

Compassionate Bulldozing?

My late husband, Philip, died of cancer. For some time before his death, he was bedridden. Here is something I would like to share:

While he was bedridden, I tried to create a perfect situation. His body was to be aligned perfectly in his hospital bed; all the pillows, pads and rolled towels were to remain in designated spots to protect his body from sores and the bed sheets were to have no wrinkles. Only a particular type of music was to be played in his room. Only the people I was fond of were to visit. And, he needed to remain quiet and still.

As you can imagine, nothing like that could last for more than 15 minutes. Philip kept moving a lot and sometimes he threw his pillows around. He was not quiet at all. He kept asking for this and that all the time. He was a real nuisance! His bed sheets, pads and tee shirts would get wrinkled. He would watch all sorts of movies and programs on television and just would not let go of the remote control. People of all sorts kept visiting him non-stop. They just enjoyed being with him. They all brought their own stories, movies, chants or music; not necessarily ones I enjoyed. In no way was this the ideal situation I had imagined.

I tried really hard to stop the 'chaos' but this was beyond my capabilities. Very soon, I had run out of energy and felt I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Finally, I realized that I was trying to stop the Life which surrounded Philip's last days. I was trying to solidify and stop something that could not be stopped: stop something that was constantly moving and changing, stop something that was perfect just the way it was.

I saw how much I was trying to control the situation due to my own insecurity. What right did I have to dictate how Philip was supposed to die? It was his own journey and he did it the only possible way he could.

I realized we need to remember to trust the dying. "Welcome everything, push away nothing", is something important that I heard from a very wise man. People should be able to die the way they want to die. We need to be careful not to become "compassionate bulldozers". Furthermore, we need to treat our own mistakes and fears with a tender compassion.

– Nino Merran

Dignity Care, LLC wishes to thank Patricia at AppelfellerARTS for the design of our newsletter. AppelfellerARTS is a full service graphic design company specializing in packaging design.



volume one ♦ issue two

Heartfelt Homecare

june 2003

Dignity Care Foundation/The Dignity House

We are excited to announce that the Dignity Care Foundation is being set up and that we are now able to see the possibility of our dreams materializing. The paperwork is underway to establish the Foundation as a nonprofit, 501-C3 and we have started working on our mission statement, vision statement and business plan.

The Foundation is being established to address several concerns that we have in the overall system as we see it. We are aware that many of the areas of our concern are being addressed by the rising consciousness in elder care, but the main thrust of our dream is to bring into the community an exceptional awareness of and dignity to, the last stages of life.

We would like to mention a few of our concerns. The first is that we strongly believe that no one should die alone. The statistics show that 76% of those dying in this country do so in a hospital setting and that 70% of them die alone. We feel that an important cultural adjustment is required to change this circumstance. We feel that anyone facing their imminent death should be with someone: someone to comfort, to support, to witness, and to validate their life lived to its fullest at the end. Our hope is to establish a network of care givers and lay people who choose to volunteer to be with the dying client. We will have connections to hospitals, facilities and those in their homes, who are facing their final hour and match the care giver / volunteer to that person.

A second concern is for care givers. With the creation of Dignity House we would like to be able to offer a retirement option for care givers who have dedicated themselves to Caregiving, as a vocation during their lives. We are all well aware that those who have served in this capacity are rarely

financially rewarded for the love, compassion and service they have given over the years. We wish to be able to provide quality care to those whose time has come to receive rather than give.

A third concern is for those who are unable financially to receive the care they need, whether they have run out of funds or have never had the ability to pay for the care they need. At Dignity Care, we have chosen to continue care for some of our clients who are no longer able to pay our normal rates. At other times, we have chosen to work with clients at a reduced rate, considering our care a service to the community. At Dignity House, we want to be able to open our doors to those who are in need of our services but lack the financial resources.

As a non-profit organization backed by fundraising, grants and donations, we hope to create The Dignity House as a sanctuary, providing a place of comfort and dignity to those in the last stages of life.

Society for Creative Aging

"When we engage elders on a personal level in the arts we provide a powerful vehicle for expression, reflection and renewal"

– www.asaging.org

Twenty-five years ago there was little understanding of the importance of creativity in old age. But the paradigm has shifted in recent years. Due to "biomedical and demographic reasons, we find ourselves quite suddenly with an extraordinary opportunity: the opportunity to transform the experience of old age in America". www.communityarts.net

The mission statement of The National Center for Creative Aging, formally established in 2001, states that they

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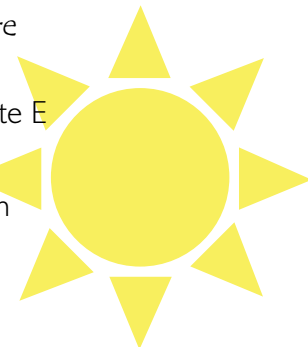


Heartfelt Home Care

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Hello Everyone,

What an amazing 3 months: my father passed on and my 92 year old mother-in-law married and moved out of our home.

I would like to share some of what I learned



around my father's death. I was with him for 10 wonderful days and for 9 of those we thought he was getting better, then he took a turn for the worse. Those last 24 hours were amazing; my strong father was fearful during part of the journey, even though he had gone to church all his life. I believed before, but definitely believe now, that no one should die alone. Recently, I heard and believe this saying: "Two of life's gifts that are often passed along unopened are birth and death." To be in the presence of the Holy when Dad passed over was incredible. If you have the opportunity to be present when a loved one dies, don't miss the chance. The birthing/death struggle is not always easy at times, but the final leaving is remarkable.

