



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MEDINA –Ms. Mary Anne Fischer, Executive Director, addressed a crowd of around a hundred at the Hospice of Orleans annual organizational meeting and volunteer recognition event April 30th at the Medina United Methodist Church. In her remarks she pointed out some concerning trends in utilization of Hospice services. “While 75% of those referred were admitted to care, 31% reached out to us too late.” She noted that “Most people are admitted to Hospice services on the same day or within 24 hours of a referral. Clearly, more people could benefit from Hospice services if they were referred earlier.”

Ms. Fischer called on Hospice volunteers and supporters to help educate our community. “Hospice is not about giving up on your loved one. It is about giving TO them.” She cited a new study that shows that Hospice care not only improves the quality of life but also the length of life. “On average, patients lived 29 days longer on hospice than those with the same disease who didn’t have hospice services.”

In her remarks, Fischer noted that it was of concern that in 2014 “14% of those referred, but not admitted, to hospice care were routed to futile efforts at rehabilitation in nursing homes where they subsequently died.” She also cautioned that we as a community need to be very wary of the recent push to legalize physician assisted suicide. “I could talk at length on this topic, but the important point I want to make is that Hospice is the answer! Hospice is the answer for anyone who is contemplating ending their life because of a terminal health issue...make sure your loved ones and friends know how important the hospice choice is! In the words of Dr. Ira Byock “The healthiest response to death is to Love, Honor and Celebrate Life.”

Ms. Fischer applauded the work of the Hospice volunteers and reported that in 2014, more than 150 volunteers contributed over 6,800 hours to the Hospice mission of providing comfort, compassion and expertise to Orleans County residents facing serious illness. She attributed a cost savings of over \$110,000 last year to volunteer involvement. “Our mission would be impossible without you – our volunteers.”

Ms. Fisher detailed key accomplishments of 2014. These included implementing changes in employee medical and dental coverage, evaluation of the agency’s cost structure and saving over \$350 in postage alone with increased use of email and online volunteer scheduling. “Hospice of Orleans has grown from an average daily census of 5 to 17,” she reported.

Finance Director Joel Allen reviewed the 2014 Budget Expenses for the agency and pointed out that more than 90% of the expenses billed for patient services go to direct patient care. He noted that patient costs for the Martin-Linsin Residence are in line with budget projections. While there has been a slight decrease in home care, all other expenses and revenue projections were on target for 2014.

Nyla Gaylord, Director of Development and Community Relations, reported on past and upcoming events and thanked Wendy Wilson of Leonard Oakes Estate Winery for her support in initiating a new fundraising event at the Winery, "Beat the Winter Blues." She noted that in the future Hospice will be producing a screening tool "What Help Do You Need?" to better assist people to identify the need for in-home support, palliative care and hospice services. The agency will continue to look for new opportunities to raise funds through events and grant seeking, as well as promoting new financial giving options that fall outside of probate and wills.

Agency priorities for 2015 include implementing the new Pet Peace of Mind program, strengthening the infrastructure of the agency to ensure its long term viability, investigating a group purchasing program with other area hospice programs, and continuing to educate our community about the benefits of hospice.

Don Algeo received Hospice's Volunteer of the Year Award. Volunteer Coordinator Christine Fancher noted that "Don is always willing to help. He volunteers at the Residence four or more hours a week and goes to a patient's home and prepares meals twice a week." Algeo also serves on the Hospice of Orleans Board of Directors.

Jerome Pawlak 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. "Jerome always says 'yes' when we ask if we can sell bouquets at his Save-a-Lot Stores or ask for any other assistance." said Mary Anne Fischer as she presented the award. Jerome told the group that his father had been a supporter of Hospice since its inception and that he is proud to carry on that tradition.

Merrill Grinnell Funeral Home received the Hospice Business/Civic Award for their role in developing and supporting the Classic Car Show for the past two years.

A Special Recognition Award was presented to Leonard Oakes Estate Winery for their many contributions to fundraising for Hospice. Wendy Wilson accepted the award for the Winery. Her voice filled with emotion, as she said "I can't thank Hospice enough for taking care of one of our long time, much loved employees this past year. Two of our employees are receiving services now. Hospice staff has been incredible! Hospice has been near and dear to our family and we are happy to support them in any way we can."

John Girvin was honored for completion of his term on the Hospice of Orleans Board of Directors. Lynn Short, former owner of Arjuna Florist, and Pamela Reamer, professor of Nursing at SUNY Brockport, were elected to serve two year terms on the Board of Directors. The Board had previously elected Dennis Piedimonte, owner of JP's Farm Market in Holley, to a three year term.

**Photos:**

1 – Don Algeo – Volunteer of the Year

2 – Jerome Pawlak and Mary Anne Fischer - Jerome Pawlak received the Mary Janet Sahukar Award, named for Hospice of Orleans' founding director.

3- Ceil Feldman, a Hospice Volunteer for more than 20 years, received a “gag” gift of a bag of flour in recognition of many gifts of baked goods to the staff and volunteers.

4- John Girvin –Outgoing member of the Hospice of Orleans Board of Directors



