



HOUSTON HOSPICE

Life Matters

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Spirit Award Dinner to Honor Nina Wickman



Spirit Award Dinner
Oct. 15, 2019

River Oaks Country Club
Reception: 6 p.m.
Dinner: 7 p.m.
Vivie & Chris O'Sullivan,
Chairmen

On behalf of Spirit Award Chairmen, Vivie and Chris O'Sullivan we are thrilled to announce that Nina Wickman will receive the **2019 Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award on**

October 15, 2019 at a festive dinner celebration at the River Oaks Country Club, 1600 River Oaks Blvd.

"Nina is one of the most integral people early in Houston Hospice's history at the Texas Medical Center," said Cynthia Nordt, Houston Hospice Vice President of Development and External Affairs. "She was the right person at a time when hospice needed to be brought to the forefront. She helped many important stakeholders realize the greater need for a place like Houston Hospice to serve terminally ill patients. The establishment at Texas Medical Center, the connections she made with institutions like M.D. Anderson and throughout the community make her so instrumental in galvanizing support."

Nordt added if Wickman were not involved, Houston Hospice might well not have ever entered the community when it did or gained the vital presence we now enjoy today in healthcare. She helped make possible our ability to serve all of the patients and families who sought our care over three decades and counting.

The story of Wickman's significant connection to Houston Hospice begins in 1982 when Marion Wilson, influenced by her own personal loss of her children and close family members, researched the idea of beginning a hospice in Houston after reading about the hospice movement in the United Kingdom. Leading a group under the name New Age Hospice, Wilson felt that an inpatient facility to serve hospice patients was lacking.

Indeed, a facility that could serve patients under the care of nurses, social workers, aides and doctors was desperately needed.

After years of serving patients in temporary locations, the organization hit a milestone in 1985, gaining a permanent home when New Age Hospice approached the Texas Medical Center about property where former Houston Mayor Oscar Holcombe's Tudor-style mansion (built in 1924) sat and served as residence for medical students following his death in 1972.

With the M.D. Anderson Foundation's support and help, New Age Hospice became a part of the Texas Medical Center in 1989 which eventually led to its transformation to The Hospice at the Texas Medical Center and then Houston Hospice. The move brought the ability to serve more patients with increased capacity in facilities and staff.

With an inspiring vision of how hospice could serve the community, Wilson was able to enlist the late former First Lady Barbara Bush to serve as honorary chairwoman of the hospice board. Bush then led Wilson to Wickman, who was a former fundraiser for the Houston Ballet.

Wickman immediately went to work, helping the group organize support and public relations while directing a \$14 million capital campaign that financed the building of the current inpatient care center, the chapel and the renovation of the Houston Hospice offices located in the Holcombe House.

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Newsletter

Janet Hitz Named Houston Hospice Volunteer of the Year

Janet Hitz has been named Houston Hospice Volunteer of the Year for 2019. For Hitz and Houston Hospice it has been a mutually beneficial relationship spanning two decades. Newly diagnosed with cancer in 1997, Hitz searched for answers. Facing the prospect of a terminal illness, she began reading several of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' books on death, dying and grief. Those readings brought her to Houston Hospice where she met now retired volunteer director Ruth Landauer who was building the volunteer program. Someone like Hitz was the perfect fit.

"I had been with family members at their passing in hospitals and it seemed to me the hospice philosophy was a better option," Hitz said. "Caring for the patient and the family both is what draws me to hospice. There is a sense of peace and quality of care that hospice brings to patients and families."

Hitz is a warm, comforting presence as she is often seen spending time with patient families and patients around the inpatient unit: from hallways throughout three floors. She seems to be everywhere at once. "It humbles me each visit, my being allowed in the family space during such a difficult time. The inpatient unit is almost sacred because so much good work is done there—the kindness that the care team extends to patients and families through some of the most difficult times of their life is so special and heartfelt." Hitz says that realizing the journey is not ours, but the patient's and family's is what guides her volunteer work and the emotional support she provides.

