

Who Can Be a Hospice Volunteer?

With a sincere desire to help others, a caring spirit, and some time, you can be a valuable Hospice volunteer. Your gift of self will help support people who are experiencing their end-of-life journeys, as well as their families. There are many volunteer job categories...nearly something for everyone that would match your interests, talents, and time availability. Many require training, but not all.

Volunteer Training

Volunteer Training class provides a comprehensive 12-hour program on a variety of end-of-life issues: hospice philosophy and care, spirituality, grief, listening skills, setting boundaries, attitudes and fear about death, family dynamics, and advance directives. It is designed to prepare volunteers working with patients either as caregivers in the Guest Wing or companions at home. An additional 6-hour class teaches personal care skills.

Patient Care Volunteers

As a patient care or companion volunteer you attend a required 14-hour training course, learning the skills which will enable you to be "present" to the terminally ill and their families. You will explore your feelings about death and dying issues, and learn how to become a good listener. You will receive an additional 6 hours of "hands-on, personal care" instruction. After completion of training, you can work in the Guest Wing at Hospice House or in a family's home.

Guest Wing Caregiver Volunteers

Our greatest need is for volunteers to work as caregivers in the Guest Wing where we provide round the clock non-medical care for up to six guests. Volunteers work 4-hour shifts from 8 am to 8 pm Monday through Friday. Volunteers work with the Guest Wing staff providing personal care (bathing, grooming, toileting), as well as helping with

household chores and keeping company with guests. Guest Wing caregiver volunteers are required to attend the volunteer training class in its entirety. Most volunteers work 2-4 shifts a month, some on a regular schedule and others as substitutes.

Companion Volunteers

Companion volunteers visit with patients in their homes wherever that might be...their own home, an assisted living facility, a nursing home and even the Guest Wing. In the private home, companion volunteers provide respite care so that the family caregiver can have a break to take care of personal business, go to appointments, enjoy a moment of recreation or just take an uninterrupted rest. Companion volunteers also visit patients in care facilities to offer friendship and socialization. No personal physical care is given by companions. Volunteers are assigned to individual patients for as long as they live. The full training class is required for companion volunteers.

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What are the rewards? Just ask our volunteers.

"Just knowing you are needed and you can lighten someone's work. To go to bed at night and know you have made someone's day brighter."

"People have asked me how I can do this kind of work, patient care in the home. They say, 'Don't you get attached?' My answer is, 'Yes... and that's the whole point.'"

Who Can Be a Hospice Volunteer? cont.

Administrative Volunteers

Volunteers work at the front desk at Hospice House as receptionists Monday through Friday in 4 hour shifts. They are often the first person the public meets when seeking Hospice services and therefore must be knowledgeable about the programs we offer. Receptionists answer the phones, sort mail, prepare mailings, file, and do data entry and special tasks. Receptionists usually work one shift a week and substitutes are called when needed. Other administrative jobs are available on an as-needed basis for special projects. Receptionists should attend the first 12 hours of the training class to be well versed in end-of-life issues.

Bereavement Volunteers

Most of the bereavement volunteers serve as support group facilitators and therefore must have appropriate experience and/or professional backgrounds. If you are interested in starting a program that we do not currently offer we would love to talk to you.

Occasional Volunteers

Many of the tasks at Hospice House do not require formal training. There are meals to cook, weeds to pull, mulch to spread, windows to clean, leaves to be raked, handyman chores and equipment to deliver to people at home. All the tasks that are done in our own homes is done here at Hospice House as well. Also, some of our professional services such as lawn care, mowing and maintenance, electrical, plumbing, painting, etc. have come from volunteers who have expertise in those areas.

How do I begin?

Contact us to learn more about becoming a hospice volunteer and learn how your talents can be matched with our needs. We take great care to be sure volunteers perform jobs that utilize their talents and that they find interesting and rewarding. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Burgoon, at 410-822-6681 to learn more. 