

We work to ensure that everyone in our community can live with advanced illness as comfortably, confidently, and fully as possible | Fall 2013

What TRUly Matters

By Darla Schueth, President & CEO

Over the last few weeks, as our whole community faced the devastation left by the flooding, our employees and volunteers, like others all over the area, continued to get their jobs done. As always, we were committed to caring for patients whenever they needed us. And now, as the recovery efforts continue, we're still in that mode, working to ensure everyone in our community can live with advanced illness as comfortably, confidently, and fully as possible.



The big red truck got it done

At times, as the waters raged, we had to get creative—Justin, one of our Clinical Managers, owns a heavily modified 1971 Bronco he calls the Big Red Truck, with 35 inch tires. On Friday, a Longmont patient really needed a visit. Our nurse couldn't make it in her car, so Justin and the Big Red Truck were called into action. By then, officials had already blocked off dangerous routes. So Justin and our nurse spent precious time, trying at least five routes to get from Lafayette to Longmont. At last, they found the only one that was accessible, that took them through Boulder and into Longmont. Since the Big Red Truck can plow through three feet of water, they kept going, leaving abandoned cars in their wake. Our patient and the whole family were thrilled to see their familiar nurse and reassured by the visit. Just by showing up and showing we cared, they knew What TRUly Matters.



Frasier Meadows garage entrance flooded and during cleanup

As many of you know, Frasier Meadows, one of our most important care partners, suffered a great deal of damage during the disaster. When some of their TRU Hospice residents needed to relocate, we admitted three of them into our Care Center. Because we're all together in this, during one afternoon, our Executive Team put on their jeans and helped the Frasier Meadows' staff with their massive cleanup job.

Another unexpected cleanup awaited our Bookkeeper, Kim, when she came to the office on Saturday to volunteer. Kim spent the day calling patients and delivering the supplies they needed. Exhausted, she returned to her home near Hygiene. Heart racing, she realized to her horror her house hadn't been spared—her basement was a total flood zone. The water is gone at last, but, even now, there are six sump pumps running to keep it from seeping back in.

Our Director of Clinical Services, Tracy, is an army veteran. Running the Admissions "control room," she certainly looked like the commander of a military mission. Tracy knew that she had to remain calm so nobody else would panic. Using the Admissions board, she tracked the locations of nurses and patients. If a nurse lived in north Longmont and couldn't get to her shift at the Care Center, Tracy sent her on patient visits in her area of town, constantly changing routes and visits as roads washed out. After working 16 straight hours, Tracy and her team were exhausted, but victorious—patients had received compassionate care, with military precision.

I have always been proud of our employees and volunteers. They provide the absolute best care to everyone in our community who needs our services. We live and work here too and this disaster certainly brought that home! And, thanks to the support of our generous donors, we're able to offer our neighbors—patients, families, referral sources, and local partners What TRUly Matters—support, comfort, and a shoulder to lean on. TRU is always ready whenever we're needed. Is it any wonder we're the preferred choice of physicians and families in our area?

And for those who are suddenly facing the issue of loss, turn to TRU. Our grief services department has educational materials to help you through this stressful time, along with an extensive resource library on our website. For copies of our Flood Resources handouts, call 303.604.5300 or email griefsupport@trucare.org.

If you need us, I hope you'll call. Because like you, we're part of this community and we're ready to help with What TRUly Matters.

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TRU Community Care's newsletter is published two times a year by TRU Community Care.



When Dr. Peter Holt first got involved with the hospice movement, Longmont had a population of about 40,000 and he had a small internal medicine practice in the little town. But then Dr. Holt saw a presentation by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross that had a huge impact on him. "I sent a letter to other Longmont doctors," says Dr. Holt. "I wanted to see if they would be interested in offering hospice-like services." The response was positive and many agreed with him that, without hospice, they were prolonging dying, not living.

"In a small community, we had more control over helping our patients make decisions. I knew my patients well and when all the appropriate measures had been taken, the body would speak to me as loudly as it could. Often the patients would have handwritten wishes stating they did not want to be kept alive for the sake of a heartbeat."

At the same time, a group of nurses were in the process of starting Boulder County Hospice. Says Dr. Holt, "I learned as much from those hospice nurses as I did from anyone else." By the late 1980s, Dr. Holt was sharing team physician duties for Boulder County Hospice with another doctor and

then went on to work his on-call weekends at the Hospice Care Center.

Finally, in 2008, he left his private practice and joined TRU. "My patients taught me well," he laughs. According to him, while hospice care has seen advances, many things have stayed the same. "We used to use Brompton's Cocktail for pain relief. The pharmacist would mix up jugs and we'd keep them in the refrigerator. The way we medicate patients now is more sophisticated and we're experts at controlling symptoms and managing pain."

