
For Immediate Release

New Program Keeps Hospice Patients and Pets Together

(Danbury, Conn.) -- Pets comfort us, reduce our fear, love us no matter what.

The bond between pets and their owners is significant, but perhaps even more so when the owner is facing an advanced illness. Recognizing the benefits of keeping hospice patients and their pets together, Regional Hospice and Home Care is now the only hospice in the state of Connecticut to offer the Pet Peace of Mind program, supported by the Banfield Charitable Trust and other outside funding, to help care for hospice patients' pets and keep patients and pets together.

From walking and brushing to food and grooming, Regional Hospice Pet Peace of Mind volunteers visit patients and their pets and provide the needed pet support. In addition, a consulting veterinarian will assess an animal should it need medical care, can help negotiate discounted rates for pet care with local veterinarians and, when possible, provide that care free of charge. Additionally, placement assistance is provided for pets that may require it.

“Hospice patients should have the opportunity to stay with their beloved pets during a time of critical illness but shouldn’t have to worry about caring for them,” said Regional Hospice President and CEO Cynthia E. Roy, MS, LCSW, CHA. “This new program, staffed by dedicated animal-loving volunteers, ensures that patients and pets can remain together and comfort each other.”

The program got off the ground and took wing through the effort of several Regional Hospice volunteers, including dog-lover Vava Antar Pragya. “People who own pets, to them, their presence is very important,” she said. “Pets are a part of the family. People will be happier longer with their pets.”

Anyone interested in becoming a Pet Peace of Mind program volunteer may contact Mary Beth Hickey, Regional Hospice volunteer manager, at mhickey@regionalhospicect.org or call (203) 702-7415. You may also contact Hickey if you own a pet-related business, are a veterinarian or groomer who would like to donate goods and services, or would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Pet Peace of Mind at Regional Hospice.

Regional Hospice is currently building the state’s first and only private-room, family centered hospice residence, with plans to accept patients in December 2014. The Danbury residence’s suites are pet-friendly.

Regional Hospice and Home Care is a nonprofit home hospice and palliative care agency based in Danbury, Conn., that offers real hope to those facing advanced illness through patient-focused care, education, resources and advocacy. Its team of certified caregivers helps patients and families discover what end-of-life care can be—what can be gained, what can be realized and what can be recaptured. Its range of services includes medical, emotional, spiritual and comfort. Regional Hospice never turns patients away, regardless of the ability to pay. It is also home to the award-winning Healing Hearts Center for Grief and Loss, a bereavement center that offers a range of grief support services. For more information, visit



www.RegionalHospiceCT.org. Follow us on twitter: @real_hope. Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/RegionalHospice.

photo caption: Regional Hospice and Home Care Pet Peace of Mind volunteers recently visited a Regional Hospice patient and her beloved dog in their home.

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