

Volunteer Newsletter

January 2023

A note from Robin Haynes Volunteer Coordinator



A former hospice patient I helped care for asked me to sit down and tell him five things I was grateful for. Right then and there, stop what I was hurrying to do, sit, and tell him five things.

His request made me a bit flustered because I was already running behind on getting my visits done and really needed to get going. He was lying in bed and reached his hand out. The look in his eyes, pleading. I stopped, put down my tasks, pulled the chair up to the side of his bed, sat down and took his hand. We sat in silence for what seemed like several minutes. Then he looked me right in the eyes and said, "So...tell me five things you are grateful for."

I don't recall exactly what I shared, but what stuck with me was how much it meant to me to stop and think about what I was grateful for and share with him.

Then he shared five things he was grateful for, and the last one was how grateful he was to be a hospice patient. I'm sure my confused look prompted him to share why. He said he was grateful because if he had never become a patient, he wouldn't have taken the time to be with the people who meant the most to him. He shared that he wasn't a man of many words and wasn't big on what he called, "all that

sentimental and mushy stuff." He thought his family knew how proud he was of them and how much he loved them, but he had no idea what it would mean to them for him to literally tell them.

He had always wanted to fly, so while he was still well enough, he went on a plane ride with his son over Aroostook County and took his wife to Bar Harbor, stayed in a fancy hotel, and even dressed in their Sunday best clothes and ate like a "King and Queen" at a restaurant. He wouldn't have done any of those things if he hadn't known he was dying. It took that knowledge to prompt him to share his feelings and do things he should have been doing right along.

From that point on every visit, we would share at least five things we were grateful for. Often it included family, friends, faith, home, but there were also plenty of simple joys of life, like fresh strawberries, watching a sunset, or the smell of coffee brewing in the morning. I had no idea at the time what an impact he had on my life.

Since then I have learned that lots of studies have proven how beneficial being grateful is to our wellbeing. It supports our physical, mental, psychological, spiritual, emotional, and social wellness. Several activities can be used to help keep us engaged, such as writing in a grateful journal, keeping a grateful jar, writing on a slip of paper each day and adding it to the jar, grateful worksheets, websites, blogs, and much more.

To this day, 27 years later, and especially on very busy or trying days, I still find myself hearing his words to stop...and share five things I'm grateful for.

These last few years have been especially difficult during the pandemic, and the Volunteer Coordinators thought it might be a great way to start off our new year by asking our volunteers to stop...and share a few things they are grateful for.



A Note From Jane Cornman, Bereavement Coordinator



Thursday Morning Drop-In Grief Support

Meetings: Bangor area online grief support

meetings continue on the first and third

Thursdays of the month, 9-10:30 am.

Upcoming meetings will take place on

January 5 and 19 and February 2 and 16.

People who are interested in attending or

want more information should contact Jane

Cornman (944-5534).

or jcornman@northernlight.org.

COVID Updates

Current Northern Light Home Care & Hospice safety guidelines:

- If a patient and family can remain masked during a visit, a volunteer may wear a medical grade mask.
- If a patient and family cannot remain masked for a whole visit, a volunteer must wear an N95 and goggles or shield.

...Volunteer Voice: Why I am Grateful

"I am grateful for the opportunity to volunteer at the Aroostook House of Comfort. It has been a real joy for me to be able to help patients, their families, and the staff." ~ Chris, Aroostook

After making a long list of things for which I am grateful, I realized they fell into several categories: Social - friends, new and old, near and far; gatherings; even technology like ZOOM that allowed pandemic-era gatherings of a different sort.

Mental - lifelong learning; the ability to reflect with clarity and perspective.

Physical - health, safety, security, and freedom.

Emotional - underlying love of all things.

But as I add to each list above, this is the reality: I am most grateful for the ancestors from whose love I resulted, allowing me to EXIST in this beautiful world, allowing me to BE, allowing me to BE ME. Because of THAT, I can be grateful for everything else.

