

Hospice Happenings

LUCILLE CAPPS IS MAKING A BIG IMPACT AS A HOSPICE VOLUNTEER

2019 GOLF TOURNAMENT

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VOLUNTEER

Colin McArthur received the governor's award for volunteer service.

CAMP SPINOZA

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Lucille Capps joins patient care volunteer team



When Lucille Capps moved into Prestwick Village, a senior living community on Johns Road in Laurinburg, it didn't take long for her to realize that there were people all around her who needed companionship. Many of the residents would go without visitors for weeks if they were visited at all.

"After you are here a while, you notice that there are many people here that do not have anyone to visit them," Capps shared. "They have nobody to spend time with them and bring them cookies and cakes. I have four wonderful daughters who bring me snacks and stuffed animals and spend time with me. I wanted to do that for others."

As a resident, Capps was limited as to how much she could tend to the needs of others living there. At 92-years old, she had a few physical limitations, but she also had to stay within the rules set by Prestwick Village.

"Prestwick (staff) would not allow me to do things like push someone in a wheelchair," Capps explained. "They were worried that I might run over my own foot or hurt my back. They are right. I shouldn't be doing things like that, but I wanted to help so badly."

Last December, an ad in the Laurinburg Exchange caught Capps' attention. Scotland

Regional Hospice (SRH) was looking for volunteers to care for patients nearing the end-of-life. The advertisement was notifying the public of an upcoming hospice volunteer training class and Capps thought that it may be just what she was looking for.

"The phone rang and when I answered, there was this soft, sweet voice on the other end," said SRH Volunteer Coordinator Bunny Hasty. "She seemed very interested, but her age completely caught me off guard. I immediately wanted to go meet with her."

It only took a few minutes for Hasty to realize that Capps would easily be able to manage the responsibilities of a patient care volunteer. "She's a little firecracker," Hasty said of Capps. "Just talking to her put a smile on my face. She is so energetic and friendly and has so much empathy and compassion for others. She's exactly what we look for in a patient care volunteer. The biggest challenge was getting her trained."

Since patient care volunteers have access to hospice patients and their information, they must undergo the same onboarding process that a staff member does including a drug test and background check. The training program is designed to give new volunteers a broad view of the mission of hospice. During the 12-hour program, which is usually offered twice a year, interested volunteers learn about the hospice philosophy of treating both the patient and family.

Capps surprised Hasty once again by breezing through the training process, and in early January, she began visiting patients. "I couldn't believe it," Hasty said. "I didn't have to explain anything to her, help her, give her extra time, nothing. She did it all on her own. She was eager to get started right away."

Capps uses her creative talents to initiate and maintain relationships with her patients. "I love to write devotions, poetry, and short stories," Capps shared. "I read them to (the patients). I also love making jewelry and other crafts, so I'll make them gifts as well. We share stories. I love the time that I get to spend with them. I'm so glad to have the chance to help."

Although volunteers typically make one visit per week or less, Capps began by seeing three patients daily. From January until the end of May, Capps made a staggering 188 patient visits, accumulated over 127 volunteer hours, and shows no signs of slowing down.

"We appreciate Prestwick Village for working with us to make this opportunity a reality for Mrs. Capps," Hasty concluded. "Our patients and the other volunteers love her. Her smile is infectious and she just has a way to make everyone around her happy. Our organization and our patients are blessed to have her own our team." ■

"Lucille has been such a wonderful addition to our volunteers. She loves to care for others and strives to make a difference in their lives. She's truly special." - Chaplain, Allen Winters

"Mrs. Capps can brighten up any room that she enters. We could all use a dose of her kindness, compassion, and positivity from time to time. She has a true hospice heart." - PR Director, Deon Cranford