

# NWHC NEWS NOW

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## The Hospice Remembrance Quilts

For many years, the staff of The Hospice Program of Northwest Wisconsin HomeCare wanted to do something special to remember the many patients who had been served through the hospice program.

After much deliberation and planning, the decision was made to remember our patients by stitching their names into a quilt. The quilt was to be called The Hospice Remembrance Quilt.

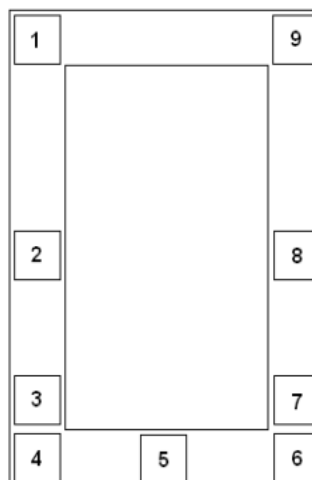
The hospice patients names are stitched into the quilt chronologically, based on the date the patient received hospice care. The first remembrance quilt includes patients who were served from 1988 through December of 1993. Each year after, a new quilt has been stitched in remembrance of Northwest Wisconsin HomeCare hospice patients.

The 2009 Quilt is titled A TRIBUTE TO WISCONSIN FARM FAMILIES. The inspiration for this quilt was used with the permission of McKenna Ryan and Pine Needles Design, Inc. The quilt was created and stitched by the members of Clearwater Quilters of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.



The newest Hospice Remembrance Quilt contains over 300 names of those patients served by the NWHC Hospice Program in 2009.

This quilt contains vignettes of farm life, as well as meaningful quilt designs with “farming relevance”.



### Quilt Patterns depicted on the 2009 Quilt

1. Corn and Beans
2. Windmill
3. Churn Dash
4. Farmers Daughter
5. Farms Field
6. Country Farm
7. Shoo Fly
8. Weathervane
9. Prairie Flower

## Appreciation through it all

For many, many years, Frank McElroy's job with 3M had he and his wife, Hazel, moving from city to city, even country to country. "Irene (as he fondly calls her using her middle name) loved the traveling part and with my job, we entertained a lot of company officials, especially when we were in France," Frank stated. So, after his retirement in 1987, it wasn't unusual that they traveled even more. With several children living in different parts of the country, a residence in Arizona and home on Lake Tainter, north of Menomonie, there was always something to see or do.

In 2000, they decided to move into a new home on the south side of Eau Claire. "The (Lake) Tainter home was very big – good for a family – but we decided we wanted something smaller and closer to stores and shopping," said Frank. The homes were relatively brand new and close to the mall "so really was perfect for us," he added.

However, in a few short years, their lives began to change - Hazel began exhibiting symptoms of Alzheimer's. But, it was a stroke in early 2008 that got Northwest Wisconsin HomeCare (NWHC) involved with her care. In addition to the left side paralysis and increased dementia, a CT scan discovered an aortic aneurysm that the doctors described as inoperable. "That's when we first started with Northwest," noted Frank. "It was for hospice care as the doctors didn't think she was going to make it, given her condition."

"The staff were all so very respectful of Hazel and they were so professional," Frank recounted of the hospice team. The hospice team generally consists of a nurse, social worker, home health aide, spiritual counselor, physical therapist and a volunteer. As much as the physical needs of the patient are tended to, so to are the social and emotional concerns of the patient's family. As part of making sure she was comfortable and in minimal pain,



they also helped arrange the set-up of necessary medical equipment, making Frank's caregiving tasks a little more manageable.

"During that period with hospice, there seemed like lots was happening," Frank stated. "But then, with all that, her condition stabilized and she had to be 'discharged' from hospice." The hospice discharge did not mean some of her daily needs went away, so Frank has continued to work with NWHC's home health staff. "The (home health) aides get along so well with Irene" referring to the staff who come in twice a week to help her with her personal cares. "They are so professional and can do much better than I", he noted.

Given her diminishing mental capacity and limited speech, Frank doesn't know if his 'Irene' has any memories of their years of travels, of her love for entertaining or even her love for doing the detailed needlepoint canvases that adorn their walls. He may also never know what she has thought of all the hospice/home care attention that she has received the past two years. But from his perspective, "they (the NWHC staff) are a nice group of people and I really appreciate what they do for her," he concluded. 📷

## G.E.M. Award Winner!

Luther Midelfort began a new endeavor to acknowledge those staff that Go Extra Mile (G.E.M.) for patients and their peers. No surprise that our own **Sue Durtschi**, LPN, was nominated, and **WON!** Throughout the system there was over 60 nominations, and only 6 were selected to be awarded the G.E.M. Award.

Sue received her award from Beth Okas, LM Customer Service Coordinator. Beth explained to Sue that “this is a really big deal.” Sue was nominated by Kelly Sikink, Assistant Administrator of Patient Services. Sue, who also just celebrated her 25th Anniversary with NWHC, had worked in the Private Duty Program with Kelly before it ended.

Kelly had quoted a comment from a past patient in her nomination. The patients family had written “I hope your firm recognizes what a “jewel” you have in Sue Durtschi. There is so much negativity around, but never enough is said for a job well done.” Well done, Sue! Thanks you for the care and commitment you have demonstrated over the past 25 years for NWHC. 🎁



Sue Durtschi, center, received her G.E.M. Award from Pat Pope and Kelly Sikink



Beth Okas, Luther Midelfort Customer Service Coordinator, surprised Sue at a meeting



## There is no place like home

**Baby boomer? Senior? Healthcare provider? Caregiver? Daughter or Son? Neighbor or friend?**

Log on to our website to view the latest video. Find out how homecare can help you with the array of services and options to help you to stay at home and stay independent.

We serve over 11 counties in the Mayo health systems northeast region. We are in your neighborhood, and we can help. 🏠



View the NWHC Video online at [www.northwestwisconsinhomecare.org](http://www.northwestwisconsinhomecare.org)

## Did you know?

- ✦ National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 10-16
- ✦ Hospice volunteers are a necessary and required member of our hospice team.

*Our 37 dedicated hospice volunteers provided 460 visits to patients and families, and donated over 700 hours of their time.*



## Mission

*NWHC/NWSHC is committed to providing the best quality, professional, personal & supportive care to people of all ages in the place they call home.*

# Home based Palliative Care

## **Relief.**

You can receive care **where** you live, to help you **live**

- at home
- in a residential care setting
- in a long term care facility

If you or someone you care about is facing a serious life-threatening illness, you do not need to struggle alone.

We can help.

We offer relief.

Palliative Care is a comprehensive treatment of the discomfort, symptoms and stress of serious life-threatening illness.

## ***You are not alone.***

Palliative care gives you a chance to live your life more comfortably, and improve the quality of life.

We provide nurses and social workers who work with a team of specialists that may include:

- doctors
- pharmacists
- spiritual counselors
- dieticians



Palliative care provides relief from distressing symptoms including pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite, problems with sleep and many other symptoms. It can also help you deal with side effects of medical treatments you are receiving. We provide support for you *and* your family. We can help improve communication between you and your health providers.

You don't have to be in hospice or at the end of life to receive palliative care. Palliative care is available to you at any time during your illness. You can receive palliative care at the same time you receive treatments to cure your illness.

Perhaps, most important, palliative care can help improve your quality of life.

Contact us today to answer your questions, and start feeling relief.

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NWHC's 16th Annual  
Hospice Golf Outing**

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[www.northwestwisconsinhomecare.org](http://www.northwestwisconsinhomecare.org)



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