States Dr. Holt, "Like in the early days, talking to patients and families, learning their goals and just listening are the keys to good care. I talked to one patient about some troubling experiences she was having and asked her if it would really be so bad if she permitted herself the experience. The nurses noted she was suddenly easier to manage and died peacefully a few days later."

Dr. Holt will be taking a well-deserved retirement in December. He has the "hospice heart" and will remain in our hearts long after he puts away his stethoscope. Thanks to him, we've all learned to listen to our patients—even when they're not saying a word.

Memories Shine at TRU Lights of Life Holiday Remembrance Celebration

Join us for our ceremonial program that features a remembrance book for signing, reading of loved ones' names, music, an inspirational message, and a luminaria ceremony.

December 7, 2013—Plaza Conference Center, 1850 Industrial Circle, Longmont (behind Best Western Plus Plaza Hotel)

December 8, 2013—East Boulder Senior Center, 5660 Sioux Drive, Boulder

R.S.V.P. preferred but not necessary. Call 303.604.5213 or email juliethomas@trucare.org

24 Hours to Give Where You Live



Support TRU Community Care on Colorado Gives Day—**Tuesday, December 10, 2013!** Last year, \$15.7 million was distributed to Colorado nonprofits. TRU received \$20,000 through Colorado Gives Day and hopes to raise \$25,000 this year. Presented by Community First Foundation and FirstBank, Colorado Gives Day asks you to give to your

favorite charities through the website ColoradoGives.org.

- 100 percent of your donation will come to us.
- When you give online any time on December 10, the value of your donation will be increased by the FirstBank Incentive Fund.

TRU Holiday Remembrance Ornament

This seed-infused butterfly ornament makes a lovely gift for friends or family. Plant it in memory of a loved one, and it will blossom into spring Forget-Me-Nots. Or hang it as a tribute to someone you want to honor.

Ornaments can be sent to you or to a friend or loved one. If sent as a gift, they will arrive with an enclosure card letting the recipient know of your lovely gesture. If you want your ornament to be received *before Christmas, place your order by December 16, 2013.*



Today your gift will go twice as far to help people in our community who need our services! Gifts received by Dec. 31st will be matched dollar for dollar by The Hadley and Marion Stewart Foundation Challenge Grant. To order, call 303-604-5236, email myracseke@trucare.org, or shop online at trucare.org.



Giving Back to Those Who Gave So Much

TRU is one of the first six hospices in the nation to receive Partner Level 4 designation—the highest certification offered—from We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). This prestigious designation shows the kind of commitment we have for those who served our country and recognizes our dedication to improving care for dying veterans and their families.

A vital part of our TRU Heroes Program is sensitivity to the issues related to various branches and eras of military service.

In addition, veterans receive special recognition when presented framed certificates and a flag from their branch of service. TRU veterans gain a connection to experienced staff and, when available, to volunteers who are also veterans. We ensure they can process their service experiences as they desire, and our experienced counselors provide support appropriate to veterans and their families. We're very proud that we've found a way to serve the needs of those who served our country so bravely.

TRU Support

We want to thank these TRU Supporters for their incredible generosity.

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If you receive two newsletters, please share one with a friend and call us at 303.604.5263 or email info@trucare.org. and we'll correct our records.



Volunteer Voice: Carol Rieder

Carol Rieder has spent her time at TRU as a volunteer in patient care, Comfort Touch, pet therapy, the 11th Hour Program, and the Care Center. She must have been here for many years, right? Not really. Carol has only been a volunteer for two years, but she's she's touched many lives during that short time.

As an 11th Hour volunteer, she was part of a very important program. These volunteers provide a compassionate presence for patients who are imminently dying, but prefer not to be left alone. Carol was on call, 24/7, and committed to be part of a team that took turns sitting vigil with people who were near death. "We were there to offer a quiet presence, not a verbal interaction," says Carol. The volunteers were highly trained, but their most important role was making sure that nobody had to die without a companion at the bedside.

Carol and her German Shepard/Siberian Husky mix also were a pet therapy team. "We were set up with a retired veterinarian and he would get so excited to see my dog! He'd just keep saying, 'My friend is here, my friend is here!' That was really gratifying."

Now Carol volunteers at the TRU Hospice Care Center. "It's an honor to share that space," she states. After several near-death experiences of her own, Carol says she has changed the way she lives. She pays attention to what she has to offer and that's part of the reason she decided to volunteer for TRU. "I recognize that death can be wonderful, if you're prepared. It can be such a graceful experience. I'm not scared of death—it's a necessary and important part of life."

Carol's honesty and calming presence are an important part of her success of as a TRU volunteer. We just wonder how many more volunteer opportunities she'll try in the next two years!

Thank You For Your Donation

We sincerely appreciate each gift received from every donor, no matter the size. Your donation enables us to provide compassionate care to patients and families coping with terminal or advanced illness. We care for every hospice-eligible person who is referred to us, not just those who can afford our services. Please visit TruCare.org for our public acknowledgement of your contribution. And thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for your generosity.