

Hospice, approaching 20 years, plans education emphasis for '14

MEDINA – Hospice of Orleans held its annual organizational meeting and honored its volunteers in a dual-purpose luncheon on April 24 at the Medina United Methodist Church (the former Apple Grove Restaurant).

In 2013, more than 150 volunteers contributed nearly 7,000 hours to the Hospice mission of providing comfort, compassion and expertise to Orleans County residents facing serious illness, Hospice Executive Director Mary Anne Fischer reported. She attributed a cost savings of over \$110,000 last year to volunteer involvement.

“It goes without saying that we could not do this without you,” Fischer told the crowd of about 120. “We consider ourselves truly blessed by the giving nature of this community.”

Ann McElwee received Hospice’s Volunteer of the Year Award. Volunteer Coordinator Christine Fancher called McElwee “an incredible lady who gives tirelessly of her time, compassion and care to hospice patients.” McElwee regularly visits two clients in the community and takes time to get to know patients’ likes and dislikes, Fancher said. “She spoils them!” Fancher also noted that McElwee has “broken all of the records with regards to hours of service dedicated to hospice.”

Carol Culhane received the Mary Janet Sahukar Award, named for Hospice of Orleans’ founding director. The award recognizes a community member who understands, embraces and supports the organization’s mission in sacrificial ways. As an artist, Culhane has contributed hundreds of hours to the creation of murals in the Martin-Linsin Hospice Residence, as well as custom-designed ornaments for the organization Light-A-Life fundraising event each Christmas.

Baxter Healthcare of Medina received the Hospice Business/Civic Award, recognizing that company’s annual sponsorship of Hospice’s Ducks Ahoy Race, held each Independence Day in Lyndonville. Baxter provides cash prizes for the race, an important fundraiser and publicity event for Hospice, according to Development Director Marsha Rivers. Baxter employees have also shown exceptional enthusiasm for the Hospice mission, Rivers said – supporting the spring bouquet sale by the dozens of dozens, and volunteering at Hospice headquarters on the United Way Day of Caring. Baxter Vice President Nelson Patterson received the award on behalf of his company.

Douglas Miller of Albion was elected as a new Hospice Board member. Henry Lehning and Jon Costello were honored for completion of their Board terms, Lehning for 15 years and Costello for ___ years. **Costello was elected as a director emeritus, which allows him to continue attending board meetings without voting.**

Mary Anne Fischer noted that Hospice of Orleans achieved several organizational goals in 2013, including: Development of a palliative care program to assist community members still undergoing treatment for serious illness; tailoring policies and procedures to become a 24/7 agency; streamlining of medication ordering to increase efficiency and decrease costs; upgrading clinical software to enable direct care staff to record visits remotely; documentation of all agency processes; updating financial policies pertaining to investments and billing; starting an e-newsletter to provide caregivers with high quality, pertinent information.

In the coming year, during which Fischer noted the agency will celebrate its 20th year as a state-certified hospice provider, Hospice of Orleans will emphasize education about its services and important end of life care decisions that everyone should consider in advance. The organization will also strive to increase use of electronic media for efficiency and cost savings, and encourage planned giving among its supporters.