Dying Vigil trained volunteer. These volunteers provide emotional support to a hospice patient and family members (or other caregiver) during a patient's active dying process. They also provide a compassionate presence for patients whose death is imminent and who may be without the supportive presence of loved ones.

Dick has also been trained and serves as an active member of the Veteran Volunteer program. Dick is an Army Veteran and is always eager to conduct pinning ceremonies, performed on Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. Maggie is always with Dick for these pinnings and sits in rapt attention, showing her respect during the presentation.

### Pierre Salmon Award

The Pierre Salmon Award recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to hospice and palliative care; promoted the growth and availability of hospice and palliative care; and embodied the core values of hospice. Since its inception, 26 individuals have received this prestigious award. Our recipient this year was well qualified to join this elite group.



*Madalon O'Rawe Amenta (right) receives the 2017 Pierre Salmon Award from CHAPCA Chairperson Kitty Whitaker.*

Madalon O'Rawe Amenta was an early American voice in the hospice movement, and was the founder and first president of the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association. She served as the Director of Education and Research at Forbes Hospice and eventually founded the Pennsylvania Hospice Network. The Network was the fourth state hospice association, and she was elected its president.

Her illustrious career included noteworthy roles as author, editor, academic educator, mentor and poet. She was frequently seen at the capitol in Washington during the campaign to create the Medicare Hospice Benefit, and she co-authored the first American textbook on hospice care. She has received numerous national and educational awards in recognition of her caring work. These awards include HPNA's Leading the Way award and the University of Pittsburg Distinguished Alumni Award. She has been recognized two different times by NHPKO.

After moving to Davis, CA from Pennsylvania in 2014, she reached out to Yolo Hospice to become a volunteer. Today, she is a seasoned and valued member of the Board of Directors and an important participant in the organization's palliative care model. Her wisdom, enthusiasm and insight has helped the palliative care program grow from two patients to an average daily census of 50-60. We were thrilled to have the opportunity to recognize her.

# Thank You to Our Top Donors of 2017

As we come to the close of another year, we want to take this opportunity to thank you, our hospice friends and association supporters. Without you we could not continue the mission of the California Hospice and Palliative Care Association (CHAPCA) which is to promote the value and quality of end-of-life care for patients and their families through education and advocacy.

Great goals and ambitions can only be achieved with strong partnerships, and we value your support and belief in what we do. We look forward to a long partnership in the future.

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## How to Help a Grieving Loved One During the Holidays

*From the National Hospice Foundation and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization:*

1. Be supportive of the way the person chooses to handle the holidays. Some may wish to follow traditions; others may choose to change their rituals. Remember, there is no right way or wrong way to handle the holidays.
2. Offer to help the person with baking and/or cleaning. Both tasks can be overwhelming for one trying to deal with raw emotions.
3. Offer to help him or her decorate for the holidays.
4. Offer to help with holiday shopping or give your loved one catalogs or online shopping sites that may be helpful.
5. Invite the person to attend a religious service with you and your family.
6. Invite your loved one to your home for the holidays.
7. Help your loved one prepare and mail holiday cards.
8. Ask the person if he or she is interested in volunteering with you during the holiday season. Doing something

for someone else, such as helping at soup kitchens or working with children, may help your loved one feel better about the holidays.

9. Donate a gift or money in memory of the person's loved one. Remind the person that his or her special person is not forgotten.
10. Never tell someone that he or she should be "over it." Instead, give the person hope that, eventually, he or she will enjoy the holidays again.
11. If he or she wants to talk about the deceased loved one or feelings associated with the loss, LISTEN. Active listening from friends is an important step to helping him or her heal. Don't worry about being conversational.... just listen.
12. Remind the person you are thinking of him or her and the loved one who died. Cards, phone calls and visits are great ways to stay in touch.

