

For Immediate Release

April 11, 2007

Contact: Robert Smith
Director of Public Relations
Visiting Nurse Association
(214) 689-2609

VOLUNTEER'S HOSPICE SERVICE MAKES FOR SWEET MUSIC

When Tammy Mast began playing the flute in the sixth grade, she couldn't imagine that her audiences would someday include hospice patients and their families.

Tammy has been a hospice volunteer with the Visiting Nurse Association of Kaufman County since 2004. She became interested in volunteering when she heard her pastor talk about his work as a part-time hospice chaplain with VNA.

Volunteer training at VNA prepared Tammy to assist the hospice team by providing patients and their families with respite care and emotional support. Tammy soon found that there was an additional way she could offer them comfort.

A year ago, the widow of one of Tammy's hospice patients asked if she would conduct a memorial service for her late husband. Tammy played the flute at the riverside gathering. "Amazing Grace" was the tune she chose.

At about the same time, Tammy and one of her other hospice patients discovered during their conversations that they shared a common interest – both had been members of their school band. The patient's granddaughter was also in school band. Tammy was asked by the patient to play the flute for her. Since then, the flute has been part of the comfort Tammy provides to hospice patients.

Tammy's hospice work is somewhat of a departure from her original career plans. She graduated from Stephen F. Austin University with a bachelor of science degree in forestry and spent two summers with the U.S. Forest Service in Aspen, Colorado.

Following the birth of the first of three daughters, Tammy became a stay-at-home mom. She's still managed to find time to help not only as a hospice volunteer, but also as room mom at her daughters' schools, Girl Scout leader, band booster mom, adult bible study teacher, active church member, and student at the Parish Lay Ministry Academy.

Despite her oftentimes hectic family life, Tammy finds hospice work to be particularly fulfilling. "I never imagined how much I would get from each and every patient and family," Tammy says. "I have seen such faith, humor, perseverance, and pure love with my many patients, and they never cease to

(more)

Volunteer's Hospice Service ... p. 2

inspire me.”

Tammy also adds, “My patients remind me how important it is to live in the moment and to not take my many blessings for granted. They inspire me to live – to really live – to dream, to take a chance, to go out on a limb, to love, to enjoy the quiet times and the crazy times alike, to not waste time on silly grievances and to be truly happy instead, and most of all, to just trust my life to God.”

Tammy volunteers anywhere from two to 10 hours a week, depending on the needs of her hospice patients and families. She's worked with about 25 hospice families and has attended numerous funerals, playing the flute at times as part of the service.

Tammy sees her work as a hospice volunteer as an important step in her own calling, perhaps as a chaplain. “I don't think I'm ready to go back to school full-time yet, but volunteering with hospice seems like it is precisely what God has in store for me right now.” Until that changes, Tammy is perfectly happy to keep making beautiful music.

Information about becoming a hospice volunteer with VNA of Kaufman County can be obtained by calling 972-962-7500 or 1-800-345-0576.



Tammy Mast uses her talent as a flutist to bring comfort to hospice patients and their families as a volunteer with the Visiting Nurse Association of Kaufman County.

###