Pet therapy provides comfort to hospice patients

When Elu walks into Carroll Hospice’s Dove House, she is on a mission: to support and comfort. But she is not a typical hospice volunteer. Elu is a therapy dog.

Carroll Hospice’s new pet therapy program features volunteers from Keystone Pet Enhanced Therapy Services (KPETS) and Pets on Wheels who bring in specially trained dogs to visit patients and families, says Debbie Zepp, Carroll Hospice’s volunteer coordinator.

“The therapy dogs are the best medicine for the moment for our patients, families and staff,” says Zepp. “In this environment, at the end of life, the dogs seem to be especially intuitive to people’s emotional needs.” The pet therapy volunteers have completed volunteer training at Carroll Hospice as well as a screening process through their respective organization.

KPETS volunteer dogs have been tested to make sure that they have the right temperament, can follow simple commands, are comfortable in unfamiliar surroundings, and more, says Lorain Land, KPETS volunteer.

Thirteen therapy dogs of various breeds and sizes volunteer at Carroll Hospice, says Zepp, and Dove House even has therapy doves for patients who love birds.

Land has been bringing Elu, her 3-year-old Red Siberian Husky, to Dove House, Carroll Hospice’s inpatient facility, for about eight months. Sometimes, they visit patients in their rooms if they are receptive, and other times they sit in the family room at Dove House and make themselves available. “We are there for people to take a break and feel that unconditional puppy love,” Land says.

Elu and the other pet therapy dogs give patients and families a mental break from the situation at hand and provide them with another aspect of comfort. “It’s been absolutely well received,” Land says, with their visits often spurring conversations with patients about their own pets.

The therapy dogs also travel to the other locations where Carroll Hospice provides hospice care, such as nursing homes and private residences. They even visited with the children at Camp T.R., Carroll Hospice’s weekend grief camp, this June. “It was such a joy,” Land recalls. “It was just a little way we could spend some time with them.”
A Letter from the Executive Director:

Educating the community about hospice services is one of the challenges hospice providers face.

We often hear from our patients and families who wish they had known about us sooner. This led us to start brainstorming on how to get our information out there to others who may not know about the excellent services Carroll Hospice provides.

According to surveys from the Pew Internet & American Life Project, of the 81 percent of adults who use the Internet, 59 percent have used it to look up health information. And with nearly four in ten adults serving as caregivers in the United States, caregivers heavily rely on technology, the Pew Research Center finds.

With all of this in mind, we decided to revamp our website, CarrollHospice.org. Our updated website features additional information and resource pages for caregivers and provides them with local, state and national online resource. We have expanded our lines of communication as well. Families can now visit our website to share their hospice experiences with us, and web visitors can fill out a hospice speakers request form for the opportunity for hospice staff to present at community functions. And our calendar of events, featuring our support groups and special events, is now more prominently displayed on the front page of the site to make it easier to find our programs.

If you haven’t visited us at CarrollHospice.org, please take a few minutes and share your feedback with me.

Sincerely,

Diane Link, R.N.
Executive Director, Carroll Home Care and Carroll Hospice

Follow us on Facebook at Facebook.com/CarrollHospice
Courage Lions Help Children

At first glance, Duffy may look like just another stuffed animal. But a closer look reveals the lion’s courage pocket, an ideal place for tucking children’s worries away, and long arms, perfect for medical role playing and big hugs. And once Duffy is seen in action providing courage and strength to a child in crisis, the realization hits: he is no ordinary toy.

Duffy and his accompanying materials are designed to help children cope with serious illness, trauma and abuse, the death of a loved one, and other crises, according to John Ramming, founder of the Courage Lion program.

The program, started in collaboration with a chaplain and medical and child life specialists at Johns Hopkins Children’s Center, has touched more than 45,000 children in 138 facilities throughout North America since 2006.

The lions are used annually at Carroll Hospice’s two grief camps, at individual counseling sessions and at grief support groups held in schools, says Kathy Bare, bereavement team leader at Carroll Hospice. Each child at Camp T.R., an overnight grief camp for ages 7 to 15, receives a Courage Lion. “Some of them carry their lion around in their backpacks for the rest of the weekend,” Bare says. “They sleep with them in their bunk beds.”

In addition to Duffy, children receive one of two books, written by Westminster author Lois Szymanski, that may help them express their feelings. “Courage Pockets” details a lion recovering from an injury, and “Courage Stones” deals specifically with grief, loss and separation anxiety, Ramming says.

For his innovation and initiative in creating the Courage Lion program, Ramming was honored with the 2013 Karen Feroli Community Champion Award from The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County at the organization’s We’re On Our Way event in May.

Bare sees firsthand the difference the Courage Lion program makes to the children she works with through hospice. “The children love Duffy,” she says. “They are just thrilled to receive him, and it’s amazing to see the hope he inspires.”

