

## WHY DO WE MAKE ALL THOSE HOSPICE DOLLS AND ANGELS ?

Every month members of the Hospice Dolls and Angels Volunteer Group meet at the Plantation Club on the first Tuesday between 1:00 and 3:30 pm to craft dolls, angels and sometimes rice-filled bags as microwaveable heating pads. Their work is the only activity of the Ocean Ridge Charities Association, Inc. (ORCA) not devoted entirely to raising funds for charity. Instead, the Dolls/Angels project encourages Ocean Ridgers to donate their time and talent to bring comfort to patients and their families as they navigate through end-of-life issues when in the care of the SECU Hospice House of Brunswick up the road in Bolivia.

And the feedback we get from Hospice is heartening:



- While packing a suitcase of a patient who had passed away, the nurse was startled when the wife cried out, jumped up and grabbed the angel the nurse had just placed on the top of her late husband's belongings. The wife explained she had deeply regretted not having anything to remember this last place they shared together, since she had devotedly collected special mementoes from every place they ever lived. Now she said, she has something tangible to remember the place where her husband, as well as herself, received such loving care.
- Upon leaving an elderly women's house, the patient's adult daughter ran to the door to thank the Hospice's visiting nurse for giving her our rice-filled heating pad because it resolved a problem for them. The heavier, conventional heating pads discomfited her mother and our microwaveable heating pad was perfect. The daughter had never heard of such a pad and she had tears in her eyes as she thanked the nurse.
- One evening a nurse at the hospice house peaked into her elderly male patient's room and saw that he was snuggling a doll. Not surprising, except for the man's earlier reaction when the nurse placed the doll on his bed. He grumbled that "it was stupid to give a man a doll."

Lonely and without visitors, she thought it might help him, and was delighted to see his grin while hugging the doll as he nodded off to sleep.

- After poking through the basket of dolls, a three year old challenged the head nurse declaring “you know, you really need to get more girl dolls because little girls do not play with boy dolls.” Hospice called ORCA’s coordinator who delivered several girl dolls the next morning. The next day when she visited her granddad again she was happy to pick out her very own girl doll from the new array. Playing with the doll refocused her attention away from worrying about her granddad and onto her new doll. According to staff, the rest of her visits were less stressful for the child -- and her mother.



*Delivery of angels L-R to Becky Long (Hospice Outreach Coordinator), Mary Pat Lynch (Ocean Ridge resident and Hospice Doll Volunteer), Peggy Burris (ORCA Board member and Hospice doll coordinator), and Maggy Schlink (ORCA Board Member)*

Since late 2011 the ORCA dolls and angels project has delivered over 300 dolls, 320 angels, and 50 rice filled heating pads to SECU Hospice House of Brunswick. We sincerely hope that others will join us during our monthly meetings or pitch in by working from home. In a touching way, our dolls, angels and heating pads do make a difference—as do our volunteers!

Peggy Burris

ORCA Board Member

Hospice Doll and Angel Volunteers Coordinator