

Center for Hope's Volunteer Coordinator is Building a Volunteer Corps and Caring Relationships

Stacy Kaplan has Doubled Volunteer Ranks, Enhancing Program for Patients and Volunteers to Enjoy Time Together



Scotch Plains, Nov 12, 2018 (Issuewire.com) - Since she started in her role as the volunteer coordinator at the [Center for Hope](#) in April of this year, Stacy Kaplan has doubled the number of volunteers, with many of them joining her team since August and about eight more set to start before the end of the year.

Thanks to Kaplan's outreach efforts, the Center has welcomed more local organizations and individuals into the volunteer program at Peggy's House in Scotch Plains and Father Hudson House in Elizabeth, the nonprofit's two residences that offer hospice and palliative care. The volunteers are spending time

with patients, lifting spirits, bringing smiles and comforting families, with positive results for all involved.

“Stacy has dedicated her efforts to building our volunteer ranks and involvement, which complements the high quality of care our patients and their families already receive at the Center,” said President Frank Brady. “The benefits of her hard work are seen every day in the wonderful interactions between volunteers and our patients, who are so appreciative of the visits and activities.”

Kaplan said her goal from the beginning was to bring more activity to the residences to create a more social environment, so volunteer recruitment was important. “I knew we would need more people from the wider community to make that happen,” she said. “Over the past several months we have nearly doubled our volunteer community, which has allowed us to reach more patients and provide more frequent visits.” She added that many younger people are now getting involved, on their own or in groups.

New volunteers have made a significant contribution to the Center for Hope, helping to organize and run events and games every week. Residents enjoy increased socialization with each other and with the volunteers at weekly Bingo games and special events, such as the Summer Picnic Lunch or Fall Festival, during which volunteers helped serve lunch, played games and made art projects with the patients.

The Center’s volunteer program is very flexible in terms of the types of activities available and who can participate. As noted in [its September blog post](#), there are individuals who come serve ice cream once a week, play music or sit quietly with residents.

“We want visits to be as pleasant for the volunteers as they are for our patients,” said Stacy. “Some people like to sit and talk, others enjoy group activities, while others like to help in the office. Some of the volunteers have started to team up on their own to do activities or visit with patients together, which is so great; everyone wins.”

Thanks to her efforts, organizations in the area have become more involved, such as St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church in Scotch Plains, St. Helen’s Church in Westfield and Unity Bank. Kaplan is in contact with local colleges and nursing schools, and with the YMCA in Scotch Plains and the Junior League in Elizabeth and Plainfield to discuss volunteer opportunities.

Kaplan noted that the value of the Center’s volunteer community to patients and families cannot be understated, but that the volunteers are also getting tremendous personal benefit out of the program. Richard Del Nero, who plays Bingo with patients at Father Hudson House and provides companionship at Peggy’s House said that “The people here are still engaged in their lives and I am blessed to be able to spend time with them.”

Doreen DiGiacamo, whose father-in-law had received services from the Center for Hope, said she derives “joy that comes from connecting with the individuals here, whether in a funny conversation or sitting in silence. It’s knowing that it makes a difference to just being there.”

Kaplan is greatly appreciative of her volunteers’ participation. “Our volunteers are so inspiring. We have such a great team of people who are enjoying their time with our residents as much as the residents are enjoying their company. The increased activity has been enthusiastically welcomed by our patients and their loved ones.”

To find out about volunteer opportunities for individuals or groups, contact Stacy Kaplan at

skaplan@cfhh.org or (908) 288-9111, or fill out the form at <http://www.cfhh.org/center-volunteer.html>.

About Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc.

Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care (Center for Hope) is a non-profit, community-based organization that provides terminally ill patients with hospice care, and their families or loved ones with physical, emotional, and spiritual support during their time of need. The Center actively supports the individual's right to live out the remainder of their life with dignity and in comfort, surrounded by the love of family and friends, and eased from the burdens of physical, emotional, spiritual, financial or social distress. Center for Hope welcomes all terminally ill patients, their families and loved ones without concern for race, ethnicity, religious affiliation or ability to pay. It also offers pain and symptom management for chronically ill and seriously ill patients through its palliative care program. Center for Hope operates two facilities, Peggy's House in Scotch Plains and Father Hudson House in Elizabeth, which provides nearly \$3 million a year in charity care. For more information, visit www.cfhh.org.

Media Contact

StarrGates Business Communications

caryn@starrgates.com

2017914694

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