

Comfort Care: Why Hospice Matters



Kelly Paradis

Community Outreach

for Good Samaritan Society

Legacy Home Health, Hospice & Marley House



I started as a hospice volunteer with my therapy dog in 2013, shortly after we moved to Prescott.



I didn't know then it would change my life and give me a new career. And a fun side gig writing a column for the Prescott Daily Courier.

COLUMN

Knowing what matters most

The hardest things to talk about are the most important. We all hope to live to a ripe old age, but not everyone gets there. November is always my month in ponder life, not only because my mom and I both have birthdays, but because she died just after her 74th birthday of Alzheimer's. November is also National Hospice and Palliative Care Month, a time to celebrate all the folks in our community who provide that special end-of-life care not only for patients with life-limiting illnesses but for their families.

When I meet people in the community and we talk about hospice care, there's still so much misinformation out there about what hospice is and what it can help. I've had people tell me that they've heard that once you go on hospice, you're not allowed to eat anymore, or that they give you drugs that make you sleep until you die. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I'm always glad when I get the chance to dispel those myths. What I've learned from working in hospice and also being a daughter whose mom was on hospice, is that the care you receive as a family is the biggest gift of all. The hospice team comes into a loved one's home, where they are the most



KELLY
PARADIS
Column Columnist

up when not everyone is on the same page about what happens next. Chaplains provide spiritual comfort, volunteers come out to visit with patients and offer family members a break, nursing assistants help with personal care and bathing. Whatever equipment and medicine is needed is delivered directly to the patient's home and all of it is paid for by Medicare.

Plus the care doesn't stop when your loved one dies — the bereavement team keeps in touch over the next year, offering grief support, cards, letters, annual memorial services and a listening ear on those days when life feels tough and lonely.

To qualify for hospice, you have to have a terminal illness that two physicians agree you likely have six months or less to live if your disease runs its typical course. My mom only was on hospice for a week before she died. According to the statistics on the National Hospice & Palliative Care's annual report

receive managing their symptoms, supporting their family and helping with pain and anxiety. I've even seen people do so well that they no longer qualify for the care and "graduate" off hospice. But they can always come back. Hospice is an unlimited Medicare benefit.

It's hard to think about dying, yet it's going to happen to all of us someday. Knowing how we want to be cared for when that time comes can be tough to talk about, but luckily, there are some great websites to help. If you're looking for some ideas, visit the site: www.thecareconnectionproject.org to learn how to start talking about it. Or if you want more information about hospice and palliative care, visit www.caringinfo.org to find out the difference between these two important types of care and when you might need them, as well as resources for creating advance directives.

When you gather around the Thanksgiving table next week with family and friends, it might be a great time to talk about how you want to be treated when your time comes. Everything is easier to discuss over a big piece of pumpkin pie and coffee, and knowing what's important to you and your family is a better gift than anything you'll find on

What makes Good Samaritan Society unique:

1. Faith-based, non-profit company, part of Prescott since 1978, with multiple service lines: home health, inpatient & outpatient rehab, long term care, independent living, assisted living, hospice
2. Continuum of Care gives Good Samaritan residents preferred access to all of our services. Comfort of knowing you'll have help at the next stage of life.



A few local Good Samaritan Home Health & Hospice milestones:

- 2007 - YRMC sells their hospice service to GSS establishing GSS — Prescott Hospice & Home Health.
- 2009-10 - Ground breaking and opening of Marley House, the only area nonprofit, faith based inpatient Hospice House with 10 private rooms.
- 2014 – Good Sam buys Legacy Home Care and splits home health services away from hospice services with separate offices.
- 2017 – Good Samaritan Hospice and Marley House provide end-of-life services and support to nearly 4,000 families in our community.
- 2023 – Good Samaritan Legacy Home Care joins Prescott Hospice & Marley House under one roof and one administrator to offer improved continuum of care and more staffing overlap.
- June 22, 2023 – Marley House has a grand re-opening to celebrate becoming a community hospice house again.

Home Health

Medical care you receive at home after an illness or surgery because you are unable to leave the house and getting to a medical appointment would be really hard to do.

For example, home health is often the next step after someone has a knee or hip replacement or after a major health event like a heart attack or stroke. The patient may stay a few weeks in a rehab facility, getting daily physical and occupational therapy and nursing care with the goal of getting to a point where they can safely return home.



After being discharged from the rehab facility or hospital, home health will make visits to provide care in the home, with the goal of keeping them from needing to go back to the hospital. Nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and other care team members work to manage and improve symptoms while working to get the patient physically stronger.

Paid for by insurance, Medicare and VA benefits.

Hospice

Medical care you receive at home when you've been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and two doctors agree that if the disease runs its course, you would likely have 6 months or less to live.

