

# Press Release

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## **One-man welcoming committee drums up new volunteers for Haven Hospice**

(CHIEFLAND, Fla.) - Arnold Dittenber is a Haven Hospice ambassador, recruiter and one-man welcoming committee. Whether he's out in the community drumming up new volunteers for Haven or greeting veterans at a Veterans Day breakfast, he makes everyone around him feel appreciated.



A retired hardware store owner who moved to Florida from Michigan, this longtime Haven volunteer lost his wife Shirley Lanier after a 2-1/2 year battle with cancer. Shirley was his partner in life and in volunteering at Haven. She died the night before their 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year.

"Volunteering at Haven means even more to me now because of how Haven cared for Shirley," says Arnold, who survived colon cancer 30 years ago. Arnold and Shirley met through the Kiwanis Club of Zephyrhills, where they lived before moving to Chiefland. When Arnold's term as Kiwanis president ended, Shirley succeeded him. Together they volunteered with the East Pasco Medical Center and the Sunrise Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center in Dade City.

The couple started volunteering with Haven during its campaign to establish the Tri-Counties Hospice Care Center, and they funded a patient room in memory of both their parents. Arnold still carries Shirley's Haven volunteer name badge, attached to his own. He's quick to show it to anyone who asks and affirm how beautiful she was. He notes with a smile that Shirley didn't change her last name to his because "Dittenber" was a mouthful to spell. Before she passed she said, "I told you I'd make it to our anniversary."

He misses her terribly but marches on in her memory, reaching out to everyone he can at community festivals, particularly students, who can earn community service credits by volunteering. Born to recruit, Arnold has signed up as many as 250 volunteers for Haven. The greatest privilege of being a volunteer, says Arnold, is that "there's so much you can do."

For more information about volunteering at Haven Hospice, contact Vondla Sullivan at 352.493.2333 or 800.677.5428.

**About Haven Hospice**

Haven Hospice is North Florida's expert in end-of-life and palliative care and is one of three 2008 Circle of Life Award® winners nationwide to be recognized as leaders in improving the care of patients near the end of life or with life-threatening conditions. Haven Hospice has also been recognized as a Florida Pacesetter for its leadership in promoting living wills. Haven Hospice has served more than 50,000 patients and families since 1979 and has been licensed in Florida as a not-for-profit hospice since 1980. For more information, visit [www.havenhospice.org](http://www.havenhospice.org) or call 800.727.1889.

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