When she is not volunteering you can find Hitz painting. Her favorite annual event is the Bayou City Arts Festival because of the families and all ages of people who come out. The festive atmosphere showcases diverse works by visual artists from around the world. "I'm always fascinated by what I will see and what's produced," Hitz said. Though still battling cancer with five recurrences, Hitz is not slowing down. Whether it's bringing moments of comfort to people in Houston Hospice's care or connecting with her passion of painting, she is always up for more. Thank you Janet for all you do and congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!



Janet Hitz accepts award from Courtney Hoyt at the Texas Medical Center's April 30th Salute to Volunteers.

Honoree Wickman Galvanized Early Support

(Continued from page 1)

Further, Wickman saw an opportunity to enhance, steward and enliven the property's lush grounds and formal gardens, bringing in the Garden Club of Houston and Wortham Foundation to restore two and half acres on the estate of the Holcombe Mansion. To this day, the Garden Club maintains Houston Hospice's gardens.



Nina Wickman and Barbara Bush in a 1995 newspaper clipping on the center's ribbon-cutting.

The beloved landscape is characterized by magnificent oak trees, rows of azalea bushes, a water fountain, paved walkways, a variety of colorful plantings and vibrant tulips which blossom every spring. Operating on property now dedicated to Houston Hospice, on January 12, 1995 the

new inpatient care center opened as the Margaret Cullen Marshall Hospice Care Center, a three-story facility with 22 beds and the space for 11 more to be added in 2013 after another capital campaign brought additional funding to build out its unfinished third floor.

Wickman, now 80, is credited with the facility's design which Mrs. Bush called the finest hospice care facility she has seen in her travels around the world.

Wickman commented during the ribbon cutting ceremony that "the Care Center is a 'home-away-from-home', a calm and comforting environment where patients nearing death and their families can be together without sterile and intrusive surroundings."

"The environment and setting that Nina wanted to achieve has thrived," Nordt said.

"Houston Hospice not only receives consistent high marks on our service to patients and families, we get great feedback about the interior and exterior elements of our facility and how welcoming it feels. All of which makes for a comforting experience especially during a difficult time. This year's Spirit Award is a tribute to Nina's legacy and impact on Houston Hospice and all of the people we have served since our humble beginnings."

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Mission Statement

Houston Hospice provides uncompromising, compassionate end-of-life care to patients and families in our community.

Book Provides Tips for Helping Caregivers Care for Themselves

Recent statistics show there are 40 million adults in the U.S. who are caregivers and that number is rising. If you find yourself in this important role, a book by BJ Miller, MD, and Shoshana Burger called *The Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death* offers helpful tips for a job that can be as challenging as it is rewarding.

The book's key message is "You are not alone," and, the authors point to the airline industry: in order to help others, we need to put on our own oxygen masks first. We'll go even further—since someone in a predicament is relying upon you: it's selfish not to take care of yourself. Self-care is a muscle you need to learn to flex so it becomes a part of your routine, instead of a rare treat. It means paying attention to yourself, even when the only thing you want to pay attention to is your beloved, they add.

Tips from Miller and Burger's book include:

Take time for yourself. Foster a contemplative practice of some sort. This means prayer, meditation, yoga, the gym, hiking, biking, dancing, gardening, writing. Find some way to connect with yourself, body as well as spirit.

Share. Have a short call list of people who will listen, without judgment and talk about anything: colleague, spouse, friend, therapist.

It doesn't need to be a shrink, though they can be helpful, too. Venting over coffee with someone you trust might be enough. One way or another, unbundle yourself.

Pace yourself. If your loved one is already in the late stages of illness, it's likely a matter of a few weeks of serious effort. A sprint. If she seems to have months or years to live, you're in for a marathon. Don't make the mistake of trying to hold your breath until it's all over.

Distract yourself. Movies, golf, books, howling at the moon — whatever transports you for a bit.