Nursing staff answers calls 24/7 and will make home visits in the middle of night and weekends if needed. All medication related to hospice diagnosis, as well as medical equipment like hospital beds, incontinence supplies, oxygen concentrators paid for by hospice benefit. **Paid for by insurance, Medicare and VA benefits.**

Care team of nurses, certified nursing assistant, social worker, chaplain, volunteers, and bereavement coordinator provide care to you wherever you call home (private home, senior living facility, group home, nursing home). The team works together to support your care decisions and advocate for what is important to you to have good quality of life. Care goals may change as disease progresses. Sometimes living situation changes as well, but hospice can follow patient wherever they live.



Dr. Fred Markham,
medical director of
Good Sam Hospice
& Marley House

Marley House

The community's only Hospice In-Patient Unit (IPU) with 10 beds in private rooms with 24/7 nursing staff to care for patients during their stay.

Marley House is not a place where hospice patients go to live out the rest of their time, but it is a place where they can go for 5 days every 30 days to give their caregivers at home a break.

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It is also used for "General In-Patient" (GIP) when a hospice patient has symptoms that can't easily be controlled in the home, like a pain crisis or extreme nausea/vomiting where 24-hour nursing care would benefit the patient. The patient gets round-the-clock nursing care with the goal of getting the symptoms managed so they can go back home. No limit on days for GIP, but patient is assessed each day to see if they are still GIP appropriate.



A few of the most important things to know about Good Sam Hospice:

Our care is available 24/7, but we are not in your home 24/7.

Your hospice care team will visit at certain times during the week and our nursing staff is available around the clock and stationed locally at Marley House.

It's the peace of mind of knowing that if something is going on – whether it's a new symptom, or a fall, or a behavior that you haven't seen before, you can call and talk to us at any time. If our nurse thinks it would be helpful to come out for a visit, they will do it, even in the middle of the night.



People wait too long to consider hospice.

Hospice can be a tough word to hear for some folks. Sometimes they feel like they are “giving up” if they choose hospice or that it means they are going to die in the next week or two. Often, when we get a hospice referral, the patient has been in and out of the hospital multiple times, has been dealing with lots of pain and anxiety and the family is really stressed. I have heard people say “I wish we had called hospice in earlier” more times than I can count.

Hospice is patient-driven.

We will always encourage our patients to make the choices that are right for them. Sometimes this means a family member does not agree with what the patient has chosen. (For example, a patient decides they no longer want to pursue cancer treatments but a spouse or child insists that they need to continue.)

Hospice doesn't always mean you are dying soon.

Typically, to be eligible for hospice, two doctors have to agree that if your loved one's disease would run its normal course, they would have 6 months or less to live.

But, sometimes people do better on hospice, because their pain, anxiety and medicines are managed, plus they have more people around them helping with their care.

The hospice team documents the care provided and how the patient is doing. If a patient no longer is declining or is actually improving, sometimes a patient graduates off hospice. But they can always come back on.

It is an unlimited benefit.



Hospice is about comfort care – choosing quality over quantity.

We may not be able to offer you more days, but we want to give you the best days we can so you can spend them doing what you love with the people you love.

We have granted final wishes as well as honored Veterans for their service.

If our team can help a patient and their family make a special final memory together, we will work hard to do so. We have had great community support, as well as the help of organizations like the Dream Foundation, Make-A-Wish and the We Honor Veterans programs to pull off some amazing experiences.





Friends & neighbors come over to say goodbye before the trip.

Lori & Jim, the owners of Servant's Heart transportation drove her across the country in 3 days and sent us photos!

Photo of Lori with Ginger & her niece after they landed in NY.

Ginger's Wish

When our hospice patient's husband died unexpectedly, Ginger wanted to move closer to her family in New York, but she couldn't fly because of her high-level oxygen needs. Thanks to the generosity of the community, we were able to make this happen.



Hospice volunteers are trained to offer companionship and comfort.

We have a lovely group of volunteers who go through extensive training so they can visit with patients, read to them, play games, run errands, provide therapy dog visits or just sit with a patient so the family caregiver can leave the house for an hour or two to take a break.

Many of our volunteers have had a hospice experience with a loved one and they know how important this kind of support can be to the patient as well as to the family.

Al Cheney, Sunrise Lion member and Good Sam hospice volunteer until he was 99!



We support the family for a year after your loved one dies.

Our bereavement coordinators and chaplains are an important part of our hospice team. They can talk with family members who are dealing with anticipatory grief to help them work through the feelings they are having about losing their loved one.

And after the death of a loved one, our bereavement care team follows up with cards, letters, phone calls, grief support groups and sometimes even one-to-one grief support.



