

Media Release

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Editor's Note: Print-quality photo attached.

Haven Hospice honors volunteers who go above and beyond to serve patients

(DeLAND)—In celebration of National Volunteer Month, Haven Hospice will honor four volunteers in a ceremony April 27 at the Haven Hospice Roberts Care Center in Palatka. They include a woman who was Haven's very first volunteer in DeLand, a long-distance volunteer who crafts greeting cards from her home in California, and a husband and wife who have dedicated themselves to supporting patients and their families. Each will be recognized for going above and beyond in helping to enhance patient care and services.

The winners of the patient and family award, Barbara (B.J.) and Harry Kirkpatrick, felt called to volunteer after they shared an experience helping an elderly couple. "A friend asked me, 'What would have happened if you hadn't been there for them?'" B.J. said. That got her thinking she needed to be there for others as well, and she decided to call Haven to volunteer. "We decided it would be a privilege to be involved in this part of the journey," said Harry, her husband of 14 years.

When a patient asks B.J. for a blanket or sweater, she jumps at the chance to get it. Passionate about helping to fulfill any need or wish, she's helping one of the patients she visits to crochet again. "I want to let each patient know that somebody cares," she said. "I wish I could do more." More for B.J. is more than most of us can imagine giving, according to Harry, who marvels at his wife's capacity for giving. "She is very protective of every patient that she serves," he said.

Audrey Perry, recipient of an administrative award, was the first to volunteer shortly after Haven's DeLand office opened in December 2008. She participates in community outreach and special projects. "I enjoy being helpful just doing whatever they need," she said. A retired elementary school teacher, she found a natural niche for her talents at Haven, where she assists with crafts, decorating, and baking cookies and brownies. She also makes angel pins that Haven's chaplain gives to patients.

Her sister Lucille Dickinson, who lives in the high desert area of Hemet, Calif., about 90 minutes from San Diego, inspired a program to remember patients on holidays, birthdays and other special occasions. Cille, as she likes to be called, said she hates to throw away greeting cards. She's helping the earth and bringing joy to Haven patients by using some card stock, glitter pens, ribbon and lace to recycle old cards into beautiful new ones. "I have a little assembly line going,"

she said. When she put the word out that she needed old cards, friends and family came through with hundreds of them. She supplies Haven with as many as three dozen cards at a time. A retired technical illustrator for the aerospace firm McDonnell Douglas, she helped design the official Apollo 11 patch and the special Congressional Record cover that was left behind on the first moon walk. Friends who've admired her recycled cards have urged her to sell them, "but that would be work," she said. "I just enjoy doing them." Haven will honor her with a community outreach and special projects award.

Like his wife, Harry Kirkpatrick visits with many patients; in the early morning hours he walks with one patient to help him continue to exercise. He also looks forward to his visits with 100-year-old Mary, whom he calls "a walking history book. It's an education talking with her." Mary adores Harry so much that she asked B.J., "Do you love your husband as much as I do?"

"It's nice to have a part in patients' lives, even when we lose them. That's hard, but you have to be emotionally mature enough to handle it," he added. "B.J. and I have both lost a lot of people, some very young, so spirituality has become a big force in our lives. I don't think someone can talk you into doing what we do. I can only say how much you get out of it. The patients, their spouses and the families we serve are so grateful for your help."

For information about how to volunteer with Haven Hospice, located at 211B N. Amelia Ave. in DeLand, contact Mary Kathryn Maine at (386) 734-7600.

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 nearly 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 or call 800-727-1889.

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