Seek respite. For yourself. This might mean finding someone to take your place for a time, finding an adult day care program, or, if on hospice, arranging for your loved one to stay for a few nights in a hospice house or nursing home. Take small breaks as often as possible and longer breaks now and again.

Watch your health. Be sure to factor in your own health and limitations. Moreover, the authors say that reaching out to friends or finding other people in a similar situation can bring invaluable support and understanding from others sharing similar experiences.

Good Samaritan Foundation Presents Nursing Awards to Houston Hospice's Johnson and Zetka



Yolanda Johnson and Patricia Zetka

Two Houston Hospice nurses, Yolanda Johnson and Patricia Zetka, received the prestigious Good Samaritan Foundation Excellence in Nursing Award at a luncheon ceremony on September 5, 2019 at the Royal Sonesta Houston Galleria Hotel. On behalf of Good Samaritan Foundation, Nancy Fahrenwald, PhD, RN, PHNA-BC, FAAN, Dean and Professor, Texas A&M University College of Nursing, chaired this year's event and Kelli Nations, MHA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, Chief Nursing Executive, HCA Gulf Coast Division, served as the emcee.

Through the Excellence in Nursing Awards, Good Samaritan Foundation encourages others to celebrate and recognize individual nurses who excel in their chosen fields. Nurses are nominated by their peers for their passion, leadership, mentorship, and service to the Houston community.

All nominations were reviewed and scored by a distinguished selection committee comprised of many clinical leaders in the Texas Medical Center. The Purpose of the Good Samaritan

Foundation Excellence in Nursing Awards is to recognize those nurses who are leaders at the bedside offering extraordinary and compassionate care and service.

While degrees, certifications, and research exhibit great dedication on the candidate's part for developing professionally the Foundation's priority of focus is on the nominees'

stories of the work they do everyday servicing patients, families, employees and students.

Johnson and Zetka have more than 37 years of combined nursing and health care-related experience.

Yolanda Johnson, RN, MSN-Ed, has been a registered nurse for 20 years. Johnson has experience in acute care, hospice and public health nursing. In 1999 she received her Associate Degree in nursing from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. She also completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree at Lamar University in 2011 and most recently she received her Master of Science in Nursing Education from Chamberlain University in 2018. A nurse with the On-Call team, she began her career at Houston Hospice, October 2017.

Johnson states that she believes "education is the impetus that empowers individuals to be successful in both their professional and personal lives." Johnson enjoys reading and traveling in her free time. Her favorite book is *Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* by Lisa See and she counts Barbados as among her most

favorite travel destinations.

Patricia Zetka has been a life-long nurse for 20 years. She recently celebrated her 25th wedding anniversary to her husband, Joe. The couple have two sons and two grandchildren. Zetka has served Houston Hospice in El Campo for 12 years as an admissions nurse.

She enjoys reading, traveling, photography, and cooking. Prior to joining Houston Hospice, she worked for El Campo Memorial Hospital, in the Med/Surg, ICU, Nursing Administration, and Case Management Departments. She decided to become a nurse, specifically a hospice nurse after losing her father, who received hospice care through Houston Hospice, over 20 years ago. Zetka said, "The care he received made an impact on me, and what I felt I had to offer to others."

She has an Associate Degree in Nursing, from Wharton County Junior College. To Zetka, being a nurse involves so much more. "You are an advocate to patients, co-workers and the community as well as a mentor to new nurses, patients, and our younger generation."

"By their professional and personal example, Yolanda and Patricia embody the Excellence in Nursing Awards," said Houston Hospice Vice President of Patient Services Jayne O'Brien.

"Both go above and beyond their roles by demonstrating that caring for people can come in all forms and many ways."

Jayne O'Brien

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**Houston Hospice is a member
of the Texas Medical Center**



COMING
THIS NOVEMBER

*Trees
of Light
2019*

An opportunity to honor
and remember loved ones



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