

# Comforting News...

## ...told with care

Webster Comfort Care Home

Volume III

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### A Star Shines Brightly

When Kathy Fulton retired as a nurse in a private practice in 2008, she certainly didn't retire from nursing altogether! For several years she already had been the Monday 3-7 PM volunteer at our Home. Because of her considerable nursing background the volunteer coordinator frequently paired Kathy with a new volunteer. (Imagine how comforting it is to "shadow" someone with so much hands-on experience.) Before Kathy was a part of a gastro-intestinal practice, she had been the Assistant Head Nurse in orthopedics and the Head Nurse in a surgical unit at Genesee Hospital. Additionally, she was the Nurse Leader of GI at both Genesee and Strong hospitals.



But perhaps Kathy's most defining moment as a nurse, and as a caring person, came when she was a volunteer at the Pines of Peace Hospice Home in Ontario, NY. At the time she was still working full time and volunteering in her free time. Webster Comfort Care Home had not yet even been a gleam in anyone's eye.

One day, the director of Pines of Peace, Cheryl Haak, said to her friend Dave Whitlock, "You are doing a wonderful service here. But your impact would be even greater if you could start a home in Webster. We have

applications for admittance from people in Webster, but have no room for them." Dave then called Kathy and Noel Schable, and together with their spouses, sitting around a kitchen table one evening, the WCCH was born.

Kathy recalls, "In my years of nursing I'd seen too many people die not nicely. I want people to be able to die in peace, in comfort, and not in a hospital." Her passion for palliative care helped bring WCCH into existence. As a volunteer each Monday 3-7 PM, as a board member (6 years as vice-chair and 2 years as chairperson), she has put her considerable energy and organizational skills where her heart lies.

Every endeavor as large as the creation of a new hospice home needs a few stellar "starters." People are needed who have grit and determination, and optimism and steadfastness, and a capacity for a good deal of hard work. Kathy is one of those people.

Not every star is in the heavens shining down. Some are right here shining brightly among us!

### Totally Amazing! And True!

When Bev Miller received an invitation to a party celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays of her Scottsville High School classmate, Lynn, and her husband, Foster, she was surprised. She had been in their wedding party in 1962, but had seen her friend only twice since then, at their 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunions.

She happily accepted the invitation. Included in the invitation was a note asking each guest to name a charity. The birthday celebrants were going to donate \$70,000 to one of the charities named by the guests. "I remembered the hospice care my husband, Bob, received at St. Mary's hospice inpatient unit. The people there were mostly volunteers and a tremendous help. They made my husband comfortable, and my son and I as well." Bev indicated St. Mary's

hospice as her charity choice.

The night of the birthday dinner each of the guests was given an envelope. They were told not to open it until the hosts signaled them to do so. Whichever guest had the \$70,000 check was supposed to jump up and shout "I have the winner!"



At the given moment Bev opened up her envelope. "I saw the \$70,000 check and couldn't believe it. Then, someone else started yelling, 'I have it!', and one by one over 100 people stood up."

In one evening 100 charities each received \$70,000, a total of 7 million dollars! A pretty neat birthday party. An exhilarating gift given by two people who felt they had been blessed by the world, and wanted to give something back. You can't beat that!!

### A Living Legacy

When Tom Starsmore retired as a film tester of motion picture film at Kodak he knew he wanted to keep busy. He accepted the role of president of the Webster Knolls Townhouse Association, a job that encompasses 348 homes. He began playing the bass guitar in the Praise Team at the Webster United Methodist Church on E. Main St.

Each Friday evening he heads to the Spencer Speedway to photograph the car races for various auto racing newspapers. And grandchildren Riley (age 7) and Jonah (age 3) happily fill many of Tom's and wife Linda's days. So, he wasn't

particularly looking for any new activities.



Then his brother-in-law, Tom Tramquill, became a resident at the Home. "The care given my sister's husband was unbelievable," recalls Tom. "I saw the care he received and wondered if I could do it for others. At first I wasn't sure. But I knew if I didn't try, I would never know if I could."

Tom became a volunteer in Sept., 2010. He currently fills the 11-3 PM shift each Tuesday. But he also frequently drops by to see how the residents are doing and to shovel the front sidewalk.

"It is great to be able to help the residents feel comfortable and free of pain. And I'm grateful to the staff and volunteers for making me feel welcome and bringing me up to speed so fast."

And we are grateful for Tom's enthusiastic and caring presence. He is, in the finest sense, Tom Tramquill's living legacy.

### **Our Own African Queen**

Last August when many of us were enjoying the last days of summer, WCCH nurse Eleanor Scott and 11 other people from Webster Presbyterian Church were off to Africa. Listening to Eleanor talk about her journey, and viewing her colorful photographs, is like having your very own informative and charming guide to Kenya.

For 10 days at the Kimuri School in Kikuyu the group worked doing both physical repairs to the school building and providing educational programs. Their work had many challenges! The school had no desks and no books! All the learning was by rote.

The Presbyterian church had ordered and paid for 75 new uniforms for the children. They brought the children the only new pair of shoes they would ever own. They provided them with the first crayons they had ever seen. They taught them songs and dances. Eleanor's dance lesson, the hokey-pokey, was a great hit!

Traveling on to Maasai Mara the group worked for 10 days at a medical clinic, a facility staffed only by nurses. Some members of the group built an incinerator to burn medical waste. Others painted the clinic walls. There were no ladders so individuals stood on paint cans or coca-cola crates to paint the 10-foot high walls. The local citizens were fascinated by paint rollers, something they had never seen.



At the clinic Eleanor used her nursing skills to treat everything from malaria and brucellosis (a disease caused by eating raw beef) to typhoid fever and fungal infections. Memorable cases included a boy kicked forcefully in the chest by his family's cow, and a man who had been attacked by a lion. A motorcycle, the clinic's only ambulance, brought patients from villages too far away to walk.

But people aren't all that Eleanor saw. Out on the Mara during a "safari" she was treated to the sight of many beautiful African animals.



Now, back home and into her more regular routine as an on-call nurse at our Home, Eleanor is enjoying her more leisurely pace. However, she just learned that a young boy at the Kimuri School passed his elementary exams,

the first young person to do so from that school. He could go on to high school, but his family has no money to send him. Knowing Eleanor's compassion and enthusiasm, does anyone doubt that that young man will soon have the money?

### **Angels Around Us**

This column is dedicated to those who, above and beyond their regular duties, recognize a need and quietly go about taking care of it. Here is just a partial list:

- Webster Schroeder JV girl's basketball team who raised \$500 for WCCH by having a free-throw contest.



- Michael Miller, the talented floral designer at Kittelbergers, recently spoke to the Women's Club of Webster. He donated his speaking fee (\$150) to the Home.
- The Pioneers' Club, a group of Xerox retirees, has made the Home their "project" for the current year. They will be donating such things as much needed paper products.



- Board member Bob Anderson who hand stamped "Newsletter Enclosed!" on 1800 envelopes as part of the annual appeal.

These people, and others, many of whom we are currently unaware, make our Home a very special place indeed!

### **Donation Option**

If you would like to financially support the Webster Comfort Care Home through the United Way you can specify your donation "United Way Donor Option #2396." Thank you for your generous support.