For more information about the Courage Lion program, visit CourageLion.org

Carroll County Children’s Fund Gifts $25,000 to Carroll Hospice

The Carroll County Children’s Fund recently made a $25,000 gift to assist in funding the child life specialist position for Carroll Hospice’s C.A.R.E.S. (Children’s Advanced Relief, Encouragement and Support) program. A pediatric palliative care program, C.A.R.E.S. provides chronically ill children with medical, physical and emotional support services in the comfort of their homes.

The child life specialist is responsible for providing education and support to children with a terminal or chronic condition and their families. The specialist also helps the child and family understand his or her condition and serves as a liaison with the child’s physician and the palliative care team.

The Carroll County Children’s Fund is a nonprofit organization that gives area children with little or no health insurance access to medical care through innovative programs, partnerships and services.

“The child life specialist is an integral member of the hospice team and, with this gift, we have the assurance that we can continue this wonderful program.”

—Diane Link, executive director of Carroll Home Care and Carroll Hospice

For more information about the C.A.R.E.S. program, visit CarrollHospice.org/CARES
Volunteers Make the Difference

Two dedicated volunteers—Rosemarie Helminiak and Hazel Rectanus—were recognized as Carroll Hospice’s Volunteers of the Year during the organization’s annual volunteer appreciation dinner. Here, they share with DASH why they enjoy volunteering with Carroll Hospice.

What are your volunteer duties?
Rosemarie: We offer a bedside presence. It’s very important for patients and families to feel comfortable. You want them to feel Dove House is not a place you go to die, but a place that the patient and family can feel peace. We also assist dietary, housekeeping and nursing staff when needed.

Hazel: I am at Dove House once or twice a month to sit with patients. I am also assigned folks at Carroll Lutheran Village and spend time with them there.

What are some of your most memorable moments as a hospice volunteer?
Rosemarie: I have also been a hospice volunteer at Copper Ridge [a continuing care community in Sykesville] for several years, working with Alzheimer’s and dementia patients. Seeing their eyes light up when they see a visitor is very rewarding. I’m also involved in the Prayer Shawl ministry; Dove House patients and families benefit emotionally and spiritually from the gift of these prayer shawls.

Hazel: I’ve had 37 patients over the years—some for a few weeks and some for months. I can’t erase what’s happening to the folks, but I can try to zero in on something they enjoy or talk about their pasts—some are amazing in what they’ve done. I enjoy humor and have found that reading a bit to them (Erma Bombeck is a favorite) calms some folks.

What would you tell someone who is considering volunteering at hospice?
Hazel: Being a part of hospice is the most satisfying and inspiring experience you will ever have. Being a part of a person’s life at this time is humbling.

Rosemarie: Hospice volunteers are special people. It is not a job. It is caring for a patient, doing what you can do to make the end of someone’s life comfortable, and giving the family support when needed.

Call 410-871-8000 or visit CarrollHospice.org to find out how you can become a Carroll Hospice volunteer.

IRA rollover extended through the end of 2013

As part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, Congress reauthorized the IRA rollover for 2013. This means that if you are age 70½ or older, you can make a charitable gift of up to $100,000 from your IRA. Your gift will qualify for your 2013 required minimum distribution, and you will not have to pay federal income tax on the amount given from your IRA to Carroll Hospice.

Contact Jenny Gambino at 410-871-6200, foundation@CarrollHospitalCenter.org or visit CarrollHospitalFnd.org to learn more about how you can use some of your IRA dollars to support our important work in 2013.

Check out our Hospice Heroes!

Please visit CarrollHospice.org/hospice-heroes to view the six hospice employees honored by the organization for going above and beyond in providing excellent care to patients and their families.
Grief and the Holidays

By Jess Roschen, M.S.
Carroll Hospice bereavement counselor

The holiday season can be challenging for many individuals, especially if you are grieving. The absence of your loved one can be difficult to deal with during this time. Reflecting on past holiday memories can bring you happiness and pain, and thinking about what the holidays would have been like if your loved one were here can also be tough. But please remember that sometimes the anxiety building up to the holidays is much worse than the actual day. There’s no perfect plan for those grieving during the holidays, as grief is so unique for each of us, but there are ways to make it feel less painful. The key to getting through the holidays is to do what makes you feel comfortable. Plan to spend the holiday time with people you can share your feelings with and who support you. Be honest about your grief; letting others know what you need is crucial.

Do what brings you comfort for the holidays. If you feel uneasy about an invitation, be honest with the hosts and let them know why you’re not attending, or have a backup plan if you do go and need to leave. During the holiday season, try not to isolate yourself from everyone; having a close friend visit with you may be helpful.

A popular idea through the years has been creating a memory stocking full of handwritten memories of your loved one. Write some yourself and have other family members write some too, then read through them during the holidays and share them with others. Other ideas could be decorating a special tree just for your loved one with trinkets, photos or other memories. Buying a present for your loved one and keeping it or donating it can also help with your grief. Volunteering at a local shelter or soup kitchen or helping a needy family may bring you comfort because you are lending a helping hand to others. Most importantly, lean on your faith and strengths during this holiday season.

