

TRANSCRIPT OF MEDIA- Hospice volunteer brings music and comfort at end of life

Darla Glover, OSF HealthCare hospice volunteer in Bloomington, Illinois

She became involved in hospice after a transformative experience while singing "Over the Rainbow" for a patient in hospice care.

"Right when it ended her son said, 'Darla look!' And I looked down and she had a smile on her face. The singing had actually calmed the labored breathing. She was even squeezing my hand and her son's hand and there was a tear coming out of her eye and she passed over right when that song ended." (:24)

Glover says singing can provide a much-needed lift, but it's not always what's needed.

"There's many times I'll have patients – again ones that I know for a long time or ones, not long – and I'll sing. But then sometimes they just want someone to sit there, to hold their hand. They want to talk and then sometimes they don't want to talk, they just want that presence of knowing they're not alone." (:20)

Hospice volunteering leaves Glover fulfilled and grateful.

"This work I'm doing; this is what gives me purpose and meaning to my life. I really believe the foundation is love. As Jesus said, 'Love one another.'" (:11)

She encourages others who are empathetic and like people to consider becoming a hospice volunteer.

"You might say 'I'm too emotional,' or 'I'm too sensitive.' Well, actually that's an advantage because I am. I now look at that as a very good trait whereas in the past I used to think it was not. But it is and so just try it." (:15)

Maureen Cox, Coordinator Hospice Volunteers, OSF HealthCare in Bloomington, IL

Cox shares that hospice volunteers also provide support to caregivers.

"This also allows time, especially if the patient is at home, it allows time for the caregiver to have time for themselves. Whether they need to leave the home to go to their own appointment or run errands or they just want time away from the house, that allows time for caregivers to take a little breather and get things done that they need to." (:23)

Volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds. A lot are retirees, but some are still working.

"Some have background in health care and that maybe they've retired and wanted to, you know, give back so they hospice volunteer," Cox explains. "But we also have volunteers that have never had experience in health care, and that is fine. It's just maybe they had a calling, or they maybe had a loved one on hospice and then decided that they wanted to give back." (:20)

For volunteers, the work can be emotional, but Cox says support is always available.

“I’ll come and sit with them and talk. They also know that if they ever needed to they could talk to our bereavement coordinator, or social worker or even one of our chaplains because I want them to express. I don’t want them to hold onto any of that sadness or worry of that patient and their family.” (:23)