Thanks again to all of our care givers for the incredible work you do. The love you share has ramifications on so many levels - ones you can't even imagine!

Mary

For a moment they hover like bejewelled clouds
And dance above the crystal streams;
Then, as they sail away on the laughing waters,
They seem to say:
"Farewell, O Spring! We are to eternity."

Okakura Kakuzo

In deep, gentle loving memory of those who have passed beyond.

(Society for Creative Aging continued from page 1)

are dedicated to "fostering an understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and the quality of life of older people." They assert that "creative expression is important for all older people of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds, regardless of economic status, age or level of physical emotional or cognitive functioning". www.creativeaging.org

The Society for Creative Aging was founded by Susan Perlstein and based on the model she developed and her organization called ESTA – Elders Share the Arts, which has been established in New York over the past twenty-five years. Boulder County has an established chapter of the society. This nonprofit organization is based on the following beliefs: "that creativity is a basic human need and that everyone is naturally creative; that experiences and explorations into the magic of creativity and the arts enhance the physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being of older adults; that expression in various art forms using reminiscences and the life review process promotes acceptance and inclusion and establishes a greater sense of identity and leaves a unique and cherished legacy from their life's treasury; and, that the universal and common language of art dissolves boundaries, celebrates the human spirit and builds bridges across diverse generational and multi-cultural communities."

Dignity Care is involved with and supports the Boulder chapter of The Society for Creative Aging. Our desire is to be able to involve our home clients in the programs that are offered by the Society. There are five different areas of the arts in which they can participate: the visual arts, writing and poetics, theatre, dance and music. Through membership in one or more of these groups, we hope to help our clients become more socially interactive and find a means of self-expression, ultimately enhancing the quality of their lives.

The Society is always looking for new members, sponsors, donations and volunteers. For more information, please contact Cindy Longfellow at 303-449-3160.

WELLNESS COLUMN

I am instituting this column to spread the word on new products in the natural healing arena that I have had the opportunity to learn about.

• My number one choice is still the Oasis products. They have two new products: Ageless and RegeniCare. Ageless supports the brain and helps with stress, sleep, mental clarity and recall, mood and focus. A test developed by Stanford University and used by NASA to measure mental functioning is being offered by Oasis on the net. You can go to www.oasiswellness.com. Put **kirkm** in the box and click on **Anti-Aging Products**. The first page is about **Ageless - 2/3 of the way down the page, click on, take the ageless test**. If you would like a free sample of this amazing product just call **Dignity Care** and we will be happy to furnish you with a week's supply. After taking the product for a week, you can take the ageless test again and measure your progress.

RegeniCare helps support proper joint function and reduces feelings of discomfort. There are several Denver Bronco players using it and getting tremendous results!! Again, if you would like to try a free sample, call the Dignity Care office.

In reference to an older Oasis product, Metagreens, I've just learned that 1 tbsp. of Metagreens (\$1/per day) is the equivalent of four shots of wheat grass (\$6/per day).

• **This past spring, I had the great privilege of meeting Dr. Merrill Garnett, a man who, 40 years ago, said he wanted to find a cure for cancer. He researched methodically for 30 years, running experiments on all the elements in the periodic table. Finally, in 1990, he found the substance he was looking for, while working on palladium: this substance attacks a target which is only found in malignant cells. He tested the substance in cancer patients at a Canadian clinic and obtained the desired results: a reversal of cancerous tumors. He named the substance PolyMVA. He obtained patents in 1994 and then asked the FDA to approve PolyMVA as a drug.**

For two years, FDA investigators scrutinized his results. When one of the investigator's wives got breast cancer, he immediately brought his wife to Dr. Garnett. When she became cancer free Dr. Garnett asked the investigator to help him get the Poly re-

leased for use by the FDA. The investigator told him he didn't need the FDA's approval since it was an all natural substance with no side effects. To this day Dr. Garnett is still hoping that the FDA will do a large clinical trial on PolyMVA. I think he will have to wait a long time. To find out more about PolyMVA or Dr. Garnett go to www.polymvasurvivors.com.

My father had esophageal cancer and was using PolymMVA after doing extensive chemotherapy which only reduced his energy but not the tumor. He was not taking the right dosage to get rid of the cancer but with the small amount that he did take, the cancer did not grow one iota in 8 months... quite unusual for esophageal cancer. Unfortunately, my father left us, due to complications with his conventional treatments.

If you have any questions, please contact Dignity Care LLC.

– MK

Lillian Lynch, Mary Kirk's 92 year-old mother-in-law, married 99 year-old Virgil Rosenberger on June 1, 2003. They met at their exercise classes at the Good Samaritan Fitness Center and Virgil soon proposed to Lillian. Without much ado, a hastily organized wedding took place in the gardens of the Good Samaritan, with the reception taking place in the very fitness center where they met!

Two days later, they moved into their own apartment in the Atrium, an independent living facility, here in Boulder. I know Lillian never thought she would marry again and undoubtedly, Virgil thought the same. And now they are starting their life together! We are thrilled for them...

As if being newlyweds weren't fun enough, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno has contacted them, asking them to appear on the show. It has tentatively been scheduled for sometime in July. We'll all be watching.