We are always happy to meet with you to talk about hospice care, or whether other options, like palliative care, may be what is needed for now.

It is never a waste of our time to come out and meet with you or with your family to talk about hospice care. We know that this can be a really difficult conversation, and sometimes it can feel uncomfortable, worrying that you're giving up too soon or that another family member will be upset talking about death.

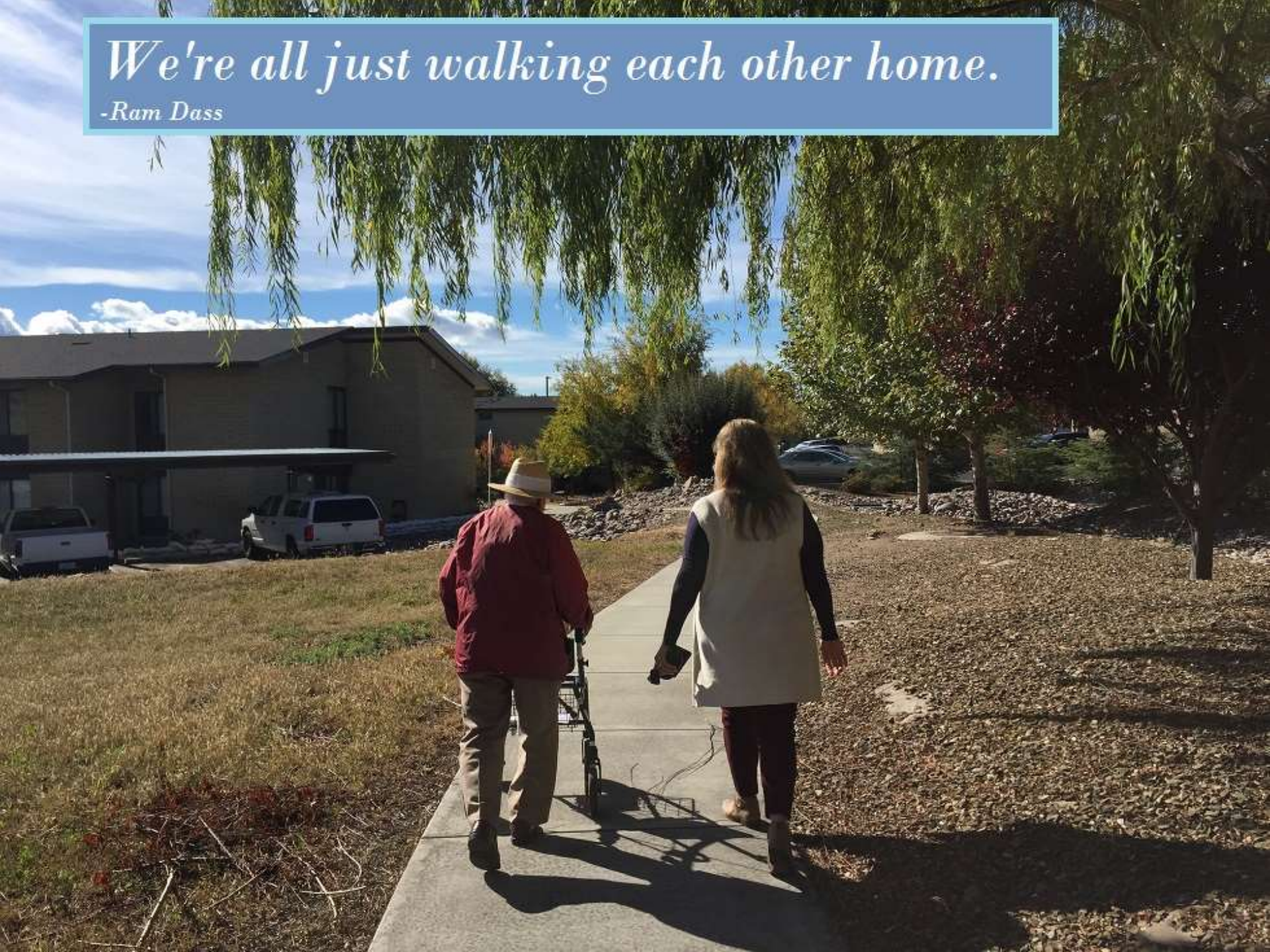
But sometimes the unknown can be so much scarier, and actually talking through what all the options are can really help.

Please call or email me if you have any questions or want to learn more about our Hospice, Marley House or Legacy Home Health. I am happy to stop by your house or give you a tour of Marley House any time.

Kelly Paradis cell/text: 928-713-2292

We're all just walking each other home.

-Ram Dass



Thank you for being here!
If you have any questions, please
call me:

Kelly Paradis

Cell/Text: 928-713-2292

Email: kparadi1@good-sam.com

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