Coping with the Holidays Workshop
Tuesday, November 19 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Carroll Hospice

Learn different ways to cope with grief during this free, educational workshop. Registration required; please register by calling Kathy Bare at 410-871-7231 or Jessica Roschen at 410-871-7656.
Make this a Season to Remember

Join us in celebrating loved ones at our annual Season to Remember event, benefiting Carroll Hospice and the Carroll Hospital Center Auxiliary.

A Season to Remember combines Carroll Hospice’s Tree Auction and Memorial Tree Ceremony with the lighting of the Carroll Hospital Center Auxiliary Tree of Lights. Last year’s event raised more than $17,000 to support Carroll Hospice and $6,000 for the Auxiliary.

For Carroll Hospice families and friends, this year’s A Season to Remember events include:

• **Tree Auction**
  
  Monday, December 2 – Tuesday, December 10
  
  8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
  
  See our stunning display of holiday trees creatively decorated by community members and organizations. Trees will be displayed and up for bid all week in the hospital’s lobby. Bids close Tuesday, December 10 at 5 p.m., and winners will be notified Wednesday, December 11 before 5 p.m.

• **Memorial Ornaments**
  
  On sale through Monday, December 9
  
  Honor a loved one by purchasing an ornament, inscribed with his or her name, to be placed on the Carroll Hospice Memorial Tree. Ornaments memorializing pets are also available for our Pet Tree. Purchase an ornament by visiting CarrollHospice.org/season-to-remember or calling 410-871-7220.

• **Memorial Tree Ceremony**
  
  Monday, December 9 at 7 p.m.
  
  A special Memorial Tree Ceremony will take place on Monday, December 9 at 7 p.m. at Carroll Hospice’s Dove House. Memorial ornaments purchased will be available for pick up following the ceremony and until Friday, January 31.

For more information, please visit CarrollHospice.org or call 410-871-7220.
2013 Carroll Hospice Memorial Tree Ornament Order Form

Personalized Memorial Tree Ornaments

☐ Ball $10 each  ☐ Dove $25 each

I want to purchase an ornament in memory of the following loved one(s):

Please print. If purchasing more ornaments, please attach name(s) on a separate sheet of paper.

Name 1:  _____________________________________________________________________________________
First                                      Last

Please notify the following person that an ornament was purchased in memory of a loved one:

Name 1:  _____________________________________________________________________________________
First                                      Last

Address: ______________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Personalized Pet Tree Ornaments

Ornaments are $10 each.

☐ I want to purchase an ornament in memory of my pet:

Name of pet:  ________________________________________________________________________________

My pet is a:  ☐ Dog  ☐ Cat  ☐ Other: ____________________________________________________________

Note: If purchasing more ornaments, please attach name(s) on a separate sheet of paper.

Payment Information

Purchase your ornaments online at www.CarrollHospice.org, fax your order to 410-871-6210 or mail this form (along with payment) to:

Carroll Hospice | Development Office
291 Stoner Avenue, Ste. 202 | Westminster, MD 21157

Total $_________________ (Checks made payable to Carroll Hospice)

Name:  _______________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________

City: _____________________________ State: _______________ Zip: __________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone: __________________

☐ Visa  ☐ MasterCard  Credit Card Number: ____________________________

CID: ______________________________ Exp. Date: ____________________________
(from the back of your card)

Signature: ____________________________________________________________________________________
Carroll Hospice
Wish List

The following items are needed for Carroll Hospice patients and families:

• Boxes of yellow cake mix, cookie mix and brownie mix
• Dove® chocolate candy
• K-Cups – coffee and hot chocolate
• Microwavable single-serving main dishes (macaroni and cheese, beef stew, etc.)
• Individually packaged snacks (chips, popcorn, crackers, pudding)
• Single-serving sized cans of fruits and vegetables
• Dove® liquid soap and lotions (small size)
• Yarn for Prayer Shawl Ministry (red, white, blue and yellow especially needed)
• New soft and cuddly teddy bears (10-12 inches tall)
• Coloring books and crayons (8 count)

If you wish to donate any of these items, please call 410-871-7528. You may also purchase items from our Wish List on Amazon.com and they will automatically be shipped to hospice. Find the link to the list at CarrollHospice.org/Wish-List

Taste of Carroll raises nearly $100,000 for hospice services

Nearly $100,000 in net proceeds was raised for Carroll Hospice at the 2013 Taste of Carroll that took place on May 6 at Gerstell Academy in Finksburg. BB&T was the presenting sponsor of the event, which featured 30 local restaurants and wineries, a silent auction with more than 100 items available for bid and musical entertainment by The Eric Byrd Trio.

Joshua Rosen, executive chef/owner of Charm School Chocolates—a dairy-free and vegan chocolate company—and the winner of Food Network’s Sweet Genius, was this year’s VIP guest.

For the first time, attendees voted for their favorite food and wine.

The winners were:

Best Entrée: Brightview Westminster Ridge
Best Appetizer: Rafaels
Best Dessert: Just Desserts by Linda
Best Wine: Basignani Winery

Thank you to all who made the event a tremendous success!

Mark your calendars! The 15th annual Taste of Carroll will take place Monday, May 5, 2014 at Gerstell Academy.