~ Pam, Aroostook

I am grateful for my health and that of my husband and family. I am grateful for a bountiful garden, the ability to preserve some of it and not having to go hungry. I am grateful for a well that runs over even when it's dry. I am grateful for the solar panels that we put up last June in our back yard. I am grateful for my abilities. I am grateful for the freedom afforded to me by this country. ~ Adele, Aroostook

I'm thankful family can gather, my health, our caring community, my Christmas shopping was done by Thanksgiving, and no snow yet! ~ Darren, Aroostook

I am grateful for family, friends, the word of God that's full of truth when this crazy world does not make sense, volunteering at the hospice, and the grace of God who forgives when we fail.

~Carla, Aroostook

I feel immensely grateful for the opportunities afforded me in my life. Grateful for the adventures I've had. And grateful for the wonderful family and friends who have been on this journey with me. (Here's to many more years) ~ Barbara, Aroostook

I'm grateful for 1. a wonderful healthy family. 2. living in a beautiful, peaceful part of the world. 3. having my health and a brain mostly working OK .

~ Bruce, Aroostook

What I am most grateful for this December 2022:

1. I am very grateful that my sister and niece were not harmed in their house fire last month. Every time we talk now, each of us expresses our gratitude and thankfulness that we can talk.

2. My family is so important to me. I am grateful that I have them and can count on them if need be.

3. I am grateful that I am able to volunteer and help others. ~Phyllis-Aroostook

I am grateful for my home in these days of homelessness. I am grateful for my warm bed when I think of all the people who wander about town trying to find a place to rest. I am grateful for my three sons, happy and intelligent adults whose hearts are in exactly the right place. I am grateful for the ability to do just what I choose to do when I see so many in prisons and jails, and I am grateful for my own ability to manage my life so easily and comfortably.

~ Mary, Aroostook

I am grateful for my parents - the work ethic my Father instilled in me - my Mother for showing me love. I am grateful for being brought up with faith in God. I am grateful for the HOC giving me the opportunity to serve others by volunteering.

~ Tammy, Aroostook

Although our family saw the death of our Dad in June, I am grateful for 87 years he had. I truly believe that he lived longer than expected, because of Mom's undying care, commitment, and love. I am grateful for Mom. I am grateful for Mike. I am grateful for our two beautiful daughters, their husbands, and our perfect grandsons. I am grateful for health, for love *and* for each day. ~ Cindy, Aroostook

I am thankful for two loving, caring daughters, for a home that I can still maintain, eyes to see the beauty around me, legs that still support me, wonderful neighbors who check on me often, friends who I can share a meal with, and the ability to volunteer at the House of Comfort. ~ Lois, Aroostook

I am grateful for so much...for my great big family, for the way I was raised, for Aroostook County, for the changes of the seasons, for my health, for the opportunities I have each day to make a difference
~ Anne, Aroostook

I have so much to be grateful for, and these are just a few examples...I am grateful for the love of my children and grandchildren; for a home to keep me safe; for beautiful sunrises and sunsets; for music; for the birds that come to my feeder; for friendships; for my faith; for my health; for this earth we live on. The list is endless. I am blessed. ~ Mary Ann McLean, South Portland

I am grateful for my friend Stacey. We have been best friends for 47 years! Such a gift that I don't take lightly. I am also grateful for being a hospice volunteer and being able to bring a little light into someone's day. I have only been a volunteer since June, but I have met incredible people in my weekly visits and they have all touched my heart. ~ Jane, South Portland

I am grateful for being a Northern Light Hospice volunteer. The training I received even through Zoom has been invaluable. The past couple of years have had a few end of life experiences, unfortunately one led me to hospice care for 2 1/2 months with my sister, she passed with me holding her hand, it was peaceful. I know the training, support and compassion I have received from Northern Light Health made a huge difference at her crossing over. I look forward to many years of helping families and patients navigate better the most difficult time in their lives with caring, compassion, education and support. At this holiday season we all have so much to be grateful for, sharing that with others is a blessing. Thank you to all the incredible people from Northern Light Health that continue to inspire us to make this world a better place. ~ Ron, South Portland

