

Script – Broadcast – Caring for the caregivers

INTRO

Fighting back tears, Sara Mattillion cracks a big smile as she describes her late mother, Mercedes Woodworth, who died in October 2025, after a lengthy battle with cancer.

((SOT))

Sara Mattillion, daughter

"My mom was a firecracker," says Mattillion, a registered dietitian at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, Illinois. "She was definitely very spunky and quirky, full of life, love and energy for everyone." (:12)

VO

The 75-year-old Woodworth spent a year in OSF Hospice until she died October 17 of this year. She was living alone at her home in Burbank, Illinois, following the sudden death of her husband, Gary, in January 2025.

Mattillion and her brother Andrew made frequent trips back to the Chicago area to care for their mother, but the care from the hospice team at OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park, Illinois, proved invaluable. A care team, which includes a physician, nurse, social worker, chaplain and volunteers, also focuses on the emotional aspect of dying.

November is National Hospice and Palliative Care Month.

Mattillion says she and Andrew appreciated the clinical and emotional support from hospice. It gave them "peace of mind" during the difficult days. She adds that her mother, too, was overwhelmed by the care and compassion she received for nearly a year.

TAG

A month before Woodworth died, she and her family gained some closure thanks to participating in AARP's Wish of a Lifetime®, a program that fulfills the dreams of older adults, often due to financial or health situations. Woodworth's lifelong wish was to visit the Grand Canyon, which she did with her two adult children. For four days, Woodworth and her children soaked in the beauty of the Grand Canyon – laughing, sharing stories, eyeing the majestic sunsets and gazing at the dancing stars.

While hospice won't change the eventual outcome, the true benefit of hospice is the support the patient and loved ones need during those crucial last days, weeks or months.

((SOT))

Barb Johnson, OSF Hospice manager

"It takes an emotional and physical toll on people to care for someone," says Johnson. "What we always tell family members is most important is that they take care of themselves first. Because if they don't take care of themselves, they're not going to be able to take care of their loved one." (:17)

For more information on hospice, visit the OSF HealthCare [website](#).