I am grateful for my family & good friends. I am grateful to have food to eat. I am grateful for a warm place to live. I am grateful for having good health. I am grateful to be living in Aroostook County.
~ Rose, Aroostook

My year has been a time I'm so thankful for my family to help me get through things I never thought I would go through. My nurse I have from Home Care and Hospice, I can't say enough. She's become my friend and has gotten me through days I needed to keep

going. I'm grateful for all she has helped me with. Robin and George I'm so grateful to both of you. Even though I miss being at the House of Comfort I'm grateful to be able to do my calls to families who have lost a loved one this year. It's been so rewarding to talk with so many who appreciate Hospice and how they were helped through losing their loved one. It was good for me to share with them the ones I had recently lost. I'm so happy to help you in this way. ~ Carolyn, Aroostook

I am grateful for every single patient I've had in the many years I've been doing this work. Every patient has taught me something about myself, and my work that I would otherwise not have known. I'm grateful to have been a part of their journey.
~ Le, South Portland

AROOSTOOK Volunter Support Meeting - January

Monday, January 9th
6:30-7:30 pm via MS Teams

Invite will be sent after the first of the year

BANGOR AREA Volunteer Support Meetings - January

Lincoln - Wednesday, January 11th
3-4:30 pm CHCS

Bangor - Wednesday, January 18th
6-8 pm NLHCH

+ *link for folks that prefer to attend online*

Education Suggestions From Ali Maguire, Volunteer Coordinator

Recommended books include:

From Sun to Sun - A Hospice Nurse Reflects on the Art of Dying by Nina Angela McKissock (251 pages)

Her Beautiful Brain A Memoir by Ann Hedren (181 pages);

The Courage to Care: Being Fully Present with the Dying by Linda Bryce

Hospice Journeys: 25 Memorable Stories by Laura Hyman

The Measure of Our Days by Jerome Groopman, MD

Making Rounds with Oscar: The Extraordinary Gift of an Extraordinary Cat by David Dosa

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

Recommended Podcasts:

Gone from My Sight - Barbara Karnes (59 minutes)

Documentaries:

Extremis – Netflix documentary (24 min)

End Game – Netflix documentary (40 min)

The Nurse with Purple Hair (49 min)
www.thenursewiththepurplehair.com

The End - Apple TV (1hr 24 min)

Prison Terminal: The Last days of Private Jack Hall- HBO (YouTube/ Apple TV \$3.99) (40 min)

Misc.:

[16 Best Podcasts About Death, Grief & End of Life | Cake Blog \(joincake.com\)](#)

YouTube has a wonderful 59 minute discussion called **From Touchy to Touching/ Straight Talk About the Dying Process**. Keep your tissues handy! <https://youtu.be/IPTYzH51bhE>



SOUTH PORTLAND
Volunteer Support Meeting -
January 19th 3:30-5:30pm



Ali's very own porch / Seasonal Art Installation, 2022

A Note From Sarah Cote, Volunteer Coordinator

Greetings Volunteers!

This time of year feels deeply reflective, internal, as though it is inviting us to sit in the more quiet corners of ourselves, and bring a little light of awareness there.

In the spirit of embracing the spaces we may typically shy away from - I invite you to meditate, pray, breathe, find a few moments of quiet contemplation, and hold these words in your mind/heart/body (*wherever you need to hold them*).



- I know things are always unfolding in a manner of highest best for me and those I interact with.
- I trust that I can handle anything that challenges me as I walk on my path.
- I break cycles. I know that there is space for things to be different from the past.
- I release all that is no longer serving me with a heart full of gratitude for those things that helped me grow.
- I am healthy and well.
- Abundance is a wellspring in me and I share this gift with those I interact with.
- I welcome connection to my shadows as they are a part of me. I am part of a whole universe of exquisite darkness and energizing light, and therefore I know there is nothing within me to fear.

On Behalf of Northern Light Home Care & Hospice

*Your area coordinators share a
heartfelt THANK YOU! for all that you
have done for your patients and
families in 2022.*

We wish you a beautiful new year!

